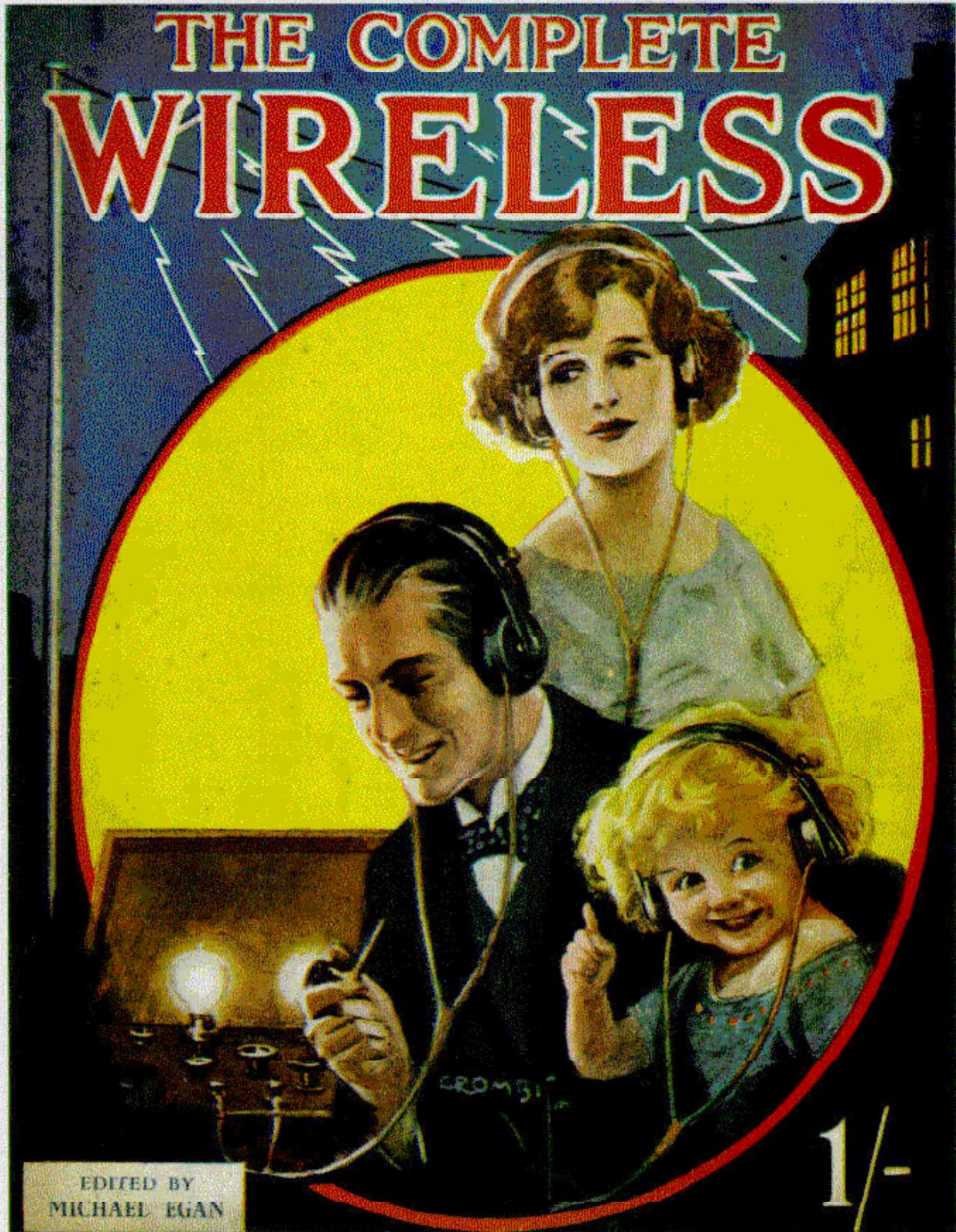


VINTAGE WIRELESS

THE COMPLETE WIRELESS



EDITED BY
MICHAEL EGAN

1/-

BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY

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COVER STORY: The fifth example in our series of reproductions of original colour covers from early wireless Magazines comes from the Newnes publication "Complete Wireless" of about 1923. It offered much the same as most other home-constructor magazines: a little "simple" theory with circuits, details of how to build both crystal and valve receivers, news of new developments in broadcasting and of new components, broadcasting notes and an advice page. During the heyday of home-building there were probably as many as fifty different magazines but they almost all disappeared in a relatively short time. The reason for this was that when attractive-looking, sophisticated, easy-to-operate sets began to be mass-produced they became cheaper and more affordable to an increasingly affluent population, for whom home-construction had before been an economic necessity.

Attractive covers are not easy to find: if any readers have examples, or other ephemera that might make good and interesting covers for the Bulletin, the Editor would be very grateful for the loan of them for reproduction.

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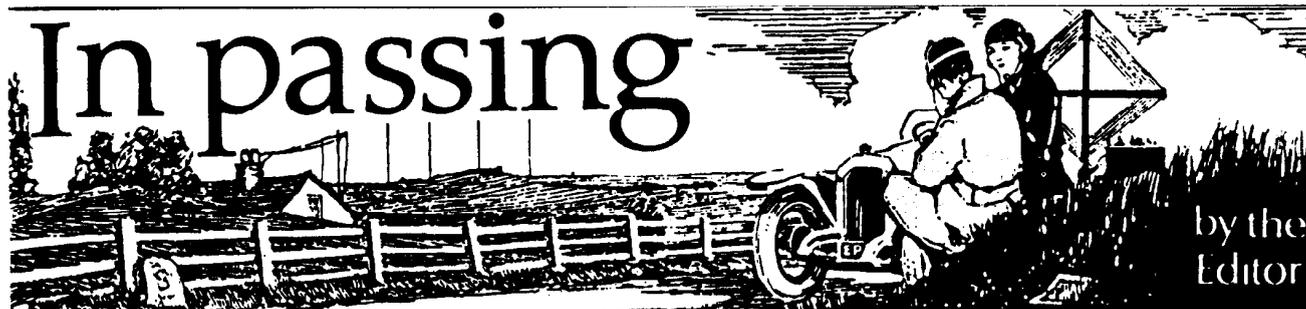


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VINTAGE WIRELESS MUSEUM



The Vintage Wireless Museum, the London meeting-place of BVWS members, is at 23 Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, London SE21 8DS. Telephone: (081) 670 3667. The Curator is Gerald Wells, whom visitors should telephone before visiting the museum.



Edited, designed and produced by Robert Hawes, to whom Editorial matters should be addressed: 63 Manor Road, London N17 0JH. Vol. 19 No. 5 10.94

The Bulletin

During my 13 years as Editor of the Bulletin, there have been many changes and it has grown from a small amateurish bundle of photocopied black-and-white typed sheets, into a much-admired, highly respected and thoroughly professional magazine with an ever-developing scope and quality, attracting a steadily increasing readership and contributions of high calibre.

The early issues consisted of only about eight pages of text, mostly concerning early Twenties technology, the rest being padded out with advertisements which were later transferred to the "Newsletter" I introduced to provide more space in the Bulletin for editorial material. It was a great success, providing a news service for members as well as the popular sales-and wants advertisements and the beginning of the development of the Bulletin itself as a vehicle for an increasingly varied range of topics. The traditional features were retained but gradually the scope was increased to try to cover the interests of a growing and developing membership.

Magazines which stagnate are doomed to eventual extinction: we must continue to develop by serving our readership, while retaining our integrity and the good qualities we have already built up. Soon, the world will be celebrating 100 years of radio and we must mark that anniversary with special features, but we must remember that the innovations of the moment are the antiques of the future; these too will all too soon become outdated and part of what we regard as "Vintage", engendering a need to preserve them for prosperity, together with the context of technology, design and social history in which they are embedded. Vintage wireless isn't just about early circuitry and for this reason, I have been just as interested in covering later periods of technology and have, for instance introduced aspects of the develop-

ment of the transistor, which is itself half-a-century old!

