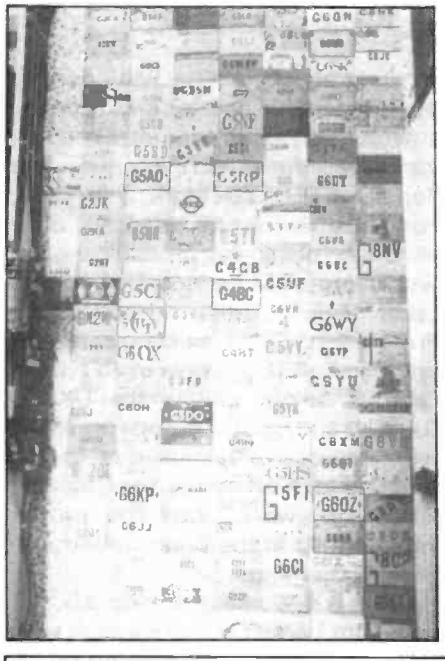
Ern, G6GR, in the well-equipped shack.

radials at about 60 feet is employed and offers many good contacts. For VHF/UHF operation, an FT225RD multimode is available with an FDK700E plus transverter for 70cms, and if my eyes did not deceive me, there is a rig for 11m in the corner.

The walls and numerous shelves of this very homely-from-home shack are crowded with memorable items from radio and television days past, including 200 pre-War QSL cards (some from the first stations licensed in various countries and many before prefixes were thought of) and a multitude of radio receivers, televisions and a 1918 SW tuner. The latter is described as a MkIII tuner and is in mint conditions; it was originally used by aircrews for spark contacts to their ground controls, and later by Ern and his father for their first amateur contacts in about 1922.

The morse key, often heard on the air, is a 1917 AT&C double current with reverse polarity and is in fine working order albeit slightly modified to meet today's requirements. An electronic 'el-bug' key is, however, available for those who prefer.

Some of Ern's collection of vintage QSLs.



It transpires that G6GR was legally transmitting television before the BBC, and whilst working professionally in the early days of television, Ernest liaised closely with Messrs. Marconi and Baird. In fact, by 1933 Ernest had set up his first trading outlet, a retail shop in Conduit Street in London's West End, selling early television spares: do any of our readers remember the Radio Reconstruction Company?

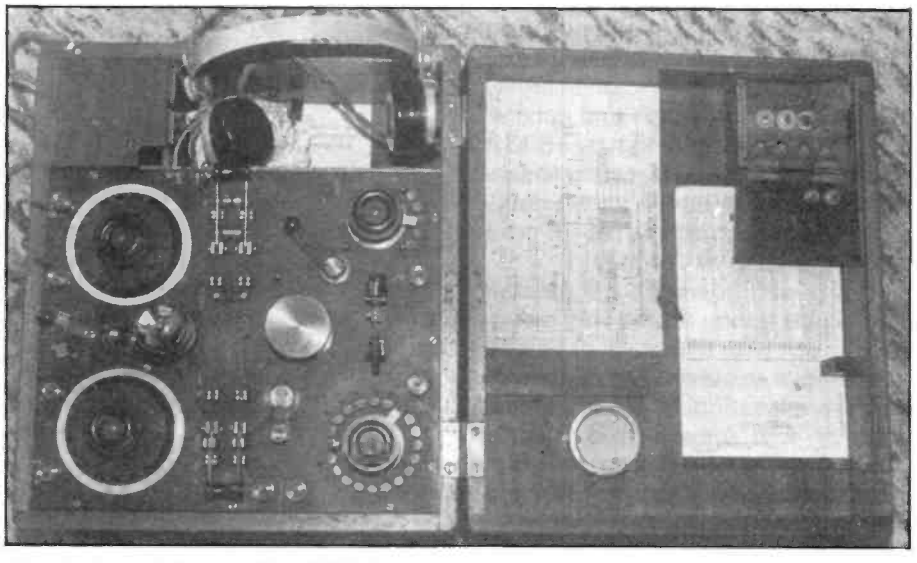
Human Comforts

Away from the shack, the hotel is extremely comfortable, facilities excellent, and the food exquisite – not to say plentiful. In fact, one feels part of a large family home rather than a holiday-maker.

Torquay lends itself to be the perfect base for a touring holiday in south and mid Devonshire with an endless list of amenities and attractions within easy reach, both by car and public transport. I thoroughly enjoyed my time exploring all that Devonshire has to offer although I know there is still more to be seen.

Disabled visitors are catered for at the hotel; so too are babies, dogs and vegetarians by arrangement. There is ample parking on site adjacent to the south-facing walled garden, a patio and sloping lawns. Watch out for the picturesque 80 year old magnolia tree in April and May and for passion fruit (!) later in the year.

The Fairmount Hotel is in Herbert Road, Chelston, Torquay, Devon and Ernest may be contacted on Torquay 605446.



Spark Tx and Rx used by G6GR and his father for their first amateur contacts in 1922.