

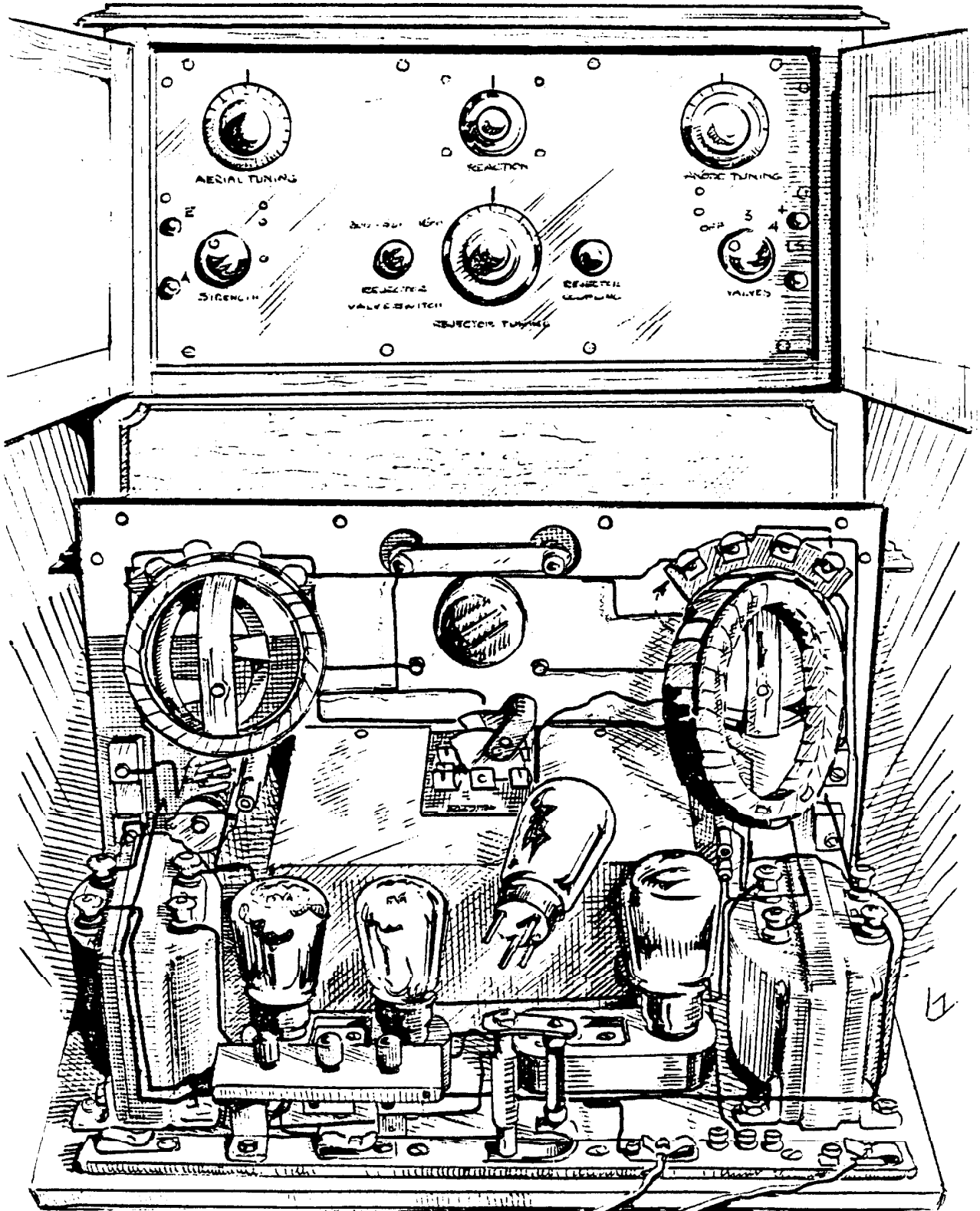
VINTAGE

WIRELESS

Volume 10 Number 3.

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BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY



THE MARCONIPHONE TYPE 41

Chairman: David Read. Treasurer: Desmond Thackeray. Membership Secretary: Gerald Wells (membership enquiries to 23, Rosendale Road, London, SE21, Tel 01 670 3667). Bulletin Editor: Robert Hawes (Editorial, General enquiries to 63, Manor Road, Tottenham, London N17.0JH. Tel 01 808 2838.) Newsletter Editor: Jonathan Hill. (14, Victoria Court, Kingsbridge Avenue, London W.3. 9AH. Tel 01 993 1306.

COVER STORY:

The illustration on the front cover of this issue, by Bulletin Artist Norman Jackson, shows the front view and inside of the Marconiphone type 41 receiver, a somewhat rare set which Tony Constable writes about on pages 38 to 39.

Rare book Reprints

HIGH QUALITY FACSIMILES OF c 1922 INSTRUCTION BOOKS:

- (1) V2 (Rotary knob tuning). All at 2.50 each post-free
- (2) V2 (Pull-knob tuning). in UK (Overseas £1 extra).
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- (4) Crystal "A" Receiver.

HIGH QUALITY FACSIMILES ON CARD, LID INSTRUCTIONS:

- (5) Gecophone No.1. Crystal set. Two for £1.75 post free
- (6) Gecophone No.2. Crystal set. (Overseas 50p extra)
- (7) Leaflet on Deutschen Kleinempfänger (DKE) in German plus photocopy of contemporary press report. £1. post-free. (Overseas 50p extra).
- (7) Belling-Lee lid card or
- (8) Rexophone lid card, 75p each inc.
- (9) Gamage's 1924, 40-page catalogue £2
- (10) Baird Telesivor parts list, £1

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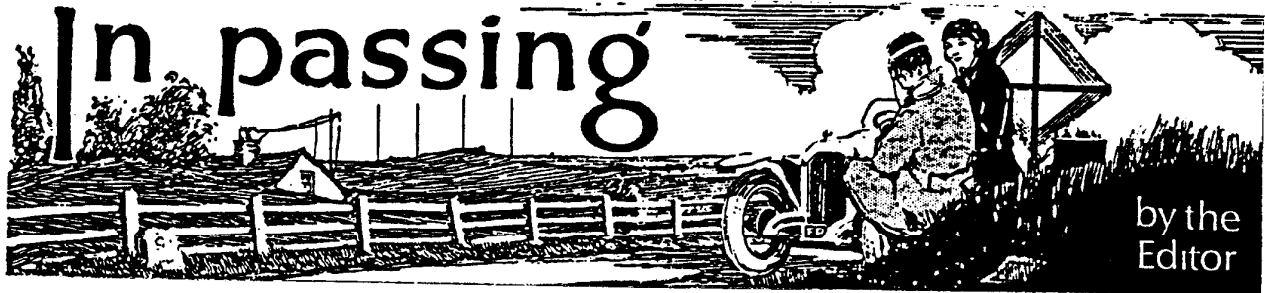
EARLY WIRELESS

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MORE MEETINGS ?

With our annual general meeting over, the largest gathering of BVWS members in our nine years of history, we are looking forward to a busy new year and considering ideas about how we should celebrate our tenth anniversary, and a television anniversary year too. It has been suggested that we should run some special events, and that in any case, we ought to be having four "Swapmeets" a year instead of the present two to cater for our ever growing membership, already approaching 500 and drawing enthusiasts from all over Europe, from the United States, Canada and Australia and even from Japan. The committee would like to assess the possible support for more meetings. If you like the idea of a meeting, say in April, write or telephone the Editor.

LINK WITH THE EARLY DAYS

We are delighted to welcome as an honorary member a distinguished early wireless pioneer, Joshua Sieger, who received his first wireless licence from the Post Office in 1921 and was an original member of the British Broadcasting Company, set up late in 1922 as an organisation of wireless manufacturers, which later became today's BBC. Mr. Sieger started his technical life with "Amateur Wireless" and "Wireless Magazine" in 1925 and went on to work in television from 1930 to 1940. We hope that he will be able to find a little time in his still busy working life to give us the benefit of some of his reminiscences for the Bulletin of the pioneering days of wireless with which he was intimately concerned.

MORE "VINTAGE" IN THE MEDIA

I hear from BVWS member Eric Westman, who has been in correspondence with the Editor of Practical Wireless, that the publication is resuming regular coverage of the interest of vintage wireless buffs. A recent questionnaire conducted among the readers of the magazine apparently showed a healthy interest in the subject, 80 percent expressing some interest.

MEETINGS AHEAD

The date of the next official BVWS meeting has not yet been fixed, but I have news of two vintage wireless meetings for your 1986 diary. One of them is another of Bill Journeaux's small gatherings at Romsey, fixed for a Sunday in March and details can be obtained from him at 7, Blair Avenue, Poole. Tel 0202 748072. The second meeting, an international swapmeet is being organised by Dutch BVWS member Marcel Ritmeester, at his new museum in Holland, for June 7th. and more details will be given when available.

BULLETIN INDEX

The Bulletin index, compiled by Don Hewlett, is now available and covers Volume One number one to Volume 10 number one. It is available from the Editorial office, 63, Manor Road, Tottenham, London, N17 0JH at £1 if you send a stamped envelope, (½ A4 size).

NEW MAGAZINE

Charles E. Miller, a BVWS member who will be known to many members as author of the book on Valve Radio Repair, has just started a little magazine called "Radiogram" which is aimed at people who like to work on sets rather than collecting them and is not intended to compete with any other publication. He describes it as a modest project, but it contains a wealth of practical knowledge which comes from his many years in the wireless trade. Details can be obtained from him at "Larkhill", Newport Road, Woodseaves, Stafford, ST20 0NP.

