

Ripping Yarns

By Angus McKenzie G3OSS

Ants in the Ant.

You may wonder what on earth the heading actually means but in fact it bales the descriptions of one of the funniest episodes experienced by the writer in his enjoyment of the amateur radio hobby over the last 23 years.

It was in 1962 that I had put up an enormous G3BXI tower in the garden, a with a builder digging a six foot hole in the ground, in which to put the mast's pedestal. At the top, above a Ham M rotator, was mounted a huge double-V beam, with three elements facing upwards for 20m, and three hanging downwards for 15m. At the centre of the radiator, was a matching box of metal, on which were mounted two SO239 sockets, one for each band, and two variable capacitor controls, the capacitors being mounted in-



side. Two glass insulators interconnected with matching arms, which fed the radiator a few feet away from the centre which was earthed to the box and tower. So what could go wrong? The mast went up and down like a yoyo with a Croydon motor system supplied by the manufacturer, so that I didn't have to go out to the garden and crank the tower up and down, but simply press a button. The first problem was the Council, for one or two Finchley residents had grumbled. The planning officer came round and explained that I needed planning permission to develop half a square foot of land which was the area of the mast. This seemed pretty crazy to me, but I had to admit that I should have asked for planning permission in the first place, despite the neighbours on both sides agreeing to the installation. Many people came round to see the antenna, and eventually, permission was granted, the then Mayor of Finchley being a keen short wave listener! After about two years or so, I started getting alarming television interference complaints. Everybody in the road was moaning that their screens were flashing once every