MERCURY

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CONTENTS

Editorial 1

Letters to the Editor 2

Neon Voltage Stabilisers (S.Sgt (F of S) Dave Sugden 5

We Ran a Raffle 8

Propagation - Or How It Gets There (Lt.Col. Sir Evan Y. Nepean G5YN) 10

This 2359 hrs Business 14

A Useful Audio Oscillator 15

Potted Prefixes (by TWODEEZEEGEE) 15

A Letter From Catterick 16

News and Views 17

Available from Headquarters 18

EDITORIAL

One of the Field Secretary's perks is to have a quick look at the monthly radio magazines before taking them up to the Society's Headquarters. So it came about that the other evening your scribe was lying in his bath browsing through the latest issue of a well known publication. It is generally agreed that the steamy atmosphere of the bathroom is conducive to thought and the first few pages advertised a transceiver at £200, a receiver at £99, another transceiver at £255 and so on. Wouldn't it be nice if the Premium Bond came up!!

Amateur Radio, like any other human activity, depends for its future on new young converts taking up the hobby for the first time. Whilst you and I know that you don't need to spend anything like these sums in order to enjoy yourself on the air there must be many a young man frightened off by all this expensive equipment displayed on the covers of the magazines.

Whilst on the subject of the cost of equipment it is interesting to see that ex-government receivers designed over twenty years ago are still being sold at quite high prices. For similar sums there are a number of modern receivers available which whilst perhaps not so solidly constructed, use modern valve types and do not threaten their owner with a slipped disc every time he moves the set.

So let us leave our Field Secretary, rubbing himself briskly with the towel prior to switching on the CR 100 which he bought for a fiver twelve years ago.

73

ECHO JULIET FOXTROT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

57 Sig Regt (TA)
Bristol

Dear Sir,

Now that both contests are over I think the time is ripe to re-think the whole subject of the Society annual contest. As I see it the present contest is unsatisfactory for the following reasons:-

1) Being on 80m only its scope is limited to U.K. and Germany.
This leaves members elsewhere in the world out in the cold.

2) There is insufficient support in U.K. to warrant the number of hours allocated to the contests. In support of this statement, I think a check of the logs will indicate that most stations worked nearly all their contacts in the first two hours of the contest.

3) Our contests on 80m on a Sunday caused annoyance to many operators who regularly use the band and were unable or unwilling to take part.

4) Being a "fixed time" contest, some members who would like to have taken part, were unable to do so because of duty commitments. This applies particularly to those serving with the TA who normally work every Sunday.

I would suggest that a "competition" instead of a "contest" might be the answer. This could be arranged to cover all bands and a period of time instead of a specific day. Of course many will disagree with my views, but I think a discussion on the subject will probably produce some good ideas.

73

Terry Quinn G3RCJ

Dartford, Kent

Dear Sir,

Why not extend the contest, say from 0900 to 1830 hrs using all bands from 160 to 10 giving a bonus for bands worked etc.

This would enable our DX members to compete particularly if bonuses for countries or continents worked were given.

Merely a suggestion from a new boy!

73

Bill Windle. G8VG

Editorial Note:- The Field Secretary would be pleased to receive any other comments or suggestions on the future form of Society contests if any more are wanted.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HQ Far East Air Force,
c/o GPO SINGAPORE.

Dear Sir,

I was idly tuning the bands when a carrier came on frequency - QRM - M was calling. I turned the beam north and left the RX on. I drove over to M's office - fast - M never interrupted a watch unless something big was brewing.

"Come in 007· sit down." he pushed over a box. "Have an 807"

"No thanks, sir, I am trying to give them up."

"Good man. They're bad for you anyway, give you parasitics."

He pushed over a top classified file with the words 'Members Only' written across it in black letters. I opened the file and saw the document, 'Mercury, March 1965'.

"Well 007, we've got their latest copy. 004 has come up with it as usual and on time. Looks as if our two top operators have had their covers blown. 001 and 002 have been identified by number and name." He pointed out the awful words in the secret report on the Contest.

“Well" he said as he lit his pipe.

"I don't like it one bit, air. Those two poor devils never had a chance. They are on to us alright."

"Yes, 007, and what’s more one of the original members, 039, is a double. He's working for us. See that report of his in a letter? He's got something there you know."

I knew that 039 used to be a top man in Intruders Watch looking for pirates, (our slang for illegal transmissions). 039 was obviously trying to get the message across that he wanted to get the Army organisation going. It was a brilliant plan. The proportions of it staggered me. We would actually have men working under cover in MOD (Army) I did not think 039 would ever be successful. He had been trying to do this for years and people in our line of business never get the official recognition they deserve. We often work in the dark and our codes of SSB, AM and CW, were carefully concealed.

"I don't think 039 will make it sir. The opposition is too tough. You realise DCI action will be required?"

