Mar/Apr 2020

Canadian Vintage Radios

The Publication of the Canadian Vintage Radio Society Incorporating the CVRS Newsletter

Spring 2020 Issue

CVRS 2020 AGM – CVRS Directors

Yes, it feels like only 5 minutes since the last CVRS Annual General Meeting (AGM)—well that was on November 17, 2019, so *a bit* longer than 5 minutes. At that time it was felt that an AGM would be better held in the Spring rather than the Fall. The Directors have therefore scheduled the 2020 AGM for Sunday, May 17 2020, so please 'mark your calendar' accordingly. The time, agenda and call-in details for the AGM will be posted on the CVRS website in due course.

The 'Frankenbird' – A Sparton Bluebird, Well Sort of... (Part 1) – Gerry O'Hara

The Sparton 'Bluebird' must be one of the most recognizable 1930's radios. Its classic Art Deco design conceived by industrial designer Walter Teague is an icon, embodying streamlining, practicality and function in a simple, yet striking design based on a round blue mirror (correctly termed 'Midnight Blue') or, more rarely, a 'peach'-coloured mirror (correctly termed 'Old Rose'). Either a 'B' (blue) or 'C' (peach) suffix was added to the model number to indicate the colour of the mirror. While the aesthetics of this radio are quite stunning, the actual radio circuit and performance leaves a bit to be desired – but who cares – its beautiful!

There were two versions of the Bluebird produced, a Canadian Model 154B and an American Model 566 (see

Cont. on Page 15

100th Anniversary of Broadcast in Canada–

Paul Guibord (Article reproduced with kind permission from the Ottawa Vintage Radio Society Newsletter, Spring 2020).

By 1920, radio transmitters and receivers had been developed to a point where voice transmission could easily reach a couple of hundred miles at night although quality left something to be desired. The air waves were still mostly used for point to point communication with some amateur broadcasts on an irregular basis.

The first regularly scheduled commercial broadcast of a radio program in Canada is generally recognized to be the one by station XWA, in Montreal (photo, below), on the evening of May 20, 1920. This station was owned by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of Canada with studios located on the top floor of their factory on Williams Street in Montreal. The station had been licensed for experimental transmission the previous year by the Canadian Department of Naval Services.

The short broadcast was received here in Ottawa at a convention, held by the

Cont. on Page 2

Editorial — Gerry O'Hara

The Spring of 2020 has certainly been different courtesy of Covid-19—who would have thought we would all be part of an international 'lockdown', hesitant even to exit our houses to venture out for essentials like food, medicines and beer?

The only 'silver lining' is that I am finally getting around to many radio projects that have been on the 'back burner' (or completely off the stove) for years—one of these dated from 2006 and another from 2010! Better late than never I suppose, and at least these are keeping me from going 'stir crazy'. It would also be a good time for members to write-up a recent project for inclusion in the Newsletter! Go-on!!!

Gerry

Local Representatives

Alberta Chapter — Rick Williams

BC Lower Mainland Chapter — Ken Patenaude

Atlantic Network — Kevin Christopher

Vancouver Island (VI) Network—Don White

Manitoba Network—Grant Sesak

Local groups or chapters of the CVRS can represent a small group, whether geographically-based or otherwise, and Networks can cover small or large geographic areas. Thus we can have the Alberta Chapter, Vancouver Island Network or even the Northern Electric Special Interest Group—as long as a member of the CVRS wishes to run it and wants it to be represented within the CVRS. So come on members, think locally, regionally or even by manufacturer or other topic—based, we want to hear

Cont. from Page 1 Royal Society of Canada, in the Château Laurier ballroom. It consisted of live performance by singers and an orchestra.

The next year, the station, transmitting at 681 kHz, received the official call letters of CFCF. The station would move to new studios a number of times with different frequencies and ever increasing power reaching 10 kW until the 1950s when it was sold and moved to Verdun where it operated as CIQC on 600 kHz.

Within a couple of years of the original broadcast, there were over 30 commercial radio stations operating in Canada. By the end of the decade radio broadcasting had become a standard fact of life just as we would consider the internet these days.

South of us, KDKA is usually considered to have held the first broadcast on November 12, 1920 although this claim has often been challenged by a number of other U.S. stations.

In honor of this event, the Emile Berliner museum launched a special exhibition "100 years of radio in Montreal" on February 27. The Museum is located in the old RCA factory located in the Saint Henri district at 1001 Lenoir Street in Room E-206. The building still has, above its roof, the two medallions that held the RCA logo, the dog and phonograph themselves have unfortunately been removed. The building now also houses various small businesses but, if you attend, you may be able to stroll around some empty rooms on the upper levels with heavily worn pine floors where phonographs and radio sets were once manufactured.

You can get opening hours for the exhibits and details of other events from https://moeb.ca/en and https://radio100.moeb.ca/en/

You can also check out the special events from our friends at http://sqcra.org/radio100/

OTTAWA HEARS MONTREAL CONCERT OVER THE TELEPHONE; EXPERIMENT COMPLETE SUCCESS

Girl Singing 110 Miles Away Listened to by Vast Audience at Chateau.

WORDS AND MUSIC CLEAR

Gramophone Music and Orchestra Selections Danced to at the Radio Station Here:

"Hello, Ottawa - Hello, Montreal" - and the first radio-telephone conversation ever carried on in Canada was commenced. A few minutes of conversation and then, through the night air, came the sweet notes of "Believe Me If All

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1920

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"Hello, Ottawa—Hello Montreal" —and the first radio-telephone conversation ever carried on in Canada was commenced. A few minutes of conversation and then, through the night air, came the sweet notes of "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," to be followed some minutes later by the voice of John McCormick singing "Dear Old Pal of Mine.

The members of the large audience in the comfortable ball room of the Chateau Laurier sat in amazement, realising that they were listening to one of those wonders that has been so much talked about but seldom demonstrated. The sweet voice they heard so plainly was that of Miss Lutten, singing into a radio-telephone instrument in Montreal. Every inflection of her beautiful voice and every word was audible to the Chateau audience, yet no wires connected the two points, 110 miles apart.

A Complete Success.

This experiment, the first ever carried on in Canada, when messages were received and replies given, was in connection with the lecture of Dr. A. H. Eve, F.R.S.C., before the Royal Society of Canada last night. Since Tuesday the officers of the Naval Radio Service and engineers of the Canadian Marconi Company have been making ready for the test. Weather conditions were reported as decidedly unfavorable during the evening, but the entire programme was carried out without a hitch, and congratulations were sent backwards and forwards by all concerned.

Three Stations Operating.

The whole programme had been arranged beforehand. The station at the Marconi plant in Montreal and that of the Naval Radio Service in Ottawa were the main stations, with a receiving station at the Chateau Laurier. Here a huge amplifier was installed so that the entire audience was enabled to hear the programme between the two main stations. This is the first time that such an elaborate programme has been attempted, and one of the longest distances over which a wireless telephone conversation has been attempted.

Could Dance to It.

The Journal reporter, through the kindness of the naval officers, was permitted to "listen in" on the whole affair at the Naval Radio Station on Wellington street. Sharp at 8.44 both stations got in touch, and the notes of "Dear Old Pal of Mine," played in Montreal on a phonograph, could be heard clearly and distinctly. Next the latest one step was put on in Montreal, and the different instruments in the orchestra could be clearly distinguished. So clear, in fact, that a couple at this end would have had no trouble dancing to it. In fact, some newspapermen did. Then the Montreal operator read the sealed message that President Dr. R. F. Ruttan wished him to deliver to the Royal Society of Canada.

Absolutely Clear.

