

licence. As with our Class B licence, operation is 144MHz up, but also with 10 metres and Top Band operation allowed. The prefix used is 'R, and these calls will be familiar to 10 metre operators. There are a number of grades within the VHF licence, which permit varying powers to be used.

The full Shortwave licence requires the knowledge of Morse code, and allows use of all bands and all modes, except RTTY, for which special permission has to be obtained. Again, there are 3 sub-classes of the licence, restricting bands and modes. Morse tests and the equivalent of the RAE are held at Regional centres. Full shortwave licence holders use the familiar U prefix.

The SWL's mentioned earlier can operate the club stations, which use the UK prefix. One of the favourite activities is Contests, an activity which is encouraged by the Radio Sports Federation of the USSR, and who work out their own internal contests which are extremely popular.

As with most other countries, the USSR has further callsign blocks allocated by the ITU, the only other the writer can remember being used is 4L1, from the 4JA-4LZ series.

### Equipment

As many operator will know, much of the equipment used in the USSR is home brew, with very little of the transceivers we are used to available. The magazine "RADIO" publishes designs, including the Radio 76 and Radio 77 transceivers which many stations use. Contrary to what you may think, some of these designs are very state-of-the-art,

with high dynamic range — a contrast to the transmitters which often chirp and buzz around the bottom end of the bands!

### Satellites

The Russians were first in the satellite field with the Sputnik, and also have their own series of amateur satellites. The first two of these were launched from the Plesetsk site, 475 miles north of Moscow in 1978, and in all 8 have now been launched, their use being similar to the AMSAT series. The latest of these carry ROBOT, and automatic QSO machine and log keeper on board. Automatic announcements along the lines of the AMSAT Codestore are also possible. The method of communicating with these can be found elsewhere, but you need to send good CW, otherwise you won't get very far.

### Awards

If you do work a lot of USSR stations, then you can apply for some of the awards available, via P.O. Box 88 of course. These consist of the R-6-K Award, for one contact with each of Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South Americas, Oceania, plus three QSO's with European RSFSR, and three with Asiatic RSFSR. Each of these awards is available in three classes, the First class for all contacts on 3.5MHz, Second for 7MHz, and Third for any bands.

The R-100-O Awards is for 100 confirmed QSO's with different Oblasts, and the R-150-S Award for a DXCC type award — 150 countries confirmed plus 15 Soviet Union Republics.

