

effort that goes into learning the morse code it is not too surprising that many take a rest from CW when they first get licensed, although the vast majority do return to the mode later. In my case it was an extreme case of laryngitis which caused my return to the key, after a few days continuous usage I was hooked again. Over the years I have found myself using the mode far more than SSB and have found that one thing that increases enjoyment out of all recognition is fitting a CW filter.

On the crowded HF bands listening to CW through an SSB filter can be very tiresome as you try and sort out which one of the signals you are supposed to be listening to. When I finally fitted a filter in my rig I was staggered at the difference, which was comforting as it cost rather a lot, and invited some of the locals around for a look. None of them had ever heard a CW filter in use before, but afterwards they all went out and bought one for their rigs too.

However, I recently listened to a very modern synthesised "miniature" transceiver, and was

rather disappointed with the CW filter. Although the nose selectivity was quite good, the skirt rejection was rather poor which had the effect of only attenuating adjacent signals somewhat, instead of removing them altogether. It may also be due to signals "sneaking around" the filter because to its small size and the very dense component layout on the PCB. It would seem advisable to listen before you buy.

Audio CW filters are quite popular, especially as they are far cheaper than commercial crystal CW filters. They suffer from the slight drawback that all signals that pass through the SSB filter can affect the AGC response of the receiver, even though most of them will be inaudible through the AF filter. This can cause some confusing effects occasionally, but they are still a very useful device.

And Finally . . .

That about winds up my mental meanderings and hopefully one or two readers might be spurred into

giving HF operating a more serious attempt. The problem of radiating RF from confined spaces are so varied that it is unlikely that readers will find specific solutions here, but that was not the intention. What was intended was to point out just some of the ways that HF aerials can be manipulated from their intended shapes and yet still prove to be effective. Once that has been realised, it should be possible to re-appraise the situation and put up an aerial at virtually zero cost. That way if it turns out not to be so hot then no money has been lost, but some experience has been gained.

There will undoubtedly be those who disagree, possibly strongly with some of my findings or opinions on technical grounds, but they represent what happened to me in practice rather than any attempt to refute existing texts. It all comes down to the fact that no two QTHs are ever the same, especially where confined space is a problem, and it is up to each individual to experiment and find out what works best for them. Given some patience and a modicum of common sense the results will be well worthwhile.

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