



When I Think Back...

by Neville Williams

Readers have their say: Omegas large and small, Archie Caswell, and the H.K. Love/Kingsley finale...

Having been holed up in hospital for several weeks by what appeared to be a belated encounter with a renegade 'bug', I am now faced with a stack of unanswered letters from readers commenting on matters recently raised in these columns. Please be patient if it takes a while to catch up. Either that, or blame the aforesaid Cytomegalo virus!

Without further ado, then, let's look at the mail. Writing from Upper Hutt in New Zealand, Terry Parritt recalls his days as a teenage wireless enthusiast in Birmingham UK, when it was possible to pick up unwanted 1920's style receivers for a few shillings apiece! These, along with various ex-government bits and pieces, were available from local 'junk' shops.

In those days, he said, it was common practice in British circuit diagrams to denote resistance values with a lower case or small omega (ω) to signify ohms; by contrast, an upper case or large omega (Ω) would signify a resistance expressed in megohms.

Such being the case, our remarks in the October, 1993 issue about the 'Tropadyne' circuit were inappropriate. At the relevant time, the resistors shown as 0.5Ω and 1.5Ω would have been read as 0.5 and 1.5 megohms — as intended by the designer.

Also from New Zealand comes an excerpt by author John Stokes from the NZVRS Bulletin, Volume 14, No.2, Aug '93. In questioning our self-same comments about the 'Tropadyne', he mentions other examples of confusing terminology over the years — a case in point being substitution of the letter 'm' for a small omega, or as an abbreviation to signify Megohm/million or Milli/thousand — a mere 1000-1 discrepancy!

Thanks Terry, and thanks also John. I suspect that the convention involving a big and little omega was observed less in this country than in UK/NZ literature. But, whatever the reason, I missed it!

Archie Caswell

When I set about to prepare a story for 'When I Think Back', there's no telling where it will finish up after historically-minded readers' interest has been focussed on the subject.

Prior to writing his story for the January/February 1995 issues, Archie Caswell was completely unknown to me. His potential biographical interest arose from the fact that, as a one time radio ser-

viceman and hobbyist from rural Queensland, he had managed to contrive ingenious — and forbidden — radio receivers in a Japanese POW camp, from unlikely oddments, thus significantly boosting the morale of his fellow prisoners.

While essentially the story of one man, it became evident from the telling that Archie Caswell had been aided and abetted by unnamed fellow prisoners, who were prepared to scrounge radio oddments at considerable risk to themselves. It was also evident that other technically resourceful prisoners had also managed to intercept radio transmissions by setting up illicit equipment in other camps.

How I came by the Caswell story is explained in the January issue. But, to my surprise, an inquiry about Archie's exploits reached me prior to publication of the January issue, while I was still flat on my back in hospital. Once uncovered, the Archie Caswell story had clearly been relayed on the amateur historians' 'Grapevine' across the world!

In a letter from 16 Cloncurry St, London SW6 6DS, Sibylla Jane Flower said that she had personally been researching a book on the history of Japanese war prisoners, particularly on the Burma-Siam Railway. She had interviewed surviving radio operators during a recent visit to Australia and the Arch Caswell story, reportedly due for publication in EA, would be very relevant to what she had in mind.

In short, Arch Caswell might well become the central figure in a book about a different kind of war hero — one



