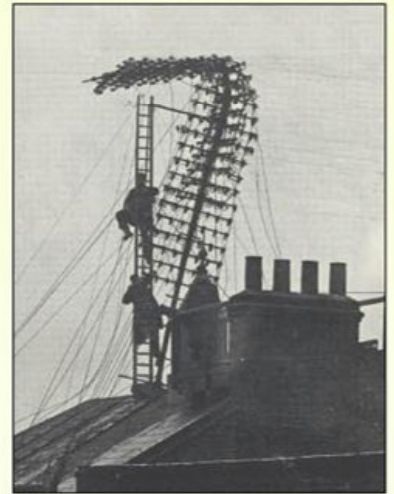


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Fenny Stratford Repeater Station



Flywheel at Fenny Stratford Repeater Station

Increased use of the telegraph, and then the telephone, demanded more wires. Between cities so many wires were needed to run together that overhead lines would have been impossible – underground cables became the only solution. The first was laid along the route of the London – Birmingham railway line in 1897/98.

It was found that as signals had to travel further they became weaker and “noise” or interference became more of a problem. This affected the telephone and speech more than it had the telegraph. Several solutions were tried but the most successful was to use the triode valve (developed in 1912) to amplify the signal. One of the first repeater stations adopting this method was built at Fenny Stratford in 1918.

The main parts of the repeater station were:
One room full of huge batteries that supplied the DC supply used by the telephone system.

An oil engine used to power a generator and charge the batteries. This has a 9 foot (2.75 m) flywheel and when started up would shake the whole building earning it the name “Thumper”. This engine is in store at Milton Keynes Museum and, one day, will be working and on show.