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THE NEWPAPER FOR THE HOBBYIST OF VINTAGE ELECTRONICS AND SOUND



British Radio Hoax

Traps "Pirate" Listeners

By Austen Fox

of the latter; anyway, some cynics started whispering nasty innuendos about human nature, and all that.

THE British Post Office has just "put across a hoax" on its trusting public which would make Tammany blush for shame—or, what is more likely, turn green with envy. It all has to do with the affair of the detective "radio cars" created for the purpose of tracking to their lairs "pirate" radio listeners throughout the British Islee. As everyone probably listeners throughout the British Isles. As everyone probably knows, the British radio receiving-set owner must obtain a listener's license at the rate of ten shillings (\$2.50 at par exchange) per year. Otherwise he is apt to have government inspectors descend upon him and padlock his radio set—or collect ten shillings. There is, of course, no danger of getting into jail for bootlegging radio programs over there—not any more than in America for running an "alleged" speakeasy.

Radio Tax Pays for Programs

But the British public as a whole is essentially honest. They go down and buy their licenses at the local post-office because they feel that a government decree or order is made to be obeyed. It has apparently struck them that it is entirely fair to expect them to pay a small license fee, a part of which, at least, goes to the monopoly company maintaining their broad-casting programs. They prefer this to advertising; they feel that they get better programs by such independence from commercialism. In this they are evidently more or less right. At least they do not have to get up every ten minutes to tune out some long speech about the advantages of Pale Pills for Pink Touthbrush as most of American radio listeners do

Pink Toothbrush, as most of American radio listeners do.

After some time, the General Post Office, however, began
to grow suspicious of its honest public. The statistics on sales
of receiving sets, parts, etc., did not seem to jibe with the
number of listeners' licenses taken out. There were too few

with true British caution, they did nothing for a while. They carefully looked over the ground, and discussed the problem from every angle. The general and the radio press likewise discussed it. Nothing came of the fuss, and the Post Office, like Br'er Rabbit, lay low and said nuffin'. The pirating of programs went right on as before. After all, what could they do about it? To maintain a great corps of inspectors they do about it? To maintain a great corps of inspectors would cost more than it was worth. To send a few here and there to catch and punish offenders might be partially effective, but it left the field pretty well uncovered. To spot the pirates otherwise seemed to be just an engineering impossibility.

Radio Bootleggers—Warning!

Suddenly, during the Fall of 1931, the radio public of England was awakened with a violent shock. The Post Office England was awakened with a violent shock. The Post Office authority published an announcement, which was taken up and given plenty of space in the daily and the wireless press, that they were "out to get" these license dodgers, and no fooling about it either. They did not mince words—they said that it was just so much dishonesty, and that they would deal summarily with anyone caught. They were tired of letting fifty to one hundred thousand people sit around enjoying these programs on which the British Broadcasting Company had labored so long and lovingly, all at the expense of the honest people of the island the island.

Being truly British, they were sporting about the warning. They told the people just when they were starting off on their crusade of reform, and they also told just how they were going to achieve their results. A broadcast (Continued on page 874) from the British Broadcasting Company studios, and a broadside in the press, opened the war. On a certain fateful day, named and dated exactly in this year of Our Lord 1931, two or more heavily armed vans (trucks) would set forth, manned by grim, determined engineers, who would stop at nothing (except the houses of pirate listeners), and one after another would bring these evil-doers to justice.

The vans were to be armed with every-

these evil-doers to justice.

The vans were to be armed with everything of the latest in radio direction-finding apparatus, ultra-sensitive and extra-accurate. They were to cruise the streets of London and the suburbs at first, and then go on to other localities. Dark and mysterious would be their movements, they would come with a blast of trumpets, "alarms and excursions off stage". In other words, they would not sneak into a town and catch these good people unaware. They would give everyone fair warning when they were about, and it was just too had for those who failed. and it was just too bad for those who failed to take advantage of this fair play and get their licenses in the meanwhile. They would not question any license which might show a more recent date than the radio set—but Heaven help the poor soul who had none!

