

WITH SPARE DETECTOR

By Ron Ham

A receiver from the 1920's which incorporated two crystal detectors.

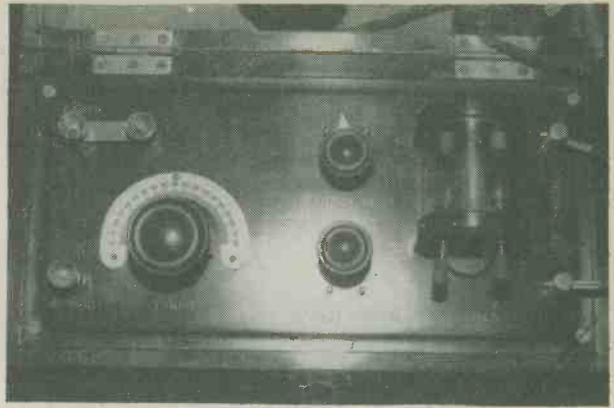
Occasionally an early set in good condition appears in a second-hand shop and through the vigilance of David Rudram of Worthing the British Thomson-Houston crystal receiver seen in the photographs was rescued for posterity.

DOUBLE CAT'S WHISKER

Two features of this set are the double cat's whisker and crystal unit mounted on the right of the ebonite front panel and the use of a variometer for tuning. The polished wooden cabinet with its



Overall view of the receiver, complete with headphones. The "Instructions For Using" are mounted inside the receiver case lid



The front panel of the BTH Radiola receiver. The tuning control, with scale, is to the left, and the dual crystal and cat's whisker unit is at the right. The top central control is a condenser selection switch and the lower central control switches in either of the two crystals

lid closed measures 11½ in. by 5½ in. by 8½ in. high. After a good clean up both the BTH insignia, under the carrying handle, and the BBC approval label were found intact. The letters "BBC" are encircled by the usual words "Type Approved By Postmaster General", and another outer circle is inscribed "G.P.O. REG. No. 106".

As can be seen in the second photograph, the instruction card is mounted inside the lid. It is dated January 1925 and is followed by the words "Form 1996-A Fourth Edition" which, coupled with the extra circle surrounding the approvals label, made both the owner and the writer conclude that this was a special purpose set. However, a dig in the writer's early radio magazines revealed an advertisement in *Wireless Weekly* for October 22nd, 1924, which identified the set as "The Radiola Model A" and described it in the following manner.

"This set is provided with two crystals, and if one ceases to function, the other can be instantly switched into circuit. The normal range for telephony is 30 miles, but a greater range is possible under favourable conditions. The tuning is simple and selective."

The price was quoted as £3. 10s. A pair of "B.T.H. 4000 ohm Head Telephones" could be obtained for £1. 5s. extra.

SELECTIVITY

Like all enthusiasts, David has tried the set out, and its selectivity between BBC Radios 1 and 4 in his area is surprisingly good. He found also that one crystal is slightly more sensitive than the other.

During the magazine research, another advertisement for BTH receivers was found in *Wireless World* dated December 24th, 1924, which showed an almost identical set, but with a larger cabinet and a valve built in. This was the "Radiola 1 (Valve Crystal) Receiver" and the advertisement stated: "This is the ideal set for Head Telephone reception up to 100 miles. Two crystals, with change-over switch, are provided."

The price, "with enclosed H.T. battery and B.5 valve", was £9. 15s. Again, BTH 4000 ohm headphones could be bought for £1. 5s. extra.

Should any readers have comments to make about these sets the writer would be pleased to hear from them. ■