

ferrite and iron dust cores for the new coils, please?
Rae Forth, G4JMT

Malcolm Healey, G3TNO, replies. The coil formers that we used in fact came originally from TV tuners; the former and slug being the IF output coil. These were obtained from an emporium in Tottenham Court Road. (Scrap UHF (and VHF/UHF) television sets are an excellent source of these components — Ed.)

Sir, in connection with the design of the antenna tuning unit for two metres described in the December edition of Ham Radio Today, can you please explain:

1. The purpose of sockets SK3 and SK4?
2. Why a simple length of coaxial cable connected in series in the signal path is described as a transformer?
3. Baluns?

Despite wide questioning and reading I have yet to find anyone, fellow amateur, lecturer, shop proprietor or author, who understands what a balun is or does and can explain it to me. Perhaps you can.

G.R. Gilbertson

If you wish to use the ATU with a balanced twin wire feed (100-200 ohms) then this must be fed in at SK3 and SK4. The ATU will match single wire antennas of 100-300 ohms impedance if they are fed in at SK3. Low impedance coaxial-fed antennas should be fed in at SK2. The 'simple length of coaxial cable' acts as a balanced step-down transformer when fed with a high impedance balanced feed at SK3 and SK4.

As far as I am concerned a 'balun' is any device that converts an unbalanced, or coaxial feed, to a balanced feed. When one wire of an aerial feeder is at earth potential (i.e. the braid of the coaxial cable) and the other (i.e. the inner of the coaxial cable) is at a potential above earth this may be termed an unbalanced feed. When both feeder wires are at an equal potential above earth this is termed a balanced feed. Unbalanced feeders are noisy, radiate, spoil the radiation pattern of your antenna and can lead to RFI. Balanced feed antennas should, if properly installed, be free of the above problems.

SAVE OUR CALLSIGNS!

It was recently announced that "all existing G5 + 3 letter callsigns will be phased out by the end of the year".

The majority of radio amateurs probably won't have paid much attention to this — "Oh yes, of course, they're going to let foreign visitors use their own callsigns — a much better idea, really". Few people seem to realise that this does not just affect a small handful of foreign holidaymakers, but about 600 (six hundred) foreign nationals permanently resident in Britain, some of whom have lived here and held their callsigns for a decade or more, and all of whom have

ordinary British amateur radio licenses which they renew on an annual basis just like everyone else.

Like most people, we are very attached to our callsigns — and not only that; losing them will also mean

— Piles of QSL cards will go to waste, and a fortune spent on having new ones printed

— We will have to start from scratch on many awards which have to be worked under one callsign

— Worst of all: WE WILL LOSE OUR IDENTITY both on the air and in amateur radio circles off-air.

I was told that the reason we have to give up our callsigns is that the Radio Regulatory Department has introduced a simplified way of listing licences to foreign tourists — which in itself is certainly not a bad thing. However, why this new regulation should affect us, people who have lived here and held British amateur radio licences for many years, I simply do not understand. TO ME, IT JUST LOOKS LIKE AN ACT OF BUREAUCRACY AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FOREIGN-BORN UK RADIO AMATEURS.

There does not appear to be any plausible reason why they should want to rob us of our callsigns. Do they want to re-issue them when the G1 and G0 series have run out? It's possible, but not very likely — after all, they did say, not long ago, that existing callsigns would not be re-issued (and just imagine the confusion it would cause if they did re-issue our callsigns, especially seeing that QSLs often arrive years after the actual contact).

However, if they do want to re-issue existing callsigns after all — WHY OURS? Of course they couldn't really revoke all the G3, 4, 6 and 8 licences — there are just too many of them — but how about G2 + 3 letters . . . ? They are just as much of an 'anomaly' as our callsigns, but I am sure no one would dream of revoking them unless all other licences were revoked at the same time.

With the exception of the old TV licences (G6 + 3 letters), no one has ever lost their callsigns in this country — and I understand that those who had TV licences had their TV callsigns as secondary callsigns, so they only lost one of two calls. (Yes, OK, so you get a new callsign when you pass your morse test — but that is an entirely voluntary thing — also, you don't lose your old one, as you can always take it out again).

It will cost RRD hundreds of pounds in administrative costs to revoke all 600-odd G5 licences and issue an extra 600-odd G4, G0s, G1s. To me, this seems like an utter waste of money, especially in view of the recent 50% increase in our licence fees.

If all radio amateurs in this country were to be given new callsigns, then, obviously, I wouldn't mind losing mine. But it seems extremely unfair that a small group of radio amateurs should be signed out and discriminated against in this way. Angelika Voss G5CCI

G5 licencees are currently in the process

of getting together to organise a 'save our callsigns' campaign. Unfortunately, they have been unable to get in touch with all the G5s, as the RSGB Callbook does not seem very accurate in this respect, possibly because many G5s are very mobile. G5s who have not yet received a letter about the campaign should write to the following address: 'Pannonia', Oxford Road, Manningtree, Essex CO11 1BN.

SILVER 70 REVIEW

Sir, I feel I must write in answer to some of Trevor Butler's remarks in his review of the 'Silver 70' antenna. After 9 months use and exposure to weather at 30 feet agl I have had no need of any maintenance of either the driven element or reflectors. As for birds perching on the elements and causing them to slip I have noted on several occasions upwards of 20 birds perched on my antenna. None have perched on the elements but they have at times completely filled the boom, with no ill effects.

I fail to see how a bird will or can perch on a $\frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter element and even if it did, dislodge the clip.

Thanks for an interesting magazine, well worth the cover price each month and keep up the interesting reviews and constructional articles.

M. Howden, G6JKP

After a discussion with Trevor, we are of the conclusion that the birds in your area must have different roosting habits to his. Birds frequently and indiscriminately perch on his elements and on occasions have been completely successful in their efforts to unseat them. Trevor's 'Silver 70', as it happens is presently on the ground undergoing maintenance for 'weathering'. Trevor lives close to both Gatwick Airport and a brickworks; perhaps the corrosion is due to a mixture of aeroplane fuel and brick fumes? Come to think of it, he looks rather poorly these days . . .

G5SO?

Sir, I read with interest the article 'Radio In India before World War 2' by George Metcalf, G6VS, in the December Issue of your Magazine.

I was particularly interested to see among the QSL cards one labelled G5SO whom I knew before the War. He was a member of the Blackpool and Fylde Shortwave Club. Unfortunately I have forgotten his name but I have often wondered what happened to him and I wondered if any of your readers knew him and could enlighten me.

Finally, may I say how much I enjoy reading your Magazine, keep up the good work.

DR MB Carson

Please address correspondence to:
Ham Radio Today,
1, Golden Square,
LONDON W1R 3AB.