For a week they operated with the grim efficiency of Scotland Yard closing in on a bond of criminals, while whole veins of

band of criminals, while whole veins of shivers ran up and down the British radio spine. It was found, said Post-Office author-ities, giving out communiques as from a battle front, that the morning was the best battle front, that the morning was the best time to work, when the husbands were away and the wives were whiling away their housework hours with gay melody. Not three days after the opening of the campaign, there appeared in both the London newsreel theatres—one on Charing Cross Road, the other on Shaftesbury Ave., in the West End, pictures of these wonderful automobiles at work catching pirates. We were shown the pictures of these wonderful automobiles at work catching pirates. We were shown the inside of the "van," filled with lovely direction-finding sets, wheels, and gadgets. We were permitted to see the engineers actually track down a set, and went with camera right to the front door of a house, where the inspector rang the bell, asking to see the license of the householder; and when the good wife admitted, with very evident embarrassment in the face of the camera, that there was no license, she was politely but barrassment in the face of the camera, that there was no license, she was politely but firmly warned that His Majesty's Government would find themselves obliged to proceed against that family to the full force of the law. There we had the working of this new policing system displayed to us in brief, convincing form.

The vans moved on and ever on They

The vans moved on and ever on. They were announced in Richmond, in Westminster, in Mayfair, in Acton Town and Poplar—and the citizens of each of these boroughs. —and the citizens of each of these boroughs, ran shivering to the branch post offices, "queing up" in long lines to wait their turns to pass the government their ten shillings for a slip of paper guaranteeing them protection and peace from the stern vans which so inexorably sought them out. The radio detectives went to Oxford, to Cambridge, to Dundee and Glasgow, and from John o' Groat's to Land's End, heralded far and near by the ever vigilant press and the unbiquitous newsreel. And in Glasgow and in Plymouth, on the Isle of Wight and on Clydeside, the lawbreakers fled to cover themselves with licenses.

New Licenses

At the end of about two weeks, an announcement was made that some thirty to forty thousand new licenses had been taken forty thousand new licenses had been taken out, and that the radio vans were really proving themselves effective. They had, in other words, made perhaps, £20,000 (nearly \$100,000, at par value) for the Post Office and the B.B.C. to split between themselves; and they had installed a proper respect for the law into many hitherto unpatriotic British breasts. Whereupon for a moment they dropped from the public eye.

Can It Be Done?

Until suddenly the public began to take note of the mutterings of a few cynics who had from the first said they did not believe that any such vans could be built. How, said these cynics, could anyone detect a receiving set? Of course, they might wait until some set oscillated, and then take a "bearing" on it. They would then move along til some set oscillated, and then take a "bearing" on it. They would then move along 100 yards or so and wait until the set oscillated again, and take another bearing—"Oh, yeah?" (they are using that expression over here now, thanks to the American talking films.) "That would be just fine; but by the time they had gotten to another spot, the chances were that the listener would have tuned off. Anyway, he would not still be oscillating. They might, of course, try to tempt him to oscillate by doing a bit of fancy reradiation themselves; but that would bring in perhaps twenty people in all the London area—and probably eighteen of those would have licenses anyway."

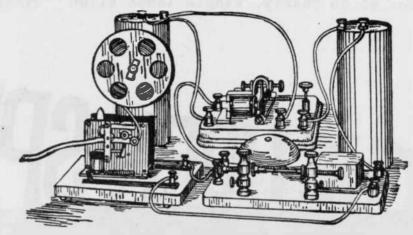
The Secret Is Out

The Secret Is Out

So the secret seems to be that the vans were just used for the publicity they could obtain. At least, the British public is getting very suspicious that it has been badly hoaxed. It is true the van riders rolled merrily along the residential streets twirling their frame aerials and looking fierce, but in reality they listened carefully for any sounds of radio broadcasting that might come through open windows. It has been a fairly mild Fall in England, and the British are fresh-air fiends. They keep their windows open until the last possible moment. Even an amateur detective might be able to learn that some house was equipped with a radio set; and it would not need a remarkable pair of ears to trace it down. It is reported that the van riders went into houses, after listening at doors and windows, whenever they heard strains from a radio.

Anyway, the B.B.C. and the Post Office are rubbing their hands over a tidy sum of delinquent license fees; and the English people, who, in spite of all American belief to the contrary, are quick to see a good joke on themselves, are chuckling at their own gullibility in not even questioning how these vans could find them—the while the Post Office says it has something even bigger and better in the way of "radio van" now coming out, which will detect any metal antenna of over six inches long.