There was a short pause, then clearly and distinctly, the beautiful words and music of "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms" were heard as sung by Miss Lutten in Montreal. The members of the audience in the Chateau were amazed, and the little group in the wireless station elated at the success of their experiment. By request, Miss Lutton sang a second song.

Wireless Sparks "Bott in."

It was then Ottawa's turn to speak to Montreal. The Ottawa operator explained to the Chateau audience something of the experiment, and then Mr. E. Hawken, an officer of the Marine Department, sang "Annie Laurie." Deafening applause greeted this at the Chateau and the second verse was requested. Then, several dance records were played at the Ottawa station. Later in the evening an attempt was made to get The Journal representative in touch with a Montreal newspaper, but several large radio stations were working and it was difficult to make a connection.

Operators in Charge.

Mr. Arthur S. Runciman, radio engineer for the Marconi Company, was responsible for the success of the Ottawa end of the venture. The Montreal operator was Mr. J. O. O. Cann, chief engineer for the Marconi Company. At the Naval Radio Station, assisting Mr. Runciman, were Mr. D. Manson, chief examining officer for the radio service, and Mr. J. H. T. Arial, radio engineer. Mr. E. Hawken, officer commanding the Marine Department, and Mrs. Hawken were also present. At the receiving station in the Chateau Laurier were Commander C. P. Edwards, director of Canadian Radio Service, and Lieut. J. H. T. Thompson, assistant.

At the Chateau.

During the experiment, before a vast audience at the Chateau, Dr. A. H. Eve, F.R.S.C., of McGill University, delivered an illustrated lecture on "Some Inventions of the Great War," and conducted a series of remarkable scientific experiments, the outstanding feature of which was the actual hearing by the audience of the singing of Miss Lutten.

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The successfully conducted experiments were heartily applauded. Dr. Eve proved himself an interesting speaker, and handled his subjects in a way easily comprehended by the ordinary man of limited scientific attainment.

Heard Better Here Than in Montreal

By Canadian Associated Press.

MONTREAL, May 20. — A concert staged in the top floor offices of the Marconi building on William street, this city, was given tonight for the benefit of an audience assembled over 100 miles away in the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa. Later in the evening a message was received from the Chateau that the concert had been heard, and congratulations were offered. The occasion was an experiment in wireless telephony which has not so far been demonstrated in a public way over distances of more than a mile or so. By reason of an amplifyer at the Ottawa end, more of the concert could be heard in Ottawa than in Montreal.

SESSION PROPOSED ON VICTORIA DAY

Objection, However, is Raised and Motion Stands Over.

The question whether the House should sit on Victoria Day was raised by Col. Peck, V.C., shortly after opening this afternoon. Sir Robert Borden said it was intended to sit on Monday as usual.

To this course objection was raised by Col. Peck and by Hon. W. S. Fielding, who thought it more fitting that the House should adjourn on Victoria Day.

Sir Robert Borden then submit-

The newspaper clipping on the left is one of the few surviving descriptions of the event. It was published in the Ottawa Journal newspaper (1885-1980) on Friday May 21, the day after the broadcast. I have included a transcript of two articles from this page, complete with the actual spellings and punctuation used. Although long and repetitive (the reporter was probably paid by the inch), it provides an insight into the attitude of the population at the time towards this new technology. NOTE: Sorry girls, we can't help you with your ugly hair problems.

Those Endearing Young Charms," to be followed some minutes later by the voice of John McCormick singing "Dear Old Pal of Mine".

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Local Chapters

BC Lower Mainland Chapter - Ken Patenaude

Thanks to everyone for attending the early March event—there was a smaller gathering than normal due to Covid-19. Times have changed even more now, with all such gatherings being cancelled, and we will try to notify everyone through Craigslist and website regarding the next event schedule as it is too early to decide if the next meeting will go ahead due to the situation.

Alberta Chapter - Murray Dickerson

On Feb 23 we toured the University of Alberta's acoustics laboratory. This lab has in interesting history, originally built in the 1970's by an engineer to atone for his years of designing and installing noisy HVAC systems; this lab is one of two in the country, the other is at the National Research Council in Ontario. In the 1980's the lab was acquired by the Mechanical Engineering department at the University of Alberta. Our host was Corian Buma (MSc, P.Eng) who wears two hats. One as an independent Acoustical specialist and the other as a contract employee at the lab. The lab's primary work is on sound transmission and absorption of building materials.

For the sound absorption/transmission testing, two acoustic chambers are connected via a nine-foot window where the material under test is installed. One room is equipped with noise generators and diffusers so that white and pink noise generated is at a level constant to 0.3 dB throughout. The other room is where the measurement takes place. By themselves, the rooms have excellent sound isolation from each other, so sound transmitted to the listening room is via the unit under test.

Non-CVRS Organization News

News and events from other (non-CVRS) vintage radio groups and organizations.

Prairie Vintage Radio Society — Nothing reported from the boys on the Prairies for this issue.

Puget Sound — the CVRS always receives a copy of 'Horn of Plenty', the newsletter of the Puget Sound Antique Radio Association. This is a great publication with many interesting article in every issue.

Ontario Vintage Radio Association — for information visit their website, here

Ottawa Vintage Radio Club—for information contact Lea Barker at barker@ca.inter.net

Quebec — The french association SQCRA has 115 members mostly from Quebec but also in eastern Ontario, United-States and France. The SQCRA organizes local radio restoration contests, auctions, workshops and social events for its members and publishes the magazine "Radiophilie" 10 times a year. The SQCRA is the promoter of many events commemorating the 100th anniversary of radio broadcasting in Canada and will also celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020. Visit their web site at WWW.SQCRA.ORG.

Antique Radio Classified — this is a great source of information and news on the vintage radio scene—always contains many adverts for vintage radios, parts and services.

Victoria Radio Group—has been around for around 7 years and has over 90 members, many local, but some as far away as Halifax. Membership is free—join online here. Monthly meetings in Victoria on 3rd Wednesday of each Month 6:30pm-8:30pm (all year) at Pluto's 1150 Cook Street Victoria—fleamarket, show-and-tell, give-away items. Contact: Lee (atlelee@gmail .com).

SPARC Radio Museum, Coquitlam — Well-known vintage radio museum based in Coquitlam, BC. The SPARC website also has a 'de-accession' section that lists items that the museum is either selling or giving away—check it out here.

We were demonstrated the sound differences in pink and white noise. We were not inside the room at the time, but opening the door to the acoustic chamber emitted pink noise that could rival a jet engine. Corian took the opportunity to use a high-quality sound pressure meter to sample the difference a horn makes to the output of a gramophone (photo, page 4). Three tests were made: one directly off of the diaphragm, one from the tube that would connect to the horn and a third from a horn. The results were quite interesting—the horn increased the volume by about 12 dB, over the sound coming directly from the tube while simultaneously flattening the frequency response spectrum.

The club thanks Corian Buma and Don Scheirer for arranging this interesting and educational visit.

Regional Networks

Atlantic Network — Kevin Christopher

As winter dragged on it was becoming obvious that this would be a busy year for our hobby here in the far East. Demand for radios and restorations was increasing rapidly. Old family radios were coming to my little shop from hundreds of miles away. Small tabletop wooden and colourful plastic radios were all the rage. Auction houses were requesting some as consignments and they were fetching very good prices at the few auctions we had. Then 'boom' went to 'bust' as the Covid Virus put a stop to just about everything, including life as we have known it. The number of visitors to my shop has dried up to zero for weeks—self isolation is all the rage now.

One positive outcome, if anything can be called positive in these troubled times, is that there is lots of time to catch up on the backlog of work waiting in every corner of the building. This has become a good time to dig into some of those not so easy to do jobs, get all that attention to detail done and have a goodly supply of radios on hand for the end of the virus time.