Like many other members of the Society who were "in at the start", I'm no longer a youngster but I don't regard myself or our magazine as a dinosaur that ought to bury its head in the sands of time and become extinct. Our magazine must continue as a living organism, spawning a new generation that will take us into the 21st Century.

The continued success of our magazine depends on a regular supply of new blood in the form of contributions on every kind of theme, and I look forward to the help of everyone. The offerings of the academic and the literary will continue to be welcome but will not be privileged above the offerings of those who feel more humble about their efforts but who may have things to say which are just as important as those of the eggheads among us.

The current issue of the Bulletin is an attempt to point the way to a more generous mix of contents and your feedback will be greatly appreciated.

Auction

The Society's next Auction meeting is on December 4th at Harpenden Hall, Harpenden, Herts. It is a major auction for which it is planned to produce a catalogue. If you wish to enter items or to order a catalogue please return your form without delay to Ron Deepprose, 70 Hollington Old Lane, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN38 9DP (Tel: 0424 428428). There will also be a mini-swapmeet, in the small hall, confined to books, magazines, ephemera, novelties, spares and small items. Anyone wishing to book a stall should contact the Organiser, Robert Hawes, 63 Manor Road, Tottenham, London, N17 0JH (Tel: 081 808 2838). Members should all receive ticket vouchers with their Bulletin, which can be exchanged at the door for tickets on payment of the relevant fee. The meeting opens at 10am but stallholders can enter earlier. To allow

unloading, auction preparations, viewing and for members travelling a long way to arrive, the AGM (in the large hall) will not commence until about 12 noon, after which members can take lunch. The Auction itself, for which lots will be restricted to about 200 lots, will not start until about 2.30pm.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held during the Harpenden Auction meeting on December 4th.

This is the occasion for election of the Committee including the Chairman, Treasurer, Bulletin Editor, Membership Secretary and Information Officer.

The agenda for the meeting is:

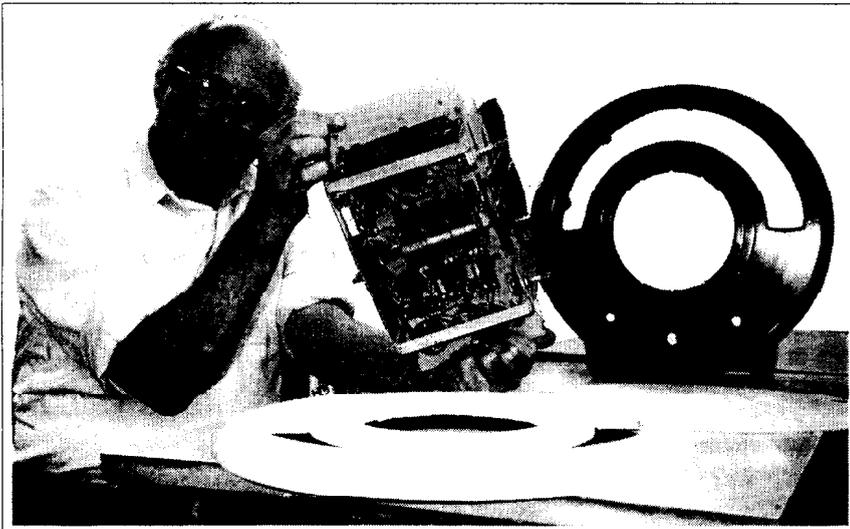
- (a) To receive and approve reports on activities of the past year;
- (b) To receive and approve a financial report from the Treasurer;
- (c) To elect the Officers and Committee of the Society;
- (d) At the discretion of the Chairman, to discuss any other business.

Nominations are invited for Committee membership or specific Office. Any nomination must be proposed and seconded by two full members of the Society, with the consent of the nominee, and submitted in writing to the Chairman at least ten days before the AGM.

Swapmeet

The next official BVWS Swapmeet is at the Memorial Hall, Wootton Bassett near Swindon on 20th November. Details can be obtained from Mike Barker, 28 Cheyney Manor Road, Swindon, Wilts, SN2 2NS, (You may telephone him for stalls or late bookings on 0793 536040). The meeting will include stalls, an Auction, "Bring and Buy" tables and there will be a separate lounge for socialising and refreshments available at reasonable prices all day.

In Passing: news, views, information



Gerald Wells photographed by Robert Hawes

All that glitters

To add a word or two to Oscar Wilde: A *Television Antiques* Critic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Well, from most of the programmes on television one sees, they certainly seem to be concerned more with money than anything else. It wasn't like that in the days of dear old Arthur Negus, who talked in terms of craftsmanship and beauty rather than cash, although his infectious enthusiasm occasionally led him into the odd faux-pas (he once described a 1924 BTH Bijou crystal-set as the "First wireless ever made"). Nowadays programmes like the BBC's "Antiques Roadshow" tend to be more entertaining than educational. Their stock joke is the nauseatingly repetitive one where the "expert" begins by asking the dear old lady: "How much did you pay for this pot?" She replies "Two-and-Sixpence in 1922" and he retorts: "Would it surprise you to know it is now worth a thousand pounds?" (Collapse of stout party).

There's a new antiques programme on Channel 4 which seems to admit its consumerist slant with its title "For Love or Money". Recently it featured a section on wireless-sets which was mostly about money, although there was a sketchy commentary on the history and art of radio - apparently gleaned from recent books. It featured three members of the BVWS: Simon Wade, who is in the City and who is renowned for his ability to trade and swap radios world-wide; Carl Glover, a knowledgeable young award-winning designer; and Gerald Wells, museum curator. They can

usually be relied upon to have interesting and amusing things to say but as is usual in television the best bits ended up on the cutting-room floor, while the trivialities and the commercial aspects of vintage wireless got the most airtime. Lots of interesting radios were shown, including the green round Ekco (which was said to have been auctioned for £17,500), after which Gerald was filmed manufacturing coloured AD65 sets to the voice-over "The market for rare coloured sets is getting so over-the-top that even good old Gerry Wells is cashing in. Using the best of ingenuity to fight the dealers and speculators he will build you one for around 500 Quid". Gerald announced that he has made six of these honest and well-made reproductions in various colours. "They used bakelite as a substitute for wood; I'm using wood as a substitute for bakelite. I can sell them for under three figures".

I'm sure that members enjoyed the show and the sets, but apart from the comments of Simon, Carl and Gerry, the programme contained little real information. I was consulted in the early stages of the programme by the producers, who were keen on bringing their cameras to one of our swapmeets. Having now seen the programme, I'm rather glad I had decided not to help any further with it.

Writtle Memorial

Tim Wander, author of "2MT Writtle - The Birth of British Broadcasting" the definitive history of the pioneering Marconi stations, tells me that the Writtle Society are actively considering erecting a plaque to commemorate

the work of Captain P.P. Eckersley. Tim is continuing to collect material on Marconi history and would also welcome photographs of Eckersley which might help with the sculpting of the plaque. His address is: Box 2562 Earls Colne, Essex, CO6 2TA.

Marchesa Marconi

Little publicity seems to have been given to the recent death of the Marchesa Maria Christine Marconi - less than a year before the centenary of her husband's successful demonstrations of radio at the age of 21. She is most recently remembered in Britain for her visits to the Earls Court BBC Radio Show in 1988 and to the opening of BBC Radio Essex - an appropriate event for it was in Chelmsford in Essex that Marconi set up his British factory and began experimental broadcasting. At that event, she told the story of how the teenage Marconi, 25 years her senior, had set up a little laboratory in his parents' home in Bologna. "One day he asked a friend to take a small box connected to a pair of headphones. 'Go over the hill out of my sight.... and if you hear anything in the headphones fire this'. He handed him a starting-pistol. My husband waited until his friend disappeared and started to tap out Morse Code. A pistol shot rang out.... and the story of radio had just begun".