With which, one journalist opines, they will find a wonderful amount of drain-pipes, eaves-troughs, and household plumbing. So the secret seems to be that the vans



3,188.—Wireless recorder outfit. This shows the picture of a coherer connected to a graph relay. This will close a local circuit when the relay armature is drawn again inner contact and will operate the telegraph ticker shown or any other apparatus, even he lighting of lights or the starting of machinery. In this way torpedo boats and marines may be controlled by a wireless transmitting station if the boats be equivith a coherer set for receiving and closing the circuit. Also a decoherer is used to the coherer and break the circuit. This has not been developed to a commercial subscause of the delicate adjustment required for the coherer and the liability to interfeby foreign disturbances. In the European war the system has played no important

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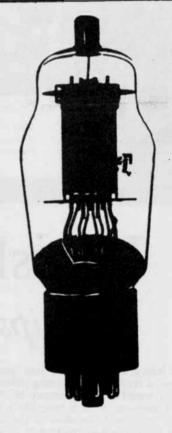
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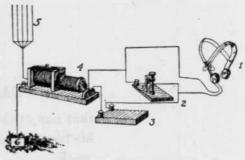
Meadow Drive, Dallas, Texas 75217. Subscription rates are \$8.50 per year, \$15.00 for two years. Second class postage Silver paid at Dallas, Texas. POST-

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Early Detectors

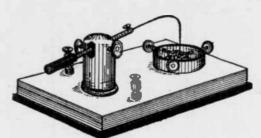
Before 1920





RECEIVING APPARATUS

eceivers for ears; 2, detector; 3, fixed condenser; coose coupler; 5, aerial; 6, copper plate in ground.



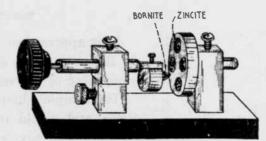
Holder for Galena and Silicon Crystals.



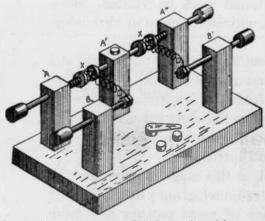


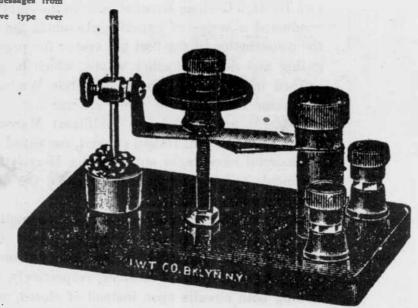
DETECTOR

sensitive type ever



The Zincite Bornite Detector.

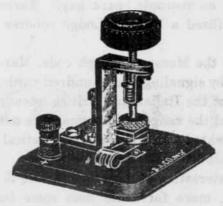




Crystal detector with double adjustment. This instrument is particularly designed to readily allow the delicate adjustment of any crystal or mineral. The very finest micrometer adjustment can be had by simply turning the hard rubber knob. It has two adjustments, one by means of the sharply pointed rod which can be lifted up or down and the other by the knob.



ming signatus



E. I. CO., 1913

Peroxide of lead detector. A flat piece of peroxide of lead is clamped between a platinum surface and a flat piece of lead. Binding posts connect to these two electrodes and are marked + and -. The positive pole of a battery is connected to the platinum electrode at the binding post marked +.

Sources for illustrations: Hawkins Electrical Guide No. 8, 1917. Practical Vireless Telegraphy, Elmer E. Bucher, 1921. Modern Electrics, August, 1908. . astisis on here.

RADIO UP TO THE MINUTE

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS OF RADIO

It is appropriate that any explanation of radio to the uninitiated should include, however brief, something of the origin of the art.

The complete history would require several volumes and would include the efforts of experimenters who have contributed to the final result. but who did not in their day even dream of what they had individually assisted in constructing.

The radio art owes its origin to Professor Heinrich Hertz, a German scientist, who in the eighties conducted a series of experiments which led to the construction of the first apparatus for propagating and detecting ether waves, which he described in 1888 in his book "Electric Waves." Professor Hertz's work, however, was not fully proclaimed until Guglielmo (William) Marconi, then a very youthful Italian student, conceived its commercial advantages and utilizing Hertz's experiments and his own ideas originated the first practical radio stations.

