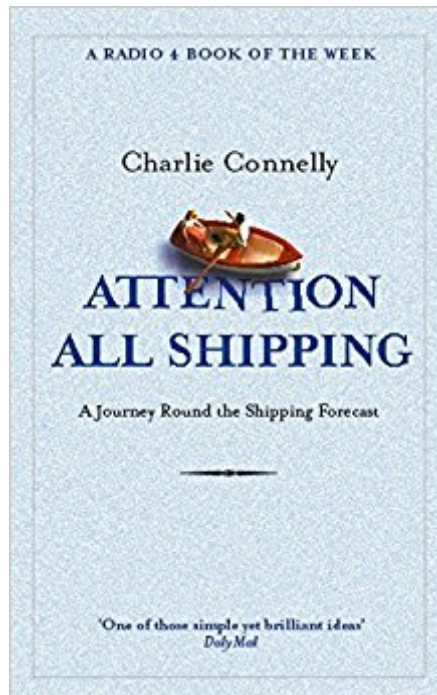




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Attention All Shipping (Radio 4 Book Of The Week)



Synopsis

This solemn, rhythmic intonation of the shipping forecast on BBC radio is as familiar as the sound of Big Ben chiming the hour. Since its first broadcast in the 1920s it has inspired poems, songs and novels in addition to its intended objective of warning generations of seafarers of impending storms and gales. Sitting at home listening to the shipping forecast can be a cosily reassuring experience. There's no danger of a westerly gale eight, veering southwesterly increasing nine later (visibility poor) gusting through your average suburban living room, blowing the Sunday papers all over the place and startling the cat. Yet familiar though the sea areas are by name, few people give much thought to where they are or what they contain. In **ATTENTION ALL SHIPPING** Charlie Connelly wittily explores the places behind the voice, those mysterious regions whose names seem often to bear no relation to conventional geography. Armchair travel will never be the same again.

Book Information

Series: Radio 4 Book of the Week

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Customer Reviews

A wonderfully eccentric study
— [OBSERVER](#) One of those simple yet brilliant ideas
— [DAILY MAIL](#) If listening to 'Sailing By' to the bitter end every night is the surest sign of a Radio 4 addict, then buying Charlie Connelly's new travel book runs it close
— [SUNDAY TIMES](#) An engaging and often very funny book

Freelance writer and Charlton FC supporter, Charlie Connelly has already proved his quirky

credentials by writing a very funny book about Liechtenstein. ATTENTION ALL SHIPPING has cemented these credentials and delighted his rapidly growing readership.

This is a great book. This is also an appalling hack job of an audiobook abridgment. The point of this story is to experience it, and why would you want to experience only part of it? I bought this because I'd lost disc 8 of my unabridged copy and didn't notice that this one was abridged when I bought it. But my mistake is your forewarning. I knew that the story picked up on disc 9 with Jeff the Talking Mongoose, so I wanted to listen to just enough of the abridged version to get me through. I listened for a short while, waiting to hear about Jeff, and finally was sure I must be past that point and switched back to the full version. The abridged version had ripped through Charlie Connelly's travels so fast it had left out almost every detail! I kept hearing bits in the full version that had been in the abridgment, interspersed between fascinating and funny stories that the abridged version left out entirely. There was no Jeff the Talking Mongoose. There was no rant about the silliness of church signs. There was no mention of his father's film role and how Charlie would have handled it. Characters came and went without any word of where they came from. The list goes on and on, and there are seriously funny bits hacked out. If you want an abridged version, here you go: A guy is inspired by the shipping forecast to travel around various coastal areas. The end. But just as the point of travel is not to spend as little time as possible in a place before racing home, the point of the full book isn't to get through it as quickly as possible while skipping all the good bits. If you want to hear the real story, including all the parts that make it actually worth listening to, you owe it to yourself to look for the full 11 disc version, not this crummy abridged substitute.

Like Simon Winchester's travels in Outposts this is a particularly British journey. Unless you are a "native" or spent time listening to the BBC news broadcasts the iconic subject of both the title and the purpose of the author's trip might confuse. However, if you grew up listening to the beautifully modulated tones of the BBC news-reader intoning "Cromarty, Rockall and Viking" - as iconic to many as "Liverpool 1, Everton 2"- this book describes a trip full of nostalgia; that most unreliable source of history. Perhaps a quick look at the actual service would be helpful as a starter for non-Brits ([...]) and would explain the intent and purpose of the forecast, if not the alluring mystique. The author recollects his own, near Pavlovian reaction, to hearing the signature tune as a boy, because it signified his tea-time. He later decides to visit each region named in the forecast that shared at least on boundary line with an accessible point - and he took his celebrated humour with him. A delightful book is the result of his journey, and brings gems to our reading from the

sea-regions such as the actual history of the invention of shipping news to save lives by Robert Fitzroy, the ex-Captain of the Darwin voyage in HMS (Her Majesty's Ship) the Beagle. During one of the periodic adjustments of the sea-regions, 150 years later, Fitzroy was honored by naming the southernmost region as Fitzroy - it was formally Biscay - after his contribution. Connelly's trip is full of Irish wit and fully explains the allure and mystery of why this broadcast is of heavy significance to those who depended on it for livelihood and to those who just listened to the sonorous announcements whilst shivering under the bedclothes at home, in gratitude for not having to weather it.

I just discovered the BBC Radio 4 Shipping Forecast fairly recently. I listen to the version at 0530 UTC as I fall asleep. Something haunting and soothing about hearing all those English place names, and nautical weather terms. As I tend to do, I got curious about the program, and the places involved. This book is a superb guide to those places, and why they are important to this program. And there are wonderful anecdotes about what has and continues to go into this practically important and yet oddly popular broadcast. I live in the USA, far from the English shipping channels. But I still feel a link to there. In case you're interested, I listed via BBC Radio 4 longwave, on a WiFi radio. Tune into the program, and get this book.

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