Obituary

Anyone attending BVWS or Radiphile meetings in recent years will have got to know Bill Watts and Fred, his twin brother. Bill, who died in August age 61 and leave a widow and two sons, was the sort of person one took to on first meeting. He was always looking for what he called "toys" which he lovingly restored in the shed in his Croydon garden. He gave the sets, as well as other donations he travelled miles to collect, to the Dulwich Vintage Wireless Museum where a room is to be dedicated to him as a permanent tribute. He will be sadly missed (Report from Gerald Wells).

Information

Important information is always printed on the inside front cover of the Bulletin. This includes a full list of current committee members and details about where to make enquiries about various matters. If you cannot find the information you need there, I should be pleased to route your enquiry.

Restoration

So you want to collect Vintage Radio? - an approach for the beginner

by Harold Page

In my collection I have several items well over 50 years old which now look as good as they did when delivered to the home by the original retailer.

Some however, can never reach this standard of renovation. So, first of all the restorer must inspect the new acquisition and decide how far he wishes, or it is practicable to go. If the chassis is badly rusted, the speaker cone eaten away with damp, or possibly inhabited by hungry mice who have sought refuge in the cosy cones, or the condensers and resistances are corroded, you might have to abandon complete restoration and settle for cleaning, perhaps polishing the cabinet and so preserving the visage for a record of its period until such time as you come across a better specimen. After all there is no point in becoming the owner of a "100 year old hammer" — everything original except the head and the handle!

The first question almost always is "does it still work?" If you are technically qualified first carry out the necessary checks of continuity but if you do not possess the qualifications and cannot resist the temptation to plug in *do* first check the input voltage, usually marked on the chassis at the rear or on the back of the set. If it's 220V this is near enough for 240V mains. However, if it is of American or European origin it could be 110 Volts; don't plug in before reducing the input voltage with the appropriate step down transformer. If you still can't resist the temptation to plug in *DO* stand by to observe any loud cracks of arcing current, smoke — hopefully not flames, and any suspicious smells which can vary from sweet sulphur to positively lavatorial odours all of



Harold Page with some of his restored radios

which herald not only a pongy experiment, but components over heating and about to break down or at worst ignite.

At the first sight, or smell of any of these symptoms *DO DO DO* switch off, pull out the plug but stand by. Even after switching off, if the chassis has "grown" a thick coat of fluff the heat generated can have a "hay box" effect and build up to a dangerous experience.

Do check for voltage leaks before poking your fingers or an un-insulated probe into the guts of the patient. Beware of AC/DC models which can have live chassis. If the mains input goes to a substantial pitch-covered square winding thing, it's a transformer and therefore must be AC. If it goes to a wire-wound cylinder, a bit like an electric fire bar with tape alongside, the model is surely AC/DC and *beware*.

If it's your lucky day and after a 20 or 30 years rest the old girl sings away just like new *DO* still keep her under strict observation and *don't* leave her plugged in and working for long periods unattended. Older sets don't have the safety overheating circuits, to be found in more modern equipment. I'm a great believer in using one's sense of smell during soak testing. It is often as good as an AVO!

You still want to go on?

Well done! Make haste slowly. Take a good look at the set. Before removing anything, sketch all interconnecting wires and colour code them. What looks obvious now may become more obscure in a week or so's time when all is ready for reassembly. Equip yourself with several jars into which you will put knobs, screws, brackets

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Restoration

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and any other bits. *DON'T* force screws or bolts, a little tear-drop of WD40 (not a mass spray) will ease most things in an hour or so. Slow yes, but much quicker than drilling out broken headed bolts and screws. *DON'T* force knobs which may look quite strong but may have become brittle. Again a little lubrication and a cord or duster coiled around will give an even pull.

Keep any rubber chassis mounting washers which now resemble well chewed Rowntrees fruit gums. You may have to use them again. Replacements are difficult, in fact keep everything, even little curled-up labels, which may record the set's assembly history.

There is no golden rule for what you do next. Let's assume we start with the cabinet, and assume the worst. You may not need to do everything but perhaps your new friend has spent 20 or 30 years in a coal-fired living room. It's owner smoked, so the cabinet has a film of nicotine and coal dust. Each week dear old Mum has slapped on her favourite polish and sealed in the dust and grime. Just for good measure the summer sun, yes they did have sun in those days, has cracked and curled the top veneer. The only thing to do is clean down with white spirit or warm soapy water by moist cloth not by the bucket full! Leave to dry, sand down by hand, in large flat areas, perhaps with a fine disc sander, *DON'T* remove original makers' marks or other model names. Fill in cracks with wood filler dyed first in the mixing. Don't go mad with the sander, most cabinets are only thinly covered with veneer.

Clean again with white spirit. Use the appropriate shade of wood dye. Sun faded areas may require extra colouring. Any deep scratches can be coloured with a brown felt pen. Now if you are a master French Polisher go ahead but you might prefer to use a clear varnish, yacht varnish. A mix of 40% varnish and 60% white spirit is good. Apply with a soft pad always "pull", i.e., rub with the grain, don't "scrub". All this should be done about six times at least. If a matt finish is required, use soft wire wool.

For the knobs, hoping they are all there and you haven't broken any, use clean soapy water, not too hot, or they may buckle; avoid digging out the lettering. You can carefully re-

insert white paint into the letters wiping off any spludges with spirit. Gold inserts can be carefully prised out, sprayed with gold or copper spray and varnish. Replace with UHU glue. Duraglit or Brasso is also a good knob cleaner.

Speaker grills as found in HMV sets can be cleaned and resprayed as necessary. Sometimes you can reverse them to good effect. Speaker fabrics need care. If it ain't broke, don't mend it, is a wise maxim. Sometimes you can find materials to match but I prefer to see an original faded cloth to something obviously left over from Mum's last loose cover making exercise. Again careful removal, cleaning with a damp cloth. Reversing can sometimes fit the bill.

With glass dials: go carefully, don't use an abrasive, it's too easy to wipe off those coveted London regional — Luxemburg and Droitwich names, leaving you with a nice piece of clear glass — you don't get a second chance at this one.

The backs can be cleaned with a damp rag, a thin varnish will replenish them. The undersides and feet call for a touch of matt black paint to set off your hard work.

"Wait a minute Master Mine has got a Bakelite cabinet". Well, that's different. Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Strip everything off, even the speaker fabric and wash down as before, sometimes it's an "in the sink job". *DON'T* be too clever and put it in the Dishwasher. It might come out really shiny like the glasses in the advert, but it might suffer the effect of hot water and come out rather buckled, never to return to it's original form. You might be the only man in Europe to possess an oval Ekco AD75! Having got off all the grime of ages, Duraglit or Brasso, lots of elbow grease and a soft cloth.

Some aerosols give a magic finish but they also lock in any grains of dirt leaving a pimply finish

Some coloured cabinets can be cleaned and resprayed. Aerosol sprays come in many varied colours. Models like KB FB10 Toaster Radio can be restored to their exact original green, red or ivory.

Now just sit back, admire your work and take a breath for the technical

side. If you don't really understand the magic of radio, leave it to an enthusiast with lots of patience and a good supply of spare parts.

The technically experienced will not look to me for advice, so my suggestions are aimed at the new collector, who, if he is wise and lucky will have a technical friend who will love to get his solder and meters at the heart of the patient.

First remove the valves, clean the glass with a damp cloth, not too much enthusiasm or else you will remove the glass from the base or erase the valve numbers. If you have already done this, a bit of heavy breathing onto the glass will bring them back long enough to read and note. The pins and bases may be green and need cleaning with any trade cleaner. If the pins are very corroded, try careful rubbing with wet and dry fine emery cloth.