Hertz, the pioneer, had understood and applied the principle of resonance. Marconi took the Hertz oscillator and resonator and adapted them for a transmitter and a receiver, respectively, by making both circuits open instead of closed, and grounding the antenna. Tuning between the transmitting and receiving antennæ in this pioneer work was accomplished by increasing or decreasing the capacity of the plates on top of his aerials.

In his experiments Hertz had used for a detector a microscopic spark gap. Marconi in his work utilized a Branley-Lodge coherer as a detector

Using the Morse telegraph code, Marconi commenced by signaling a few hundred yards, but with the aid of the Italian and British governments he increased the range of his apparatus until he had demonstrated that radio was a practical commercial possibility with unlimited scope.

It is interesting at this stage to note that Signor Marconi, more fortunate than some famous inventors, surrounded himself with associates who had the foresight and imagination to picture the future possibilities of the new science. It was this

that has enabled Marconi to-day, in the prime of his life, to reap the material benefits of his pioneer

No historical reference to modern radio would be complete without appreciating the experiments of Sir Oliver Lodge, the famous English scientist who, as early as 1888, experimented along the lines originated by Hertz and contributed valuable aid towards making the art the success of today. Later Professor Lodge was to become associated with the Marconi interests, as also was another eminent Englishman, Professor J. A. Fleming, who has contributed to the radio art several valuable text books. In fact, it might be stated that he was first to write any substantial work on the subject. Later he was to revolutionize radio with his original work on vacuum tubes, which we will deal with in its place or chronological order.

Following Marconi's entrance into the field and the filing of his first patent in 1895, radio telegraphy was taken from the academic to the commercial stage and from that date various improvements by innumerable experimenters have followed with endless repetition.

It may be stated, at this stage, without fear of contradiction, that radio telegraphy and telephony has been productive of more patents and more patent litigation than any other science, art or industry invented by man. Patents issued to date in the United States and foreign countries already number tens of thousands. Litigation upon the subject has littered the courts. Reference to all who have contributed to the art can, therefore, not be made within the scope of this volume, and any neglect to give credit, where credit is due, is not premeditated. We will endeavor to give the reader only the principal events which seem to occur, as it were, as stepping stones in radio engineering.

Following Marconi's commercialization of radio, as we may term it, came rapid developments on both sides of the Atlantic.

Nicolas Tesla, in 1897, introduced the tuned transmitter and receiver, or what was to become known as the two circuit transmitter and receiver, which was eventually to lead to much litigation in the courts. In 1898 Marconi patented his first double circuit receiver, retaining, however, his original plain aerial transmitter. Della Riccia, in the same year, adopted a closed and open oscillatory transmitter, while Braun and Stone, in 1899, both devised inductively coupled apparatus.

Ducretet and Pupin, in 1899-1900, it would seem,

EARLY DAYS OF RADIO

were the first engineers to resort to what is known as conductively coupled circuits, which were used most successfully commercially for a number of years prior to the introduction of radio laws and regulations. After the promulgation of these laws, conductively coupled circuits became impractical as the wave emitted did not comply with the requirements of the new regulations.

In 1900 Signor Marconi and Professor Braun shared the Nobel prize for their efforts in the radio field. This was the first public recognition of the new science and an acknowledgement of its importance in the scheme of human events.

High Spark Frequency.—Wireless telegraphy had now reached a stage when its study attracted the brightest minds of the scientifically thinking world.

All the earlier equipments had employed as a primary source of energy induction coils, with various means of breaking the direct current. Owing to mechanical difficulties these "make and break" devices were necessarily slow in action, with the resultant low spark frequency. The manipulation of these early equipments required considerable skill on the part of the pioneer operators to maintain a "spark," indeed, the old time radio telegrapher, in despatching a batch of business, necessarily would conduct a series of experiments during his efforts.

These induction coil sets gradually gave way to "power" sets, in other words, alternating current supplied by motor generators, supplied the power source. The usual commercial frequency of sixty cyles was first employed. While the practical operation of radio apparatus was immeasurably improved, the low spark frequency objection still remained.