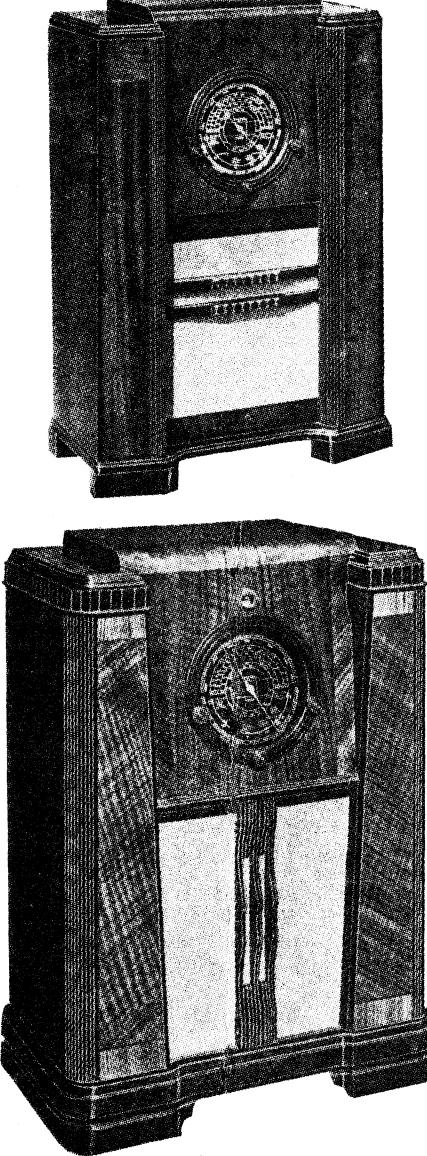
A photo of Howard K. Love, sent to us recently by a reader.

wielding a circuit diagram and a soldering iron!

Howard Kingsley Love

On the other hand, one of the most satisfying stories I've prepared in recent months was that on Howard Kingsley Love, the founder of Melbourne's Kingsley Radio (see EA, July-August, 1994).

This story emerged as a natural sequel to the earlier story of Lay Cranch, but posed a very real problem: HKL was widely known throughout Victoria as a radio amateur and technical writer, a pioneer broadcaster, an electronics engineer and an equipment manufacturer. What was missing, or so it seemed, was the usual assortment of biographical articles published during the course of his career. That he had accomplished much was in no doubt; our problem was to document exactly how, when, where and why!



A range of Kingsley receivers as advertised for the 1938 market. At upper left is the K 45D five valve dual wave console priced at 19 Guineas. Lower left is the K50 CD five valve dual wave console which featured a Kingsley high fidelity amplifier and was priced at 25 Guineas. Centre is the six valve K60 CD console which cost 30 Guineas. Upper right is the K50 MD Mantel Model five valve dual wave receiver modestly priced at 17 Guineas. And at lower right is the six valve dual wave K60 DP radiogram priced at 65 Guineas.

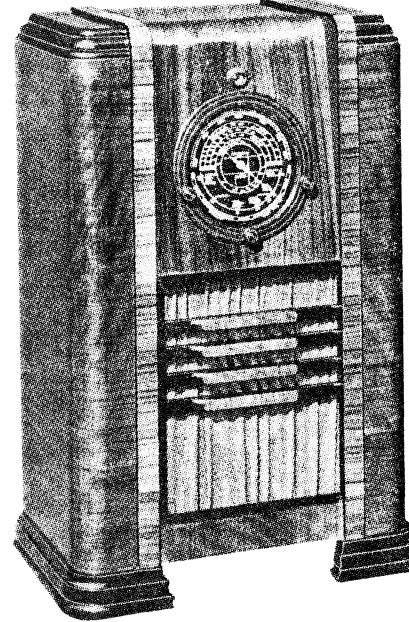
Fortunately, we were able to assemble a few snippets of basic information about HKF and other pioneer Victorian amateurs from early magazines, which slotted in with the recollections of a reader from way back, George Neilson (VK3TES), who had worked for years in the Kingsley factory.

By merging George Neilson's story with that of Lay Cranch and scattered references in postwar magazines, were able to present a reasonably cohesive biography of Howard Kingsley Love, extending from his early years as a radio amateur to his sudden and unexpected death in 1948.

The exercise took on a much more personal quality on receipt of a letter from HKL's daughter, Kathryn Lechte — also unknown to me prior to the exchange.

Here is what Mrs Lechte wrote:

I was pleased to read Mr Williams' recent article, as H.K. Love was my father. For years I have been hoping that someone would recognise my father's expertise as one of the original ham radio pioneers.