Brush off all the dirt and fluff with a soft paint brush. It might be worth your while to rig a small rubber tube attachment to the home vac to really suck out the tenacious muck.

Switches respond to cleaning with fluid. Careful dismantling may be necessary.

Tuning condenser vanes may require very careful cleaning with a soft brush or cloth. If any vanes are distorted and scrape, the whole unit may have to be stripped down, and uninked (easier said than done), and reassembled.

Failed or suspect resistors and capacitors will need replacement. If you are a perfectionist sometimes you can fit the new component into the wax sleeve or can of the original. If a genuinely marked Hunts capacitor can doesn't contain what you had expected, someone may have got there before you.

Some previous repairs, especially those carried out during the war years, had to be improvised, so don't be surprised if you encounter a "parcel" of components strung together to make the correct values.

Patches of rust or corrosion on the chassis may require gentle emery cloth and perhaps a little WD40 to stop the creep. Brackets, speaker frames and odd bits can be cleaned and matt black painted. If you come

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Restoration

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across a chromium plated chassis as sometimes used by the RAP rental company, and the American Emmerson, clean with a dry cloth until you can see your face in it. They are rather beautiful, the chassis not always the faces!

Tuning drive cord can be replaced with a non stretch fish line. This is a job to test your patience.

Now we come to radiogramms and their autochanger. Believe it or not, many an electronic buff will take fright at the sight of an autochanger. At least you can turn the platter and watch what happens next, that's more than you can do with a printed panel or even a row of valves.

First remove the whole unit from its base, set it up on a couple of blocks, put a mirror below and take a good look. Possibly previous owners have been over generous with the oil can plus 20 or 30 years of carpet fluff might be keeping it warm but nothing else. So make up a mix of white spirit and a little heavy oil. With a small paint brush clean out all the cogs, arms and bearings until all the grime has gone. Leave to dry then lubricate very parsimoniously with 3 in 1 oil, drop by drop only, from the tip of a knitting needle or similar probe. A tiny camel hair brush will help.

Take great care with the pick-up head, the wiring can be fragile and might have become brittle. Don't pull it away until you have fixed a "pull-thro" string to replace the defective wire. Perished pick-up dampers can be replaced with rubber cycle valves cut down to size. HMV type damper pads can be cut from thin rubber or an old inner tube. If the cast turn table or platter has developed a wobble, try to replace it. My restorer has been known to "spring" it back to flat by careful persuasion and gentle use of the vice, well covered so as not to make marks, of course.

All you need is hours and hours of patience and a tolerant wife, plus a certain amount of luck, firstly to find the model you seek and then to find replacement parts. Good luck!!

DO'S and DON'TS

- DON'T** Work on the chassis when plugged in until safety checks have been made.
- DON'T** Leave an aged radio switched on unless observed — it could overheat — or even smoulder
- DON'T** Clean the dials with abrasives or fluids which may erase the station names.
- DON'T** Plug in and switch on before checking the input voltage — it could be 110 volts not 240.
- DON'T** Probe around before checking for a live chassis AC/DC receivers can give you an electric shock.
- DON'T** Leave knobs and screws loose on the bench, small jars or boxes are all you need.
- DON'T** Force grub screws on knobs, or any bolts or nuts — a drop of oil and wait will save drilling out broken screw heads.
- DON'T** Rub off names or emblems from the cabinet.
- DON'T** Throw away speaker fabric. A worn or faded fabric is better than an incongruous modern replacement.
- DON'T** Fiddle with IF trimmers on coils. You might be lucky and work a miracle — you might not and give somebody a near impossible task.
- DON'T** Be clever and put knobs into the dishwasher or hot water, they may take on a new shape.
- DON'T** Clean valves with so much gusto they break in two and lose their vacuum.
- DON'T** Poke consenser veins in an attempt to ease the chafing.
- DON'T** Be too generous with oil on autochangers or rubber mounting washers and grommets.
- DO** Inspect before "diving in" to see how far you think it wise to restore the instrument.
- DO** Restore cabinets to original colour.
- DO** Keep a record of all wiring and any modifications you might make.
- DO** Call in the expert before you have done damage.
- DO** Join the British Vintage Wireless Society, 63 Manor Road, Tottenham, London N17 0JH. Enjoy their magazines and Newsletters.

Editor's note: Thanks to Harold Page, who has started off our Restoration series with this excellent article for beginners.

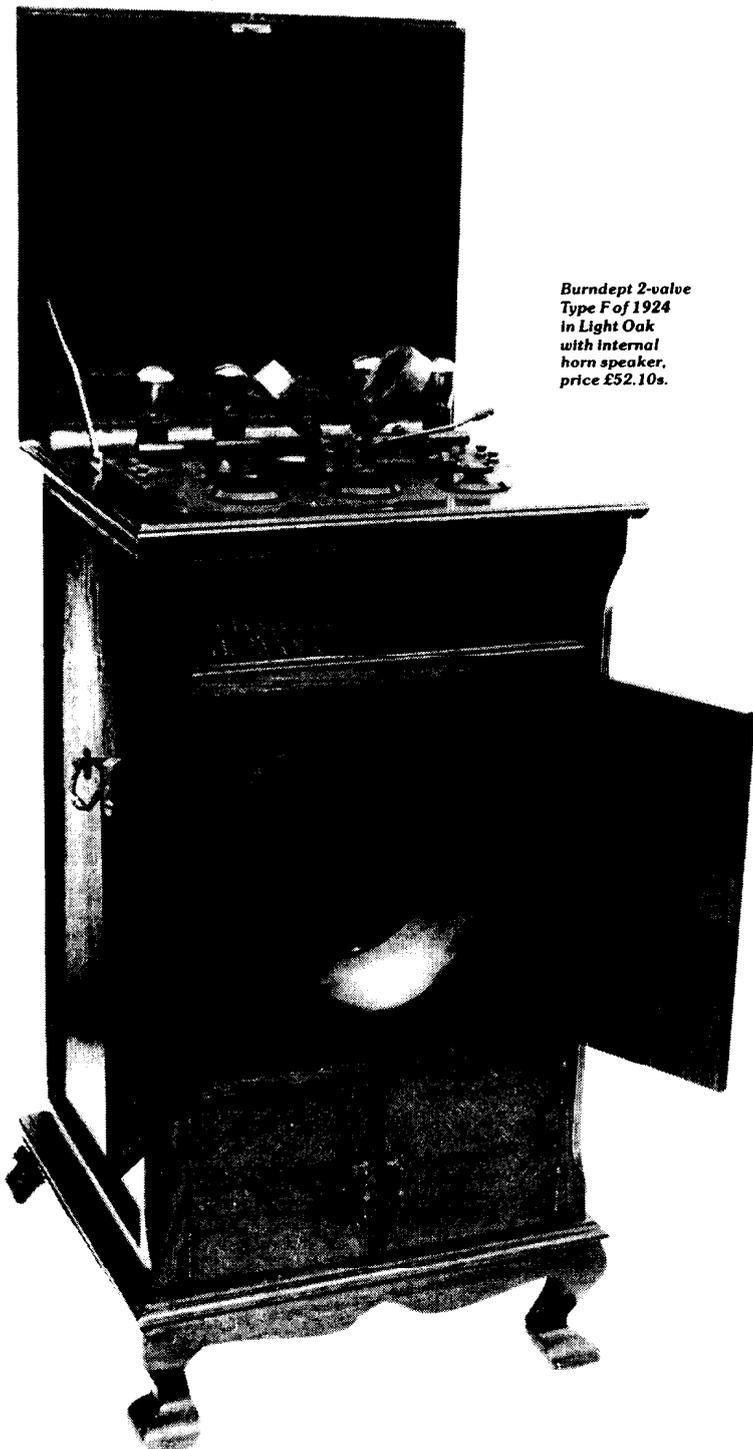
A member of the British Vintage Wireless Society. Harold spent 40 years retailing until his retirement a few years ago. In 1986 he won the coveted Bang and Olufsen Dealer of the Year Award. He is also a Past President of the Radio Electrical and Television Retailers Association (RETRA).