Hopefully, this will pass before too long and fewer and fewer people will be affected by it. From Nova Scotia, all the best to everybody and stay safe and healthy.

Manitoba Network— Don White

The Manitoba Network connects CVRS members living in the Province of Manitoba and provides a way for those outside the area to contact vintage radio enthusiasts in the region. All CVRS members residing in the province are eligible to be a part.

If you are interested in learning more and/or becoming a member of the network, please contact Network Coordinator: Grant Sesak, gsesak@gmail.com or membership@canadianvintageradio.com.

Vancouver Island (VI) Network - Don White

The VI Network connects CVRS members living on Vancouver Island, BC., and provides a way for those outside the area to contact vintage radio enthusiasts in the region. The network extends from Victoria in the south to Cape Scott in the north.

VI Network members who are signed in can find contact information for those connected to the network by clicking on this link to Vancouver Island Network Member List.

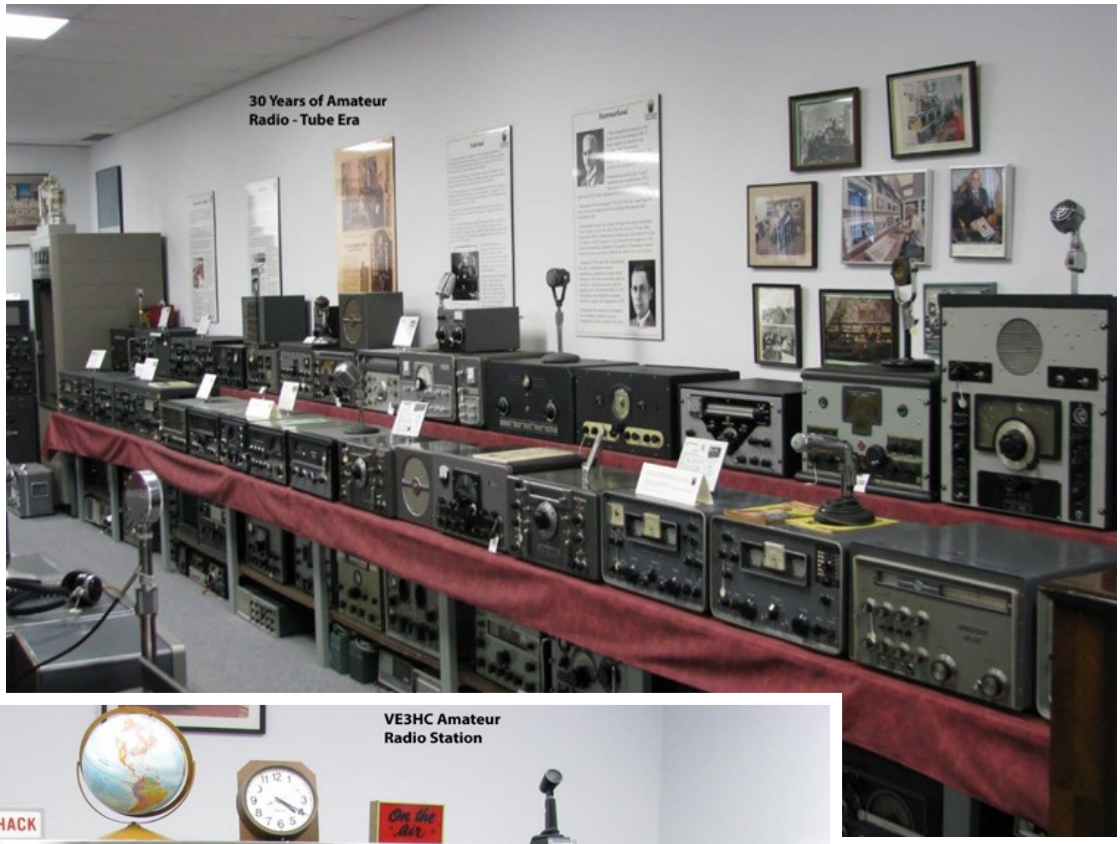
Whether you simply want to see who belongs to the CVRS in your locality, or you wish to buy/sell, find help to problem-solve, learn about the restoration and preservation of vintage radio, or just connect with others interested in vintage radios, perhaps on your next trip up or down the Island, here is a way to do that.

If you are a CVRS member residing on the Island who is not yet a member and would like to join, please contact: Don White, don@canadianvintageradio.com.

Hammond Museum of Radio, Guelph, Ontario (Part 2) -

Noreen Irwin (Curator, Hammond Museum of Radio)

Part 1 of this article provided an introduction to the Hammond Museum of Radio, and described its sections devoted to Telegraphs, Early Wireless, Edison Phonographs, the 'Golden Age of Broadcasting' and Transistor radios.



Amateur
In recognition of the many innovations and advancements that have been made thanks to Amateur Radio operators, the Amateur collection holds a prominent place in the Museum. The artifacts have evolved from commercial and military products. On display are receivers and transmitters from most well-known manufacturers as well as some international items (photos, right and below). A member of the Collins Collectors Association, the museum contains an extensive collection of Collins Radio equipment including a donation of a rare 51J5.

Speakers and Microphones
A representational display of speakers and microphones showcase the early days of radio (photo, page 7).

Temporary Exhibit
This is a relatively new concept to the Museum and is being developed for the many repeat visitors to the mu-

seum whose first question asked is “what’s new in the Museum?”. The exhibit will be used to showcase new or rarely seen objects and will rotate to become an area for guest collector displays, interactive displays and perhaps travelling exhibits. We will plan on a six to eight month time frame to ensure our returning visitors have plenty of opportunity to see “what’s new in the museum”.

Future Interactive Exhibits
A series of interactive exhibits have been developed using items from the permanent collection as well as archival material never before seen by the public. Some examples for future exhibits are:

Evolution of Style
Visitors will see a variety of radios highlighting the changes in styles from the beginning of broadcast in 1920 to the peak of radio sales in the 1930s. A collection of coloured radio ads will be on display and comments of listeners from the 1920’s and 1930’s will be highlighted in a series of vignettes.

Tickle The Cat’s Whisker
An interactive display in which visitors tune in a 1920’s crystal radio to the local broadcast station.

Turn Me On – Tune Me In
An interactive display allowing visitors to turn on one of the Art Deco radios and tune in to an AM station.
Blondie and Dagwood
Visitors are transported back in time to the Depression Era and can listen to a typical radio broadcast of the 1930’s.

History
The history of the museum can’t be told fully without some reference to the history of Hammond Manufacturing

Company Limited and Hammond Power Solutions Inc. Hammond Manufacturing began when Oliver Hammond established a small manufacturing enterprise at their home in 1917. Oliver was an inventor who was trained as a tool and die maker. The first products manufactured were pneumatic vibrators used in the foundry business. The company's very early interest in "Radio" in 1919 was captured by Oliver's oldest son Len through his reading of virtually everything he could about the subject. This led to the building of the first radio in Guelph. It was built around an 'Audiotron' tube and other parts made in the shop since there were few outside sources where one could buy parts at this early date. From this beginning there was a succession of radios each an improvement on the previous models. The Hammond Display in the museum features the 1923 Hammond receiver along with a number of early Hammond products and company history.

At the death of Oliver S. Hammond in 1925, Len at the age of 22, took over the leadership of Hammond Manufacturing and along with his brothers Roy, Fred and Ken combined their knowledge and ability to design transformers, broadcast station equipment, metal fabrication and other products which put the company in the forefront of the industry. Today Hammond Manufacturing and Hammond Power are still industry leaders celebrating over 100 years in business and are guided by Rob Hammond, CEO, Hammond Manufacturing and Bill Hammond, CEO, Hammond Power.

