

My early mobile installation on 2M included a Withers halo on the top end of a metal rod which used to slide down behind the hinges of the back doors of the estate car. It always struck me as amazing how Tom Withers' halos seemed to remain shiny and bright, and looked brand, spanking new for years. It was not for 10 years or so that I eventually found out what in reality had been happening, surprisingly regularly. Every few weeks my wife would forget that the halo was up, and would drive into our garage, and just before coming to a halt would hear once again the expensive crunching noise heralding the destruction of yet another halo. This was invariably followed by my wife making a fast trip to Withers' original factory in North Enfield, where apparently she got a good exchange deal of new for old, being easily Withers' best customer for halos. At the time, rather a strain on the housekeeping!

#### Accidents can happen

There are some occasions when it can be very embarrassing to be transmitting inadvertently. I can well remember twenty years ago one amateur who had very bad asthma as well as an incredibly loud parrot (which used to over-modulated like hell) and who was given a bottle of scotch on New Year's Eve. He drank the entire bottle over a three hour period, as all good Welshmen do, followed by the loudest final I have ever heard, his speech becoming more and more slurred and wheezy followed by a bump and happy snoring. The following morning, he was discovered still snoring by his rig which was still transmitting happily.

My own terrifying moment came when twenty years ago, my lovely fluffy white cat switched on my transmitter with her back left foot, and when I came home I proceeded to have a slight disagreement with my mother-in-law just outside the shack, not realising the rig was on! Before long, my telephone rang and a friendly local amateur warned me to what was happening, amid much loud laughter from his end.

We can all do quite ridiculous things at times, and I can be as stupid as anybody. So now you can all have a laugh at my expense if I



admit to something really crazy. I used to have a Withers crystal controlled valve converter for 2m whose output used to be plugged into my normal receiver. One day I commenced loading up on 14MHz, into what I thought was my aerial, but the anode load and tune controls seemed to be in very strange positions indeed. After a short while, there was a most expensive smell coming from the gear which turned out to be my Withers converter going up in smoke as I was attempting to tune up 100W of RF into its output stage, back to front as it were. The manufacturer said he had never seen one of his converters in such a mess before but perhaps a few readers have even

more crazy stories to tell! Has anyone heard of anybody loading up the overhead power cable of a disused tram line anywhere on top band yet?

On one Scottish holiday, while mobile near Loch Lomond, we stopped to transmit in a village, attracting the attention of a couple of small boys. Soon they were sitting in the back of the car, eating our toffees. It was a good location, and I decided to amaze them with a tour of the furthest points of the globe. No reaction from the lads, so when the toffees were finished, I said brightly, "well, what did you think of that?". A pause for reflection, and the more talkative of the two said, "Can ya no get France?".