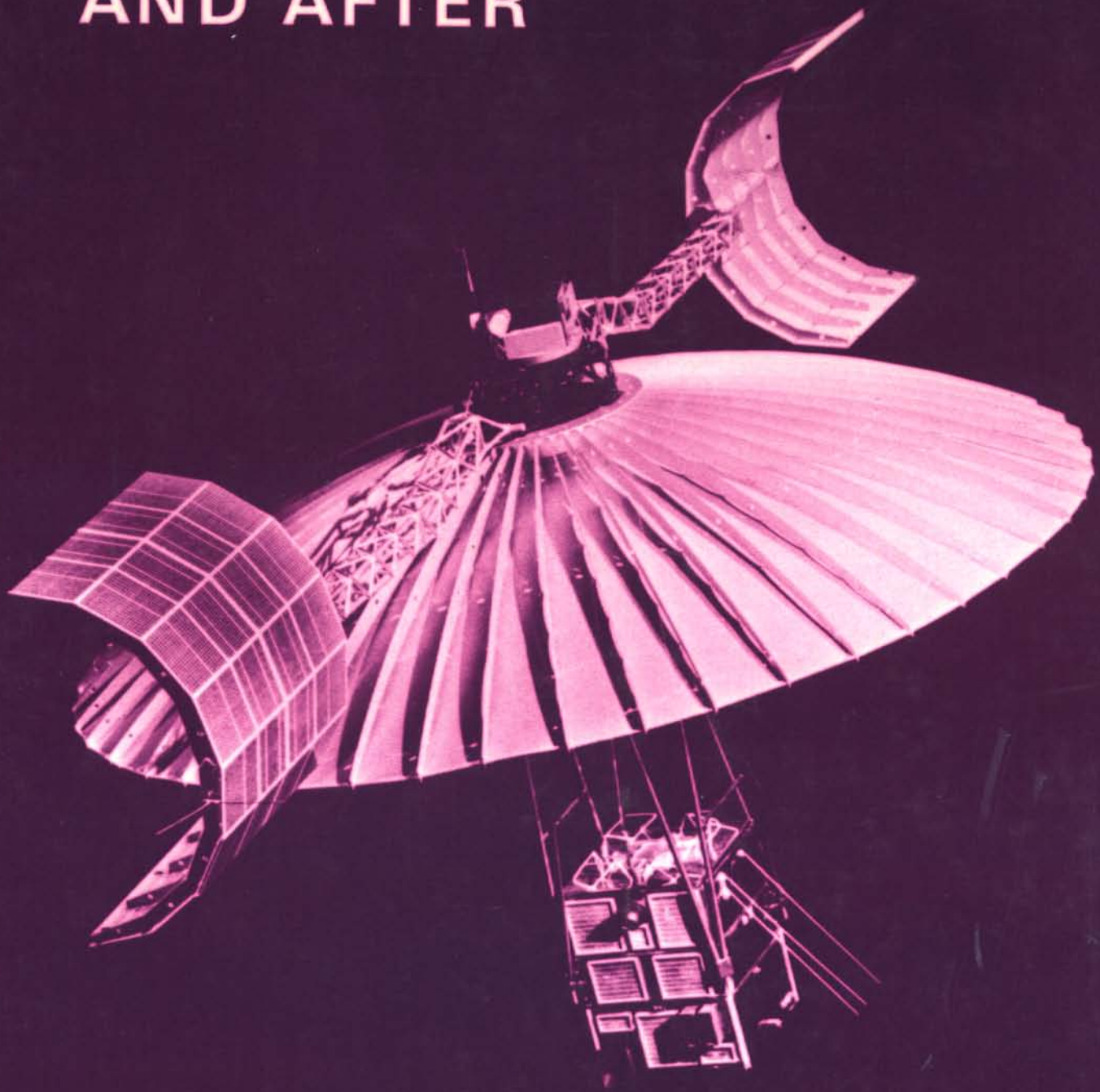
TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN THE 1980s AND AFTER



The Royal Society of London

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A ROYAL SOCIETY DISCUSSION
ORGANIZED BY
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PREFACE

The year 1976 marked the centenary of the invention of the telephone. Conferences, discussions and lectures were held in all parts of the world to mark the event. These generally tended to be historical and sociological reviews of the previous 100 years and emphasized the benefits the telephone had brought to mankind.

During the year the Royal Society sought contributions from eminent experts in half a dozen countries to a meeting at which the future pattern of telecommunications development would be discussed. This was held in March 1977.

The papers covered virtually all aspects of modern telecommunications, from microtechnology, on which much of the future success in circuit and system design depends, to strategic systems planning. The social aspects were not ignored: a paper was included on the implications of new telecommunications service and reference was made to the topical – and controversial – question of the future size of the telecommunications switching industry.

It is clear that there are few physical impediments to a further massive growth in telecommunications, tending to produce a major impact upon many other industries, and on society in general. The main uncertainties are those of human organization and of politics rather than of technology. Perhaps this in itself is the most fundamental change which has affected the art in the 100 years since its birth.

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