Museum Programs

Assistance with Guelph's Acquired Brain Injury Program
The Museum works with the program using the artifacts as an opportunity for learning, socialization, interaction and hands-on experiences.

International Students Program
Geared towards exchange students, the Museum of Radio program includes history lessons, How Radio Communication Works, International Morse Code demonstrations, Titanic and Safety of Life At Sea.

Children's Program
Program includes the reading of the book *Radio Rescue*—a true story about the experiences of a young Ham operator in the 1920's. Also included in the program is a history lesson, Morse code demonstration and scavenger hunt.

Portal to the Past
Presently in the development state, teachers and students of the Upper Grand District School Board will have an opportunity to access the collections, archives and research of the museum through this Outreach Program based in the classroom and conforming to the Ontario Grade 8 History Curriculum.

Hours of Operation
The Museum is normally (Covid-19 permitting!) open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for self-guided tours. Day and evening groups are welcome in the museum. Visitors or groups who wish to visit in an evening or weekend or would like a guided tour are encouraged to contact the Museum's Curator, Noreen Irwin-Hann at nirwin@hammfg.com (519-822-2960, ext. 252).

A Graphic Short Story: Restuffing 'Domino' Style Paper (or Mica) Capacitors—Ivan E. Geleye

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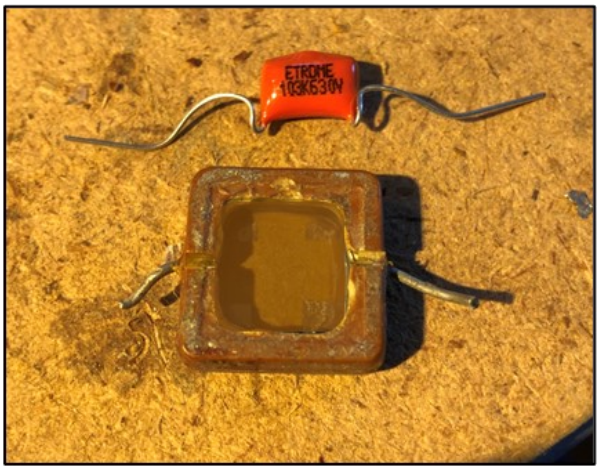

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Operators in Charge

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At the Chateau

During the experiment, before a vast audience at "the" Chateau, Dr. A. H. Eve F.R.S.C. of McGill University, delivered an illustrated lecture on "Home inventions of the Great War" and conducted a series of remarkable scientific experiments, the outstanding feature of which was the actual hearing by the audience of the singing of Miss Lutten.

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Joining the CVRS

Member Benefits: These are many, but here are some of the obvious ones:

Networking: Opportunity to network with like-minded folks—radio restorers, collectors, repairers, historians etc.— by joining local chapters, attending member-organized swap-meets and local meetings to chin-wag about radio-related topics.
Schematic Service: The CVRS offers a free copy service for Radio College of Canada (RCC) schematics to members currently in good standing. A pdf file of an RCC schematic can be obtained by emailing schematics@canadianvintageradio.com with the manufacturer and model number of a radio made in Canada between 1927 and 1980. If possible, please provide an estimated year of manufacture or the latest year of patent registration (usually given on the model tag). Members wishing a printed copy of a schematic should send a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope, Canadian postage) to the CVRS Membership address given below. If you wish to make sure that an RCC schematic for your radio exists before sending a SASE, send an email to the above email address.
Website: The CVRS website provides updated meeting information, membership and contact information, as well as access to radio-related information and links of interest to Members.
Forum: An active forum is available to members and non-members, however, enhanced functionality is being considered for members.
Newsletters: For prior calendar years, electronic copies of the Newsletter can be accessed (where available) and downloaded by current members in good standing. Passwords to access this section will be sent annually to those members taking out membership in the current year.

Payment of Dues: Two types of membership are available in the CVRS, based on whether you wish to receive a hard copy of the CVRS newsletter sent via Canada Post or a PDF file sent via e-mail (the recommended option: it's faster and every issue is in full colour!). Either way, dues may be paid by mail or by online banking. Two factors determine the amount you should submit: how you receive the newsletter, and how you pay your dues.

Paying by Cheque or Money Order: If you pay by cheque or money order and wish to receive the newsletter as a pdf file via email (recommended), annual dues are $20. If you want a hard copy sent to you by mail, the dues are $45 (Canadian addresses only). Send a cheque or money order for the appropriate amount ($20/$45) to: CVRS Membership, 6496 Groveland Drive, Nanaimo, BC, V9V 1V4, Canada. If you are a new member, please include the following information for our member database: name, address, phone number(s), email address, occupation, any special areas of interest in vintage radio or related topics.

Paying Online: Two options exist for you to submit dues electronically:

PayPal

1. You may submit your dues by using the SEND MONEY tab. Select the "Personal" and "Other" transfer options since you are not purchasing a commodity or service. Enter the CVRS membership email address (membership@canadianvintageradio.com) as the address for PayPal to send the transfer notification.
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2. When you enter the amount and email address, it will ask you to suggest a question and answer. Just make a question up and submit it and the answer,
3. After you have completed the transaction, email the question and answer by separate email to membership@canadianvintageradio.com. If you are a new member include the member information requested above.

Heard Better Here Than in Montreal

By Canadian Associated Press:

MONTREAL, May 20: A concert staged in the top floor office of then Marconi building on William street, this city, was given tonight for the benefit of an audience assembled over 100 miles away in the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa. Later in the evening a message was received from the Chateau that the concert had been heard, and congratulations were offered. The occasion was an experiment in wireless telephony which has not so far been demonstrated in a public way over distances of more than a mile or so. By reason of an amplifier at the Ottawa end, more of the concert could be heard in Ottawa than in Montreal.

Workshop Fire Threatens Family Harmony—The Old Newbie

Dear Brother-in-Law,

I write with an update on family matters and life with your Dear Sister.

In a nutshell, life with your Dear Sister continues to be fraught. The extensive repairs to the ceiling in my workshop are almost complete, and the painter says that the smell of burned rubber won't last more than a few months. It was unfortunate that your Dear Sister walked in unexpectantly when she did, as I am always so careful when powering up a radio for the first time after a repair. It takes a lot of concentration. But she was so quiet, just standing there behind me glaring at my new acquisition - anybody would have been startled. Who knew that such a small bottle of lacquer thinner falling from a shelf could create such a lot of smoke inside the radio when ignited by quite an impressive spark when the test leads shorted out the filter capacitor? I would have thought the spilled coffee would have put the fire out.

My insurance adjustor recommends that I keep the most recent pictures of the damage in our house private for now, but I can share with you a few snapshots I had taken of the radio earlier in the day.

Before this unfortunate incident I'd at least had the satisfaction of painstakingly restoring the chassis of a little Addison Model 2 back to near-factory condition.

Like many collectors, I have long admired the look of plastic radios from the 1930s and 40s with multiple swirled colours, made from exotic plastics called Catalin, Plaskon, Beetle, and others. And, like many of us, have never owned one of these radios because they are so expensive. But I sensed possibilities when the voice behind me said 'My, those are pretty.'

I was drooling over a website to quietly learn about Catalin plastic and how to identify it. The site was dedicated to jewellery and my Dear Wife again was lurking.