BULLETIN OF THE BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY: CONTENTS OF VOLUME 10.NO 1.COPYRIGHT

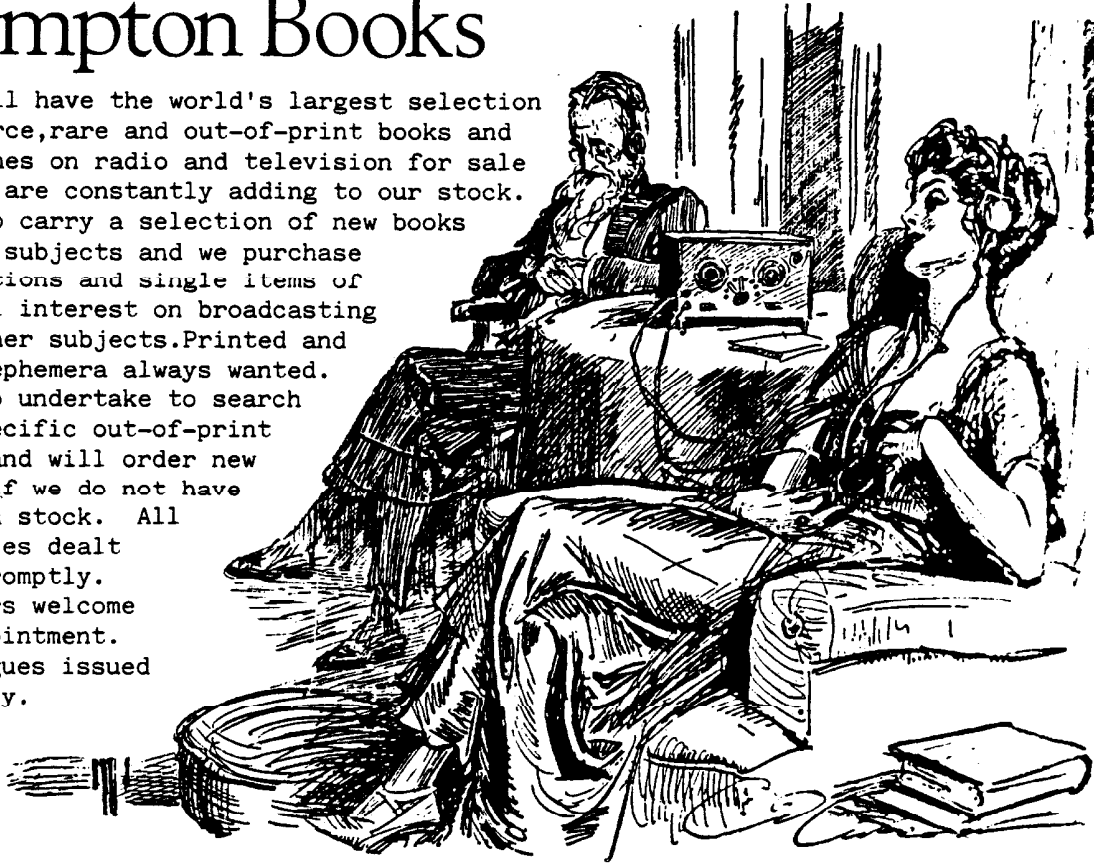
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Harpenden

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BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND "SWAPMEET" AT HARPENDEN

Our meeting at Harpenden on November 17th 1985 was certainly the largest and busiest in the nine years of the Society's existence, attracting more than 350 visitors, including enthusiasts from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Canada, the United States and all over the United Kingdom. A special guest was Mrs. Jean Caudrey, daughter of Capt. H.J. Round, the early valve pioneer. At tea Mrs Caudrey reminisced on having tea with Marconi, and of the day when her father constructed a makeshift mouthpiece for a microphone so that Dame Nellie Melba could make her famous broadcast in June 1920. More than 80 stalls - a record - were put up in Harpenden Hall and annexe to accommodate the members' "Fleamarket", which pleased all the people who were disappointed last time, although it caused some crowding. In a break in trading, the annual general meeting was held and the following appointments to the main committee positions were made by voting: Chairman, David Read; Treasurer, Desmond Thackeray; Bulletin Editor, Robert Hawes; Membership Secretary, Gerald Wells. Other appointments to the committee will, as usual, be by co-option for specific tasks as they become necessary. The future "official" address of the Society will be at the Vintage Wireless Museum, 23, Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, London, SE21, although Bulletin enquiries should continue to be direct to Robert Hawes at 63, Manor Road, Tottenham, London, OJH. Thanks are due to members of the retiring committee for their service to the Society, including Tony Constable, who took over the work of Treasurer due to the illness of Ian Higginbottom; to the Bulletin artist Norman Jackson, to the Membership Secretary Mike Kemp; to the Newsletter Editor Jonathan Hill; and to the secretaries Geoff and Jan Mitchell. It is hoped soon to inaugurate a new system of control and communication that will better manage services to our membership of approaching 500. The Harpenden Swapmeet is such a popular event that there have been many requests that we should hold an extra one in the year, and this may be considered. If members feel this may be popular, they should write to the Bulletin Editor about it. Recently, security arrangements have been made at our meetings to ensure that members only and their guests are admitted, to prevent the entry of non-member dealers who contribute nothing to the Society but take advantage of our meetings to buy at low prices. To some extent, most collectors become dealers in a small way, but as members, most of them behave fairly and responsibly, as do the respected professional dealers who are members, who have the interest of the Society at heart. We rely on the co-operation of members to ensure that visitors to our meetings are bona fide members of their families or friends. After all the busy trading, a fair amount of "junk" is left unsold, and at the November meeting Roger Snelling had the idea of auctioning 30 lots to aid the society. A ten percent commission plus gifts raised nearly £30 for society funds, and may go to the Society "Computer Fund" which is growing to a point where we hope to be reporting a successful conclusion soon.

The hubbub of trading and gossip at Harpenden is always tempered by the serene atmosphere surrounding the displays in the annexe. Traditionally, David Read organises a display to stimulate interest in particular subject area and this time it was "Superhets". Broadcasting in the UK was characterised by a single authority (BBC) disseminating a national programme through a regional network of stations in a small country. In the USA, broadcasting laissez-faire resulted in a very large number of independent broadcasters in a vast country. This contrasting circumstances gave rise, early in the mid-'twenties, to a predominance of crystal sets and simple TRF receivers in the UK where sensitivity (for distance) and selectivity were unimportant. In the USA, on the other hand, where sensitivity and selectivity were vital to the development of multivalve receivers, superhet receivers were commonplace. Nevertheless, the major UK companies did offer superhets for sale in this early period, for pulling in and separating Continental stations, but designs were heavily influenced by American practise. Substantial sets of this nature by McMichael and GEC were shown in the display. The GEC set was interesting in that it was offered as a "portable". With seven valves and an integral frame aerial and folded horn it was clearly designed to be carried on the running-board of a Rolls Royce rather than carried by hand, particularly since the oak box alone and its batteries weigh several pounds. A similar set was also offered by GEC in kit form. In the USA, Western Electric with their monopoly position in the public telephone and telegraph business were excluded from marketing radio products for public sale. However, their pioneer work in the valve and military fields enabled their overseas subsidiaries to design and sell radio products for local markets.

