



## CENTENARY OF RADIO TELEPHONY

Although the name of Marconi is generally associated with the first long distance radio transmission, his first and subsequent transmissions were all made using Morse Code. This was referred to as radio-telegraphy.

Not many people remember, or even know of the Canadian inventor, Reginald Fessenden who was the pioneer of radio broadcasting or radio-telephony, where voice is broadcast directly, rather than Morse Code or 'data'.

The first radio-telephony broadcast was made by Fessenden from Brant Rock near Boston Massachusetts when he transmitted human voices to several ships at sea owned by the United Fruit Company. He followed this with a recording of Handel's "Largo" played from an Ediphone. The date was 24 December 1906 at 2100 Eastern Standard Time (US). Ship radio operators in the Atlantic were said to be shocked to hear a human voice emanating from equipment used to receive Morse Code.

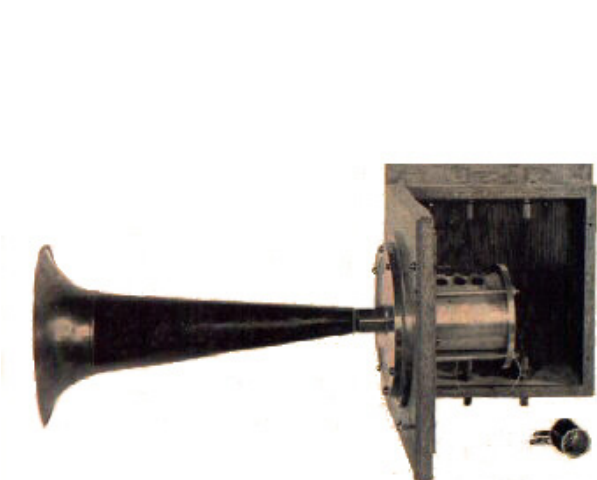


At the time few people believed that the transmission of voices and other sounds was possible. It is even reported that when Fessenden asked Thomas Edison his opinion of the matter, the latter replied: *"Fezzie, what do you say are man's chances of jumping over the moon? I think one is as likely as the other" !* Fessenden then went on to prove him wrong, and the technology of radio broadcasting developed from there.

Unfortunately, because of a lack of business acumen, and an inability to promote himself, Fessenden lost control of his patents. The royalties resulting from radio-telephony made many other people (such as Marconi) and private companies in the field very rich.

Not only was Fessenden the first to successfully demonstrate radio-telephony, but he went on to invent the radio compass, and even to demonstrate a crude television system in 1919.

The frequencies used for the early broadcasts were in the Low Frequency part of the radio spectrum, below 200 kHz.



*First radio microphone*



*First radiotelephone broadcast - from Brant Rock*