

10 MODE 1
 20 * FX 6,0
 30 * LOAD PICA
 40 * GDUMP 0,2
 50 * INIT.
 RUN

Additional Equipment

I have now made two additions to the initial equipment. I obtained a special Jaybeam crossed dipole assembly, designed to resonate at 137 to 138 MHz, and fitted to this the preamplifier unit designed by Timothy Edwards (reviewed in the January 1983 issue of HRT). The preamp, which is not much bigger than half a match-box, has to be mounted within five metres of the antenna; using a plastic 35mm film holder to house the amplifier (wrapped in some sponge-type plastic), I connected it to the antenna with a 1' length of URM76 50ohm cable terminated in a 'N'-type plug (a hot soldering iron can be used to make reasonably neat holes at either end of the film holder). I used low-loss coax to connect the preamp to the receiver, with an extra single-core wire for the 12V power supply, these two leads emerging from the lid end of

the box. To finish off, I covered the whole assembly, including the plug, with stretched self-amalgamating tape, and taped the coax and the 12V feed to the mast to avoid stress being applied to the preamp terminals.

The difference this made was quite amazing. With the 2 metre dipole that I had been using, the time that was available to obtain a picture was perhaps 15 minutes. With the new antenna, its reflector and pre-amp, I appeared to have reception over the whole time the satellite goes from one horizon to the other, about half an hour! I can recommend that anyone interested gets the antenna which is designed for the job.

The second change which I have made is to use the AR4200 scanning receiver. With this not only can I receive NOAA9, but I seem to be able to receive some satellite or other at most times of the day, including a number of Russian ones and NOAA 8. Of course, the scanning receiver picks up numerous transmissions of interest on other frequencies within its range. Well worth the extra, I thought, for the additional facilities it gives.

All in all, I have found myself an absorbing interest. It seems to take precedence over actual transmitting, at least for the moment — every available moment I pop into the shack 'to see what's on'! The next step is to obtain a dish in order to receive Meteosat on 1.69GHz.

The quality of workmanship of the assembled units, the crystal controlled receiver WSAT Rx, the interface, (IF 2.0) and the pre-amp, WS-pre, I found to be excellent. Timestep Electronics themselves are very helpful in answering queries from an absolute greenhorn in this subject. I can thoroughly recommend receiving weather satellites for any amateur who wants a 'change of scenery'.

The crystal controlled receiver, WSAT Rx, costs £79.95, and the scanning receiver, AR4200 is £269. The interface unit IF.20 costs £88.50 and the Matthew Atkinson EPROM, EPROM WS 2.0 is £37.50, the WS-pre pre-amp £10.95 and J beam's crossed dipole with reflectors (2X-WS) £34.50. Timestep Electronics Ltd, are based at Wickhambrook, Newmarket, Suffolk (phone 0440 820040).

HALBAR

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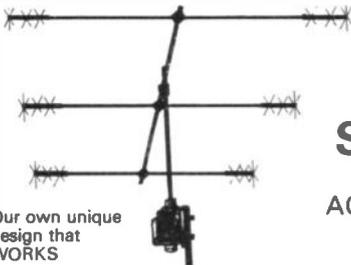
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Typical performance

Antenna model	AQ-20/2E	AQ6-20/3E	AQ40/2E
Forward Gain Dbd	3.8 to 4.8	5.5 to 7.5	3.8
Front to Back Db	13 to 15	16 to 18	12
Side Null Db	25	25	20
VSWR (typical)	1.1:1	1.1:1	1.1:1
Weight	7.5lb	12lb	12lb
Wind load	2ft ² 0.18M ²	3ft ² 0.27M ²	3ft ² 0.27M ²
Turning radius	76"/1930mm	96"/2438mm	114"/2895mm

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