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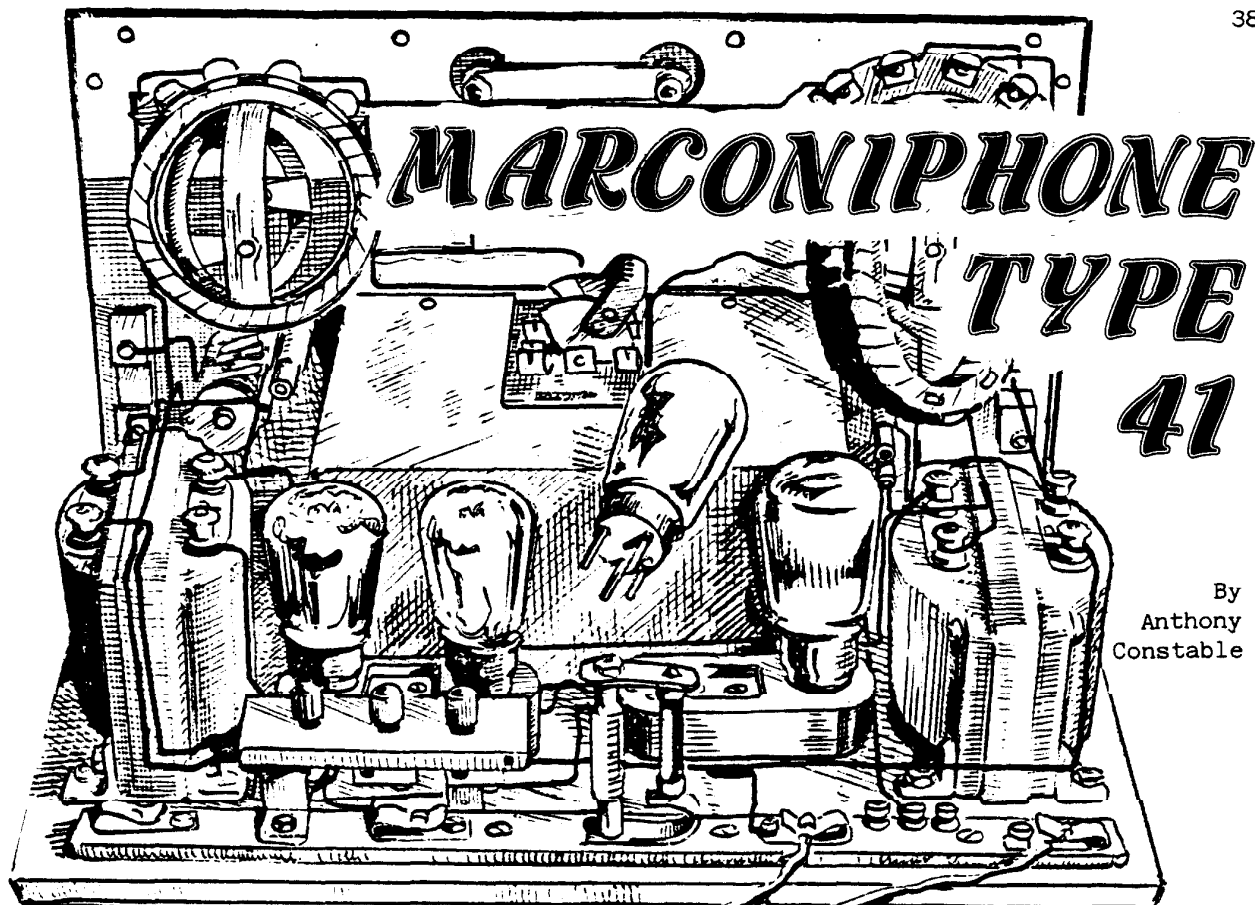
David's display included two examples from 1924: a seven-valve superhet with frame aerial by Western Electric Ltd, one of the founder members of the British Broadcasting Company, and a superb six-valve broadcast monitoring receiver built by Northern Electric in Canada. Both these employed Western Electric's revolutionary 0.9 to 1.1 v oxide coated Wecovalve with all heaters in series to eliminate the use of wet accumulators. These exceptionally well made sets are still a joy to use although over 50 years old. Superhets of this period employed triodes, usually had an IF of about 50kcs, and were in the UK un-ganged, making it necessary to tune the oscillator and radio frequency separately. Careful design however resulted in similar dial settings for both, and tuning presented little problem. This is in marked contrast to the problems that can beset the alignment of a multi RF stage triode TRF such as the Marconi 81 with its multitude of dials. Two interesting sets displayed were a French Ducretet superhet using an early bivalve as mixer, and a Ducretet TRF to superhet converter of 1925. The latest receiver shown was a small McMichael "Colonial" of 1936-7 in a tropicalised teak box. This was designed as a small battery superhet for use by the British abroad, enabling those in the Colonies to tune in the "home" service. Also displayed in the annexe was a 2nd World War German tape recorder, brought along by Dennis Yates. It was of considerable interest. It was intended for telegraphy recording and for high-speed morse, having a revolving head unique in its day and similar to modern video-recorder heads, which enabled playback of transmissions at readable speed. The machine was captured from the Germans in the war and its discovery solved the mystery of how Hitler was able to apparently broadcast from one place while reported to be hundreds of miles away in a battle zone, for the machine produced a sound like "live" broadcasting possessing none of the hissing and crackling then associated with recording- particularly from 78 discs. Known as the "Toneschreiber B" it is thought to be the only surviving example of such a machine, and with it came a number of tapes which have not yet been played, and which may contain fascinating material.

Another interesting exhibit, this time a working one, was of special interest to members of the Society's "Vintage Vision" section, who have been struggling since "405-line" transmissions ended a few months ago to devise methods of running their vintage sets from the modern "625-line" transmissions. There are in existence in the Society, two commercial converters, previously used by the BBC and ITA to convert 625 to 405 for transmission over the public system to enable viewers possessing old sets to continue using them. But these converters are in cabinets eight feet high and weighing many hundredweights. The exhibit at Harpenden was of a working "breadboard" converter made and demonstrated by Doug Boynes and small enough to fit into a briefcase. Of modern solid state technology, it might have seemed out of place at Harpenden, but it was producing quite a good picture on a vintage set on display, and is going to be a useful device. It cost over £1,000 to develop and there are still bugs to be eliminated, but the inventor hopes to produce a cheaper and smaller final version.

THE ENTHUSIAST.



from Popular Wireless Weekly, 1923



By
Anthony
Constable

All the Marconiphone receivers of the early 1920's used a unique form of tuning in which a grounded metal plate was moved across an inductance coil. The plate and coil systems came in various configurations, the best known being the pancake coil and metal spade of the V2 receiver. The V1 uses a cylindrical coil surrounded by a circular metal band. The Marconiphone 41 uses a very similar system to the V1 for both aerial and anode tuning. Considering the date of the 41 (1926) and the wide availability of inexpensive good quality tuning condensers it may seem very surprising that the old system was still in use. Perhaps the set was designed around a surplus stock of old components... a not uncommon practice. Furthermore, by this time the Marconi company owned the old Sterling Telephone and Electric company, a good source of high quality components including some of the best variable condensers available. And, what is more, the Marconi 41 uses one of these Sterling condensers well hidden inside a black metal box behind the front panel. It is the variable element of the "rejector circuit" which appears almost to have been added to the set as an afterthought. The rejector can be switched in and out by opening the top of the set and reaching down inside. It was obviously just a little too difficult for the designers to get the double-pole/double-throw switch on to the front panel without overcrowding. Without the rejector, the tuning is very broad, with a lot of station overlap and good selectivity can only be achieved with the rejector circuit switched in. But even better selectivity could have been obtained without the rejector circuit and with the conventional components used by most other manufacturers. The "spade tuning" devices used on the Marconiphone range of domestic receivers were, it is believed, designed by C.S. Franklin, one of Marconi's top design engineers. The system was never used on any of the Marconi military, naval, or professional receivers. Why was it ever used at all? Certainly, when first introduced on the V2 in 1921-2 it was very economical. The V2 was a good integrated design, ideally suited for subcontracting to the Plessey company, who could mass produce the "chassis" from simple raw materials (In 1922, Plessey's first order from Marconi was for 500 crystal "Junior", 5,000 "Crystal A" and 5,000 V2 sets, at a cost of £30,625). There was no dependence at all on the unreliable components industry. The variable condensers currently manufactured by the Marconi company were far too expensive to put into a domestic receiver. These condensers are to be found in Marconi Naval sets and in the well known multiple tuner. The Marconiphone 41 is a very handsome set, in its polished mahogany cabinet with two front doors, top lid and rear access battery compartment. It was not

the most expensive set available in 1922 but, at £37.19s.od. (complete with batteries and valves) it found into only the more wealthy households. For the man who really wanted a top quality set regardless of price and who had a good knowledge of the subject there were better sets available. It is always difficult to assess the performance of an old 1920's set. For one thing, today's transmitters cannot be compared with those of the 1920's. Also, it is not easy to acquire a set of original valves (The 41 takes three DER's and a DE5) in perfect condition. However, using the correct valves with moderately good characteristics, and making allowances for transmitter power, it do not think experienced customers would have been over impressed with its performance in 1926....particularly if the retailer also demonstrated other available sets, notably the top quality Burndept receivers. A very good performance can be obtained with the 41 using a carefully selected set of later Mullard PM series valves. This may be cheating a little but has many advantages: it conserves ones hard-earned DER's and DE5's, it overcomes the difficulties of not having perfect examples of these valves anyway, it is doing what any owner of the 41 would have done if better valves were available, and it has the happy result of securing a very good performance out of a fine old relic. The Marconi 41 referred to in this article was found a few years ago in a garage in extremely good condition. Curiously, both transformer cases and both the rheostat covers were very rusty, while there was no sign of corrosion elsewhere. The transformers were perfectly clean inside but both were open circuit. With the help of BVWS friends I was able to gather together half a dozen Marconi "Ideal" transformers in varying condition. Despite almost identical external appearances in this random sample, the interiors were all different. The laminations came in three different sizes and there were four varieties of pancake coils ! However, after much juggling of laminations and pancakes, it was possible to put two suitable 3:1 transformers inside the original and refurbished cases. This set is quite rare among collectors and I should very much like to hear from other owners- if there are any.

