

Radio man: the remarkable rise and fall of C.O. stanley

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Deskripsi Lengkap: <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20452353&lokasi=lokal>

Abstrak

'Radio man' tells the story of C.O. Stanley, the unconventional Irishman who acquired Pye Radio at the beginning of the broadcasting age. Though he started with little experience and even less money, he was to make Pye a major player in the British electronics industry - only to crash it spectacularly forty years later. From the romance of early radio to the birth of the mobile, Stanley and Pye were players in some of the key moments of 20th century Britain. His obsession with the infant medium of television allowed Pye to provide the equipment that put radar into planes in time for the Battle of Britain. His energy also drove Pye's pioneering work on the proximity fuse - work that would revolutionise anti-aircraft warfare - and the company's manufacture of the war's most successful army radios.

In the 1950s Stanley led the offensive against the BBC's monopoly of television in a battle that split the British establishment. When his son, John, took Pye into mobile radio Stanley fought and defeated the bureaucrats who then controlled Britain's airwaves.

Stanley's loss of Pye in 1966 illustrated British industry's inability to withstand foreign competition. It also brought tragedy. Stanley himself escaped with honour more or less intact, but left his son to face public humiliation on his own. This revealing and meticulously researched text is written within the broad context of the political, technological and business changes of the time, and shows how a very ambitious businessman was brought down by the qualities that made him so successful.