M thought for a minute. "You think so 007" The worry was clearly shown on his face, his hands nervously playing with a big bug key - a present from a top W operator, probably with CIA in the States, and was for services rendered on a Dxpedition'.

"You know, 007, nobody really cares. The top boys in MOD (Army) have never heard of us and unless the Big Man himself speaks, I'm afraid 039 has had it."

I broke in, "You don't mean EC himself, sir?"

"It looks like it 007. We need somebody with a lot of pull."

"What about a code message, sir, an article in the 'Army Quarterly"? It's a classified document for certain eyes only. May be we could get 003 to help?"

"I don't know, 007. 039 has tried damned hard for years now. He will need help you know. Do you think we could get that new organisation RSARS to help?"

"I don't know, sir, but they are a good crowd. 004 runs them - it might work."

"OK 007, keep me briefed."

I drove off through the crowded streets back to continue my present case - DX - and wondered if, after all these years, 039 might make it. It is not easy in our job. A great deal of patience is required. Perhaps one day one of our operators might manage to get a message across.
It could well be 039.

007

(G3 Not James - Me)
(9M4MB)

Kew, Surrey.

Dear OM,

Further to G3ADZ's comments I agree, in these troubled times, let us not argue as to who formed a club, any Prawn can do that. Let us remember that it is the job of the Corps to provide communications under any conditions with the equipment which you have to hand. This means, experience outside the set Rule Book, which may arise in peace time.

Thus for the sake of those who argue, let us have a separate class of membership for those hams who served in other arms after all they supported us in war.

Put another way; to a Force Commander are you really worried as to whether it is a Sapper, Regimental Signaller or a member of the Corps who is operating at the other end, provided you have communications.

73

D.A.W. Clark G4JT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bushey Heath,
Harts.

Dear OM,

You may be interested to know that I was a founder member of what I suppose has developed into the RSARS. Early in 1946 I was stationed at Catterick and was at that time in charge of specialist training in centimetre communication equipment (WS 10 etc.). With the resumption of amateur activity on 10 metres in this country we obtained permission to use one of the huts as a clubroom and managed to scrounge an AR 88 and a WS 36 which we used extensively on 10 metres using my own callsign. Some 50 countries were worked from this location before I was demobilised other active members I recall were G8RF, G3AAK and G5DQ.

73

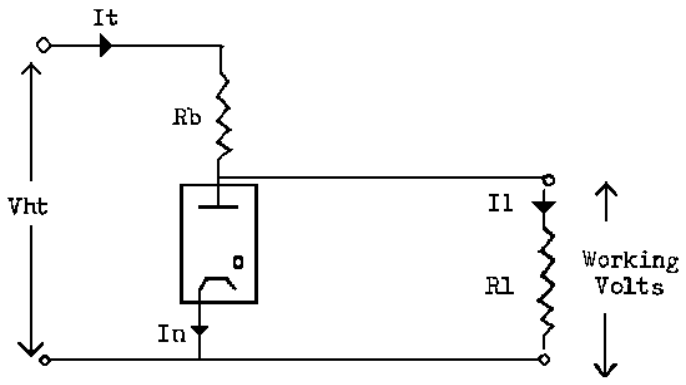
Ronald C. Ray G2TA

NEON VOLTAGE STABILISERS

S.Sgt (F of S) Dave Sugden

It is not widely appreciated that one cannot just slap a neon stabiliser into a circuit and expect it to stabilise H.T. supplies just like that. Let us therefore examine the principles involved so that we may understand its limitations.

Over its working range the voltage across the neon remains substantially constant for large changes of current.



The function of the series resistor Rb is to limit the current flow when the neon strikes. If it were not there the current would increase to such an extent that the neon would be destroyed.

Choose "In" to be in the middle of the current operating range for the neon used, e.g. for a VR 150/30 the current range is 5 to 30mA so let "In" be 15mA. The current through the load "Il" can therefore change up by 15mA, or down by 10mA and the voltage across the load will remain substantially constant at Vwkg (150 volts for a VR150/30).

The problem is to find a suitable value for Rb.

Example

For a VR150/30:- Vwkg = 150v Vstriking = 180v

Current Range = 5 to 30mA.

Let the H.T. voltage be 300 volts and the load to take 15mA at 150 volts stabilised.

$$Rl = \frac{V_{wkg}}{Il} = \frac{150}{15} = 10 \text{ K ohms}$$

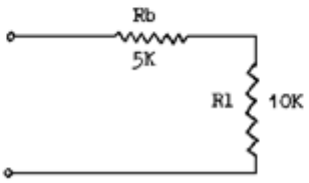
Now It = In + Il = 15 + 15 = 30mA

and $$Rb = \frac{W_{wkg}}{It} = \frac{150}{30} = 5 \text{ K ohms}$$

Our ballast or series resistor must therefore be 5 K ohms.