Figure 1: Addison Model 2

As we know, Catalin is a pretty plastic that was used by manufacturers to make radio cabinets in the 1930s and 1940s. What I didn't know is that it was also used to make jewellery back in the day. And some of you may recall that my Dear Wife is a jeweller's daughter, with a passion for collecting baubles that is matched only by her passion for shoes. Hence her interest in the antique jewellery website I was browsing. This was an opportunity.

'Pretty? Yes, I suppose they are,' I said, keeping my voice level as I jiggled the bait. 'But this colourful plastic looks even better in large pieces than it does with jewellery.' I could feel the nibble on the end of the line. 'Have a look at this.'

I switched to a Kijiji website showing a plastic radio from 1947. Over the years I've learned not to overplay my hand, so the radio I showed her was not a big, ridiculously expensive Catalin model from the 1930s, but rather a cute little black-and-white Addison Model 2, affectionately called 'The Cow'. It's made from a swirly plastic called Plaskon, that looks a lot like Catalin but is not as desirable and hence significantly cheaper. Purists will tell you that real Catalin radio cabinets are thinner, more translucent, and have a 'warm glow' to match the tubes inside. Yes, side by side there is a difference in the two plastics, but frankly I find it difficult to tell them apart unless you

do the smell test. The smell test? If you gently heat a piece of Catalin by rubbing it or holding it under warm water, you get a faint whiff of the formaldehyde it gives off. Plaskon doesn't smell like anything.

For the chemists in the crowd, Catalin belongs to a group of formaldehyde-based plastics that started back in 1907 with Bakelite and evolved through the 1930s as essential industrial materials. While Bakelite is molded under high temperatures and pressures, and is extremely durable, Catalin is a clear liquid that can be brightly coloured, cast in molds at room temperature, then cured with moderate heat. The results are products like radio cabinets that are pretty but perishable, prone to shrinking and cracking over time - the degree of damage being a boon to collectors who can then set a value on perfection.

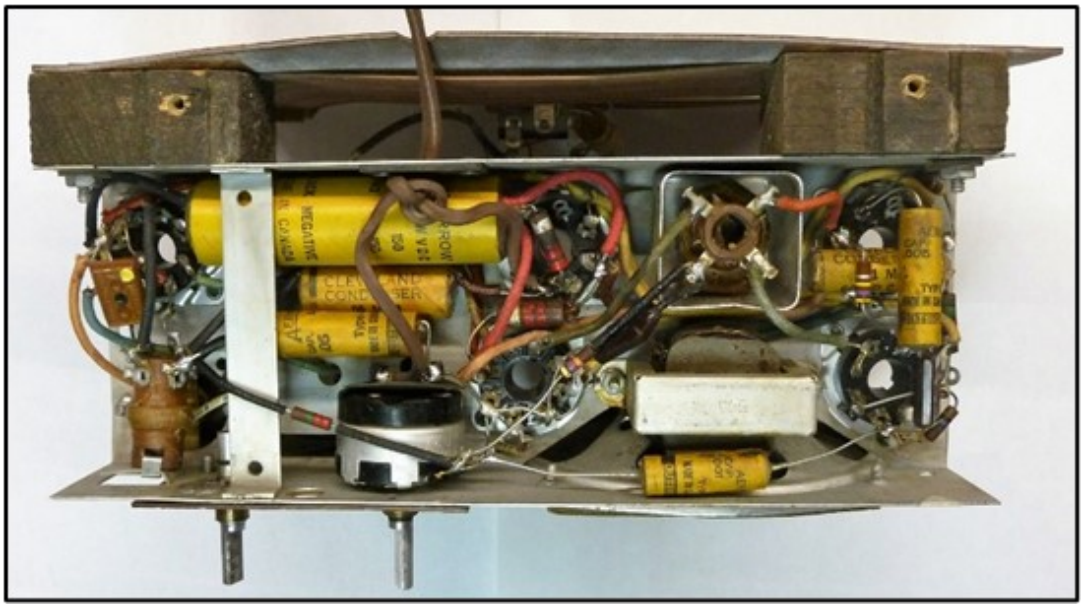


Figure 2: Wiring restored

Now the little Addison on the Kijiji website was advertised as being sold for parts. An exchange with the seller revealed that it was probably in bad shape internally because his dad had been a tinkerer. 'Everything rattles around when I shake it' was the best he could describe its internal condition. But miraculously, he said there was only one small crack in the plastic cabinet that had been smeared over years ago with epoxy, and the original knobs were still attached.

The radio really looked much better than the plastic jewelry that I had used as bait. The seller had photographed the radio from its best side and my Dear Wife was hooked. I was confident that I could somehow restore both the cabinet and the chassis, so it was time to reel in the prize.

Figure 3: Tuning knob busing

'Do you like it?' I continued.

'It would look good beside my white kitchen cabinets and would keep you out of the kitchen while trying to make it work.' Bingo! A few mouse clicks with PayPal and it was on its way.

I'm a great believer that you get what you pay for. And this purchase was no exception. The seller had been completely truthful in what he told me. There was indeed a crack in the side that had been fixed by coating it with epoxy. When first done, the epoxy had probably been clear, but now it was yellow and liberally covering well beyond the crack. Like Catalin, the colours in Plaskon go right through the cabinet, so the surface can be lightly sanded without noticeable change. I started carefully on the epoxy around the crack with 320 grit paper and progressed to finer grades until I revealed the surface of the crack, where I got lucky. The crack was completely closed and none of the epoxy had wicked in. By carefully polishing the surface with Novus #2 the crack disappeared on the outside and all the surrounding epoxy was gone. Inside the cabinet, there was more epoxy smearing the crack, so I sanded it lightly and left it for strength.

Now the chassis was a different matter.

According to the radiomuseum.org site, these Addison cabinets were supplied with two different chassis, the 2A and the R5A1, with the R5A1 being the most common. The chassis in this radio is a 2A, which has the output transformer mounted under the chassis instead of on the speaker. The 2A chassis also has the bushing of the tuning shaft weakly attached with a simple press-fit into a hole, instead of being threaded and secured with a nut as was done in the R5A1. In my radio, the heavy bushing, shown in Figure 3, had separated from the chassis and was the reason the previous owner was selling the radio for parts. I was lucky that during shipping the bushing didn't damage anything or break a tube as it rattled around.

Figure 4: Bushing soldered into chassis

Fixing the bushing was relatively easy. As shown in Figure 4, I sweat soldered it back into the chassis using a 300-watt Weller gun and common 63/37 (eutectic) tin/lead solder with an extra drop of liquid rosin flux. The blob of solder shown on the surface of the chassis was for heat transfer where the gun contacted the chassis. There was no damage to the interior of the bushing and a lubrication with white lithium grease mixed with light machine oil finished the job.

I used the 63/37 electronics solder because it has the lowest melting point of all the common alloys. By comparison, I use a high melting point silver solder with a tiny butane torch when I fix the cheap jewellery bling my Dear Wife finds at yard sales. I considered using silver solder here because of its high strength, but eventually rejected it for fear of damaging the bushing with the heat. The tin/lead solder joint has proved perfectly adequate.

After restuffing the caps, replacing a few resistors with modern look-alikes, and realigning everything from the bizarre tuning configuration I found it in (the seller was right again in his description of his dad as a tinkerer!) the radio was once again playing beautifully on my workbench before your Dear Sister fatefully arrived to creep up behind me.

To forestall future incidents of this kind in anticipation of our insurance rates eventually returning to normal, I am in the process of installing a complex intruder alarm around my workbench. A small price to pay for remaining a part of your family.