His father started a business making wireless sets in a garden shed in 1921, following service with the Royal Corps of Signals, and the business blossomed. A collector all his life, Mr. Page hopes eventually to open his own wireless museum in East Anglia.



Company History

Big-ends and bright-emitters, superhets and superchargers — the story of AJS



Burndept 2-valve
Type F of 1924
in Light Oak
with internal
horn speaker.
price £52.10s.



S.J. Mills

Book Review

by Jim Boulton

'A.J.S. of Wolverhampton' by Stephen J. Mills, 216 pp, 210 b/w photographs, book size: 293mm x 213mm. Foreword by Geoffrey Stevens, pub. by the author, available from him for £20 plus £3 p&p., from 2 St. Andrew's Road, Sutton Coldfield. B75 6UG.

Here is the much needed and long awaited history of one of the great Wolverhampton, indeed world, motorcycle marques. Stephen Mills tells the whole story of the talented Stevens brothers who, from very small beginnings built up a business employing 3,000 people and able to produce up to 600 motorcycles per week.

The book is not only about motorcycles, for also covered in great detail are the A.J.S. cars, commercial vehicles and wireless sets and the story ends covering the production of the Stevens light van and motorcycles after A.J.S. was liquidated and production moved to Plumstead.

Part 1 gives a general overview of all activities, covers competition work and whilst much of this relates to the T.T. and continental road racing, the author has not forgotten the less glamorous but important reliability trials, track racing and record breaking.

Separate chapters deal in more detail with the immortal 'Big Port', one of the all-time classic motorcycles; the Overhead Camshaft machine in which we learn about the 1930 attempt on the world maximum motorcycle speed record for which a

Company History



Above: cabinet and loudspeaker production in 1925 in a typical factory setting of the time. Almost all the workers were women - a source of cheap labour.

special 990cc V twin was built. Due to various problems including misfires, it was unsuccessful and even when supercharged by new owners still failed. This machine is now back in England and running with no misfires. The cure is said to be simple. Interested? Well, really you should buy the book.

Harry Stevens was a pioneer of wireless. During World War I, at the behest of neighbours, he was investigated by police, it being wrongly suggested that he might be communicating with the enemy. In 1923 wireless production started and continued until 1928, large numbers of excellent sets being produced.

About the time of the cessation of wireless production commercial vehicles were introduced also from the Walsall Street works with Charles Hayward (father of Sir Jack Hayward, saviour of the Wolves) in charge. Starting in a very small way making sidecars Charles Hayward had become an A.J.S. director in 1921.

There is a chapter on the excellent 9hp light car designed by F.G. Booth, ex-Clyno and later designer of the first Hillman Minx. Some 3,000 A.J.S. cars were produced. Further chapters cover the Stevens van and motorcycle production, 1932 to 1938. The book has been written with the full co-operation of the Stevens family and there are some amusing anecdotes. We read of George Stevens' daughter Millie



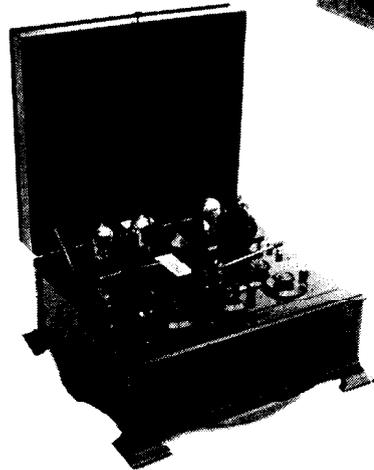
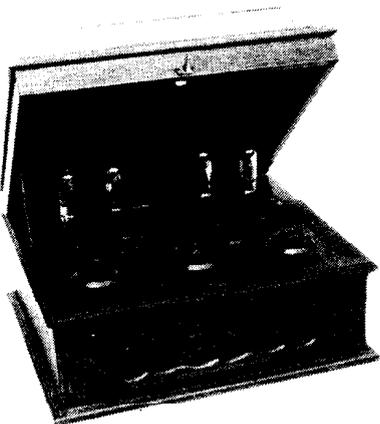
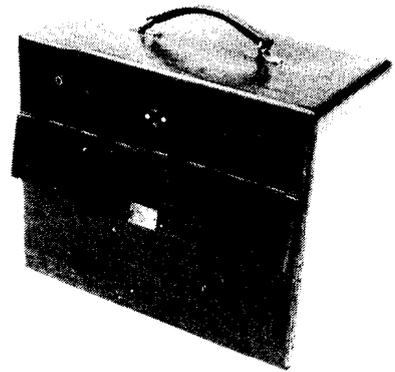
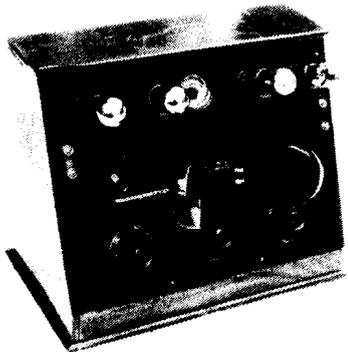
*The 1923
"Table de Luxe"
cost £36.5s.*

roaring around on a 'Big Port' with pet dog crouched on the tank. Millie was a very caring person and a leading light in the A.J.S. Sports and Society Club. Many of the fascinating photo-

graphs are published in this book for the first time.

This is the definitive history of a great Wolverhampton company which gained world-wide fame, and I can strongly recommend it.

Wireless History



Vintage Transmitting

Operation Maquis

John Pears of the Dacorum Amateur Radio Transmitting Society (DARTS) has sent an account of that Society's participation in the recent 'Operation Maquis' organised by a French group to commemorate the 50th anniversary of clandestine radio links between England and occupied Europe during WW2: and to honour the brave men and women who gave their lives in this endeavour.

Amateur radio aspects are not really a prime BVWS concern but John Pears gives an interesting description of the B2 Portable Transmitting and Receiving Equipment Type 3 Mk II and the conditions under which it was operated. Designed by the late John Brown, the B2 was featured amongst other things in Pat Hawker's review of clandestine equipment in BVWS Bulletin 18/1.

Operating the B2 on the amateur bands

The B2 receiver covers the frequency range 3.1 to 15.2 MHz in three bands, and can resolve CW, SSB, and AM. Band one covers 3.1 to 5.4 MHz, this provides operation in the 80m band, band two covers 5.2 to 9.4 MHz, this provides operation in the 40m band, and band three covers 8.7 to 15.2 MHz, which provides operation on the 15 and 20m bands.

The B2 transmitter is a crystal controlled CW only unit with a power output of about 20 watts, with four plug in tank coils to provide transmission in the frequency range comparable with the receiver. Each crystal can be used to transmit on its fundamental, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th harmonic, for example a crystal having a fundamental frequency of 3.515 MHz can provide operation at 3.515, 7.030, 14.060 MHz. Comprehensive metering is provided on the transmitter, this allows the operator to check and fault find, as the various voltages and currents on both transmitter and receiver can be monitored, this metering is also used to tune the transmitter and load the antenna. Switching between transmit and receive is manual. The key has about 250 volts DC on it so you have to be just a bit careful where you put your other hand.

Details of the B2

The WW2 clandestine radio network consisted of the Home Station, and the clandestine operator, the Out Station. The Home Station would be in England far from London or its suburbs, sited in an area for the best reception.



BVWS member John Pears, GOFSP, operating the B2 during DARTS participation in Operation Maquis with the special call GB50CR.