In general then $$Rb = \frac{V_{ht} - V_{wkg}}{In + Il}$$

But will the neon strike with this value of Rb? Before the neon strikes the circuit looks like this:-



A simple calculation shows that the voltage across the load before the neon strikes is 200 volts. So the neon will strike since our VR150/30 strikes at 180 volts. If the voltage were lower than 180v we must choose another value for In or look into the possibility of increasing Vht. Note this will mean a new value of Rb.

To what value can Vht fall and yet the stabiliser operate correctly, that is, strike when switched on?

$$180 = \frac{V_{ht(min)} \times Rl}{Rb + Rl}$$

$$V_{nt(min)} = \frac{180(Rb + Rl)}{Rl}$$

$$= \frac{180 \times 15}{10}$$

$$= \quad 270 \text{ volts}$$

To what voltage can the H.T. fall without stability suffering assuming that the neon has struck?

The minimum operating current of the neon is 5mA, the load current is still 15mA.

Voltage across Rb = 5 K ohms x 20mA = 100 volts

So Vht (minimum) = 100 + 150 = 250 volts.

So once the neon has struck the H.T. voltage can fall to 250 volts without any effect on the stabilised supply.

To what voltage can the H.T. rise without destruction of the neon?

It = In + Il = 45mA

Therefore V = 45 x 5 = 225 volts

and Vht(maximum) = 225 + 150 = 375 volts.

Therefore with the circuit shown we can stabilise the voltage across the load at 150 volts for a variation of supply from 250 volts up to 375 volts. If the H.T. is liable to be switched off, however, these figures are modified to 270 volts to 375 volts.

Calculations along the lines of the above example can be applied to any type of neon stabiliser provided the current drawn by the load and the H.T. supply voltage are known.

WE RAN A RAFFLE

The President started it; we were discussing Society finances at the AGM and wondering how to raise some money when he said, "Run a raffle, give a decent receiver or something similar as the prize and I will guarantee the Society against any loss."

On returning to Catterick the Treasurer, the Field Secretary and some of the HQ gang got their heads together and after much discussion Terry Richardson came up with the idea of a £30 credit voucher with Heathkit as first prize and two items from the HQ station shop as second and third prizes. The next problem was how many tickets to have printed and what price each ticket should be. By this time thanks to the assistance of the Army's Legal Branch, we were fully acquainted with the provisions of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act and bearing these in mind it was decided to charge 6d. a ticket and have ten thousand, printed in books of ten.

When to hold the draw and when to send the tickets out?? It was now nearing Christmas and the market was flooded with "Grand Christmas Draw" tickets from Sergeants Messes, Football Clubs, etc. etc. Got to use a bit of low evil cunning here; if we send them out immediately after the New Year everybody will be skint, better leave it until the end of January so that the monthly paid members will have drawn their pay. Besides if we leave it until the New Year we shall only have to pay one registration fee under the Act. Give people a couple of months to return the tickets so we'll hold the draw at the end of March. Agreed?? Into Richmond to see the printer, write to Heathkit to confirm that we shall require a Credit Voucher, wait for January first and then register the draw. Got to state the object of the draw, can't just say lolly, better put "To raise funds for Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society". The names of the three people responsible for the draw? The Treasurer obviously, the Field Secretary, can't put A.N. Other, put Staff Sgt Pocock, he won't mind (he didn't).

So it was that at the end of January the Treasurer and Field Secretary sat down, with a pile of envelopes and a box full of books of tickets. "Old so and so, he's got bags of contacts, send him ten books. Bill told me to send him four. Yes that's a very active club - ten books. Don't know much about him, better only send one book. He's in 8 Sigs I'll catch him. The President, ten books at least. No don't send me any, it will look too much of a fiddle if I win".

So we posted them off and sat back with our fingers crossed waiting to see what would happen. We didn't have to wait long - "Tickets received Tuesday evening and took them to my local club, sold the lot in 15 minutes with none left for myself, please send more." "UNCLAS RSARS 227 REQUIRE FIVE MORE BOOKS". "Many thanks for tickets received this morning, already sold them so please send three more books." "Just sold my first 100 tickets, please send another 100. I do not expect to sell them all as the bludgeon is getting rather battered, still one can but try." "I teach at a Technical College and the students find it hard to refuse! "If you will forward another ten books I will forgo my chances of winning a fortune on the Football Pools for the next ten weeks and spend my 5/- entry fee in what will surely be a less profitable but equally satisfying cause."

Meantime at Catterick G3CIO worked members and always asked whether they wanted more tickets, any visiting officer at the Royal Signals HQ Mess found a book of tickets waved under his nose and Senior NCO's used their influence among the trainees of 8th and 24th Signal Regiments.

