

SOME NOTES ON THE "MAJESTIC" MODEL 90B

By PETER LANKSHEAR

Introduced in 1930, Grigsby-Grunow's Model 90B represented the ultimate development of the neutralised triode TRF. Although made obsolescent by screen-grid valves already in use by other manufacturers, and with the superhet. revolution approaching, it was the culmination of a decade of triode TRF development. The result was a splendid receiver with few limitations and no faults. The circuit, which was developed by Radio Frequency Laboratories. was classically simple but efficient.

The concept was to have as few audio stages as possible, and to concentrate the gain at the front end. The resultant benefits are low noise and minimum distortion from the anodebend ('biassed') detector, which incidentally is required to deliver 20 Volts of audio direct to the 5:1 driver transformer for full output. This type of detection, unlike the grid-leak variety, gives its best performance at high input levels. In this case it is biassed by means of a 34K cathode resistor.

As the high detector input level in turn demands considerable driving capability from the final RF amplifier, this stage is not gaincontrolled, and is self-biassed by means of a 1800 Ohm cathode resistor.

Three further stages of RF are used which are gain-controlled by means of a 75K variable resistor in the common cathode circuit. In the same circuit is an 'equalizing' control which is ganged to the rear of the tuning capacitor shaft to compensate for the natural tendency of the gain of the set to increase towards the HF end of the band. A further point of interest is the variable aerial inductor which consists of a copper 'hat', moveable over the aerial coil by means of the left-hand control knob. Its function is that of an aerial trimmer or compen-



sator. As the system is actually a pi-coupler, there is an efficient transfer of signal from the aerial. With the 'local-distance' switch in the 'local' position, coupling to the aerial is through the switch lead capacitance only.

The massive loudspeaker has a 10-inch 'doped' buckram cone, and a field coil producing a very strong magnetic flux from the 60mA operating current. In the absence of any built-in hum-bucking coil, the field is connected after the filter chokes in order to reduce the hum level. It forms part of a voltage divider supplying the RF stages.

All major power supply components are potted in rectangular cans; the power transformer alone weighing 16 lbs ! A choke-input filter is used, which is easier on the rectifier, though it requires a higher voltage on the transformer secondary winding.

As push-pull amplifiers are inherently hum cancelling, the combination of big filter chokes and 2mF filter capacitors is sufficient to make hum inaudible.

Mechanically, the chassis is large and solidly built; it had a depth of 12 inches and a width of 19 inches. The massive 5-gang tuning capacitor occupies the full depth of the chassis, while the RF coils are housed in screw-on copper cans. The entire RF assembly is mounted on a separate sub-chassis which also forms internal shield partitions. The chassis bottom plate is held on by no less than 24 machine screws.

"They just don't make 'em like that any more" (as someone once said) !!

REMEMBER AUCKLAND "B" STATIONS ?

... and technical people involved? Like Roy Keith of 1ZQ ("Hello! Hello! 1ZQ Auckland calling, 1ZQ!)... 1ZBr(La Gloria - Doug Shipherd)... 1ZR (Lewis Eadys - *-McCarthy Sid Cottam - Uncle Scrim got his start here) 1ZS (McCabes - Eric Grainger). . . 1ZJ (Johns Ltd - Russ White, Norm Edwards, Wally Hunter ... 1ZH (Radio House, Hamilton - Geo Anchor)

* The Laly Statem with the Bry fanch

-NZVRS Vol.1 No.3 Nov.1980

NEW ZEALAND

VINTAGE RADIO SOCIETY

A non-profit organisation devoted to the preservation and restoration of all early radio equipment, and collation of any associated information...

additions to be deleted



BIRTHPLACE OF RADIO COMMUNICATION. Villa Grifone, in Pontecchio, near Bologna, Italy. Eric G. Kirby provides this issue with an interesting account of his visit to the home of Marconi.

GREAT PIONEER ALWAYS REMEMBERED

The hill in front of Villa Grifone has been hollowed out to accomodate a mausoleum. If you look through the large-gauge iron mesh door you will observe Marconi's marble tomb. above which, carved into the stone wall, is an inscription which reads . . .

DIEDE CON LA SUA SCOPERTA IL SIGILLO A UN' EPOCA DELLA STORIA UMANA '

This refers to Marconi's discovery setting the seal on an epoch of human history. The words of dedication are those of Mussolini, with whom Marconi was friendly for many years.

There is an Amateur radio station in a building behind the Villa Grifone. It is known as "Stazione Radio Commemorativa" with the call sign IY4FGM. The notice on the door indicates that the station is "generally active every weekend".

-E.G.K.



Villa Grifone, showing mausoieum entrance.

GALVANI . . . FAMOUS PREDECESSOR

Bologna has the oldest University in Europe, founded AD425, and had 10,000 students in the 13th. Century! Galvani the physicist was appointed Professor of Anatomy in 1762, at age of 25. Our language today commemorates his researches with terms such as 'galvanic', 'galvanise', 'galvanometer', etc.