The Home Station far away from prying eyes, with aerial systems facing towards northern Norway and as far away as southern Spain, used about fifty receivers, with their operators, headphones and pens at the ready constantly alert. Each receiver has attached to it a wire recorder, which was started when the radio operator heard a signal. The recorder could be used to check the incoming message, and also provided means of checking the fist of the outstation operator, all operators made a tape of their Morse sending before they went on a mission, this was kept and could be compared at any time with the latest message to check that the outstation had not fallen into enemy hands. No operator however experienced can produce Morse signals like a machine, each operators way of sending is like a fingerprint, characteristic of that particular operator.

The Outstation operator lived under considerable fear of capture, discovered by the enemy as a result of an informer, or located by a direction finding unit, the average survival time was only about three months. By August 1944 over fifty clandestine networks were operational, transmitting A high volume of ciphered messages.

Each operator was supplied before his or her mission with a microfilmed operating schedule, or it would be dropped to him or her by parachute during the mission, this meant that the operator would not have to send out a call, because the home Station would

be listening at the appropriate time on the allocated frequency.

The operator would never transmit for longer than five minutes under any circumstances, and never more than twenty minutes during each day.

Transmissions from the Home Station would normally take place during the day-light hours, and transmission from the Out Station would normally take place during the night.

Each operator had at least three crystals, one for normal use, one for day time emergency use, and one for night time emergency use. All emergency frequencies were continuously monitored by the home station, and a response to an emergency call would be made exactly one hour and ten minutes after the outstation transmission was first made. During this time the operator had to remain with his radio, waiting for a reply to the message, this made emergency operation very dangerous, seventy minutes can seem like a life time, as the operator anxiously waits, loaded revolver on the table, listening and looking out for the sinister black Citroën used by the dreaded Gestapo. At last the home station replies, the operator takes down the cipher message, puts the crystal and headphones back into the suitcase radio and hides the set, conceals the message in the handlebars of the bicycle, and sets off down a dimly lit French cobbled street into the night.

Books

Oliver Lodge and the 'invention' of radio

A reply to a recent review of a new book

from the Editors of the book: Dr. Peter Rowlands, *Honorary Research Fellow in Physics at University of Liverpool and author of "Oliver Lodge and the Liverpool Physical Society; and Dr. Patrick Wilson, Lecturer in Electronics and Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Communication and Neuroscience at Keele University.*

In his review of our book, *Oliver Lodge and the Invention of Radio*, Tony Constable made certain statements about the early history of radio to which we have been invited to respond. While we are grateful for the positive comments in the review, we feel that some of the points made by Dr. Constable should not be left unchallenged.

It is unfortunate, for example, that he should attempt to imply that the main aim of our book was to "rekindle" a "discredited" case for Lodge as the "discoverer" of radio. Our work makes no such populist claims, and specifically questions the concept of single inventors for complex technologies (p.39). What we do claim is that Lodge played a significant part in the introduction of this technology, which, while recognised at the time, was later partly submerged in a propagandist version of the history largely generated to serve the commercial interests of the Marconi Company during their long dominance of world radio.

Most of our evidence comes from direct quotation of original manuscript sources and Dr. Constable acknowledges that we "have explored the available archives with extreme thoroughness". He seems to imply that the inaccuracies of previous attempts at revisionism, usually made on nationalistic grounds, must inevitably discredit the entire process of historical reassessment, but the whole point of historical research is surely to use

direct evidence to weigh up historical claims and not simply to accept a particular version of events just because it has become established by default.

In our view, the key invention in the process of technological transfer from Hertzian waves to radio telegraphy was the coherer, and, despite Dr. Constable's claims for the telegraphic possibilities of Hertz's spark gap detectors, the coherer was the first practical device which was suited to this technology. In fact, it is perfectly clear that, by 1894, the Lodge coherer, unlike the Hertzian detector, was very much a telegraphic device, especially when used with such clearly telegraphic apparatus as Morse keys, Kelvin galvanometers and siphon recorders, and demonstrated with the collaboration of a leading manufacturer of telegraphic equipment. By saying that he had not attempted "actual telegraphy", Lodge meant that he had not produced a system in commercial use, not that he had failed to transmit information using Morse code. The fact that he never denied was that he had not seen a use for such transmissions over short distances whereas Marconi certainly had.

It is absurd to imply that a transmitted message must be a coherent phrase or sentence when individual letters are sufficient to demonstrate the principle. Marconi's famous transatlantic transmission of 1901, after all, consisted of nothing more elaborate than the single letter S! It is also unreasonable for Dr. Constable to quibble over the use of the word "radio" in referring to Lodge's demonstrations, since that is the now accepted term for the telegraphic use of Hertzian waves whereas the more general term "wireless telegraphy" incorporates several alternative technologies already in existence when Lodge was working (see p. 66). Dr. Constable makes much of the fact that Popov first used a relay in a "signal-actuated decohering circuit", but Lodge had used an electric bell as a signal-actuated decoherer while trying out the Branly filings tube, and he also devised a more reliable clockwork decoherer which he used in his British Association lecture at Oxford in August 1894.

Constable points to the significance of Marconi's patent of 1896, but this patent was filed in the certain

knowledge of Lodge's prior work, and after Marconi's original apparatus had been improved beyond recognition by people who were fully aware of what Lodge had done. It was not unusual for ideas to be patented even when they were already widely known, and it could often be costly to amount a legal challenge, as Lodge himself found when he set out to contest the validity of Marconi's tuning patent of 1900. It is particularly significant that neither Germany nor the United States recognised the validity of Marconi's patents, but did recognise those of Oliver Lodge, which were filed subsequently, on the basis of his prior discoveries. Lodge was, indeed, highly respected in these countries up to the 1920s, and pioneers like Fessenden considered it perfectly natural to refer to the "Lodgeian" method of radio transmission.

The correspondence we have uncovered clearly shows that Lodge was happy for others to pursue the development of radio telegraphy as long as he received public credit at the appropriate time for his privately acknowledged contribution. Preece and Marconi promised but never delivered. In particular, they deliberately held back for several months the fact that Marconi's system was based on Lodge's coherer, and, by the time that this had to be publicly acknowledged, Preece had worked out the ruse that Lodge was inventor only of the name, a piece of propaganda which astonishingly catches out Constable himself when he asserts (in somewhat populist style) that Lodge "became a three time loser in the priority stakes: To Hertz, to Branly and to Marconi". The idea that Branly was the inventor of the coherer, as opposed to the investigator of a scientific effect of which he had no clear understanding at the time is quite incredible, but was used as a serious commercial ploy to discredit Lodge's clear priority.

The Marconi Company actually liked to give the impression that coherers sprang up more or less spontaneously everywhere after Branly had announced his experimental results; but our documentary evidence shows otherwise. Every one of the subsequent users of coherers — Popov, Bose, Jackson, Righi and Marconi — took the idea, directly or

Books

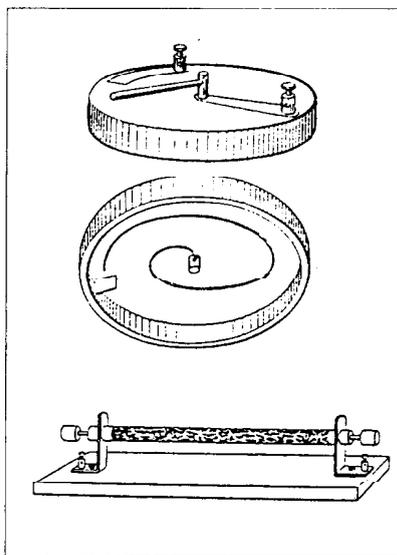
> "Oliver Lodge" - continued from previous page

indirectly, from Lodge's published writings, and every one of them, directly or indirectly, acknowledged it. Marconi's debt is clearly stated in a letter by Righi which we have quoted.