The Treasurer was building up quite a file of letters, notes on the back of QSL cards and Message Forms. Several members took the opportunity to pay their subscriptions and we discovered a number of errors in our membership records, one member who was shown as unlicensed had in fact held a ticket since before the war. In some cases queries on other subjects were raised in letters asking for more tickets, we hope these were all answered but if anyone is still waiting for an answer we apologise and ask him to write again. One small problem was how we would get the prize to "Scouse TX Troop" if he won, we knew who had sold the book and hoped he would be able to help. Fortunately the winning counterfoils were clearly marked with a full name and address.

So the night before the draw arrived. At G3CIO there was great activity, three members armed with Pliers, Snipe Nose, were removing the staples from books of tickets whilst another half dozen were separating the tickets and putting them into a large cardboard box to the accompaniment of remarks like "Sgt Major -----, burn it". "Go careful with that one, it's mine!"

On the night of the draw G3CIO was on the air for several hours but only worked one member however MERCURY was being held back and the results were hastily added to the back page. Collating, stapling and postings take a few days so it was the middle of April before most members
learnt who the lucky ones were. The winners were notified by post immediately and the prizes posted within a few days. Gus Taylor GW8PG won the Heathkit Credit Voucher with ticket 7034, F.E. Wylie XYL of G3MEF the transistor portable kit with ticket 1542 and J.A. Shelton GM3TDS the loudspeaker with ticket 8566.

We understand that Gus intends to use the voucher towards a Mohican. Unfortunately Tom Wylie G3MEF has had some difficulties with the transistor receiver but we hope everything is OK now and apologise for the trouble caused.

The aftermath consisted of balancing the books, making the statutory return required by the Act and disposing of over six thousand counterfoils in the clubroom stove.

The results of the President's idea, which are summarised below, have made a substantial contribution to the Society's financial well being. The reaction of members was of almost unqualified support and it was encouraging to see the keenness with which they did their best to "saturate the local market with tickets". Yes, we ran a raffle but you made it a success.

INCOME	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Sale of 6679 tickets		166 - 19 - 6
EXPENSES	£. s. d.	
Cost of prizes	41 - 0 - 0	
Printing, postage etc.	18 - 3 - 11½	59 - 3 - 11½
PROFIT TO SOCIETY FUNDS		£107 - 15 - 6½

PROPAGATION - OR HOW IT GETS THERE

Lt. Col. Sir Evan Y. Nepean G5YN

In the very early days of wireless it was believed that wireless Waves, being of the same nature as light and travelling in straight lines, would only be capable of providing communication over short distances along the surface of the earth. This had been proved conclusively by mathematics and Hertz had shown that they could only be made to diverge from such straight lines by interposing in their path something having properties different from that of air, e.g., a sheet of metal.

Marconi, imbued with the amateur spirit and not deterred by this, had been carrying out experiments in transmission over longer and longer distances. In 1901 he set up a transmitter at Poldhu in Cornwall from which he received signals in Newfoundland. To achieve this the radio waves had surmounted a "mountain", the curvation of the earth's surface, 200 miles high. As the mathematics could not be disproved it was evident that there must be something about the air in the upper atmosphere which was different from that at ground level which caused radio waves to be bent back towards the earth.

At this time it was suggested independently by Heaviside in this country and by Kennelly in the USA that the earth was surrounded by a layer of conductive air which bent the radio waves which had left the earth back to its surface again. It was realised that the rarefied air in the upper atmosphere could be ionised. or rendered conducting by the energy received from the sun.

This was not proved until Appleton and Ratcliffe working at Cambridge carried out certain experiments in 1924 and 1925 in conjunction with the BBC. The frequency of the Bournemouth broadcasting station was slowly varied and the variation in signal strength caused by interference between the direct ground wave and the reflected sky wave noted. From the change of frequency necessary to cause the signal strength to pass from maximum through minimum and back to maximum again the path difference between the direct and reflected rays and hence the effective height of the reflecting layer could be calculated. Figure 1 indicates the geometry of these experiments. Their experiments in fact showed that there was not one simple layer but several layers of ionised gas lying one above the other. The number, height and density of these layers. was found to vary from hour to hour throughout the day and night, from season to season and over a longer period which we now know as the eleven-year sunspot cycle. The part of the earth's atmosphere in which these layers are situated is known as the Ionosphere.

There are thus two methods by which radio waves, excluding VHF waves and above, are propagated from point to point, along the surface of the earth which is known as ground wave propagation and by reflection from the ionosphere. The characteristic of ground wave propagation is that it is only useful for short distances. The wave passing over the surface of the earth induces currents therein. The earth has resistance and therefore extracts energy from the wave. The better the conductivity the lower the attenuation. Thus Ground wave propagation will be best over sea and worst over dry desert. Also the higher the frequency the higher the attenuation and vice versa. Lower frequencies will also be refracted slightly round the curvature of the earth and have their range slightly increased by that means. That is why for local work up to about thirty miles Top Band is usually used employing ground wave propagation. On the other hand for long distance communication via the Ionosphere it is necessary to use the highest possible frequency. This is because the higher the frequency the lower the loss involved during bending at the Ionosphere.