Your brother-in-law in family harmony,

The Old Newbie

Free: Philco multi band radio instruction manual that is 50 years old in excellent condition. This manual came with a radio bought new in 1970. The radio itself is long gone. If anyone would like it for free please provide a name and email address to start the process. I can email a photo of this manual. Email: bobfrew1@shaw.ca

For Sale: 1951 Philco radio/record player in very good condition for sale by Patrick Laroche. He would like to sell it to someone who would really appreciate and enjoy this piece.
Patrick is located in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec His email is plarcon@videotron.ca, Tel: 514-943-9951.

Model 51-1734

An example of the large floor model radio-phonographs which Philco continued to offer in the 1951 model year.

The set includes an eight tube radio with reception of AM and FM signals as well as a three speed automatic record changer.

Original selling price: Unknown

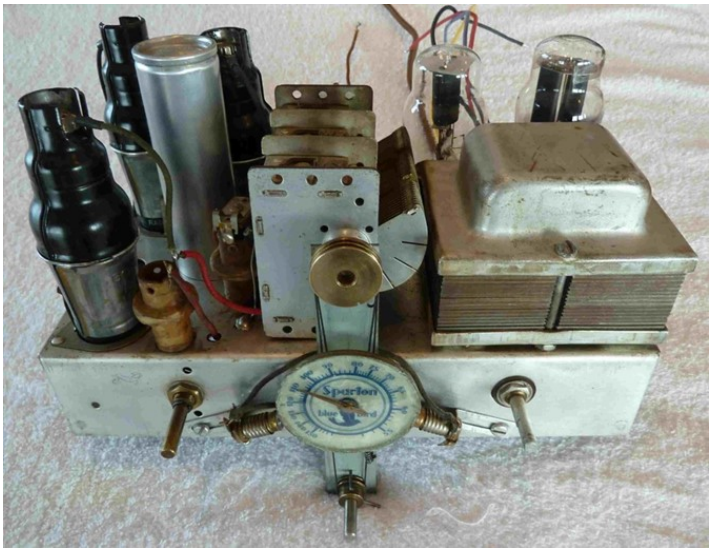
Number made: Unknown

Cont. from Page 1 the excellent article by Gary Albach in Canadian Vintage Radios' December 2017 and February 2018 issues). These radios shared most cosmetic design elements and superficially look the same, but differed in detailed appearance, eg. the Canadian model sported wooden knobs, the American model metal knobs. However, the biggest difference was in the circuitry and chassis, these being totally different between these two models: the Canadian model having a power transformer (to comply with Canadian legal requirements of the time, and that Canada had universal AC power) and which was Broadcast Band only, whereas the American model was an AC/DC design and included a Shortwave band.

Background

In late-December 2019, I was contacted by someone who wanted advice on how to go about selling a Canadian model Bluebird (photo on Page 1) that their family had owned for many years. On checking details of this set on photographs, I noticed that the chassis in the radio was not original – it was an 'All American Five' (AA5) type chassis, having four octal tubes and one miniature tube (photo, right). The owner noted that they recalled that their grandfather, the original owner, was "into tinkering and 'fixing' pieces" – including this radio. I noted to the owner that unless the original chassis could be found, the value of the radio was likely significantly impacted to a collector as the set was not complete and all-original. This was acknowledged by the owner, however, they still wanted to proceed with a sale. I located an owner of another Bluebird (American model) who indicated they would be interested in purchasing this radio as their set was fitted with a replacement mirror that was slightly smaller (by a quarter inch) than the original, and the three horizontal chrome trim bars had been shortened by a previous owner of that set to suit. This was hardly noticeable to the casual observer, but was annoying and detracted from that radios' true value. Using the original mirror and chrome bars from this Canadian radio could render their set technically 'perfect'. So, they made a deal with the owner and took possession of the set with this in mind. As a side deal, I agreed to purchase the left-over parts to make up a Bluebird 'look-alike', but which would effectively comprise parts from at least three radios:

- The cabinet, knobs, feet, and dial mechanism from the Canadian Bluebird;
- The (replacement), slightly smaller mirror, chrome dial escutcheons and shortened horizontal trim bars from the American Bluebird; and
- The AA5 chassis from an unknown manufacturer.



Thus the idea for the construction of a 'Frankenbird' radio was born…

My friend delivered the AA5 chassis to me soon after the purchase of the radio, however, some of the chrome parts for their set needed re-plating and thus the remaining parts followed on a few weeks later.

AA5 Chassis Inspection

It would seem that the original Sparton chassis (a similar one shown in the photo, left) must have had a major failure, eg. power transformer burned out, and the (then) owner thought the best way to render the set operational again was to sub an AA5 chassis for the original.

Some quite extensive modifications had been undertaken to the AA5 chassis to make it fit the control layout of the Bluebird:

Cont. on Page 18

Radio Operator Training at the Radio College of Canada:1928–1964 (Part 3) — John Gilbert

This article is Reprinted from Vol. 32 of the AWA Review by permission of the Antique Wireless Association.

Previous parts of this article provided background, the certification of radio operators, the Predecessors of RCC and The Early Years of RCC 1928–38. Part 3 covers RCC Advertising & the RCC in WWII

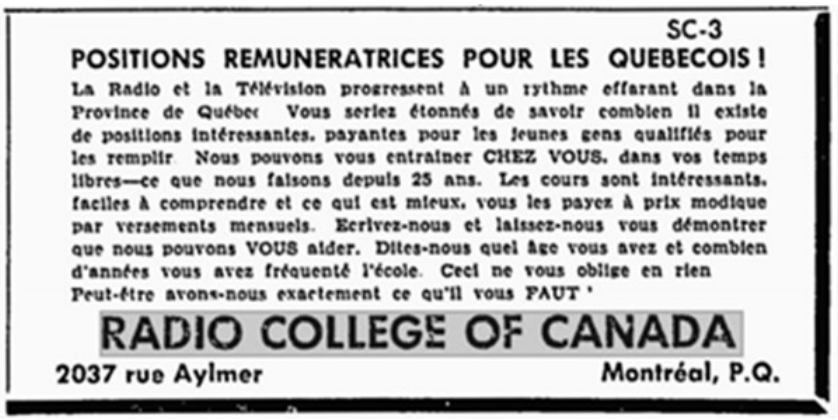
Advertising

The most visible historical record of RCC is through their thousands of advertisements in radio publications and national and local newspapers. Two examples of advertisements that RCC placed in newspapers, the technical press, and amateur radio publications are reproduced in Figs. 3 and 4, one in English and one in French. The college sometimes shared a booth with other parties at exhibitions such as the Canadian National Exhibition of 1935 where they are shown as "British American Extension College, Incorporating Radio College of Canada—Educational Courses". RCC also advertised itself as an authorized agent for the Sprott-Shaw School in Vancouver.

RCC in WWII

By 1938 RCC had become well established, with successful technical and radio operator courses and a publishing arm issuing the well respected RCC Service Manuals. The radio operator course, if attended full time, could be completed in eight months. However, as students had to pay their own tuition fees, and the living cost for out of town students was expensive, two alternative options were offered: evening classes and correspondence courses. Evening classes, which could take up to two years to complete, were an attractive option for local students, as they could continue to earn a living wage while studying. Correspondence courses, which allowed students to study at their own pace, were attractive to out-of-town students, as they would not then have to face the high costs of living in Toronto. These arrangements worked well in the last years of the 1930s, but the onset of war in 1939 created new challenges for the college. The demand for radio operators, crucial to the war effort, increased dramatically, and staff members left to join the armed forces.

Fig. 3. Advertisement for RCC. (Tom Brent, SPARC Museum, Coquitlam, B.C.)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POSITIONS REMUNERATRICES POUR LES QUEBECOIS !

