Yes, I've got some observations. First of all, thanks for the kind comments. But to the matter in hand. Yes, I've heard that valve cathodes can be stripped by premature application of the HT supply. However the observed facts don't fit precisely. I have a number of old mains radios (they are something of a hobby with me) which warm up with HT present... they were designed that way. No ill effects. Secondly, although the HT is present all the time on my linear, the electron stream is cut off by keeping the grid 1 bias volts on and taking grid 2 to cathode potential. This cut-off phase also applies to the warm-up period.

It is interesting to note that you must keep the PA valves shut off during receive because the standing bias current causes a significant amount of white noise on the other side of the aerial changeover relay. This could adversely affect the receive path noise performance.

Re. your query on the step-up transformer in the grid circuit, that's just a simple autotransformer wound on a ferrite 'braid breaker' core. The core is a 1cm square of ferrite with two thin holes through the middle. The core is wound with a total of six turns of 24swg wire tapped at four turns for the drive input.

Frankly, the actual shape of the ferrite core used is relatively unimportant. Providing that the cross sectional area is equal to that of the average pencil, the permeability is at least 200 (most are) then it should be OK. Anything sold as a balun core will almost certainly be suitable. I suggest a 'suck it and see' approach. You can't do any damage. Good luck — Ed.

NORTH SEA OIL RIGS

Sir, The *Syledis* navigation system, used mainly in the North Sea by the oil exploration business, has caused problems to UK amateurs using the 432MHz band for some time. Initially *Syledis* chains were set up temporarily where and when required, but subsequently installations became permanently established. These permanent chains do not transmit continuously, but are switched on automatically by a mobile unit requiring a navigational fix.

Unfortunately for the amateur population, the 430-440MHz band is allocated on a primary basis in the UK to radio location, with amateurs having only secondary status. The amateur population has therefore no right to demand that interference from *Syledis* cease. What is also unfortunate is that the frequencies of operation chosen by the manufacture of the equipment, and subsequently allocated by the Home Office, coincide with part of the DX Communication end of the 432MHz band.

A paper presented at the *Electronics in Oil* conference held towards the end of last year in London gave some details of the system, and indicated the frequencies used by the service. The frequencies mentioned are 432.563MHz, 432.513MHz, and 432.463MHz for the Primary Group, and 432.383MHz, 432.303MHz and 432.144MHz for the Secondary Group.

Although the Home Office have been approached about the situation, at present they are not prepared to alter the status of amateurs on 432MHz. So for the time being, UK amateurs are, by the terms of their licences, obliged to avoid these frequencies, so as not to cause interference with the primary service. I would be grateful if you could convey this information to your readers so that they are aware of the situation, and realise which frequencies in the band they should avoid.

MALCOLM APPLEBY G3ZNU
CHAIRMAN, VHF COMMITTEE, RSGB

DISGUSTED, DEVON

Editor, I wrote to a component firm in Brentwood, Essex, to ask if they would let me have a key to the list of linear ICs which they advertise. Of course they referred me to their catalogue; but why should one have to pay to find out what they are advertising?

Now if *you* would publish a list of linears, showing what the things are for, you would please advertisers and constructors alike.

JIM BOURNE

TELEVISION BANDWIDTH

Sir, I was interested to see the article on ATV in the March issue. This seemed to give a fair picture of ATV as it is today, though I for one regret it. I have used ATV since 1964 but am rarely on now, and watch less and less as time goes on because over the last few years ATV, on 70cm anyway, has become largely a pointless black box activity with the usual black box disadvantages. That is, operation with minimum equipment and even less know-how!

Colour operation was mentioned but it was not pointed out that operation with commercially available transmitters on PAL colour is a contravention of the licence conditions. You work it out: they transmit a double sideband signal and a PAL signal requires over 4.43 (in practice over 5.5) MHz of information. That is, the transmitted bandwidth is in practice over 10MHz, in a band only 8MHz wide!

In several cases, including the Fortop transmitter, there is no provision for sound modulation, either in the middle of the passband or anywhere else, so use would represent another licence contravention. Now we all know that when it comes to policing the bands — even on sound — the HO/PO are pretty incompetent so the chances of anyone being done for such a breach on television is fairly remote. However it would indeed be a pity if a lack of information in a magazine article were to be the cause of one of these unknowledgeable black box operators losing a licence.

A JAQUES G3PTD

The notes on frequency checking equipment on the back of the amateur licence say that "When determining the proximity of an emission to band-edge, the bandspread due to modulation, on the appropriate side of the carrier, needs to be added to the frequency tolerance of the carrier.". So even the daftest of the daft need to take the bandwidth of their signal into account, whatever mode, television or not, they're using.

PAL colour signals can be contained in an 8MHz band by using a vestigial sideband filter, to cut off the high frequency components in one of the sidebands. Although this technique is universal in television broadcasting transmitters I've seen no mention of it in amateur circles. However I wouldn't be surprised if the BATC cogniscenti solved this one years ago. I'd like to publish a design for such a 70cm VSB filter. Any offers? — Ed.

SHOCKING

Sir, Tut tut! How long have the Channel Islands been off the tip of Cornwall? (Your map on p7 of *Ham Radio Today*, May 1983.)

You publish a great mag, but your geography is shocking!

H E HOGG

I cannot tell a lie. I haven't the foggiest idea why we printed the Channel Islands in such a Scilly place — Ed.

PERSONAL PREJUDICE

OM, An excellent and thoroughly readable magazine, spoilt only by the apparent personal prejudice of the Editor against the RSGB.

Reasonably low key in the first two issues, this prejudice shows up very clearly in the third.

The RSGB is a National Society (indeed the only National Society) which represents the interests of British radio amateurs. The only qualification for membership is an interest in amateur radio, and no licence of any sort whether Class A or Class B or whatever need be held.

There are no faceless beings at RSGB HQ who control our destinies. The administrative staff who work there are the paid employees of the Society, and the views, opinions, decisions and aims of the Society are those of its members and of their representatives as voiced through the various elected committees.

The RSGB membership embraces an extremely broad cross section of Society both men and women, young and old. The technical abilities of some of its members extend no further than the RAE whilst others are in the top bracket of technical expertise.

It comes somewhat hard therefore to find this large body of enthusiasts labelled as "benign", elderly and "fuddy-duddy". Now I am a member of the RSGB, and whilst I may admit to being benign on occasion, and whilst "elderly" may be a matter of opinion, I do not consider myself to be "fuddy-duddy" and I extremely resent being so called.

Reference the RSGB being against Class B CW on 144MHz. If this is true as you assert then there must be a valid reason for it, other than the curious and selfish reasons which you, by implication, put forward. Furthermore if, as you claim, some confidential information was "leaked" from a closed committee meeting then it seems to me that the corrupt attitude of the person who leaked it is equalled only by that of the person who purveys it in print as unsubstantiated second-hand gossip. It would be interesting to know whether the RSGB was asked for its reasons regarding the above before you knocked it so hard in your column.