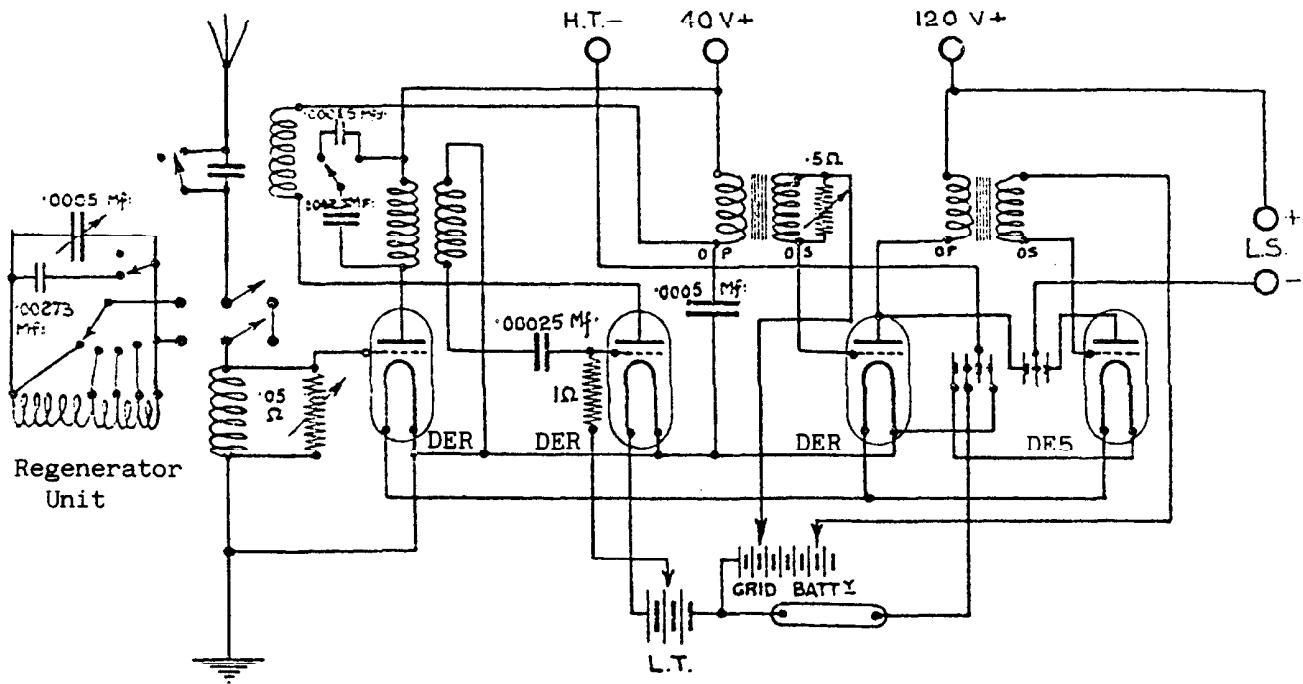
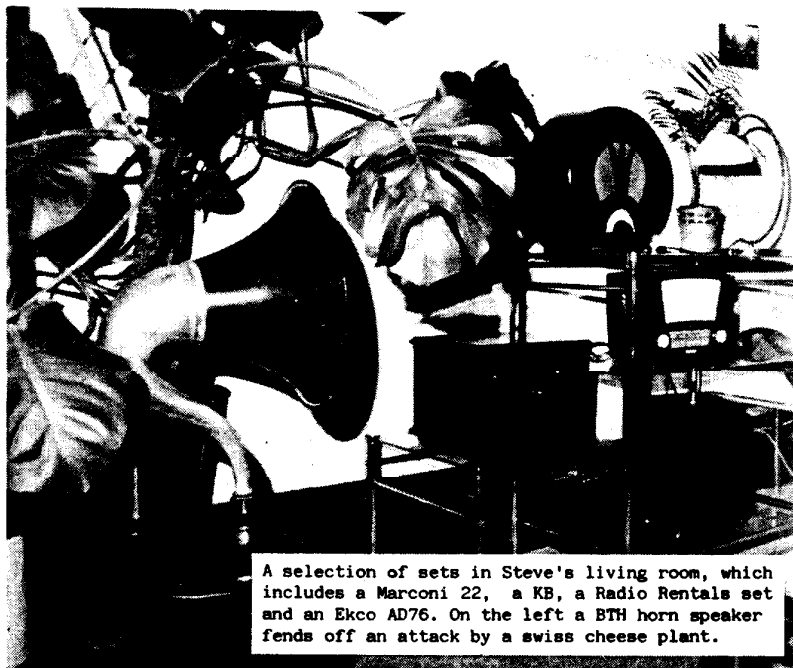


DIAGRAM OF CONNECTIONS
RECEIVER TYPE 41



A selection of sets in Steve's living room, which includes a Marconi 22, a KB, a Radio Rentals set and an Ekco AD76. On the left a BTH horn speaker fends off an attack by a swiss cheese plant.

In response to the Editor's invitation to members to send details of their own collections, STEVE HARRIS of Stockport, has sent this article and some photographs.

Articles submitted should be typed if possible and the photographs should preferably be in black and white.

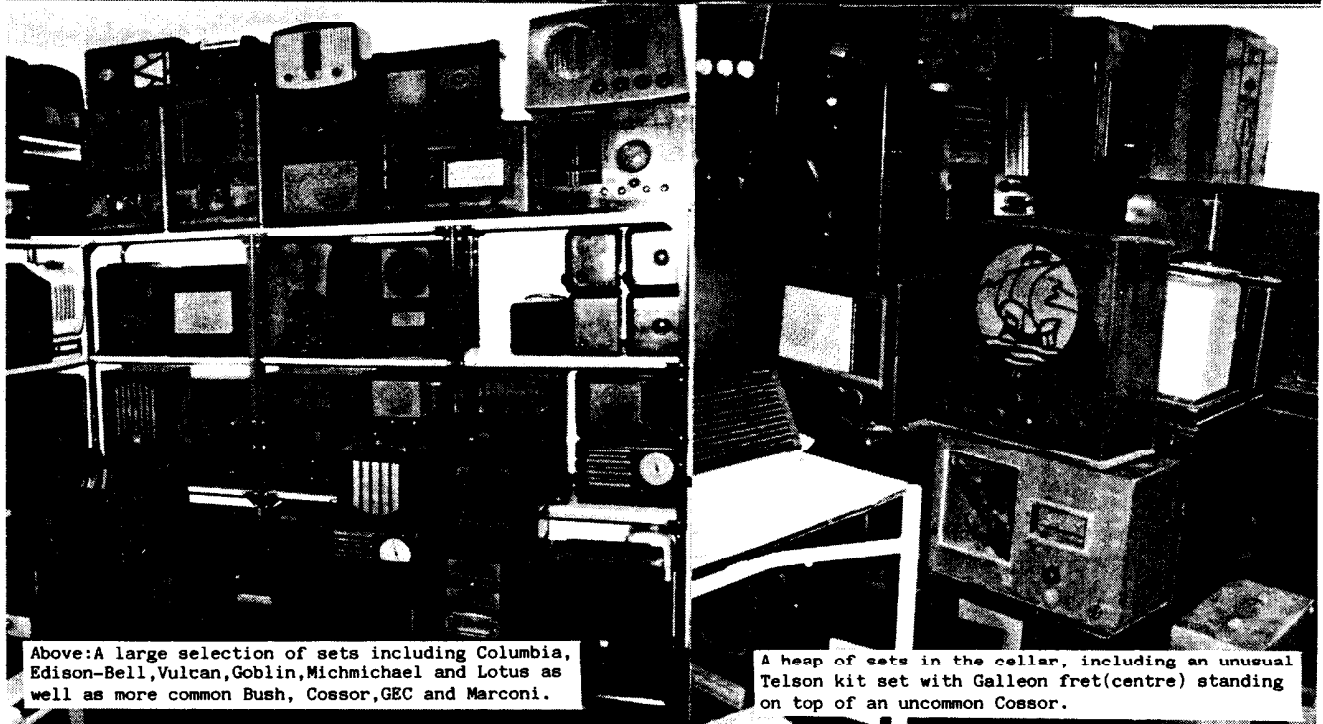
Although I have been collecting seriously for only a few years, my interest in wireless goes back to my childhood, which my fascination for everything wireless and electrical led me from jumble sales to rubbish tips in search of treasure: at that time quite worthless in money terms. Any wireless could be picked up for a Bob or two. My two shillings a week pocket money could often buy two or three sets at a jumble sale; the main problem being how to carry them home and how to pacify my irate parents when I got them there. I shudder now to think of the sets I mercilessly pulled to pieces. I even pulled the pieces to pieces, unwinding even the transformers, perhaps in the hope of unravelling the mystery of the functions. I abandoned wireless when the oily finger of the internal combustion engine beckoned, only to seek again the consolation of its relative cleanliness after years of lying on my back in pools of oily water under motor-cars. But how that return to wireless brought back memories, touched off by that smell of dust and hot paxolin. Now, as a Television studio technician, peering at a heap of plastic beetles calling itself a sync pulse generator (which by rights should be a wardrobe full of ECC83's) the technology of yesteryear seems more fascinating than that of today. It may be obsolete: but today's technology is obsolete before it leaves the drawing board. While engaged in the room by room restoration of my Victorian house, I have decided to exhibit as much as possible of my collection in the furnishing scheme. Many of the superb collections I have seen are tucked away out of sight in spare rooms and garages, but I wanted at least some of my collection on view in living rooms and in use. But I didn't want to entirely dominate the house. I decided on a main display in the dining room and on having other sets scattered around the house. I do have one room in the house which is entirely devoted to wireless, providing storage and workshop space, plus another room extended into the roofspace for further storage space and fifty sets in the cellar. A hoarder by nature, I feel like a squirrel laying in food for the winter: vintage sets are going to increase in price and become scarce eventually. I get many sets from the antiques trade. Most dealers accept that the market is limited and will sell to me at reasonable prices, especially if I buy the rough with the smooth. However, the desperation in the trade to find stock at a time when our heritage is rapidly disappearing overseas, means that items like old radios which were once considered junk are now attracting inflated prices. "It's Art Deco mate: it must be worth fifty quid" is an irritating response when one's enquiry is about a DAC90 with a cracked case. But every

cloud has a silver lining, so they say, and dealers do often come up with something so it is their pockets which get lined with silver. A few years ago, and to a lesser extent, even now, interesting wireless pieces were being dumped on tips or dismembered by inquisitive boys. Now, instead of being dumped straight in the dustbin, old sets are taken to the local fleamarket to be valued: "Can't sell 'em, but I'll take 'em off your hands for a quid". That might be the first step on a set's journey through the underground network of the antiques trade, acquiring value as it goes. Maybe one is at the end of the line, but at least another piece of history has been saved from the jaws of the refuse compactor. Why do people collect things? The reasons must be many and complex: nostalgia, appreciation of craftsmanship, financial gain or sheer acquisitiveness all play a part. Much of the pleasure of collecting must be the quest for knowledge: of technical development and social history.



