

LETTERS

POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Sir, I read with interest Brian Ewing's letter in October's HRT, and noted with disgust the manner in which he tried to trivialise the point I originally made. These days, if one is to believe letters, editorial etc, in radio magazines, much thought is given to protecting the image of amateur radio. It is therefore dangerous for someone who is openly connected with the hobby, or who holds a position in a national body connected with it, to make political statements. These may be taken to represent the opinions of amateurs in general. The nuclear balance is an issue of world-wide importance, and is currently good news value for the media, unlike Mr. Ewing's "free range eggs" or "gay lib", and in a sense the Patron of the RSGB would have been just as unwise to express opinions *against* nuclear weapons. It is not at all relevant whether that agrees with my own supposed political "bias", although I doubt whether Mr. Ewing would have liked it and he would probably have been the first to complain!

To be fair to HRH Prince Philip, by the way, I have made a point of obtaining a copy of his speech. I note that the nuclear issue was only touched upon in passing. Perhaps I have done him an injustice, but not half as much as the media who focussed on that small part of the speech and gave it prominence.

Mr. Ewing accuses me unjustifiably of writing letters only tenuously connected with amateur radio. Not so. The public behaviour of prominent members of the RSGB, and their treatment by the media, is of direct concern to us.

P. Thompson

I take your point Peter, but I do feel that we should all be free to make political statements – although the more responsible the position we hold in society the more careful we should be of making the point that it is our own personal view that is being stated, and not necessarily that of the organisation or body we represent. . . which neatly brings to the next body of letters. . .

BACKWARD BABOONS – FAIR COMMENT?

Sir, As one of the "backward baboons" who passed the RAE multiple choice examination a few years ago (it was the first such RAE), may I be permitted to grunt a few comments on the astonishing outburst of invective which appeared in your October 1983 issue –

written it seems by one "the honourable – I passed the written exam" – Frank Ogden, G4JST.

I agree with Frank that our ranks are now filled with undesirable types who are a disgrace to the much-vaunted "spirit of amateur radio". A few years ago one expected fellow amateurs to be polite, courteous, helpful and tolerant individuals who would do anything to help a fellow amateur. Yet, what do we find but a vociferous group of trumpet-blowing egoists whose arrogance almost takes one's breath away? Yes, Frank, the attitude of some amateurs has indeed changed regardless of their self-proclaimed technical expertise.

I first studied for the RAE thinking that I would be attempting the old-style format which was identical to various school/university exams which I had taken twenty years ago and which by "question-shooting" (and luck!), one could pass by mugging up 30 to 40% of the topics.

Let's face it, the old style exam was also a "piece of cake" and the *percentage* of candidates who passed it was no lower than with the current multi-choice type which can at least cover the entire syllabus. The real difference between the last of the old type RAEs and the new type is that in 1983 there are thousands of new people aware of amateur radio instead of hundreds in, say, 1973. We all have an elitist streak in us but it is no use trying to put back the clock. The days when the "real amateurs" using a hammer and a screwdriver could knock up a one-valve CW rig with massive point-to-point wiring is gone for ever.

I look forward to *Ham Radio Today* moving forward under the guidance of someone "of a higher calibre". Best of luck.

Arthur Tait, GM4LBE

(Hon Sec Lerwick Radion Club, GM3ZET)
PS. If I were not such a "backward baboon", I might have signed the letter with my other "written exam" qualifications: Arthur Tait, BSc., C.Eng., MICE, MIWES, MIPHE, (GM4LBE)

Sir, I just had to write about Frank Ogden's "Comment" in this month's (October) issue. It was outrageous to say the least; for someone in his position to make such remarks is beyond me.

Peter Stonell (G4TLB) sums up my comments in his letter (OTT in the same issue) when he said "You are far too out of touch to be the Editor of this magazine". He is right, and I for one am

very glad that Frank Ogden is going.

I cannot understand why the magazine printed it knowing the harm it would do to our hobby and I am sure you will lose many readers over this article.

There is only one "backward baboon" and it must be Frank Ogden.

V H Dann, G4PPD

Sirs, The bigoted and unjustified views of the current state of Amateur Radio expressed in Frank Ogden's editorial (HRT October) cannot pass unchallenged.

In the gospel according to Frank, a radio amateur is a person with considerable technical knowledge who constructs his own equipment, which is fine for Frank because he has and he does. But there are many amateurs making valuable contributions to the hobby whose interests do not lie in construction. These folk may organise and participate in contests, work with Raynet, organise DF hunts or edit their local club's magazine. According to Frank they are not radio amateurs.

With regard to the RAE, I would agree that, as with many examinations, there is room for improvement in the syllabus. Did not the City and Guilds of London Institute recently invite comments and suggestions on the syllabus? (In my view there should be a separate paper devoted to operating practices and procedures.) In HRT it is reported that 2226 people failed the RAE all of whom, together with those that passed but obtained "only" pass grades or "only" one credit are "backward baboons" according to the Editor. How dare Frank use such insulting language about people who may have spent many months studying for an examination in which they may have had little previous knowledge.

Frank mentions interesting conversations he has had with unlicensed pirates. Let us hope that Frank values his licence at least to the extent that these conversations took place face to face and not over the air.

I wish you well in your new publishing venture Frank, but hope that the next Editor of HRT at least believes in the future of the subject about which he writes.

D W Green, G40TV

Sir, Frank Ogden leaves HRT and takes a swipe at amateur radio enthusiasts. Where does he and other biased people get the idea that only "real" hams spend all their time building bits and