Fessenden appears to be the first radio engineer to suggest a remedy to low spark frequencies and apparatus known by his name appeared which gave forth a high musical note and did much to overcome "static" or "atmospherics," which has been and continues to be the bugbear or hoodoo of radio.

A German system known as "Telefunken" also utilized a high frequency alternator to produce the high musical note.

These high spark frequency equipments utilized either rotating gaps to convert sixty cycle alternations or "quenched" gaps. The latter are used almost exclusively in modern equipments, owing to their efficiency in their "dampening" effects.

Perhaps we should here remind the reader that a full or comprehensive study of the above men-

EARLY DAYS OF RADIO

tioned apparatus will be found in the portion of this work devoted to practical radio, and no effort is made in this chapter to an explanation of their construction or functioning.

While the development of radio was progressing rapidly, during the decade of 1900-1910, the "spark" was practically the only system used in commercial wireless telegraphy. Great progress, however, had been made in what is to-day known as the "continuous wave" or the "arc" systems. As the former term indicates, this system employed a continuous or "undamped" wave as its principle.

Poulsen was the originator of the "arc" method, while Alexandersen produced a high frequency alternator, which, while having a comparatively low rate of R. P. M., delivered an exceedingly high frequency. Both systems are used extensively today by operating companies.

An evolution of the vacuum tube, dealt with later, also produced another form of continuous wave radio transmission, which can be said to have put radio telephony where it is to-day.

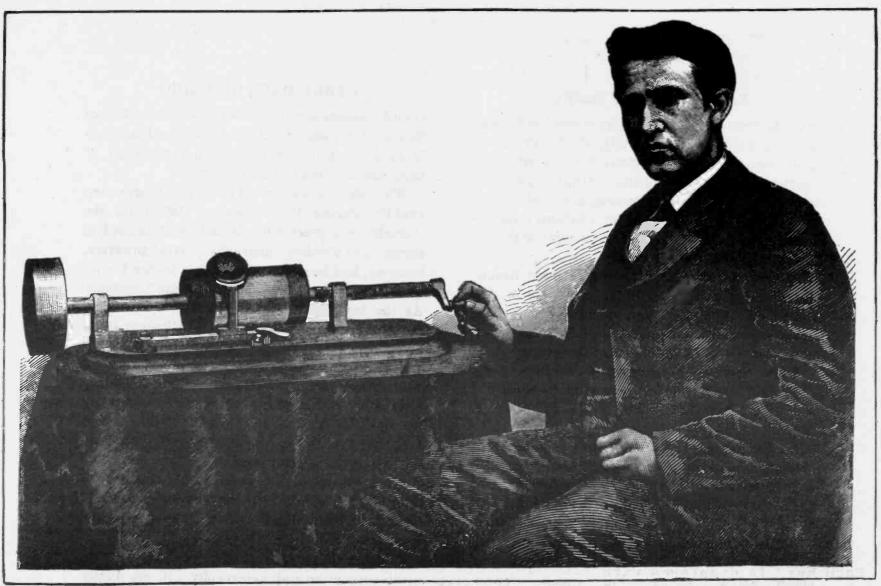
Undoubtedly, owing to its greater efficiency, continuous wave radiotelegraphy will eventually displace the spark systems, although, especially on shipboard, both systems are often used in one station. This, however, is merely as a convenience and a necessity under existing conditions, as a complete change from one system to the other would be too radical from a commercial or practical point of view. It is one that will come very gradually.

It will now be necessary to go back to the comparative early days of radio to bring the reader to the development in the science, which possibly, has resulted in the astonishing, and we might say, miraculous results that are obtained to-day.

Vacuum Tube Discovered.—Professor J. A. Fleming, after associating himself with Marconi, developed what is known as the "Fleming Valve." This invention was to be the most important development in the radio field.

The Fleming valve was inspired from the effects of the Edison incandescent electric lamp, and takes us into a study of the "electron theory." Thomas Edison, the inventor of the lamp, had experimented in its pioneer days and discovered that by placing a plate within a bulb separate and untouching the filament, a flow of electrons was observed from the filament to the plate.

