



Rockwell
Collins



Rockwell International



COLLINS



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Issue #6

This newsletter is sent out to all who have called in on the AWA net and who have email facility, and those who have paid for mail envelopes, with the hopes that it will encourage you to call in again and help to keep the AWA net alive and well.

Should you not want to receive any further publications of this newsletter, drop me a note and I will take you off the mailing list. Should you prefer to receive a hard copy via snail mail, please send an SASE for the period you would like to receive these and I will process for you.

Happenings:

The lapel badge has taken off quite well and quite a few have gone out to various people. Anyone interested in getting such a badge, can get hold of Cliff by email at csmyth@altron.co.za to place an order with him. The cost involved is R22 per badge, PLUS R6.00 postage. The bag used for postage can take up to 12 badges, so order a few and save on postage.

Cliff's banking details are as follows:

ABSA branch code 515-205 (Northgate) account C.J. Smyth. Number 0711107967. Use your call sign as a reference number.

You have probably noticed that the logo on the head of the page has changed. This is now the same as the lapel badge and it was felt we should stick to one logo. Hopefully this will become something that the AWA members can associate themselves with.

I am investigating supplying the logo in the form of a cloth badge (embroidered). Size is 75mm diameter. Should you be interested in one of these badges, send me an email and we can gauge what the interest will be like. I can then investigate prices etc.

ZS0AWA/CW.



Still the old diehards calling in on the CW net. Stations heard : Ian - ZS5IAN; John - ZS6JBJ; Barrie - ZS6AJY; Clive - ZS6AVP. Thanks guys for keeping the net going and making it a topic of interest.

Remember the AWA CW net on Saturday afternoons at 14:00 SAST, run at 12 wpm and so should meet the needs of all interested in CW. 7020 is the frequency.

Then of course the Straight Key net on Monday evenings at 19:30 on 80m, freq 3579. I have heard that there is also a QRP CW net that runs on the same frequency in the mornings at 06:30, which has been going for 15 years.

AM Net:

I am really amazed how the interest in AM is continually growing. So nice to hear the new callers on AM and all the rigs that are being used. As Willem so politely puts it, from the “Tupperware” signals to the pure AM enthusiast, it really is good to see the enthusiasm that is being shown. There really are some great signals out there and we encourage you all to keep it up and dust off those AM rigs to get them working again.

Remember the AM group on Wednesday evenings at 07:30 SAST on 80m, freq 3615 (-5kc for QRM) Please come up and join us if you have the time and the inclination. This group is also growing slowly in numbers. There have been a few evenings that AM has been impossible due to the high QRN, but I think in general, we have been more than successful at running a net in the evenings. Several of the chaps are now doing MF on this net and that makes it even more interesting. The set up for transmitting music is different to that used for normal phone, so it makes for an interesting event.

I have still not heard from anyone regarding the oldest operational AM receiver or transmitter around, so I will kick off the ball here. I have a Hallicrafters SX25 made in 1940, pictured below. Who’s going to beat that one.



SSB Net:

When calling in to the net, let us know what rig you are using. There are some interesting sets out there that people are using, and it's always great to know that the person you are talking to is using a blast from the past.

A hearty welcome to those newcomers to the group and we hope to see you all come back again.

Some of the rigs heard recently:

Malcolm – ZS4SM B25; Peter – ZS5JP FT200; Danny – ZS6AW FTdx100;

Gonset Company

Faust Gonset, W6VR, was an old-time ham. In the 1930s, he contributed articles about transmitter modifications to *RADIO* magazine. In 1942, he co-edited the *Radio Handbook*, for years the major competition to the handbook put out by the ARRL. In fact, the West Coast-oriented *RADIO* gave *QST* a good run until just after WW II, when it tried to shift its focus to broadcast engineering, went bust, and was folded into *CQ*. In the forties, Gonset joined his father's company, bringing in some top ham radio engineering talent. The first noteworthy product was the legendary "Communicator" series of portable VHF transceivers. This was followed by a mobile converter, the "10/11," and the equally legendary "Commander," an HF mobile. When the FCC finally allowed mobile amateur operation in the 50s, Gonset was there, leading the pack with small, lightweight, mobile powered, and pretty much unbreakable, ham radios at affordable prices.



GONSET G-66 RECEIVER. Less power supply and speaker. Net.....\$ 169.50
Power Supply, 6-12VDC-115VAC. Built-in speaker. Net.....\$ 39.95

For example, Gonset made an early, HF mobile receiver, the G-66, and a matching transmitter, the G-77, both of which would fit easily under a dashboard. They were cool looking little boxes, kind of like shinier spy radios, with external power supplies and modulators that went somewhere else (the trunk?). They only used AM, but they covered all the HF bands.

In the true boat anchors, Gonset made a series of rather odd looking HF receivers, vaguely reminiscent of the Motorola bases of the era, with funny bent panels, but about a zillionth of the workmanship of Motorola's commercial-grade gear. The full-size, Gonset transmitters were more conventional looking, in the standard battleship-style boxes. There was the GSB-100 exciter/transmitter, and the GSB-101 linear. Later on, a smaller desktop linear, the GSB-201 series, got the legal input from 4 811As.

The Commander series was for portable HF use, with a rather purposeful looking 30-watt AM transmitter and matching receiver, both in absolutely tiny boxes, with little doors in front. The transmitter would do 30 watts AM, not bad for something that would fit a glove compartment. I have never seen one of these. The pictures make it look cool, like the airport radios of the era.