Our evidence also suggests, contrary to Dr. Constable's assertions, that Lodge behaved with gentlemanly restraint throughout the entire controversy with Marconi and Preece and was in no way as "unreasonable and confrontational" as the other two protagonists. He kept his side of the bargain; they did not. It is not often realised that the Marconi Company propaganda was often specifically anti-Lodge because he had the most dangerous claim against them. It made commercial sense to publicly minimise his contribution. Thus, even after Lodge's claims to the invention of tuning (a practical necessity which he recognised from the beginning) had been vindicated in both British and US courts, and even after the Marconi Company had to offer a small fortune to buy out Lodge's patent rights, it was still possible to find Marconi Company publications tracing the origin of the principle to Marconi's patent of 1900. We even discovered such a reference in a recent article on Marconi in a leading radio journal (*Electronics World and Wireless World*, September 1994).

Oliver Lodge has had an increasingly high profile in recent scholarly books on early radio, for example, Hugh Aitken's *Syntony and Spark* (Princeton 1975) and R. F. Pocock's *The Early British Radio Industry* (Manchester 1988). We notice also that G. R. M. Garratt's simultaneously published and entirely independent *The Early History of Radio from Faraday to Marconi* (IEE 1994) is broadly in agreement with our point of view. Constable's approach is influenced too strongly by the views which were promoted for so many years by the commercial interests of the Marconi Company. It is clear that Lodge's contribution was of a different order to those of Branly, Bose, Righi, and even Popov. His work was on a par with that of Marconi himself and it is good to see that this is finally being recognised in so many different quarters.

Peter Rowlands, Liverpool
J. Patrick Wilson, Keele



Lodge Coherers

Editor's Note: Tony Constable's review in *Bulletin* 19/4 of the new book on Lodge hardly did justice to this important new piece of research. Having now had an opportunity to read the book, which is extremely wide-ranging and thorough, quoting much new evidence, I can thoroughly recommend it, not only for its considerable scholarship but also for its accessibility to the ordinary reader. It is no mean feat for a technical author to make a complex subject accessible and even entertaining for the lay reader without detracting from its value and authority.

Tony Constable's review seemed to me to represent a somewhat narrow and selective view of the text, as well as employing an approach which is today regarded by most historians as rather dated.

The fact is that contemporary historians, while not rejecting established institutional texts, now adopt a more broad-minded approach which healthily re-examines long-established perspectives and undertakes new research to re-present old and new evidence in a more analytical context. As in the case of current history teaching, the idea of simply passing on "received" and "approved" texts without question has gone out of fashion. Just as social historians now no longer see history as a succession of the adventures of Kings and Queens, the new historians of technology see the history of discovery more as a continuum of progress than a

succession of isolated peaks established by "great" and famous men.

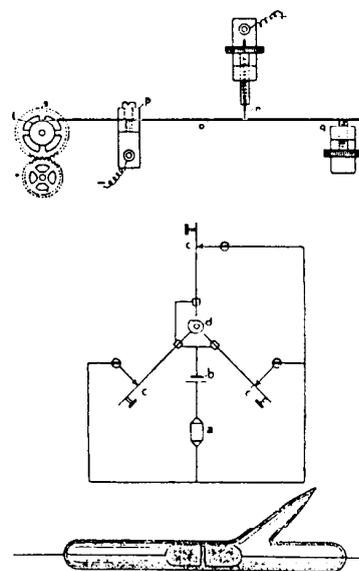
A post-modern re-examination of archives recognises that all texts are historically "constructed" and that any critical reading of the historical canon is influenced by an understanding of current and continuing transformations of scientific reasoning about developments in technology.

The new book not only re-examines the part played by Lodge in the early developments of radio, but also gives a broad portrait of him as a Victorian scientist and philosopher who worked in a large number of areas and whose reputation suffered at the hands of bigoted and self-seeking institutional and commercial forces.

An experimenter to the end, Lodge, a pioneer psychic researcher who was adept at exposing fake mediums, left a puzzle for posterity. He left a box of sealed envelopes — like a Russian nest-of-dolls with instructions on how to guess his last message. The posthumous experiment did not work but one wonders if he is still out there in his Ether somewhere, devising a way to contact us — to set the record straight.

Robert Hawes

The book can be obtained from P.D. Publications, 4 Ascot Park, Crosby, Liverpool L23 2XH, price £10 plus £1.50 post (cheques to "D.N. Edwards"). The *Bulletin* Editor also has copies, which will be available at Society meetings.



Lodge's simple reed spring coherer with the bank of brushes and the Marconi coherer.

Book Reviews

News

Book Review:

by Enrico Tedeschi

"Transistor Radios", a collector's encyclopedia and price guide by David and Robert Lane, published by Wallace-Homestead Book Company, Radnor, Pennsylvania, USA, price \$19.25

Another transistor radios book, another disappointment

While it is good that transistor collecting books keep coming out, as this is a sure sign that the hobby is catching on, it is a pity that none of them so far has been on target.

Like the *Bunis* and the *Poster's* volumes, this is a sort of catalogue of the transistor sets produced in the "Golden Age" (1954-1963). And like the other two it lacks in illustrations and also in accuracy. I can see no point in listing hundreds of models if only to describe where they have their grilles and volume controls. This is most frustrating as what everybody wants to know is what models came from a particular manufacturer, when they were produced and what they look like. I think that the notion of trying to quote a price for every model should be dismissed as useless as every collector has his own priorities and likings.

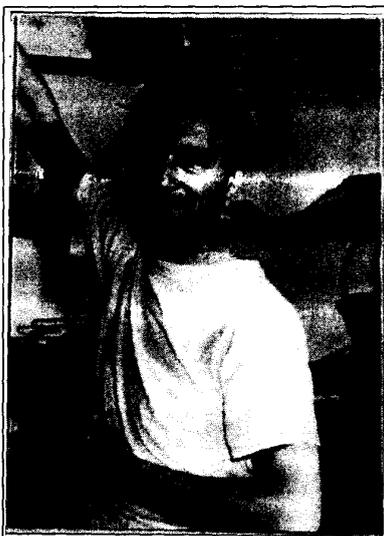
There are inaccuracies like the suggestion that the Sony ICR 120 was the first integrated circuit radio (it was, of course the ICR-100) and also several important models are missing altogether; (for example the very early and historically important TR-72).

If I have to find a plus point in this book it must be the tentative historical side of it but even this lacks insight and is merely a representation of known information gathered from the usual sources (which are not even recognised in the bibliography).

There is also a novelty radio section, which I think it has only been added to make the book thicker and it is not very useful.

Novelty radio collectors will be much better off with the latest edition of the Robert Brood's *"Collecting transistor novelty radios"* published by L-W Book Sales.

So I cannot recommend this book to any serious "trannie" collector who I think will be much better off with the *Bunis* volume at least until somebody comes up with a really useful catalogue and/or history of transistors. Copyright 1994 Enrico Tedeschi.



Enrico Tedeschi

Book Review:

by Enrico Tedeschi

"Poster's Radio and Television Price Guide", by Harry Poster, published Wallace-Homestead Book Company (second edition 1994). Price \$17.95. Available from: Transistor Network, RRI, Box 36, Bradford, NH 03221, U.S.A.

The latest addition to the "Transistor price guides and catalogues" is this handy book often used by advertisers as a picture reference for their offerings.

The annoying thing about these sorts of guides is the lack of pictures. Everybody knows and is willing to accept the fact that the price guide is always "incorrect" and it will be going out of date very quickly but if such books could be used as a reference for identification and dating it would still be in use years after.

So, although there are more than 300 black-and-white pictures in this volume it is very annoying not to be able to see a picture of the particular model you are looking for.

The book is not dedicated to transistor radios only as it also contains prices and pictures of valve radios and television sets.

Not my ideal book, but one I had to buy and use while waiting for something better to appear. © Enrico Tedeschi 1994.