Fleming, casting about for an improved detector, studied this effect and discovered that this flow of electrons was always in the same direction



Edison at the age of 31 years old

Scientific American, July 6, 1878

THE PHONOGRAPH AND ITS INVENTOR, MR. THOMAS A. EDISON.

EARLY DAYS OF RADIO

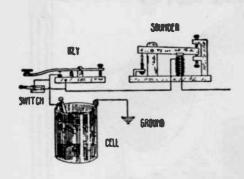
and of a negative nature, flowing from the heated filament to the cold plate. This flow could be controlled by inserting a rheostat in the filament circuit and increasing or decreasing the filament current. These valves when properly constructed made excellent detectors for "spark" radio signals.

After Fleming's valve came the discovery by Dr. Lee DeForest, of the "three element" vacuum tube, which he called an "audion." DeForest inserted what he termed a "grid" between the filament and plate. This was possibly the most important discovery yet made in the new science of radio, and during the years of the World War, was to revolutionize the art. With the coming of the audion, methods of amplifying or increasing the intensity of radio signals were devised.

One method of amplification, discovered by Armstrong, then a Columbia University student, was the "feed-back" or "regenerative" circuit, which is now almost universally used in radio practice.

A full description of vacuum tubes and associated circuits is not intended here, but will be found under that caption in the practical course which follows.





THE K5RW COLLECTION OF WIRE AND WIRELESS TELEGRAPH KEYS

The K5RW collection is a private musum of wire and wireless telegraph instruments. the collection consists of 197 pieces. most are semi automatic keys or "bugs" as they are most commomly called. There are approximately 100 different "bugs" in the museum, making it one of the largest collection of "bugs" in the world. there is also an assortment of spark, wireless, radiotelegraph, landline and submarine cable instruments. the museum can be seen by appointment. Visitors are always welcome.

Each key is displayed with an I.D. card that shows the date that the key was made, the manufacturer and model number, the original owner and any historical innformation. Some of the more interesting keys in the museum are a 1904 Vibroplex (first model), a Marconi key that uses ball bearing at the fulcrum, a rare Australian vertical broadside bug, a 50 amp spark key, an early mechanical code trainer known as the Omnigraph, a Bunnell key that was used on thee "pony wire" at the RCA Rocky Point / River Head Long Wave wireless station and a Creed paper tape reader from a Trans- Atlantic cable station.

The museum also contains a large collection of resource material pertaining to keys, the manufacturers and the people that used them. Many personal accounts are recorded by letter and on tape.

The largest assembly of resource material and memorabelia concerns T. R. McElroy, the world's champion telegrapher and radio- telegrapher. (McElroy's record, set in 1939 remains unbeaten to this day.)

Resource material is being put together on the Martin, Vibroplex and United Electric Vibroplex and United Electric precision rebuilt -- it's quite get on a regular basis. So, in keys. A comprehensive list of a radio -- and I think the top the future our second class major models has been compiled. collector's item of them all. mail might be much faster.

also a list of domestic makers of bugs is continually being updated as is a list of pre-

1926 wireless keys.

Fiding a new tidbit of information about old keys is as much fun as finding an old key. so research into the "Gol-den Age of Communication" is an ongoing activity.

The search for new keys and related instruments continues. Priority is given to spark keys, rarer Vibroplex/ Martin models, off-brand bugs, landline apparatus and sub-marine cable instruments. Secondary priority is given to

wireless components.

Curator of the museum is Neal McEwen, amateur radio operator K5RW (formerly K5ZJP). He is 39 years old and has been a ham for 25 years. He is married, father of two children and employed as a research computer programmer by an en-

ergy company.

Neal saw his first "bug"

at age fourteen and that's when his fascination for keys and telegraphic codes began. Several years ago he decided to start a small collection of "bugs." The deeper he got into it the more interesting it became. (Did you know that there has been more than fifty different firms that manufactured "bug?") The small collection soon became a large collection and Neal's interests expanded to other telegraphic instruments as well.

At present the curator's interests address all areas of telegraph and radiotelegraph instruments and history. There is so much to be learned, so much interesting history and so many instruments to be rescued from obliven that Neal plans to continue present activities as a lifetime advocation.