On the shelves above left:
Ekco, Marconi.
On sideboard: Philips, Ekco.

Above: Amplion folded horn, 2-valve KB, Celestion loudspeaker, Murphy, Ekco, Pye, Cossor.



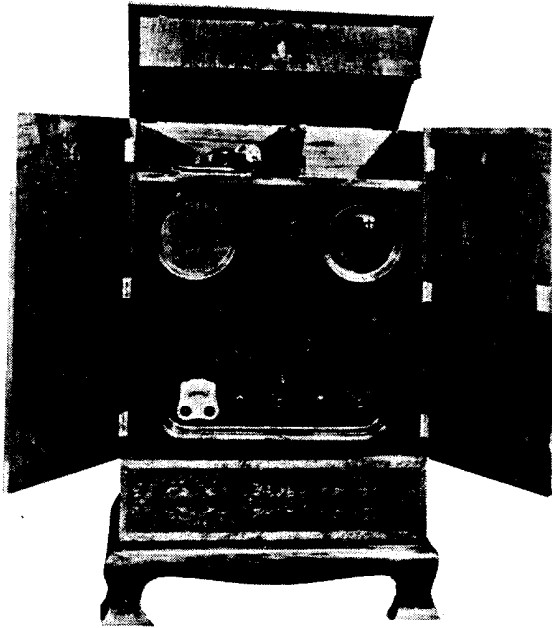
Above: A large selection of sets including Columbia, Edison-Bell, Vulcan, Goblin, Michmichael and Lotus as well as more common Bush, Cossor, GEC and Marconi.

A heap of sets in the cellar, including an unusual Telson kit set with Galleon fret (centre) standing on top of an uncommon Cossor.

VINTAGE VISION

RAY HERBERT contributes another article, this time on:

"AMATEUR EXPERIMENTERS"

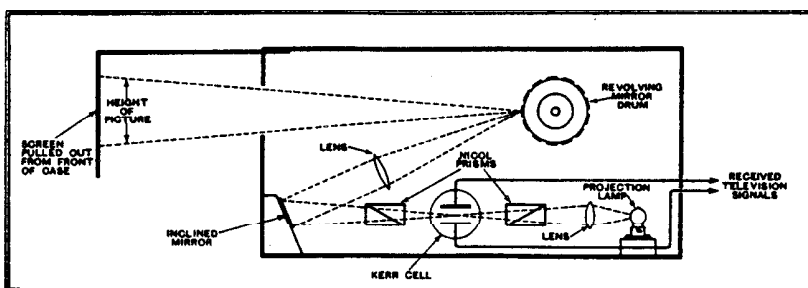


A home-constructed tele-radiogram, 1930

The activities of the early wireless enthusiasts have been well documented in magazine articles and in books but the trials and tribulations that beset the veteran viewers are less well known. This is surprising, bearing in mind that 90% of the television sets in use between 1929 and 1935 were home built. Mechanical television of the 'thirties represented an unique blend of wireless, mechanics and optics, a fascinating combination for those who had recently graduated from Hornby trains and Meccano sets. Obtaining a picture did not pose many problems and the author, as a 15 year old school-boy, accomplished the feat in three weeks from a standing start. A Century superhet donated by a relative provided the vision signals from the National Regional station and the television equipment consisted of a 20-inch Baird disc, a rather large commutator motor and a flat-plate neon. The accompanying sound required a separate receiver. As with the first wireless sets featuring temperamental catswhiskers and swinging-coil reaction these basic television receivers needed to be set up by the man of the house. About ten minutes before the programme was due to start, the motor would be warmed up. After the vision signal had been tuned in on the loudspeaker the output would be switched over to the neon lamp. The disc had to run at 750 rpm precisely, keeping in phase, spot for spot with the studio scanner. If too fast, the broken picture lines swept upwards, if too slow the reverse applied. When finally resolved, the image frequently appeared split down the middle and this could be corrected by "slipping" frames until the picture appeared in one piece, then held in place by a 150 ohm variable resistor used as fine tuning for the motor speed. Mechanical synchronizing devices of the phonic wheel type were available but they required extra output power for the field coils and necessitated a motor having the shaft extended at both ends, and such motors were not easy to find. Viewing the neon through a series of rapidly revolving pinholes produced a very dim picture and the restricted viewing angle resulting from the magnifying lens system meant that only two or three people could watch the programmes at the same time. Considerable ingenuity was displayed by the amateur constructors of this period. Scanning discs were fabricated from cardboard or aluminium and motors were obtained from fans, sewing machines and vacuum cleaners. One schoolboy in Huddersfield, unable to afford a motor, built a water turbine out of scrap metal to drive his disc. He confirmed that it worked well until someone turned on a tap, when the water pressure dropped and his picture disappeared. Osglim beehive neons cost about 3s (15p) and the alphabet type were also used, the letter "H" providing the best illumination. The brilliance could be improved by silvering one side of the envelope or by using a reflector. Later, a mercury vapour device, the T.I lamp made its appearance but it required an output power of some five watts in contrast to the neon which could be operated from a small battery valve.

"Vintage Vision" (continued)

Pictures were tall and narrow, an aspect ratio of 7:3, designed specifically for head-and-shoulder shots and small groups of standing performers. This arrangement, combined with the immobility of the studio flying-spot scanner resulted in fairly static presentations. Instrumentalists, conjurers, jugglers and singers figured prominently in these 30-line programmes. The more ambitious productions were by no means neglected and constantly tested the limits of the techniques then current and of the equipment available. Jack Payne's danceband appeared on the tiny screens from Savoy Hill in 1931. There were pantomimes each Christmas, plays and the first outside broadcasts from the Derby at Epsom in 1931 and 1932. In 1932, the mirror-drum receiver arrived, satisfying the quest for bigger and brighter pictures, but they were expensive, even in kit form. A 100-watt filament lamp acted as a light source and the beam could be modulated by means of a Kerr cell. This arrangement provided a black and white picture on an 8"x4" frosted glass screen. The mirrors had to be accurately positioned and securely mounted on a well-balanced drum. Not the least of the problems of that era was that of the meagre viewing periods, typically two hours each week, half of which occurred during the mornings and was of no use at all to people at work. There were no pattern generators in those days, of course, but some enterprising amateurs constructed their own flying-spot scanners to produce closed-circuit television for test purposes. In 1933 at least one radio amateur transmitted 30-line pictures on 160 metres, and at a later date both 30 and 60-line images were radiated in 10 metres. The early constructors were fortunate in having first-class backup in the form of technical information in various journals and a wide selection of kit sets and specialised components. The magazine "Television" issued constructors licences 17 months before the first programmes appeared from 2LO, mainly as a means of stimulating interest. Popular Wireless described in 1933 a television set for 10s. (50p) comprising a cardboard scanning disc driven by a gramophone turntable, and a year later, the Daily Express were promoting a receiver for their readers at a price of £5.10s. (£5.50p). In spite of improved studio techniques and mounting public interest, the viewing times did not increase, in fact the reverse situation prevailed. Amateur Wireless for March 1935, announced a reduction in programme hours to 11-11.30pm Tuesdays and 11-11.30am on Fridays with the editorial comment: "Not enough, the cry will go up- and we shall echo that". Don't be so mean, give television the break it needs". In contrast, the Baird company were putting out at this time at least 16 high definition programmes each month from their own studios and transmitter at the Crystal Palace. Unlike the high definition service which commenced operation in 1936 with reception limited to a radius of about 40 miles round London, the 30-line programmes were receivable throughout the UK and even on the Continent. Reports were regularly received from viewers in France, Holland, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Italy and Germany. Even 1,500 miles away in Madeira an experimenter wrote to describe a transmission received on 7th November, 1932: "The gentleman in evening dress whom I first tuned in was splendid, both as close-up and semi-extended. The sheen of the silk of his coat lapels was perfectly seen, while it was noticable on several occasions that his cufflinks were catching the spotlight beam". This pioneering service is sometimes described rather unkindly as crude, experimental and of little entertainment value, without an explanation that higher definition could not, for technical reasons, be transmitted on the medium wave band. During these early days, very few people had ever seen television and the entertainment value was that of actually being able to see a picture, regardless of the programme content. It should be remembered that this was the world's first regular television service and by this means public interest was kept alive, technical progress received constant stimulation and the experience gained proved of great value to the high-definition activities which were to follow.