I have often contemplated writing down things I remembered about his life, but my knowledge of the workings of Kingsley Radio was limited as my father died when I was in my early 20's and coping with a young family.

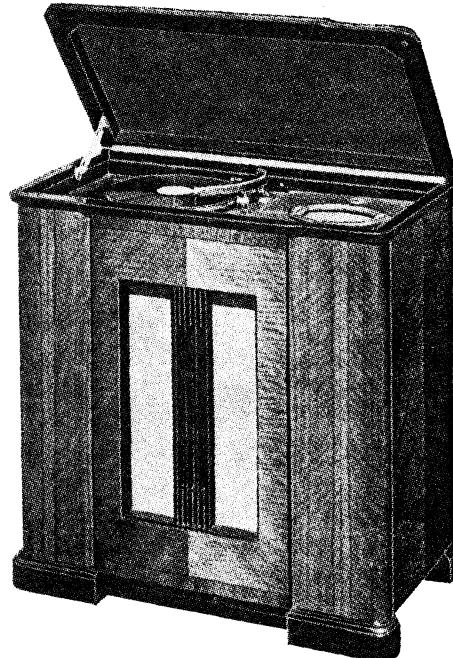
To read about the staff and how the business operated brought back many memories of the 1940's and I am only sorry that we lost touch with so many staff and friends through the trauma of my father's death and the winding up of the business.

My father's wireless room was always the hub of much activity, especially when a 'CQ' brought in overseas hams on the loudspeaker, often keeping the family awake until all hours.

Morse code was an integral part of radio in the 1920's and my mother was often brought into the radio room to help interpret some distant contact, as she had been trained as a telegraphist in England.

VK3KU and VK3BM were two well known callsigns in those days. When my father died at age 52, a great pioneer of radio was lost prematurely.

Kathryn Lechte (50 Bowden St, Castlemaine, Vic 3450)



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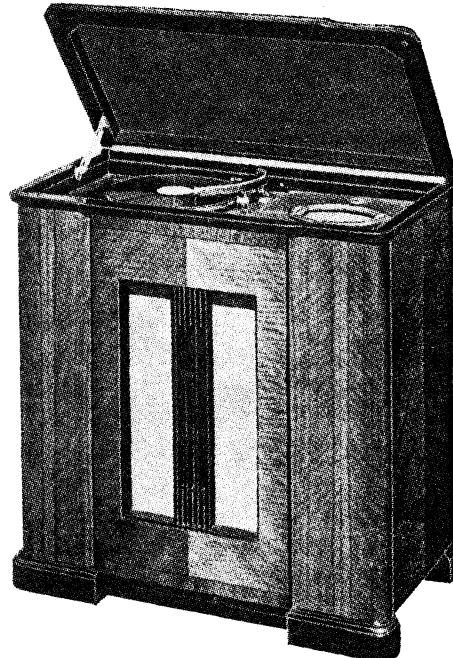
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WHEN I THINK BACK

It is indeed good to realise that the articles in the July and August 1994 issues can provide a basic biography of Howard Kingsley Love, which can be embellished by any other information which may come to hand. Kathryn Lechte would have personal memories of H.K.L. in their family home.

Other readers, as below, have contributed further information.

Writing from Mt Gambier in SA, John F. Harris says that he became an amateur operator after the war and invested in a Kingsley AR7 receiver as part of his station equipment. At the time, Kingsley Radio offered a service whereby owners of an AR7 could return the LF 'Band A' coil box to the factory and have it converted into a 10-metre bandspread coil box.

By way of further up-dating, he personally replaced the original 6U7-G RF amplifier with an EF50 and the 6K8-G converter with an ECH35. The end result was quite a receiver, he says, which kept him going until he eventually replaced it with a BC-348.

John recalls that when he took in his Band-A coil box, someone at the factory had shown him a prototype 6-metre converter. To the best of his knowledge, and sadly, the converter had never reached the commercial market.

Broadcast receivers

Writing from Latrobe in Tasmania, at the ripe old age of 81, Jim Davis VK7OW says that he has been around for long enough to remember and collect a fascinating array of wireless memorabilia, including some branded Kingsley.