NEW ZEALAND VINTAGE RADIO SOCIETY

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"N.Z.V.R.S. BULLETIN" . . .

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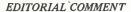
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Phone 604-213)

Correspondence, membership enquirles, subscriptions: To Secretary, at address above.

Regular meetings of the N.Z.V.R.S. are held on the FOURTH Monday of each month except December. Out of town members are cordially invited to attend meetings when in Auckland. Venue: 617 Dominion Rd., Balmoral. (Opp. Auckland Savings Bank). Time: 7.30 PM.

Contributions to the Bulletin, and advertisements, should be sent to the Editor.



Even the most casual observer will surely notice—and I hope be impressed—by the greatly improved appearance of this issue of the BULLETIN. Now, before anyone gets the idea that 'yours truly' is soliciting praise, let me hasten to add that the credit is due solely to one person who most generously volunteered to help the N.Z.V.R.S. in this manner. Although not a member of our Society, he was nevertheless sufficiently interested to take over the difficult and time-consuming task of handling the layout and typesetting involved in the production of our little journal.

To many readers, our benefactor's name will be well known. Perhaps not so well known is the fact that for many years he has been responsible for the production of high quality 'trade mailers' (sales leaflets) for a certain organisation. These have a very wide circulation and we are fortunate to have the services of

their producer at our disposal.

And just who is the Good Samaritan? None other than our old friend Waldo Hunter. Now "somewhat-retired", but working as hard as ever, Wally learned the printed-matter craft under the tutelage of Victor Johns (whose catalogues were known to every radio set owner through the Twenties and early Thirries). Just after WW2, when Wally returned from the Navy to become manager of Johns Ltd., he commenced catalogue production - there may still be copies of the 1948 and 1949 issues around. Incidentally they were perhaps the first trade catalogues produced in this country by offset-print methods in common use today.

Wally is now the proud possessor of a couple of typesetting machines and, as if that is not enough, does all his own artwork, photography, etc. Versatile is the word! - J.W.S.



Eric Kirby alongside the Marconi memorial statue, in front of Villa Grifone. Note plaque below third-floor window of the room in which the original experiments were conducted.

MARCONI AT BOLOGNA

enor, stoppers

A tribute - by Eric G.Kirby

If you are interested in the life and work of Guglielmo Marconi, and if you intend visiting Italy, be sure to include Bologna in your itinerary.

Marconi was born in Bologna on 25 April 1874 and lived in Pontecchio, a delightful village about fifteen kilometres north of the city centre. His father's extensive estate, including "Villa Grifone" the family residence, remains virtually unchanged in over a century. This is the birthplace of Wireless (!)

It was here (and in the Italian Alps during his vacations) that Marconi studied the work of Heinrich Hertz, who had observed that small sparks appeared in the gap of a metal loop when the latter was in close proximity to a high voltage induction coil.

Marconi experimented with "Hertzian Waves" in a third-floor room of Villa Grifone. Today there is a plaque below the window-sill to indicate the actual room. This room overlooks the farmland which is to the rear of the house. The land is very well tended, attractive and peaceful. It is planted with grain crops and grapes and, nearer to the house, with fruit trees. The ground is flat for about a kilometre and a half, and then becomes gently rolling country.

While on one of his alpine holidays, in 1894, Marconi became obsessed with an idea which had first occurred to him during that vacation.

The idea was to use electrostatic waves (Hertzian Waves) as a means of communication. Marconi's idea was completely innovative because, in spite of Hertz's extensive experiments, Hertz himself had not envisaged using his findings to develop a means of communication.

Marconi hurried back to Villa Grifone. Using a detecting device invented long before wireless was thought of (later called a "coherer" by Sir Oliver Lodge), he extended the range over which a wave generated by a spark could be detected. He demonstrated to his parents how a bell could be rung on the ground floor by operating his induction coil on the third floor, with no wires connecting the two.

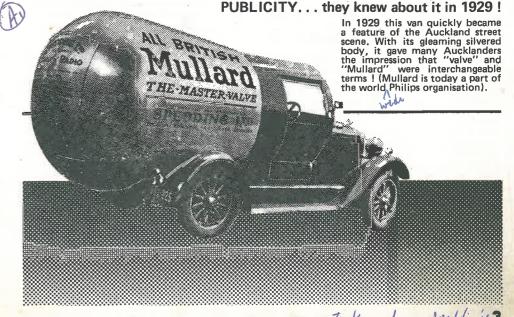
The range was further extended to the lawn at the rear of the house, and then out onto the farm land. As the distance increased, his brother Alfonso signalled by the waving of a white flag that the coherer system in his charge had responded to the "three dots" sent by Marconi's "transmitter".

Marconi then moved the detector (coherer) to the opposite side of the hill and out of line-of-sight (see photo.) and arranged for Alfonso to fire a shot from a rifle if the three-dot code was received from the Villa — a distance of two kilometres.