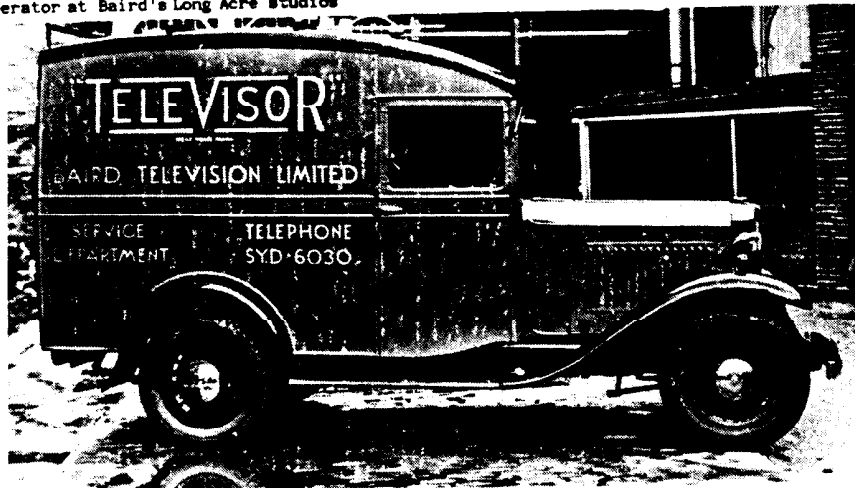
(Left: The optical arrangements for the mirror-drum receiver)



Connie King, telephone switchboard operator at Baird's Long Acre studios

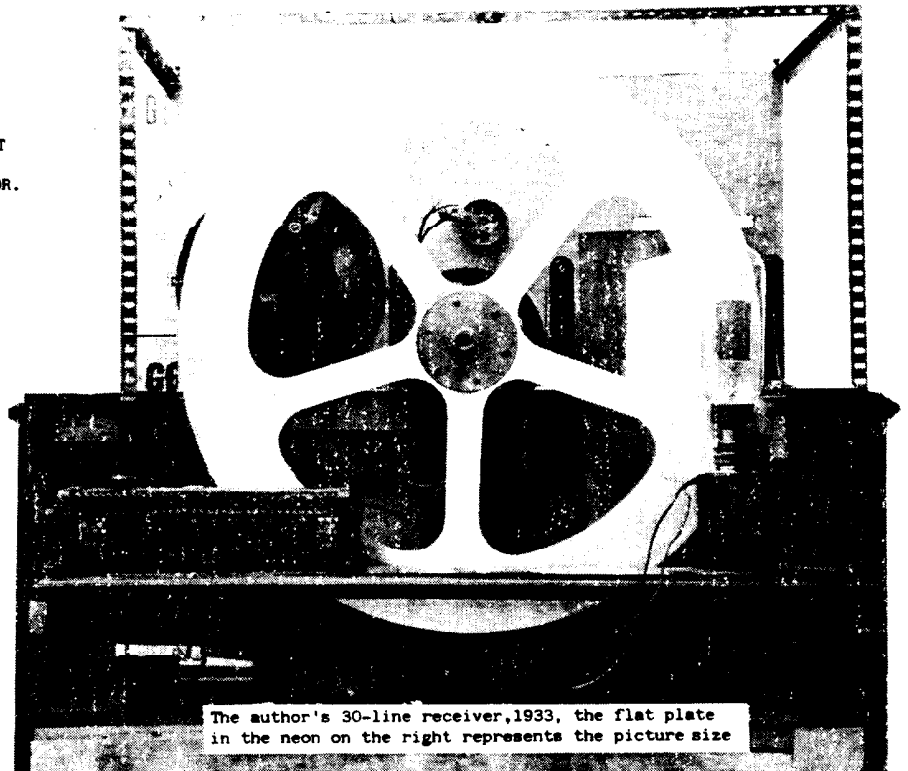


A.F. Birch, a Baird engineer.



Service van outside Crystal Palace studios, 1935.

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The author's 30-line receiver, 1933, the flat plate in the neon on the right represents the picture size

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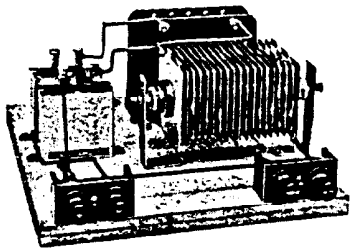
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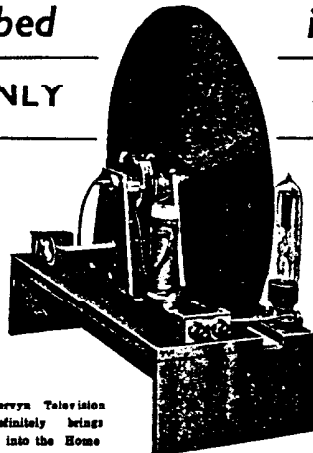
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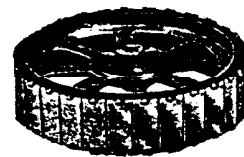


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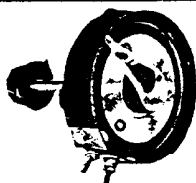
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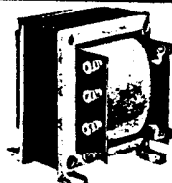
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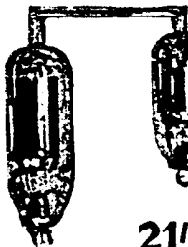
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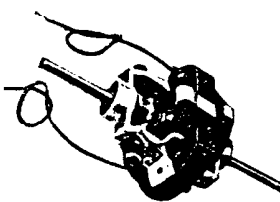
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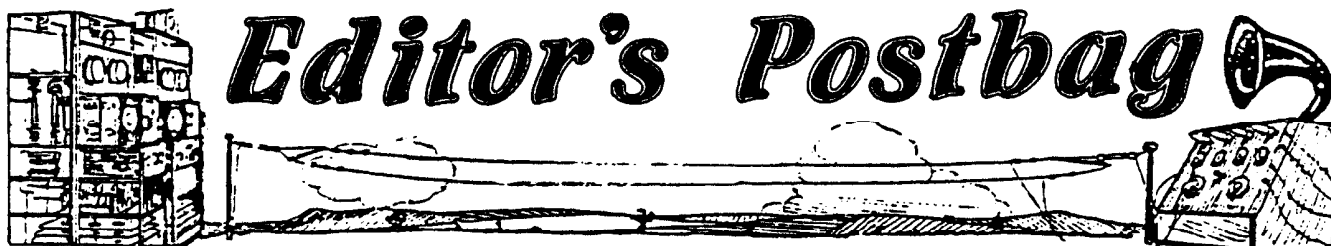
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Editor's Postbag

From Frank Brittain: The short answer to Tony Hopwood's question is that stocks of pre-war valves, with a few exceptions, were used for the maintenance of domestic sets during the war. Total sales for new equipment and maintenance by members of the BVA (British Radio Valve Manufacturers' Assn) were running at the rate of 12 million a year in 1938 and 1939. The government, and particularly the Ministry of Information, were anxious that radio sets should be maintained and it was agreed with the BVA that its members' total production for this purpose should not exceed three million p.a. In 1940 the BVA set up a communal planning scheme whereby members would produce valves and then buy and sell them from each other, selling to the public under brand-names. The actual maker of the wartime "communal" valve is normally indicated by a code letter stamped on the envelope or the base. Examples are: GEC (Marconi-Osram) Z and P; Cossor V and K. Each member was allocated a quota based on percentage of total sales in 1938-9, eg: Mullard 35% and Ediswan (Mazda) 13%. This is only a rough outline of the scheme, which worked well and continued for a year after the war ended. Incidentally, the 12 million annual production rate in 1939 by the BVA had risen to nearly 40 millions (nearly all for the services, of course) by 1945, and prior to the advent of the transistor, to 100 million, after which it declined rapidly. The rise and fall of the valve business as we knew it covered almost exactly 50 years.

From Ray Turner: As a schoolboy, I worked several evenings a week, as most radio repair men had been called up or diverted to war work such as the teaching of servicemen or work in factories on military equipment. My father had a substantial wireless relay, rental and "music-while-you-work" business, and like many, had seen the war coming and had laid in as many valves as he could. This initial stock plus what he could get in the war, kept him going through to 1945. On the other hand, my uncle, who had a little radio business, had a great deal of trouble getting valves. The most frequently needed was the Mazda AC/TP, which had a poor standard of reliability and often had to be tapped before it would oscillate (I think the cathode used to come adrift) and I rigged up three Murphy sets with dowels poking out of the back allowing the owners to tap poor valves into operation. Electrolytic capacitors often failed, causing heavy overloading of mains transformers and rectifiers; output valves often failed because the coupling capacitor from the DDT leaked and caused overheating. By 1942 it was difficult to get valves like MU14, MTK4, AC/TP, FC4 and many Mazda Octals, so we had to "make do". It still has a Cosmos triode, with three big pins and two little ones, that I put into a set in '42 and replaced with a MKT4 in '45. To keep sets going, we used early AC/Ps and ML4s. Any valve which dissipated more than 10 watts required a special licence from the Post Office, and some paper work was required for many HMV and Marconi sets using PX4's, plus a wait for replacements. Electrolytics were scarce, and many firms were set up to rewind transformers that would before have been replaced. Resistors were no problem but dry batteries were. British manufacturers got a lot of US-made octals in the war which they overprinted with their own names. In the war, many radio repairers would not tackle Philips "Monoknob" sets if the dial-drive was faulty, so I got many as a boy to fix. Tony Hopwood's suppositions are fairly near the truth: one had to improvise and use whatever valves one could get. But when I was called up for the Army early in 1945, I found out the forces had huge stocks.

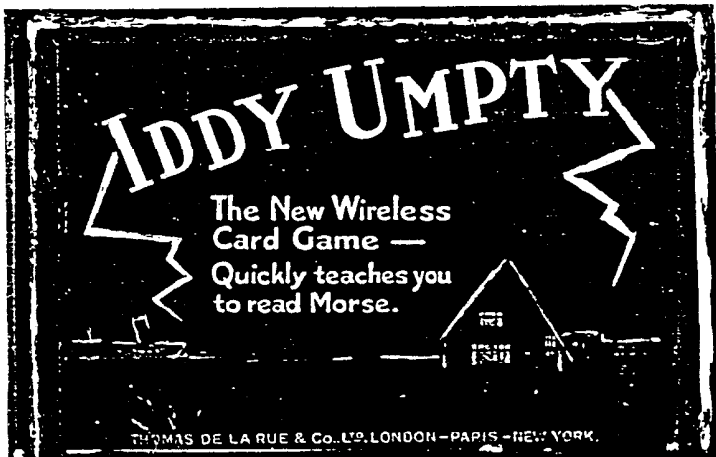
From Douglas Byrne: I have vivid memories of wartime difficulties in repairing sets. When I went home on leave from the RAF I helped in the local radio shop, doing "make-do-and-mend" jobs. I remember there was no shortage of run-of-the-mill valves, but some frequency-changers were short and it was impossible to get the American ones used in line-cord miniature sets which were imported by the thousand in the thirties. The line cords themselves used to burn out and had to be replaced by light bulbs of suitable wattage or even by condensers. Small electrolytics were short and had to be replaced by large paper ones which would not fit inside and had to be hung out of the back of the set. But working on domestic sets made a change from the ubiquitous 1154's and 1155's in the Signals section.