On the other hand there is a limiting frequency above which insufficient bending takes place to return the waves to earth. This varies throughout the 24 hours, seasonally and throughout the eleven-year sunspot cycle.

It was stated that there was a number of conducting layers formed in the Ionosphere. How can this be? In the lowest six miles of the atmosphere, the Troposphere, the constituent gases of the atmosphere are kept mixed by atmospheric turbulence. Above this where there is no turbulence the gases having different densities stratify themselves, the lighter gases rising above the heavier ones. Different wavelengths of ultraviolet light from the sun will ionise and be absorbed by different gases. Thus a number of ionised layers will be formed at different heights. While the sun's radiation is falling on the atmosphere two actions are proceeding, ionisation and recombination by collision between positive ions and free electrons. Thus a balance is struck and the degree of ionisation produced is the result of this balance.

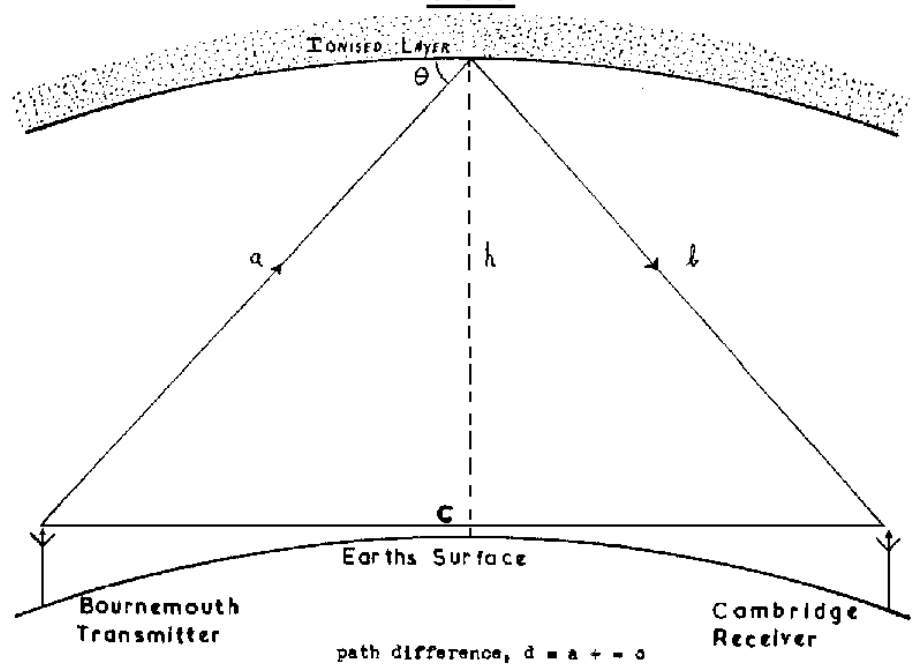
Now let us see what layers have been detected. By day there are four layers. They have been designated the D, E, F1 and F2 Layers. In winter the F2 layer is close above the F1 Layers. In summer the F2 layer is well separated above the F1 layer. At night when the sun's radiation is removed the D layer disappears entirely by recombination. The E layer rises to a slightly greater height and the F1 and F2 layers become one F layer at an intermediate height. The density of the layers is dependent on the intensity of the sun's radiation. This will be greater in summer than in winter and also greater at sunspot maximum than sunspot minimum. Figure 2 and table I indicate the layer positions and heights.

Let us see how the layers affect different frequencies. By day the D layer completely absorbs medium waves. Medium wave broadcasting stations are therefore only propagated to the extent of their direct ground waves. Frequencies equivalent to Top Band are partly absorbed and partly transmitted. Higher frequencies are transmitted. The E layer will then reflect Top Band, 3·5 Mc/s and 7 Mc/s bands giving medium distance propagation. Top Band beyond the limit of ground wave will be weak due to D layer absorption. 14 Mc/s will be reflected by the E layer at oblique incidence giving propagation over rather greater distances with some skip distance. In the morning and evening when the E layer is less dense 14 Mc/s will be transmitted to be reflected by the F1 or F2 layers and the greatest distances will be obtained. 21 Mc/s and 28 Mc/s will penetrate the E layer to the F1 and F2 layers and give the greatest ranges of propagation.