One can only imagine the jubilation which must have prevailed when the shot rang out! Marconi's father witnessed a repeat performance of the feat, and is reputed to have been stripped of the scepticism which he had maintained right throughout his son's days of experiment.

And that is where — and how — it all began!!





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The actual number of true Distributors was always quite small, as many brandnames were owned by Retailers who were supplied ex-factory. In other cases the distributing company was owned by the

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manufacturer, or vice versa, e.g. Warwick Smeeton Ltd/Imperial Radio Mfg Co.; Johns Ltd/Wellmade Ltd; G.A.Wooller & Co. Ltd/Akrad Radio Corp. Ltd. Also it will be found that in some cases different distributors were used in certain areas,

distributors were used in certain areas,

e.g. Golden Knight by Farmers Trading Co. in the Auckland area and Calder McKay in the Wellington area — and so on.

The name La Gloria was originally used on gramophones by the La Gloria Gramophone Co. in the 1920's. The owner was C.H.Pearson. In 1952 Charles Pearson Jnr used the La Gloria name on radios made by Dominion Radio & TV Co. Ltd.

Westco Products was originally, in 1933-34, Westonhouse Air Gas Co., which later became Westonhouse Radio Ltd. From 1952 to 1957 this firm made Murphy radios under license. After the demise of Westco, Murphy radios were then made by Allied Industries Ltd.

The name Courier was originally owned by J.Wiseman & Sons (saddlery mfrs.) who operated a small radio factory between 1929 and 1932. After this firm ceased to make radios, the name Courier was later taken up by Radio Ltd who used it until approx. 1952.

Courtenay radios were originally made by W.Marks, Cornhill St., Wellington and distributed by Stewart Hardware Co. of Courtenay Place — from where, presumably, the name was derived. In 1934 the Radio Corp. of NZ Ltd was formed, and manufacture of Courtenay radios was continued, with Turnbull & Jones becoming national distributors. It was at this time that R.C.N.Z. introduced the name Columbus, which was used on radios distributed through the companyowned Radio Centre network of retail outlets.

For a short period around 1951 RCNZ made clock radios under Columbus and Radiola brands; the latter brand being distributed by National Electric & Engineering Co. Ltd. Later still, after the takeover of the RCNZ by Pye-Wooller, the Australian name 'Astor' was used on sets made at the Courtenay Place factory.

Japanese 'General' radios were made for a short time in the early 1950's by Bell Radio & TV Co.; they were the only Japanese make known to have been assembled in NZ

Now a word of explanation regarding the 'piracy' of overseas brand-names: Firstly, though, this compiler offers no

Spymester Bondaful)

Market

FOR SALE

It making terminal boards for style speaker and headphone

Ebonite strips, suit making terminal boards for battery sets; old-style speaker and headphone cords and multi-cables; chassis for Colonial 32 AC (rough). ARTHUR WILLIAMS, 26 Centre Street, Invercargill.

RCA-100 magnetic speaker (good appearance but coils o/c; cabinet for Stewart Warner 950; Philips 2063 dynamic speaker. JOHN STOKES, 617 Dominion Rd., Auckland, 4.

Cabinet for Radiola Model No. 60. GRAHAM JESSOP, 26 Swainston Rd., Glen Innes, Auck.6

WANTED

Any cathedral radio using 224 and 227 valves. Valves: Any Mullard DFA series; Philips E442 (UY base); 233 American with old style bulb; any early AC tubes such as McCullough, Kellog or Sovereign, having heater connections at top. GI.ORGE WESTON, 179 Rosebank Rd., Avondale, Auckland.

Schematic diagram for 1933 HMV "Concert Seven", and one MS4B Catkin valve to suit. ARTHUR WILLIAMS, 26 Centre St., Inver cargill.

For swapping only: Cabinet for Gilfillan GN2 in exchange for GN1 cabt. Philips Mod. 2516 complete with Baby Grand spkr. Philips 3002 eliminator; Loewe 2-valve AC set (all working); Atwater Kent Mod. 32 cabinet and remains of innards; misc. components - audio transformars, tuning condensers; quantity of valves. GEORGE WESTON, 179 Rosebank Rd., Auckland, 7.

apology for use of the term, as any person or persons making unauthorised use of any well-known and respected name, or else closely imitating it, deserves no respect. The first noted example of this despicable practice was when a small Auckland firm, General Radio Co., took the company logo belonging to the highly respected General Radio Co., U.S.A. Not content with this, they also pirated A.F. Bulgin's slogan "The Choice of Critics", even copying the trademark of a bewigged aristocrat peeping through a lorgnette.

Although, following the world-wide trend, the manufacture of valve radios was discontinued in the late 1950's or early 1960's, it is interesting to note that in 1978 a Christchurch firm, Stewart Radio Centre, commenced making a 6-valve radio! - J.W.S.

The Editor will be pleased to receive details of any other N.Z. brand-names or manufacturers' names not listed above.

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