100 Years of Radio

IEE Conference - a call for papers

The Institution of Electrical Engineers is arranging a three day International Conference in London on September 5th-7th 1995 to celebrate the centenary of the first application of electro-

magnetic radiation for practical radio communications. The scope of the Conference will cover the development of radio from the 1890's to the present day with reference to the conditions (technical, financial, social, political and general) under which this development has taken place.

Particular subject areas will be:

- Marine Radio
- Pre-broadcasting developments
- Broadcasting (am, fm, DAB and other systems, but excluding television)
- HF communications
- Data radio communications
- Military communications
- Telecommunication satellite systems
- Microwave point-to-point communications
- Mobile and Cellular radio
- Amateur Radio
- LF and VLF communications
- Receiver and transmitter development
- Antennas and propagation
- Developments in components
- Social origins and impact of radio
- Biographical papers

The Conference will be accompanied by an exhibition of artefacts, photographs and archival material.

The IEE is now calling for papers for the Conference, the working language being English. Those wishing to offer a contribution should submit a synopsis (up to 1 side of A4 paper) by January 23rd 1995. Authors whose synopses are selected for development into full contributions for further consideration will be notified in March and requested to provide a typescript of 5000 words maximum (less if illustrations are included) for assessment by May 5th 1995.

Those wishing to offer a paper, or wanting copies of the programme and registration form when available in mid-1995, should write to the HYR95 Secretariat, Conference Services, IEE Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL mentioning the provisional title of any proposed paper.

Bakelite Fair

A Christmas "Bakelite Fair" featuring many kinds of early and late plastics objects including radios, will be presented at the Design Museum, Shad Thames, near Tower Bridge, London on November 15th from 10am until 4pm. Admission price is £2.50 for adults - children free.

Memorabilia

Sounds Peculiar

by Anton Fitz-Gerald

The story about a talking telegraph pole set my mind thinking of many other sound peculiarities that I've experienced in my life. Intermittent noises in old equipment can often take a while to trace, but I've found the most illusive of all, have been those of my old house. Having stood for a hundred years, it has all the proverbial creaks and groans that you'd normally expect. But there have been several occasions during the past twenty years of my occupancy, when I've heard sounds of an extra-ordinary nature....

After listening to a late night concert, I switched off the radio and remained for a while to finish my night-cap when I became aware of a strange, low pitched singing. This gave me good cause to speculate; because, at about the same time during the previous week, I'd heard a sound from the hallway, similar to a clarinet. Yes, the radio was well and truly turned off, so where was the sound coming from? I then stood in the hall for a few moments waiting for the chimes of the 'witching hour' from the mantel-clock to fade away. The singing was coming from the piano in the study. It was as if someone was gently and repeatedly tickling a second lower 'A'. I stealthily crept toward the door and eased it open.... The noise stopped.... there was no-one there! I gulped the remainder of my whisky and went to bed wondering if the long musical history of the house was still loitering in its walls.

Many months later, in the still of night, I was in the study writing, when the piano once again 'played' a long, sustained lower 'A'. When I approached the keyboard to touch the offending note, the sound transferred itself to the door. I moved accordingly; it instantly returned to the piano and then stopped. What ever it was, I thought, it must have a sense of humour. The following week, I was standing near the door when its old brass handle started buzzing. I gently placed my finger on it and the buzzing ceased.

This phenomenon never manifested itself again until the following year. I was sitting at the piano thumbing through some music when there it

VINTAGE ADVERTISEMENT (Sales leaflet of March 1935)

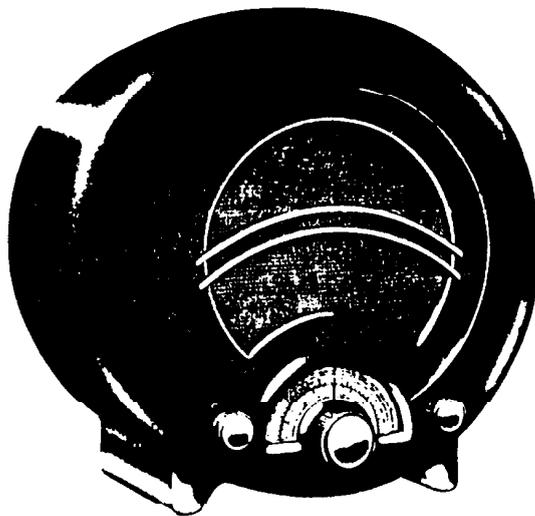
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was; rattling the door handle. As before, I got up, and the noise stopped.... I sat down pensively, and it resumed. I repeated my action once again and so did the noise. Ah! - of course - it was resonance. Subsequently I found that the piano rests on a long floor joist that runs from the doorway and continues beneath an area in the kitchen where the deep freezer is located EUREKA!

To account for the infrequent behaviour of this resonance, I found that several conditions need to be satisfied: both the door and its old brass handle must be left at critical positions. My weight when on the joist has an affect as does periods of dry weather. And the noise would obviously stop when the freezer cuts

out. With regards to the piano; I can only surmise that its damping mechanism didn't always return properly against the wires. This has now been corrected.

The clarinet sound remained a complete mystery for a very long time as it never lasted long enough to trace, until one occasion when I just happened to be standing in the right place to hear the single note coming from the base of a dividing wall. That day in particular, the wind was gusting from an unusual direction and was I suppose, channelling its way to vibrate - like a reed instrument - a tiny section of floor covering.

Conclusion: No spooks.



In a Thirties Time-Capsule

Society member Alex Woolliams, an English teacher and PhD researcher, who is the Organiser for our meetings in Portishead, lives in a 1937 time-capsule which puts his radios into a proper social setting, using them as everyday necessities and preserving history as it really was, rather than trying to re-create it synthetically. It demonstrates what Alex has discovered from his researches: that the notion of the Thirties as all Bauhaus, Art Deco, Clarice Cliff pottery and black-and-chrome round Ekco radios is, of course a myth which was only true in the lives of the rich and the fashionable. For most ordinary people, they were hard times of hand-me-down furniture and clothes. Houses were painted cream and green on the outside, while almost everything inside was tobacco-brown – including the wood-boxed radio which was the central focus of the home in the days before the television, which Alex shuns.

It all began when Alex, haunted by childhood memories of his grand-

parents' home, searched and found his time-capsule: a small terraced house in Bristol which came on the market on the death of a spinster who had been the sole occupier since it was built in 1937. She left it just as it had always been, she hadn't ever changed a thing.

Rather than throwing everything out, knocking down walls to make a through-lounge, painting everything white and fitting plastic-framed double-glazing, he left it just as it was, but began the never-ending job of restoring everything from the doorknocker and the wood-and-leather armchairs to the kitchen-range and the radios. Everything is 1937 still: the cooker, the copper kettle, the aëuser in the bathroom, the bookcase and its books – even the "Radio Times" on top of the solid-walnut 4-valve TRF Marconi-phone 42 AC. There's another set in the house: a Pye 350 with BTH horn speaker, which he uses as a tuner for his vintage amplifier and huge Voigt

corner-horn. They all work perfectly, delivering vintage music from 78-records and tapes of original broadcasts. The Thirties popular song "Stay as sweet as you are – don't let a thing ever change you" that syrups out of the old gramophone could be just the signature-tune for Alex, his social-worker wife Carol and their 13-year-old daughter Emma, who lovingly tend to everything with their yellow dusters and tins of original Mansion Polish. Spick-and-span it is – "But not shiny", says Alex, "The Thirties were not brash and glaring for most people – only a tiny minority lived in the Jazz-Age style".

Alex admits a sense of theatricality, even eccentricity but he and his family live in a real home and not a museum, leading perfectly normal lives – in many ways like a typical Thirties family who wrote letters instead of telephoning, had creative hobbies instead of watching the box and did things for themselves.

Robert Hawes