

# NEWCOMER'S

**Licence conditions, how often should you utter your callsign, thieves, rotators, aerial design and decibels are just a few of the topics covered this month**

## Letters

Kathryn Jackson, G6LHY, queried whether I knew my Licence. Well, I knew I had one somewhere, and eventually found it, so I can confirm that mine reads the same as yours! I can see the reasoning behind your query, and it all hinges on the actual wording used in the Licence. It says "each period of sending", and not "each transmission", which is subtly different. The latter would make it obligatory to use your callsign at the start and finish of each individual over. The words "period of sending" are quite a lot less demanding, and I believe were substituted to this form somewhere in the 1960's to reflect the problems raised by the growing use of SSB and VOX. These made telephone style conversations possible, whereas previously with most activity being on AM, the overs tended to be complete in themselves, as they are now with a lot of FM.

The "period of sending" can encompass a complete QSO, from start to finish, hence the requirement for repeating the callsign if the time exceeds 15 minutes. It allows natural conversation without callsigns being repeated ad-nauseam every few sentences, which is the point I was trying to make in the January issue.

In practice, very few people will go a whole 15 minutes without callsigns, and it is very much up to you how often within the 15 minutes you do state you call. Certainly in a net of several stations, you would be advised to use it more often, otherwise it is difficult to know when a station has finished his (or her) over.

Also, there is no requirement in the Licence for the callsign of the station being worked to be repeated at any particular interval. In fact, it doesn't ask you to say it at all, except

indirectly under section 2(d), when it requires you to establish communication initially with each separate station contacted. Of course, it must be entered in the log book. Again, a relaxation for Nets, so that a large one doesn't get bogged down with regurgitated callsigns every over.

Of course there are stations who don't use their callsigns very often, or if they do, omit the prefix for some reason best known to themselves, witness a certain nightly net on 80m. Besides making it very annoying to listen to, you should hear the number of times one station stops talking, and several others then all chirp in at once for instant chaos!

dbW	Power (W)
9	8
15	32
16	40
20	100
22	160
26	400
0	1

Table of dbW terms used in amateur licence vs actual power (50Ω system)

## Morse methods

Roger Stroud, G4PSJ, writes to say that he found the best way to learn Morse was to take it in 15 minutes periods maximum at a time, but lots of these, filling up your tea and dinner breaks with practice sessions, and adding at least an extra two sessions in the evening. This method got him the pass slip in the period between the RAE and the results of same coming out. I would agree — don't do too much in one sitting or you will probably end up slowing down rather than speeding up.

Another of Roger's tips was the result of having a 10 metre dipole

up, but finding that the band had closed the time he got home. So, armed with the right lengths of wire and some croc clips, he lengthens the dipole the right amount for 15 metres and then works the DX there! A useful idea, and one which could be usefully extended to the other bands, even if space is short. Providing the main centre portion of the dipole is in the clear, this being the high current part which does the majority of the radiating, then what you do with the rest won't make a lot of difference to the signal. bending it around will tend to mean the aerial needs to be shorter than the calculations will tell you, but this can be determined with the aid of an SWR Bridge (preferably one using some form of transformer coupling, as these tend to be more accurate than the cheap trough line type) for general use.

## Watch what you say

Very few of us stop to consider who might be listening when we are gaily chatting away on the air. Most of the time it doesn't matter, but there are occasions when you may later regret particular statements. I am referring in particular to those stations who happily inform the world on one of the 2m FM channels (and heavily monitored if you think about it) that "I'm out for the day, got the XYL and kids with me, be back late this evening".

There are those who will delight in this type of information, and later relieve you of much of the contents of your house, and or shack. 2m rigs are cheap to buy and provide an ideal monitor for thieves. So don't make the sort of statement above over the air, no matter how tempting it is to tell your mates where you are going.

On the above subject, one of my locals, Mick, G6MYB, recently awoke to find that he had been visited in the night. The shack is outdoors, luckily the rig was