La Radio et la Télévision progressent à un rythme effarant dans la Province de Québec. Vous seriez étonnés de savoir combien il existe de positions intéressantes, payantes pour les jeunes gens qualifiés pour les remplir. Nous pouvons vous entraîner CHEZ VOUS, dans vos temps libres—ce que nous faisons depuis 25 ans. Les cours sont intéressants, faciles à comprendre et ce qui est mieux, vous les payez à prix modique par versements mensuels. Ecrivez-nous et laissez-nous vous démontrer que nous pouvons VOUS aider. Dites-nous quel âge vous avez et combien d'années vous avez fréquenté l'école. Ceci ne vous oblige en rien. Peut-être avons-nous exactement ce qu'il vous FAUT !

RADIO COLLEGE OF CANADA

2037 rue Aylmer Montréal, P.Q.

Fig. 4. RCC advertisement, Montreal. (Les Chutes, Oct. 20, 1954)

The pressure on Radio College to quickly produce qualified operators for the war effort was complicated by many factors. One example, which might have reduced the number of incoming students, was an amendment to the RCC application form stating the student "Must be a British subject and...not eligible to take commercial operating examinations if he or his parents have at any time been enemy subjects." In the 1940s, the British Merchant Navy dominated the North Atlantic trade routes, and Dutch and Norwegian ships, unable to return to their home ports, joined that mix, with all their officers being fluent in English. They needed a second radio operator on board to sail in convoys, and as their radio operators adhered to the PMG guide for operating procedures, RCC was a good source of operators for these ships.

The demand for operators was so high that a former RCC instructor, with the tacit approval of RCC, set up the Canadian Electronics Institute (CEI) in Toronto to train a backlog of operators. The well-known electronics educator, the late Ernie Brown, graduated from CEI, and as a radio operator in the merchant marine, he sailed in the Atlantic convoys. These were highly risky ventures—Brown was torpedoed twice in the early stages of the war. The Canadian Electronics Institute was short-lived, as its chief instructor was soon called for military training.

RCC began training women operators around 1942; the first graduating class is shown in Fig. 5. Even with the number of women operators graduating, war conditions had created a demand for radio operators which could not be filled by graduates from radio training schools in Canada. By 1943 some 770 radio operators were employed in the Department of Transport at marine stations, airports, and monitoring stations in Canada and Newfoundland. Canadian Radio operators provided services essential to the war effort of Naval Service Intelligence, the Royal Air Force Ferry Command, the United States Ferry Command, the Combined Training Organization, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and Trans-Canada Air Lines. Further, the merchant navy with its radio operators was regarded as "practically an arm of the fighting services." The Department of National War Services had recognized these radio services as being essential to the prosecution of the war, and as of March 1943 they were short 275 operators. Finally, in a country at war, the duties of operators at marine, air and monitoring stations required a higher level of secrecy. In the case of the monitoring stations the need to intercept enemy transmission required a knowledge of "foreign" Morse code.

The demand for operators was mainly by the Radio Division of the Department of Transport (DOT) and the Merchant Navy for "foreign-going" merchant ships. As a result, DOT sent a letter to thirteen radio training schools announcing a program of financial assistance for students who agreed to accept employment with either of these two entities. The letter was co-signed by the controller of radio for DOT and by the director of merchant seamen.

Fig. 5. First women's RCC Radio Operator class, 1942. (YLRADIO website)

Applicants for the DOT program had to attend regular daytime classes but would only be refunded one-half of their tuition fees after completing six months of satisfactory service with the department. Male operators were required to take duty at any departmental station in the Dominion of Canada. Female operators were to be employed at departmental monitoring stations as much as possible. As will be seen below, separate policies for male and female operators soon broke down as the demands for operators increased.

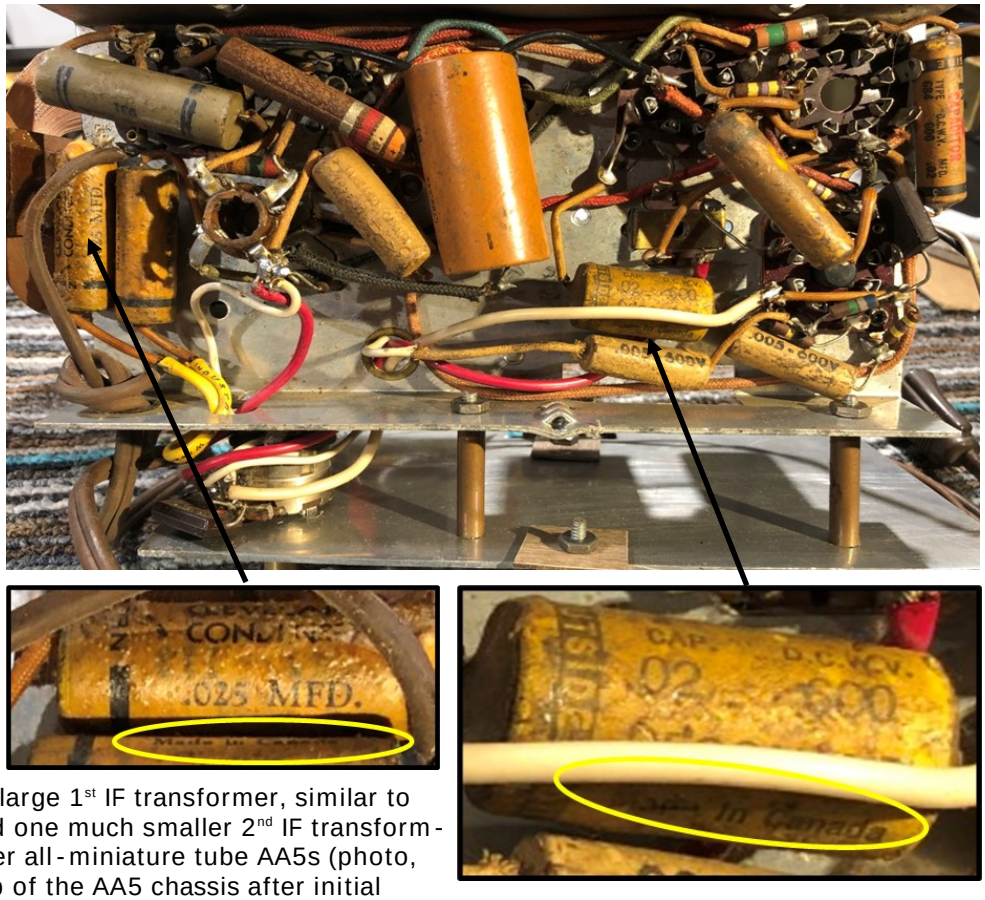
Applicants intending to serve on foreign-going merchant ships would be paid $60.00 per month during a basic training period of eight months, and would be refunded the full tuition fees in two parts. One-half of the fees would be refunded when the student entered the merchant seaman's manning pool, and the other half after one year's satisfactory service. The program was only open to male students, who were then obliged to serve for two years on any foreign-going ship to which they were assigned.

The restrictive opportunities for women operators are related in Olive Carroll's book "Deep Sea Sparks." She writes "Canadian restrictions forbade women to serve aboard our country's ships but Norway had no such reservations." Several women sailed as "sparks" in the merchant marine. Following the lead of the first, Fern Blodgett, eight sailed in wartime, and others, including Olive Carroll, in the years that followed. During the war years many women RCC graduates went to work in the intercept or monitoring service and later at the radio range stations.