After dark the E layer will reflect Top Band and sometimes very considerable ranges are obtained. 3·5 Mc/s and 7 Mc/s will penetrate the E layer which by recombination has become quite weak and be propagated to great distances by the F layer. Except near sunspot maximum the F layer will not reflect 14 Mc/s. 14 Mc/s and above will thus not be propagated at night except near sunspot maximum. Similarly except near sunspot maximum the F1 or F2 layers will not be sufficiently dense to reflect frequencies of the order of 28 Mc/s. Thus this band is only of use for long distance transmission for a few years near the maximum of each sunspot cycle. However for this very reason it is useful as a short distance ground wave frequency as there is no interference from atmospherics or from stations beyond ground wave range. The properties of 21 Mc/s lie between those of 14 and 28 Mc/s.

No reference has so far been made to "Sporadic E", the Es layer referred to in Table I. This is a thin highly ionised layer occurring irregularly at E layer heights, chiefly during the summer months. It has a high critical frequency and is capable of propagating the higher frequencies over medium distances.

FIG 1



path difference, d = a + b − c

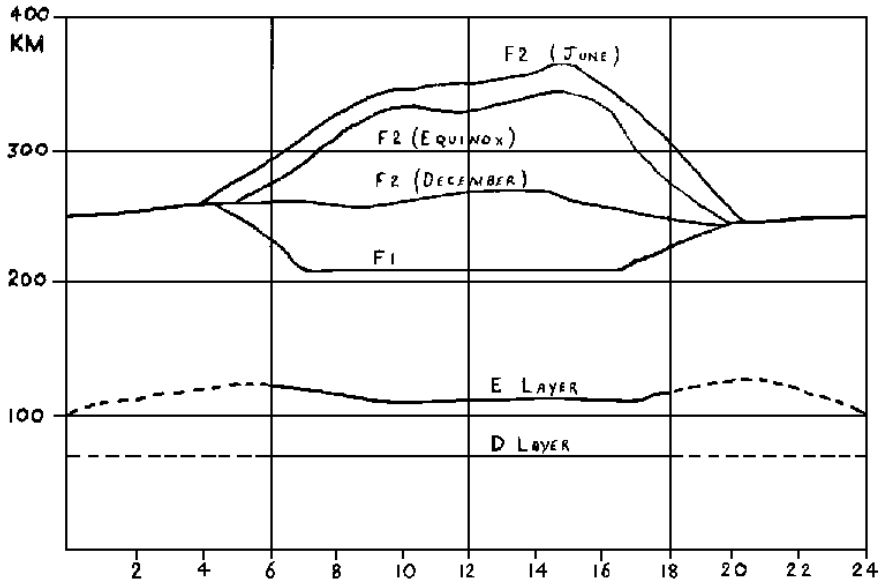
The distances from Bournemouth to Cambridge, c, is known.
The path difference, d, having been calculated, is known.

$a = b \therefore \frac{d}{2} = a - \frac{c}{2}$

$a = \frac{d}{2} + \frac{c}{2}$ and the virtual height, $h = \sqrt{a^2 - \left(\frac{c}{2}\right)^2}$

FIG 2

HEIGHT OF LAYERS



Hours - Local Time

TABLE I

Layer	Height of max Ionisation	Max average Electron density (Ne) Electrons per Cu Cm	Time of occurrence	Ne at sunspot max / Ne at sunspot min	Density of neutral particles per Cm^3	Frequency, fc at 1945 equinox (Sunspot max)
D	60 Km 37 miles	$1{\cdot}5 \times 10^4$	daytime only	2	8×10^{15}	--
E	100 Km 62 miles	$1{\cdot}5 \times 10^5$	24 hours	1·5	6×10^{12}	3·7 Mc/s
F1	200 Km 125 miles	$2{\cdot}5 \times 10^5$	daytime only	1·56	1×10^{11}	4·9 Mc/s
F2	300 Km 186 miles	$1{\cdot}5 \times 10^6$	24 hours	4	2×10^{10}	10·5 Mc/s
Es	100 Km 162 miles	" Sporadic E", unpredictable, predominates in summer.				

fc = critical frequency, the highest frequency that is returned to earth at vertical incidence.
MUF = fc Sec θ, when θ is the angle of incidence at the ionosphere.

Another effect is that of the effect of the earth's magnetic field. This is very complex and can only be referred to briefly. By acting on the electrons set in motion by the passage of the radio waves it divides the ray into two rays polarised at right angles to each other. They have slightly different properties. In particular their critical frequencies will be different, The two rays are known as the "ordinary" and the "extraordinary" rays. The effects are more marked at the higher frequencies. Marked differences in propagation are often noted between rays that are propagated parallel to or across the earth's magnetic field. For short distance high angle radiation, particularly in the tropics, different angles of alignment of the aerial must be tried to see which gives the best results.