However, the most famous, and prevalent, Gonset radios were and are the Communicator series of AM transceivers for 6 and 2 meters. Gonset sold a bazillion of these. They were standard issue for Civil Defense/RACES and disaster communication. Both came in the same square, ungainly, metal box, looking a lot like something you'd keep bread in,



but with SO-239 coax jacks on top. (This made a good place to screw on a whip antenna, when working outdoors in the field.) Early versions had "magic eye" tubes. Gonset also made an external amplifier, in a matching box, with the inevitable little window to look in and see how the finals (826s?) were doing. This little radio, known affectionately as the "Goony Box," was cheap to begin with, and even more so used. However, it could stand up to portable use, and it pretty much opened VHF to hams. It's hard to believe now, but most simplex and even duplex on VHF used to be AM. FM was later, when modified Motorola and GE land-mobile gear came into use.



Communicators went through several revisions, with Roman numerals, up to the IV, which had a more "modern" case. Later models had a sliderule dial instead of a rotary pointer. Their major competition was the Heathkit Sixer and Twoer, the classic "Benton Harbor Lunch Boxes." The Communicators are neat radios, popular with collectors and AMers. They're immortal. They still come up for sale at times, with or without the nuke-era yellow paint jobs, and/or the round CD logos.

Gonset didn't survive the transition to solid state. Faust Gonset sold the company to one of his suppliers, then it was sold one more time in the 60s before vanishing without a trace.

Faust Gonset stayed in the radio business, however. He started SBE, also in California. SBE, for Side Band Engineers, marketed the first truly miniature SSB transceiver in 1963. It wasn't quite all solid state, with tubes in the transmitter driver and PA, but it was still tiny, way smaller than most of today's HF gear, and with speaker and power supply built in.

The SB-33 was up to Faust Gonset's usual engineering standards, with many dual-use "bilateral" circuits to cut complexity and create a true transceiver, in which major portions of the transmitter *really were* the receiver backwards. It was followed by the SB-34, more an update than a redesign. There were also a couple of matching linears. These weren't much bigger, so you had a base-station punch in a mobile-size footprint. All this means that the prototype 'ricebox' was not the FT-101. It was the SBE, made right here in these US of A. The radio was years ahead of its time.

Gonset sold SBE, which passed through several owners, including Raytheon, whose later CBs had the SBE brand. Two very interesting transceivers, the SB-35 and 36, were assembled in Japan, but still never sold well. When Raytheon closed its San Francisco factory, it sold the brand name and line to David Thompson, who had been the marketing manager for land-mobile.

SBE dropped amateur, but lasted several years longer making highly regarded CBs and scanners. One of these, the Opti-Scan, was among the first programmable scanners, which did not require that an expensive crystal be ground for each desired channel. Instead, the user would insert punch cards. Quite the advance, at the time. SBE also appears to be gone, or at least out of the radio business.

With thanks to the Ominous Valve Company website for the article.

Promotions:

The following are the dates for the Radio technology in Action, which is going around the country. This is a great time to get out your Antique's and set them up on display. We have found that there is a lot of interest drawn to the old rigs as people reminisce on what they used to operate and how many contacts they made on them. Come on guys, how about putting up a display in these areas?

- **KwaZulu-Natal** - 15 July University of KwaZulu-Natal
- **GAUTENG** - 19 August SARL National Amateur Radio Centre

The Eastern Cape and Western Cape RTA days have been and gone. Did anyone manage to get some rigs on display at all ? Please let us know if you did.

If anyone does set up a display, please take some photo's and email them to me for inclusion in the newsletters.

Should you feel so inclined, send us pictures of your shack that we could have them included in this newsletter.

Restoration News:

I recently acquired a Trio TX88A from Theo ZS6TO in Pretoria. The TX88A was made in the 1960's and is purely a low power AM transmitter. The original specs were that it would put out 20W on AM using a single 807 valve in the final. The rig I received from Theo has been modified to work with a single 6146, so it will be interesting to see what it can do. The rig needs a bit of TLC as it has some rust on the one corner of the case and a bit on the chassis, but other than that looks in fairly good condition. Operating frequency is from 6 – 80 meters. This rig has found a new home with William – ZS5WC.



Rod – ZS5RK has been busy restoring a Gonset GSB 100 and has been heard on the air a few times with the rig. The Gonset is a Multimode transmitter made from 1958 - 1964 with 100w input on SSB and 50w input on AM operating 10 – 80 meters.



Antique Clubs and Sites:

<http://worleys.com/reference/hamradio/antique.htm>

Swap Column:

There is an online swap shop on the website of the Highway Amateur Radio Club for ALL amateurs and interested parties to use - it is not restricted to members only. We have been invited to make use of this facility too. Should you want to, use the link to the HARC at the end of the page to take you to their website.

If you would like to forward this newsletter to any other interested parties, please feel free to do so. Print it out and put in on your club notice board, or give it to someone interested in valve radios. If you know of any who report in on the net but don't have email, print it out and give them a copy.

Remember net days and times:

Saturday 08:30 SSB net - frequency – 7070Mhz
Saturday 09:15 AM net – frequency 7070Mhz
Saturday 14:00 CW net – frequency 7020Mhz
Wednesday 19:30 AM net – frequency 3615 (-5 for QRM)

This, and past copies of the AWA Newsletter can be downloaded from <http://members.harc.org.za/newsletters/AWA/>. Our thanks to the Highway Amateur Radio Club in Durban (<http://www.harc.org.za>) for providing this service to our members and other interested parties.

Thanks for the bandwidth.

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