Part 4 of this article covers the curriculum, people, place, the legal basis and adapting to changing times and technologies: 1947-62

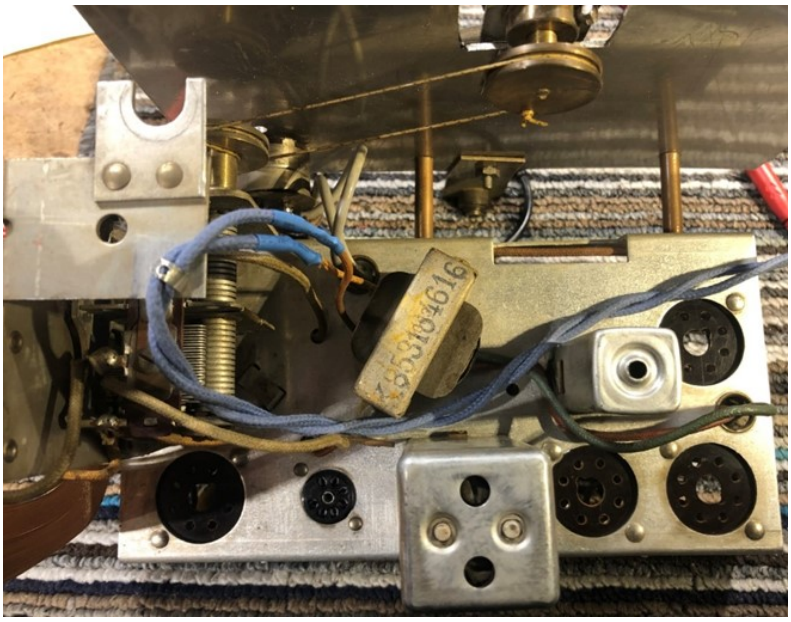
Cont. from Page 15 - The AA5 chassis he selected had the tuning gang offset to one side of the chassis, whereas the original Canadian Bluebird chassis had the tuning gang central on the chassis. The original tuning arrangement comprises a vertical metal bar on which was mounted the dial (central), the tuning shaft (bottom), and a pulley mounted on the tuning gang shaft at the top. To make this work with the offset tuning gang, a mounting plate ('control panel') for the volume pot and tuning assembly had been fabricated from aluminum, attached to the AA5 chassis with two spacers. The vertical metal bar had then been attached to the centre of this plate such that the tuning shaft mated with the corresponding (lowest) hole in the larger chrome escutcheon. Two new pulleys had then been machined, similar in design to the ones originally on the tuning gang. One of these was mounted on a short shaft installed through the tuning gang pulley (photo, above) and the other on the tuning gang shaft. The original dial cord stringing arrangement had been retained for the parts mounted on the vertical metal bar, though the cord had been replaced with thick kitchen string with no tensioning spring.

- A hole had been drilled in the 'control panel', positioned to align with one of the control shaft holes in the larger chromed escutcheon, and the volume/on-off pot installed through this hole. No provision was made for a tone control in this AA5 chassis and no mods had been made to accommodate one – the knob for the tone control was simply fixed onto a short dummy shaft.
- Leads going to the volume pot/on-off switch had been extended (unshielded wires) through the chassis to the re-positioned control.
- An extension for the volume/on-off switch shaft had been machined – a push-fit over the control's splined shaft.



The AA5's tube line up as received was 12BE6 (converter), 12SK7 (IF amplifier), 12SQ7 (detector/AGC/audio amplifier), 35L6 (output) and 35Z5 (rectifier). This is an unusual tube line up, mixing four octal tubes with one miniature tube, and, as such, I though that would narrow down the make and model such that I could probably find the schematic in the RCC documents – likely from the 1947 through mid-1950's period (the 12BE6 tube was introduced in 1946). Also, the chassis included a large 1st IF transformer, similar to those found on octal tube AA5s, and one much smaller 2nd IF transformer, similar to those found on the later all-miniature tube AA5s (photo, top of page 19, which shows the top of the AA5 chassis after initial cleaning). The only clue to the country of manufacture was that three of the (assumed) original waxed paper ca-

pacitors were marked as 'Made in Canada' (circled yellow on photos on the previous page) – strongly suggesting a Canadian-made chassis as Canadian parts were never(?) used in American-made chassis as far as I know, only as replacements during servicing in Canada.



I spent some time scanning through many RCC schematics and also enquired through the CVRS Schematic service, but no joy was to be had. The only Canadian AA5s I could find that had a similar line up were a Northern Electric (Model 5412, but that uses a 35W4 rectifier and is dual band), and the CGE Models C453 and C409, though these have a 12SK7 RF amplifier added, so are not really AA5s. So, maybe those capacitors were replacements and if so, this AA5 could be an American model after all. However, I did not think it worth scanning through Riders or Beitmans as there were several hundred AA5 models made in the US during this time period - probably easier (and quicker) to 'reverse engineer' the chassis if I needed to.

Several obviously replaced capacitors were present, including five waxed paper ones and the dual electrolytic. No dial light was present on the chassis – fairly unusual for an AA5, as one is usually incorporated into the heater string (via a tap in the rectifier heater).

As this chassis had been adapted to fit the Bluebird cabinet, I decided to keep it and refurbish it – just replacing the paper capacitors 'like-for-like' with plastic film types, and the dual electrolytic with separate modern parts, without referencing a schematic. I noted that I would also need to explore ways of providing light for the dial, and installing a functioning tone control – this is a three way switch in the Canadian version of the Bluebird, simply switching a couple of capacitors from the plate of the output tube to its cathode.

Chassis Refurbishing and Testing

The chassis was dusted/vacuumed and then cleaned with alcohol and lighter fluid as needed to remove grime and grease. The aluminum 'control panel' was removed from the chassis and the vertical bar removed and cleaned separately. Great care was taken cleaning the dial assembly: especially when cleaning the fragile translucent plastic dial and its convex cover glass (photo, right). With the grime removed, the dial looked like new (photo, left), although a couple of the metal dial glass retaining lugs suffered some metal fatigue on bending back into place and had to be strengthened with a dab of J-B Weld (invisible from the front).

Part 2 of this article will conclude the chassis refurbishment and testing, additional modifications to accommodate a tone control and dial lighting, assembly and testing of the radio.

Radio—Caption Competition— Eamonn Tork

Another version of our 'Radio Caption' competition—if you would like to enter, please send suggestions here. Some examples to twiddle your dial...

- Miles had his self-satisfied, smug grin on again— not for long though as he had picked up the B+ lead instead of his spiffing new prototype remote control...
- There was something wrong with the specs in the advert thought Miles—he could have swore it said '27 inch picture' - too good to be true he mused. Either that or they had sent him the '27 inch cabinet' model.
- In the early days of black and white TV, actors had to wear heavy, contrasting makeup so their features could be seen on the low-resolution sets. Here we see one of the first colour TV cameras, which, of course, needed very loud and hideously colourful chairs to be of any use (though to be honest, given the camera specs, Miles might as well have been sitting on an orange box, or a camel...).
- Way ahead of his time, in a flash of inspiration, Miles conceived 'YouTube' - albeit comprising a 3" mirror set into a kitchen cupboard. Meanwhile 80 years into the future...

WARNING and DISCLAIMER: Vintage radios and other older electronic equipment were not manufactured to meet modern-day safety standards. These radios (especially AC/DC radios) and equipment can present electrical safety hazards and materials health and safety hazards (eg. asbestos, PCBs) in their original form. Any modifications to, repairs of, work on, or operation/use can pose a significant risk of injury, even death. Readers undertake work on such radios or other electronic equipment entirely at their own risk. The CVRS and authors of articles appearing in Canadian Vintage Radios hereby waive any responsibility or liability whatsoever associated with anyone working on, modifying or operating any piece of electronic equipment or otherwise making use of any information contained within this publication or available elsewhere from the CVRS, including but not limited to, the CVRS website.

And finally.....

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