Amateurs frequently comment on the different order of frequencies used by commercial stations and themselves for transmitting over given distances at the same time, noting that the commercial station is using a lower frequency than the Amateur. It is necessary for commercial stations to maintain continuous communication. The MUF suffers minor variations from day to day. 'The commercial station must therefore use a frequency that is propagated at all times, at that particular period of day. The Amateur is more interested in occasional long distance communication using low power. The higher the frequency the lower the losses in propagation and the lower the background noise. The Amateur will therefore use the highest frequency that is being propagated at the particular time.

An article such as this can but refer briefly to the better known phenomena affecting propagation. No reference has been made to skip distance as this is covered adequately in the Amateur handbooks. Anyone who is interested in pursuing the matter further in simple language is recommended to read "Short Wave Radio and the Ionosphere" By T.W. Bennington.

THIS 2359 HRS BUSINESS

One of the letters received at HQ, recently asked, "Why is there no such thing as 2400 hrs? We often see 2359 hrs and 0001 hrs but never 2400 hrs".

The writer well recalls being told "There ain't no such thing as midnight, it's 2359 or 0001 hrs" but recent editions of the relevant books do allow the use of 2400 hrs provided one qualifies it with the dates of the days referred to. Thus we can now quite legitimately say 2400 hrs 16/17 MAY, but both dates must be given.

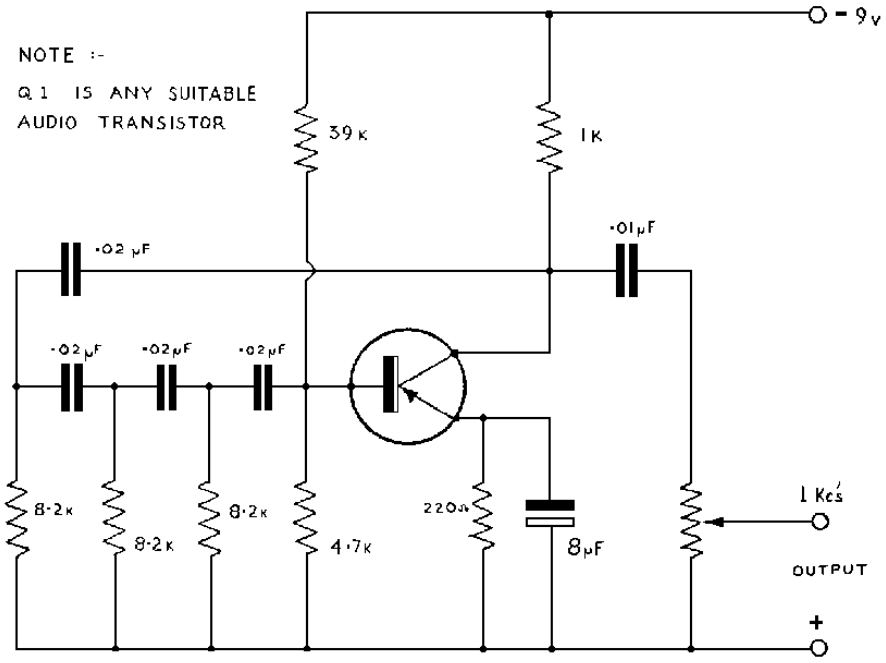
If RSARS ever run a 24 hour contest, we shall reduce it by 2 minutes and say "from 0001 hrs to 2359 hrs on ....."

It's far less confusing.

A USEFUL AUDIO OSCILLATOR

Need a little A.F. oscillator for odd jobs around the shack? Learning Morse? Well why not try the circuit given below.

No transformer is needed for this simple RC oscillator and the largest component is likely to be the 50 Kilohm pot used as volume control. The whole job will fit nicely in a small tobacco tin or similar box.



POTTED PREFIXES
by
TWODEEZEEGEE

PA zero - a henpecked father.
OH - the remark the XYL makes when the OM contemplates a session on the air.
I1 - said by the leading jockey passing the post.
EA - answer by deaf rustic.
SU - a short girl.
PX - the GI's NAAFI.
OQ - commissionaire's request to milling crowd.

Sign outside betting shop - SP all races.
Kissing a YL might bring forth - YU so and so.
Noah was the first radio amateur and is still remembered - AR K.

A Letter from Catterick

The Ham Shack

Vimy Road

Dear OM,

Yes I know it's a long time since I last wrote but the Editor won't give me enough space to make all the excuses I've invented, you wouldn't believe them anyway.

There have been quite a few changes up here in recent months, after several attempts at conversation around the stove in the main club room whilst more energetic types were chassis bashing in the same room we felt some alterations were called for. The main room is not used only for nattering and the workshop is the long corridor in front of the small cells. Power points and extra lights have been installed, lockers for members' gear in the cells give a fair degree of security and no longer will G3CIO be modulated by the sounds of distant hammering. Talking of the modulation of G3CIO, we haven't started keeping cats, GW3RZQ is learning the trumpet.