MORE ABOUT THE KB "KITTEN"

From Frank Brittain: The Kolster-Brandes set in a bakelite cabinet was made only for Godfrey Phillips and available only for BDV cigarette cards. It was never sold through retailers and never called the "Kitten". Originally, Phillips asked Kolster-Brandes to quote for 10,000 sets and the company estimated that they would need 30s. (£1.50) per set to cover tooling costs and so quoted 32s.6d. (£1.63) for the set- without valves. Phillips would not pay more than 27s.6d. (£1.38). It was finally agreed that 20,000 sets would be supplied at 27s.6d. and a further order was given for another 20,000. Standard Telephones and Cables (STC) who owned KB were not members of the BVA (British Valve Association) at the time (they resigned after the demise of the "Micromesh" range but rejoined in the mid-thirties when they went into production with the "Brimar" range). KB held a BVA members' set-makers agreement which prohibited them from fitting non-BVA valves, so Godfrey Phillips imported the French "Fotos" valves direct. The bakelite cabinets for the sets (which often suffered transit damage), were made by Kent Mouldings, an associate company of KB. The speaker-fret design, which I think is more fleur-de-lys than Prince of Wales Feathers, as suggested, was used by Brandes before they became KB and moved to Fooks Cray, Kent. The design was used in their "Ellipticon" cone loudspeaker marketed in 1927 and made at Slough together with the well-known "Brandeset 111A" and "Matched Tone" headphones. The coiffured female head design embossed on the lid of the set was a KB logo and was featured in their advertising as "The Listener". It was also used as a lapel badge for their dealers. The user of the set would have required a 100-volt, not 60 volt HT battery, probably a Lissen at 12s 11d. (65p) and a 2-volt accumulator such as the Exide DFG at 8s.6d. (43p). In the firm's advertisement, the crossed-out price of £5.5s. was just a nonsense since the set was never sold directly to the public by KB, and was rather like today's RRP (Recommended Retail Price). The original KB "Pup" was in a somewhat mediocre wooden cabinet with a sloping top and not many were made. The best-known "Pup" in wood cabinet with sloping sides was produced in both battery and AC versions. KB made a total of 250,000 of these and at one time were producing at the rate of 2,000 a day. The "Pup" was followed by the KB "Kitten" but few of these were made and little is known about it. There was, in the early 'thirties, a KB 362 "New Pup" which had two battery triodes and pentode output; and also KB397 "AC Pup" triode detector and pentode output. (Editor's note: I am indebted to Frank Brittain for his painstaking research. The cost figures are authentic and came from an old friend who was responsible for the early "Pups" and the BDV set. How's that for a case of "the horse's mouth" ! Can anyone follow up with some information on the real "Kitten" please ? Frank has also written with some information two and three-valve Cossor "Silver-tone" sets which were cigarette coupon sets and were never sold through the trade. Does anyone have information about any other such sets which might form the basis of an article ?)

MELBA'S MICROPHONE

From Roy Rodwell, Marconi Publicity Unit, re: " DAME NELLIE MELBA'S MICROPHONE" : The microphone displayed at the June Harpenden, although a genuine vintage BBC one of the correct period, was not the actual one used for her famous broadcast. This is at the Marconi company. It had a makeshift cone fitted to it- made from a cigar box- and after the broadcast, Dame Nellie autographed it.



FEELING UMPY

I have a card game, manufactured by Thomas De La Rue, called "Iddy Umpy" which is meant to teach Morse. Can anyone explain the term and its connection with Morse ? Could it be a sort of onomatopoeia like "Dah-da-Dit-Dah" ? Those with an etymological turn of mind might also like to explain whether the term "I'm feeling a bit Umpy" (meaning unwell) has any connection with "Iddy Umpy", or is Humpty Dumpty, Cockney-style. ANSWERS to the Editor please.

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO" by Dennis Gifford, with an introduction by Richard Murdoch. Published by Batsford. Hardback £14.95. 320 pages, over 180 illus.

A must for vintage wireless enthusiasts for whom nostalgia for the old and once familiar voices of the air is as important as the hardware of the hobby, is Dennis Gifford's new compilation of broadcasting memories "The Golden Age of Radio". A thickish hardback, printed on art paper and having more than 180 pictures among its 320 pages, it is an invaluable reference guide to the programmes and personalities of broadcasting from Will Hay's "Listening In" review of 1922 to "I'm sorry I'll read that again" from the John Cleese team of 1973 which ends this sampler of 50 years of broadcasting. In between, it mentions almost everybody a Listener might remember. Lord Reith gets a mention but not an article to himself as do Lord Haw-Haw of the wartime German propaganda station and Lords Waterlogged and Blockhead of the British side at about the same time. Dame Nellie Melba, perhaps the first "star" to broadcast, gets a mention but not an article to herself as does Nellie of the NAAFI otherwise Doris Hare of "Ack-Ack-Beer-Beer". But these are minor carps, for there are no important omissions that I can detect among the 1,600 entries in this amusingly-written and authoritative anthology by Dennis Gifford, compiler of television's long-running "Looks Familiar" which grew from his radio panel game "Sounds Familiar". The book begins with the "AEF" programme of 1944-45, which featured such people as Glen Miller, Jessie Mathews, Jean Metcalfe and Bing Crosby, to the "Zoo Man" who was to most people David Seth-Smith but in fact was beaten to the title in 1924 by Leslie Mainland. In between can be found articles on shows like "Bandwagon", "Itma", "Hancock's Half Hour", "The Goon Show", "Charlot's Hour" and "The Angus Prune Show". You'll find all the radio personalities too, including Leonard Henry- the first man to blow a raspberry on the wireless, Big Hearted Arthur and Stinker Murdoch, Gillie Potter of Hogs Norton, Mabel Constanduros who played a whole family from grandma to the baby, Gilbert Harding who was one of the first to use a rude word for a flatus on the air, Mr. Middleton the radio gardener, and Archie Andrews the ventriloquist's dummy who got his own series despite the fact that on radio one couldn't see whether his manipulator's mouth was moving or not. But more memorable than the real people behind the broadcasting personalities in this parade of entertainers, are the whimsical creations like Colonel Chinstrap ("Don't mind if I do"), Mrs. Tickle the Char ("Can I do you now Sir?"), Eccles ("You've deaded me!"), Monica (Good Evening Each"), and Mr. Growser (It's disgrrrraceful), plus hundreds more. Apart from the funny men there are the many dance bands - do you know Henry Hall's other signature tune? And what were the tunes they played to introduce "Paul Temple" and "Dick Barton, Special Agent"? You'll find them all in this book together with the first jingles of Radio Luxembourg like the "Ovaltineys" and "Hurrah for Betox, what a delightful smell". (This book is available at special discount to members, which will save the cost of post. Contact the Bulletin Editor for details).

"THE BBC: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS" by Asa Briggs. 439 pages, with 22 illustrations. Published by Oxford University Press at £17.50

Asa Briggs' new history "The BBC: the first fifty years" is a one volume study of part of the same area covered by his complex and comprehensive four-volume history of broadcasting in Britain from its beginnings to the end of the British Broadcasting Corporation's monopoly. The publishers emphasise that the new single-volume work is not just an abridgement of the four bigger volumes, which were based mainly on BBC archives, but, like them, makes use of hitherto unpublished primary sources, while adding material from a wide variety of sources outside the BBC, and putting the BBC as an institution in a national and international perspective as well as relating it to society, culture and politics. Since Lord Briggs has an academic background, his work would be expected to be scholarly and it certainly is so; but the book is by no means a dry recital of facts. It is a history of the development of the organisation of broadcasting, the changing techniques concerned, the evolution of programmes, the ideologies of control, its structures and procedures, and of the personalities concerned. As such, it is not about the technology of broadcasting, the history of which has been well covered in other works over the years. The reader will find in the book a wealth of fact and quotation as well as anecdote and a little humour, but whether the reader accepts the interpretation of all this material which is implicit in Lord Briggs' selection, juxtaposition, assembly and comparative analysis of it, will depend upon the reader's acceptance of the author's own ideology. But there's a lot of information for your money- although £17.50 seems a lot for a single volume.



ADVERTISEMENTS in this section are free to all members. They should be sent to the Editor, 63, Manor Road, Tottenham, N17, London. The Society does not accept any responsibility for them.

WANTED: Frame aerial for Western Electric superhet type 44002, as featured on front cover of Bulletin vol 9 no 1. Dennis Yates, (please note new address and phone: Newarts Farm, No Man's Lane, Stanton-by-Dale, Notts. NG10 5WQ. (0602)393139.