73 de K5RW B. Neal McEwen Richardson, Texas

Mailbox

Dear Jim,
You've got the best paper of all of them-- you should raise the price to a least

\$10.00 a year.

Jim, at \$750.00 they cost more than a Ford, Chevrolet or Plymouth in 1936.

I've got the latest model and have nt found the others yet.

Oh yes, heard there were only 400 built--...

Some people are asking \$5,500- (LA) - \$6,000 (Monterrey Calif. for them.

If you want more info or pictures front and back-- can send them.

Art Corbus EDITOR... Thanks for about comments Stratosphere. Please send more information and pictures. Information came from the Columbus Georgia Auction that a set like yours sold for a similar price.

Can you give me any information on collectors of old radios.

I have a Zenith, one of the first kind made and the Zenith Company of Glenview IL/ says it is of some considerable

> Thanks Stella Filley 317 N. Center Cameron, MO 64429

Dear Jim:

Why dos it take so long for my copy of THE HORN SPEAKER to get here?

I received my April issue

today -- May 1st.. Several times I have called someone who is advertising a radio that I want, only to find that the radio had been sold, days before.

would be happy include first class postage the next time I renew.

C. H. R. Sheboygan, WI

EDITOR... First class is \$15.50 a year and anyone's subscription can be pro rated to first class.

We got behind on our mailing schedule several months ago, but we will catch up during the combination months of June July and August. However, remember that all the regular second class subscriptions are mailed at the same time.

I have just received information that now there is a I've got a Zenith way for monthly publications to Stratosphere now-- it's receive the fast mailing that absolutely beautiful and weekly and daily publications

THE WHOLD WILLY THE

2445 LYTTONSVILLE ROAD SILVER SPRING MD 20910

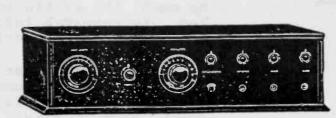
"Also can provide reprints of the following Olde Tyme Radio publications:

Atwater Kent Instruction Manual

Atwater Kent Equipment Catalog

* Radiola III manual

of the Switch and Flick Vintage Radio.





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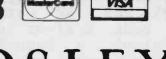
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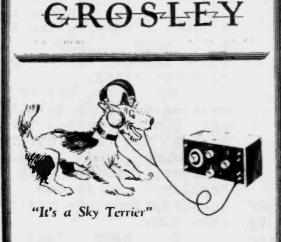
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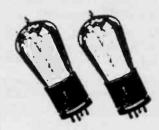
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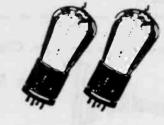
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I attended a meeting of AWA at Augusta, Georgia, March 26th and met some nice there. Had a good "antiquers" meeting and a flea market and some bargaining afterwards. Most of fellows were from Georgia, Alabama, south Carolina, Florida and my wife Alabama, south and I from Miss...

By the way I need a single volume control for an AK 60C. ... Good luck to all V.R.P.S. members.

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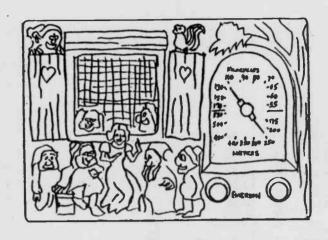
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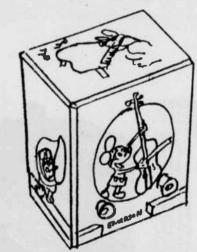
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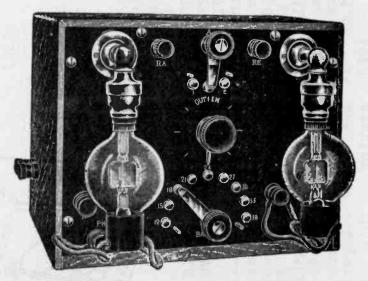
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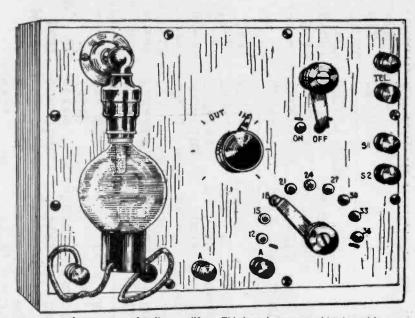
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