

NEWCOMER'S

There's always something new to be found in amateur radio no matter how many years spent on the air.

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Everyone is a newcomer to amateur radio at some time or other and even the most seasoned of us regularly stumble across new facets of the greatest of all hobbies. Even the editor of Ham Radio Today, Frank Ogden G4JST, admits surprise at the depth and variety he found in amateur radio when he got his G8SNW ticket four years ago. And this, he says, was after more than 20 years playing around with RF complete with skull and cross-bones flag hoisted up the aerial attached to his ex-WD No. 22 set. They're coming to take you away, Frank. (*Oh no they won't because I'm going to scrub this bit — Ed.*) Kidding aside, this is the purpose of the column — to introduce, inform and delight people about amateur radio.

Above all, I need your help. This is a FORUM where we can share ideas and problems but this cannot be done without input from our readers. If you have any specific problems or ideas, (or even hints and tips) you would like to see sorted out in this section, then please write. I will do my best to sort them out, as space permits, but will be unable to assist with personal replies.

The odd piece of construction should also find its way in — if you have any ideas then send them along — they may also find their way into the Technical section. We would like to make this the best of the Ham Radio magazines available and with your help it can be done.

Since the author was licensed, one major change that has occurred within the hobby is that of what may be termed the 'engagement' to amateur radio. The practice of Short

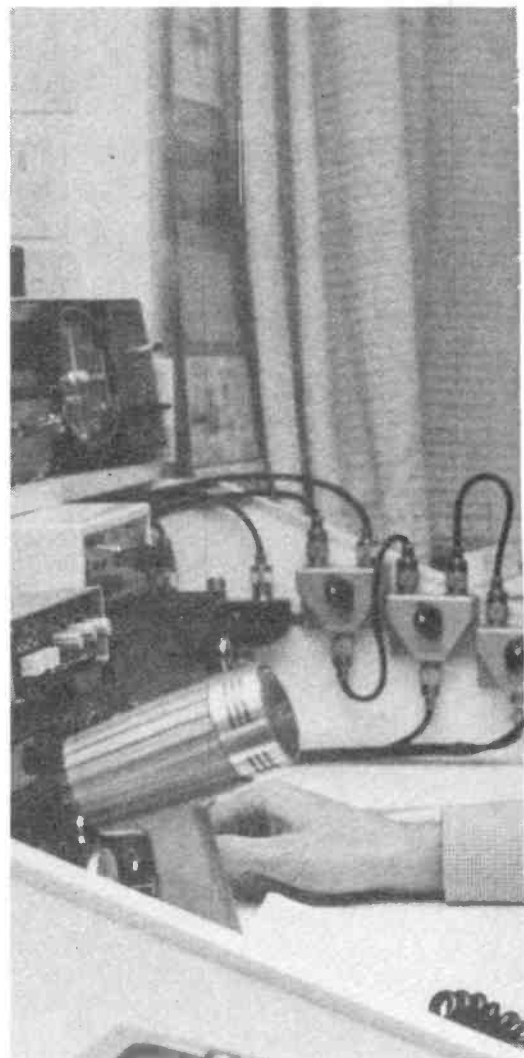
Wave Listening was obligatory to anyone intending to obtain a licence, during which a great deal of the operating techniques used both on HF and VHF were acquired for putting into practice later. During recent years, this process of familiarity has fallen into disuse, one major contributory factor being the advent of legal CB, with many CB'ers forsaking their limited access to the radio spectrum in favour of the wider horizons and considerable 'magic' of ham radio, but without the SWL background they would once have had.

'Ham radio'? Shouts of horror from many quarters can be heard, but the term seems to be accepted these days without the derision it would once have had.

QRZ, QRZ?

Back to operating. One of the consequences of less introductory listening is that the newly licensed (and not so newly licensed) amateurs use many of the terms in everyday use without really realising what they actually mean. The writer's prize one is "The fading is caused by the QSB", but this may be an extreme example. A more common misuse is with the term QRZ. The international meaning is "Who is calling me?", when suffixed by a question mark. A frequent statement is "QRZ the station on this frequency?" even when said station was known to have been calling CQ. If he had been actually calling you then the correct response would have been "QRZ? This is G3WPO". Otherwise QRZ is not a suitable term anyway.

The whole question of the use of



Q Codes on telephony is one that has been debated in the past. I personally regard it as part of amateur radio, much as other hobbies have their own jargon. The argument against using them in conventional QSO's has its merits, but the chances of their use being restricted to CW only is pretty remote. Old habits die hard.

One piece of operating practice worth adopting is that of listening on the frequency you intend to use before making any transmissions. On VHF FM simplex I have often heard stations make contact on S20, then gaily fly off to a nominal channel without checking it first. Chances