

LETTERS

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TOP BAND

Frank, Thanks for the February issue of *Ham Radio Today*, which I'm pleased to see is just as absorbing as the first. The KW2000 series is excellent.

Could I make this one plan — don't leave out Top Band. It is too dear to the hearts of many people.

In many respects 160m is different from the other amateur allocations. It is the amateurs' only test area for MF propagation, a subject that could no doubt fill a whole chapter of your series on the mechanics of the ionosphere. In home-brewing, the low frequency allows a high standard of construction with easily available and cheap components, yet there are problems in the size of antennas and some tuning elements. It is a band on which dx-working and rag-chewing exist side by side and on which AM is not yet considered 'old'.

Some of the above comments might apply to 80m too, but it is perhaps the area of operating procedures that is of greatest interest. How about an operators' guide to 160m in a future issue? What are those coastal station frequencies to avoid, what are the allocations to overseas amateurs, the DX window, the squiggles and bangs we hear? A lot of this worthwhile information seems thinly spread throughout many publications and some is not easily available to the average amateur.

Maybe I've missed some previous definitive article somewhere, but please don't give God's given band the cold shoulder!

STEVE RICHARDS G4HPE

I wouldn't dream of it. I love Top Band too. You have put forward a great idea for an article. Anybody prepared to take up the challenge? We pay jolly well — Ed.

HELP, PLEASE

Dear Ham Radio Today, I have just read your first magazine and found it very useful especially the bit on propagation, which helped a lot with my short-wave listening.

My receiver is a Lafayette HA 700 and virtually unknown as I haven't seen any articles on it (hint, hint). But my receiver has a send facility with the

SSB, CW and AM modes and I would like to know from your technical staff what modes it transmits on and also how can it be made to transmit as there is no plug at the back saying where to put a microphone or morse key.

There is a small hole at the back and I wondered if a plug was connected here and wires soldered inside.

Please could you help (I'm on my knees) as I'm hoping to take the RAE next year after my GCE's and CSE's and it would save me some money if I could have this conversion done.

PAUL MARTIN

Sorry Paul. I don't know your set. Maybe somebody else does and would be kind enough to write in. — Ed.

THE PROFESSIONALS

Sir, Of course the RAE is easy when looked at through the eyes of the electronics and radio professionals who hide behind amateur radio call signs. They also have an eye to business, hence the proliferation of radio and electronic magazines containing technical reviews with complicated circuit diagrams which use abbreviated technical jargon which no-one else understands. These people should be called radio professionals and issued with an extra prefix in their callsign, eg. GK4XYZ where the K means know it all.

Also, don't forget that no specified qualifications are required to sit the RAE, (Marconi hadn't any). Indeed, it is not even obligatory to have taken an RAE course.

R.T. FINCH G4PNE

Um, Yes. But what exactly is your point, Mr Finch? — Ed.

THE BIG WAIT

Frank, Here's to success on the launching of "H.R.T."!

I am a SWL, currently studying for the RAE for May '83 and fully intending to make a beeline for a G4 ticket. As my practising speed is now around 18 WPM I am going to take a gamble (?) and apply for a morse-test before sitting the RAE. There are too many delays if you go through the slow

sequence of RAE — WAIT MONTHS FOR RESULT — APPLY FOR G 6 — WAIT MONTHS FOR LICENCE — TAKE MORSE TEST AFTER WAITING MORE MONTHS AFTER APPLICATION — APPLY FOR G4 LICENCE — WAIT AGAIN FOR G4 PASSPORT. So I reckon it's worth taking a gamble.

Another reason for by-passing G6 stage is the apparent state of 2 metres. It's becoming another waveband for CB'ers and having to use repeaters isn't my idea of communications. You can't beat the unpredictable HF bands!

I must say I like the look of your new magazine. *Practical Wireless* and *Short-Wave Magazine* are superior to *Radio Communication* for beginners content but it looks as though you may become No. 1 (!!!)

Is it possible for you start a regular feature giving approximate up-to-date value of both valve and solid state receivers, transmitters & transceivers, old or new, as a guide to the less informed SWL/HAM NOVICE etc??? All the very 73's on your new venture.

BRIAN PATCHETT

Thanks for your comments, Brian. We plan a regular 'Glasses Guide' type feature — Ed.

PARROT FASHION

Sir, I am writing to congratulate you on a superb first edition and to wish good luck for the future (not that you'll need it!)

I would also like to make a few points on matters raised in your letters column.

Firstly, I would like to defend CW. It is difficult, indeed tedious to learn morse but it does give a great deal of pleasure in use and is still the best mode for effective mode of communication.

As for homebrew, I build all my own equipment. This is partly due to financial considerations but mainly because I enjoy building something with my own hands then hearing it work.

Finally, the RAE. I am disheartened to read in *Rad Com* this month that while 67% of candidates passed, the C & G noted great weakness in the 'electrical theory'