WANTED: Semi-circular chrome bar for AD65; centre knob for Ekco SH25; set of coils for Marconi 41; any spares for Marconi 21; Frame Aerial for Gecophone BC2940; Case for Ekco A22 and UAW78; complete Philco 55. **FOR SALE:** HMV1117 and 1115; Marconi 264; Cossor 3468 and 335; Bush VHF61 and DAC53; Osram Music Magnet; Ekco AC85; Phillips 660A; Ferranti Lancaster; GEC BC403; Philco 260T; RGD Rangogram. **ALSO** repairs on valve sets. C. Mason, 7 Compton Gardens, Kinver, Stourbridge, W Mids. Phone Kin 872744.

WANTED: Any pre-war television receivers subject to being complete and original. Gordon Bussey, 64, Pampisford Rd, Purley, Surrey. CR2 2NE. Tel (01)660 2240.

WANTED: 20's-30's Exide 2v accumulator with pointer showing charge state. Also required Pye Black Box (3-knob separate bass and treble model), case condition immaterial. Robert Hawes, 63, Manor Rd. Tottenham, London N17. OJH. Tel 808 2838. I'm also seeking Brownie black-cased loading coils and BTH ones for the valve-crystal set.

FOR SALE: Dial lights suitable for DAC 90As (recent manf.) 35p ea + SAE.

WANTED: Frame aerial for Gecophone BC2780 1927 superhet; Chas sis for Majestic 52; back for Pye P/AC. R. Tucker, Foxhall Cottage, Caston, Attleborough, Norfolk. Tel: 095383288.

EXCHANGE: My Murphy TU92 bandspread sw, Quad amp and preamp, Garrard 301, Pye Portable 25, for bound vols Popular Wireless and 1929 Pye miniature inter-valve transformer. Ian McWhirter, 18, Sydall Rd. Bramhall, Stockport. (061) Tel: 061. 439 6996. **ALSO REQUIRED:** details about Pellant II 2v BBC/EBR set to help rebuild. All letters will be answered.

WANTED: Gecophone large horn LS. Edward Lane, 115, Wooton Rd. Kings Lynn Norfolk.

WANTED: Base/driver unit for Brown "M" horn LS. Any reasonable price paid. K Chorley, 7 Foxfield, Everton, Lyngington Hants, Tel Lym 45231.

WANTED: Western Electric frame aerial type 44001 (mounted on small box with wavechange switch and terminals. Also wanted, Concern Grand. I will buy or swap for early horn speakers, crystal sets, Wireless Worlds, valves etc. Duncan Neale, phone 0672 870866.

SALE ? SWAP: I have 12 bound volumes of Popular Wireless Weekly, covering Jan '24 to June '28. Bookbinders cloth binding, insides excellent. Ads bound in. Offers to Robert Hawes, 63, Manor Rd, Tottenham, N17 OJH. Tel 808 2838. I'm seeking bound copies of other '20s wireless magazines; mint Pye "K"; Brownie transformers; Marconi wavemeter; AD65 black/chrome. I have cash or goodies for swap.

INFORMATION WANTED: on c1925 Ediswan 4v long-range Radiophone; and Gecophone BC 2010 deluxe 4v. Will willingly pay costs. Dieter Bardenheier, 50A Park Rd. Titirangi Auckland 7, New Zealand.

FOR SALE: various sets. Ring Jim Taylor Bournemouth. Tel: 0202 510400.

FOR SALE: HMV 442; Murphy A30C, A70, GEC BC5639; Advance signal gen. type 62. All good condition. J. Tydeman, Ring Peterfield 62049.

FOR SALE: Waterslide transfers "BBC" badges, Marconi, various sizes. Made from the original patterns of the 20's by the firm who made them then. Contact Dennis Yates, 0602 393139 (Nottingham). **WANTED:** transmitter no 1 for GPO phone. Phil Beckley, 0633 853906.

WANTED: "The Construction of crystal receivers" by Alan Douglas (Radio Press) and small book by Ballhatchet in same series. Desmond Thackeray, 7 Beech Clo. Byfleet, phone 41023.

TRADE: Unique Canadian valve sets (Crosley, DeForest, Northern Electric, CDN, Westinghouse, old fashioned Greenbacks) for equally rare British or European valve or crystal sets. A.R. Nolf, 620 Auburn CR, Burlington, Ont. Canada, L7L5B2.

WANTED: Anything Zenith, valve or transistor. Also literature. A. Gates 01 720 5839 (Eves).

WANTED: parts for ethnophone V MK 111 c1925. Including LF transformer no.333 low-ratio for second stage, and Burnpedt power valves; LF transformer 226 high-ratio first stage; valves L55, R5V; circuit diagram. Cost will be paid direct in Sterling. Jan Hartog, member of Dutch Vintage Wireless Society, Twiskeweg 118, 1503 AC Zaandam, Holland.

WANTED: Early 45rpm juke box, any condition considered. T. Rees, Vintage Wireless Co. Ltd, Cosham Street, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS17 3EN.

FOR SALE: Huge stock of service data and manuals on radio and television and audio. Please write or telephone for quotation. Express mail order service. Tudor Rees, The Vintage Wireless Co Ltd, Cosham Street, Mangotsfield, Bristol, BS17 3EN. Tel 0272 565472 (answerphone).

DISPOSAL: 40s and 50s sets. Duncan Neale phone 0672 870866.

WANTED: to complete 45 year project: 1 or 2 Lissen hi-q ceramic 4-7 pin valveholders. Also, for 20 year project, 1 or 2 UX6 valveholders with amphenol insert, not more than 1-1/8" diam. Bernard Litherland, Old Schoolhouse, North Wraxall, Wilts. Tel Bath 891254. **CIRCUIT WANTED** please for Pye EAH1 979, AC, using ACSG, AC2, AC Pen. Theodor Sichler, C/O Renate Schmidt, Kerpen Special Ltd, 17 Cockspur St. London. **INFORMATION WANTED PLEASE:** Does anyone know anything about the Marconi crystal set 20B other than the circuit Percy Harris gives? And can anyone provide a photocopy of Cosmos Catalogue c 1924 or loan it for photocopy? Desmond Thackeray, 7, Beech Close, Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 7PS. Tel: Byfleet 41023. **WANTED:** Orig. manuals for Eddystone 740 and 680 receivers. Swap for orig. ones RCA AR88D, H-allcrafters SX28, good photocopies Marconi CR100, Murphy B40 series. **COMING SOON:** carbon granules for early microphones, also Woods metal. Philip Taylor, 14, Willow Walk, Canewdon, Rochford, Essex. Phone 03706 598. Also: small quantity of zincite wanted.

FOR SALE: 20 working sets, for sale individually, not as a bulk lot. 30-40s. Send SAE for list. D. Hewlett, 23, Grace Rd. Downend, Bristol.

WANTED: Ekco Princess portable, model P63. Stands upright like a gravestone, 9"x7"x2" thick. Vol and tune knobs visible through windows on top. In 2-tone Green. Gordon Bussey, 64, Pampisford Rd, Purley, Surrey. Tel 01 660 2240.

WANTED: Garrard turntables, RC-1, 2, 3 turntables. I want one good working one, or will buy several to make up one. Also want service material on same. Norman Braithwaite, 4415 Greenwood Ave, N, Seattle, INA. USA 98103.

FOR SALE: GU50 valve; Ferranti transformers, and chokes; ACE B3 set £7; Lissen 1934 set £9; D Thompson, 5, Holcombe Ave, Bury. Tel: 061 747 5653. I also restore and repair valve sets at discount to members.

WANTED: Copies of "television" Magazine. 1928 Sep; 1929 all ex Jan, May, Aug, Sep; 1930 all ex April, June, Sep, Oct, Dec; 1931 Jan, Feb, Apl, Aug, Sep. Purchase or exchange duplicates including Vol 1 no 1. Ray Herbert, 24, Norfolk Avenue, S Croydon CR2 8BN. Tel: 01 657 1126.

WANTED: Amplion, Brown (not H2-4), Ediswan and other horn loudspeakers. Richard Jehlik, 8320 N. 28th Ave, Omaha, Nebraska, 68112 USA.

WANTED: One "Theremin" (1920's-30's) valve musical instrument relying on varying frequency of an oscillator: Tim Wander, 25 Nuns Meadow, Gosfield, Halstead, Essex. Tel: 0787 475070.

OFFERS? Leak Varislope III pre-amp and TL50 mono power amp using KT88's, with instructions, circuits. Working. Reply c/o Barry Orloff 0252 514795, (evenings), Malcolm MacInnes.

WANTED URGENTLY: Advertising literature brochures, photos of HMV/Marconi TV's and radiograms 1945-54. Also **WANTED:** same sort of material on all TV sets from 1936-39 and the post war period 1945-60. Needed for book research. Also **WANTED** please: any radio show catalogues up to 1960, plus copies of "Television and Short Wave Radio" from 1936 to 1940 (I will buy or swap for duplicates I have. Photos on loan for any above would be very welcome. John Gillies, 55 Hemmen Lane, Hayes, Middlesex. Tel: 01 573 7517.

WANTED: "Boy's guide to wireless," 1914. by A. Williams. Book swap/ cash? 808.2838. R. Hawes, 63, Manor Rd, London N17. Also:

THE COMMITTEE OF THE BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO ASSESS THE DEMAND FOR EXTRA HARPENDEN "SWAPMEETS" WITH A VIEW TO HAVING FOUR SUCH EVENTS A YEAR. IF YOU LIKE THE IDEA, AND WOULD WELCOME A MEETING IN THE SPRING OF THIS YEAR, PLEASE SEND A SHORT NOTE TO THE EDITOR, ROBERT HAWES, 63 MANOR ROAD, TOTTENHAM, LONDON, N17 OJH OR TELEPHONE HIM ON (01) 808 2838.