Among the gang here there have also been changes, Dave Sugden is trying to arrange his Morse Test and hopes to be on with a 9M4 call'ere long. Much to everyone's surprise Terry Richardson, who ran the club shop, was posted recently. He had been in Catterick so long it was rumoured that he was on the R.E. inventory. New faces have included Bill Jones G3JXL and Ron Barrell G3FOP of the civilian staff of 8th Signals and G3UDU of the military staff of 24th Signals. G3FOP is a VHF type and G3JXL a sidebander so between them we may be on SSB on "Bottom Hand" one of these days.

At the other end of the frequency spectrum the Field Secretary has been heard calling CQ on audio frequencies. With two amateurs in the household it's an apt name for a dog.

One of the best signals from the Far East that we have heard for a long time came from 9M2SR the other month when despite European QRM the Catterick operator, complete with duffle coat, had a long QSO with the shirt sleeved gang in the club shack at Seremban.

We were pleased to have a visit from Barrie Clark ex 5B4CL and one of the leading lights of ZC4TX one rainy evening in February. Other visitors to the shack have included several Army Cadet Force NCO's on courses, several of them with their own tickets. If seems that the ACF is one of the main routes by which new amateurs get on the air. On a more exalted level official visits by the GOC Yorkshire District and the Commander Training Brigade have taken place.

National Field Day is in the offing as I write this when we shall once again brave the Catterick climate for a spot known to the locals as Venus's bosom or something similar. After that comes Old Comrades' Weekend and the fun of GB3RCS operation, doesn't seem a year since the last time. Must be getting old or something, the way time flies past.

73

Jimmy

NEWS AND VIEWS

From Catterick

Members who read in the RSGB bulletin that the Society would be represented at the Stoke on Trent Mobile Rally ; and were themselves present will be wondering where we got to. It was our intention to attend but it became clear shortly before the event that, due to various exigencies of the service, there would not be sufficient qualified members available and as a result it was regretfully decided to cancel the Society stand. We offer our sincere apologies to all concerned.

Royal Signals Institution have asked for a complete set of all issues of MERCURY as they feel this will be of historic interest.

From Malta

9H1AA is the callsign of the club station of 234 Signal Squadron, this is the only Royal Signals station on the island and adds yet another country to the list of Royal Signals amateurs. Equipped with a DX100 and an AR88 they are combining with Royal Navy amateurs to operate during National Field Day.

From Aden

The Royal Signals club station VS9ART is in the process of being reactivated. There is a huge backlog of QSL's to catch up on but any RSARS member who has not yet received a card should drop a line to Amateur Radio Club VS9ART, 15 Signal Regiment, BFPO 69. As soon as cards come from the printer short work will be made of the backlog.

From Cyprus

ZC4TX, the club station of 259 Squadron has been off the air for some time having had to vacate the clubroom. New premises are now available near the accommodation and the station is active again. It is hoped the new more convenient location will increase the number of active members. There seems little likelihood of the Cyprus government issuing 5B4 licences again outside the Sovereign base areas, at least in the near future.

From Australia

Ken Threlfall, Member 33, warns other would be emigrants from UK to take their gear with them. Radio equipment of any sort is very expensive and shipping costs involved in taking gear with you are less than the differences in price.

From Devon

G3PYZ at Junior Leaders Regiment, Newton Abbott, is now equipped with a DX100 and has been very active recently. However both the Regiment's licence holders are now at Catterick so there will be a lull in activity, let us hope it is only temporary.

QUOTE - Have worked 32 member stations to date but awaiting return QSL's from a great many I'm sorry to say, pity the poor SWL member.

G3OAZ

AVAILABLE FROM HEADQUARTERS

SOCIETY NOTEPAPER

This is a good quality 10 x 8 inch white paper bearing the figure of Mercury, and the words "Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society - Members Correspondence". The price is 8/4d. per 100 sheets post paid.

SOCIETY QSL CARDS

A new stock of Society QSL cards is now available. The design of the cards has not been changed but the size has been reduced slightly so as to fit standard postcard size envelopes.

Due to the increased cost of printing and postage we regret that the price of the basic cards has had to be raised. For the benefit of members unable to arrange over-printing we can print callsign, name and address on the cards. Basic cards are despatched by return of post, overprinting takes two to three weeks.

The prices are now 35/- for 500 basic cards and 50/- for 500 cards overprinted with callsign, name and address, both prices include postage.

PLEASE USE THE ORDER FORM

ORDER FORM
(Block letters please)

Name .....Callsign .....

Address .....

.....

I enclose Cheque/Postal Order for .....Please supply :-

.....sheets of Members Notepaper at 8/4d per 100

.....Basic QSL cards at 35/- per 500

.....QSL cards overprinted in .....(state colour) at 50/- per 500

Cheques and Postal Orders to be crossed and made payable to
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