As a collector, he has an array of SW receivers and transceivers, 35mm sound film equipment, antique radios from 1914, phonographs from 1897, broadcast mikes from 1926, etc. I may have more to say about Jim's activities in another issue.

In the present context, Jim's memories of HKL go back to the late 1920's, when they met at Burnie. HKL had been playing records and answering technical questions over broadcast station 3LO in Melbourne, and had agreed to supply a mutual friend at Burnie with 'the best record player that money could buy'!

What follows reminded me very much of the 'York' line of receivers released by Reliance Radio in Sydney around 1934. Designed to feature annually at Sydney's Royal Easter Show, the 'Yorks' were virtually custom built, using the best available components, circuitry and cabinet ware.

Jim says that, back in 1932, the Kingsley special receiver was unique. It

which anticipated the Garrard X-100 parallelogram arm by 49-odd years!

Jim says the sound was 'out of this world' to a hobbyist who owned a home-brew three valve TRF set, built on a breadboard with plug-in coils wound on UX valve bases.

But, adds Jim Davis, "the proverbial wheel turned the full circle during the next 20 years". The proud owner of the receiver passed away and left it to a relative who had no real use for it. Jim Davis was able to buy it for his collection — the cabinet in original condition, unmarked! (see picture).

Jim has been in touch with Kathryn Lechte and has photographs of typical Kingsley receivers from the 1930's, and also a 16mm colour film of the Kingsley factory showing various stages in receiver production.

The final chapter?

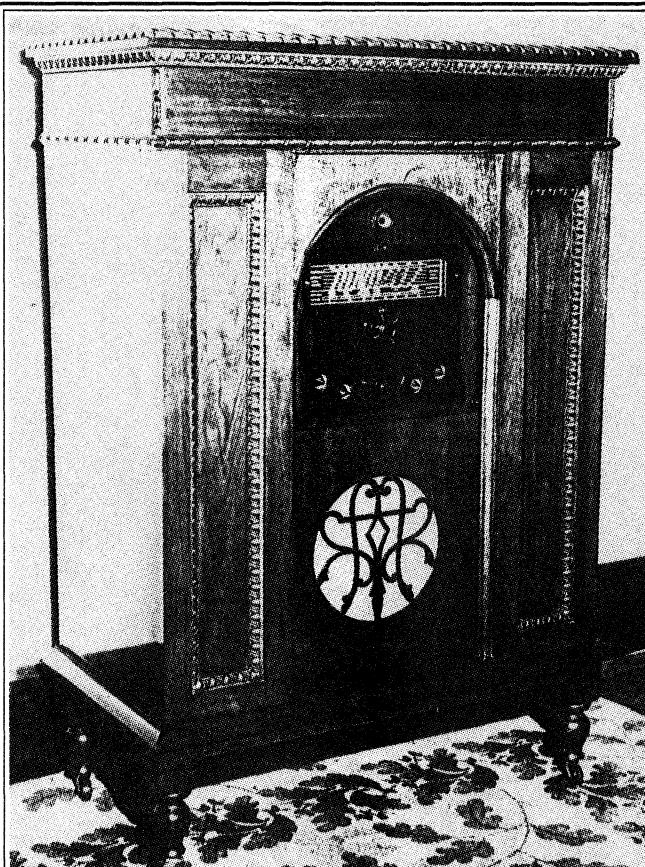
Writing from Woodend in Victoria, Mr H. Martin recalls a career with a number of electronics companies in the Melbourne area. In the process, he mentions that he may well share in the final chapter of the Kingsley saga — a tantalising statement in the present context.

Mr Martin arrived in Australia from Germany in 1952, and worked in Tasmania for a year under a labour contract with the HEC. He was transferred to Melbourne in the following year to assemble and wire Byer tape decks.

In the meantime, he had to cope with learning English, and to *Radio & Hobbies* (as we were then called) went the honour(?) of the most obscure phrase he encountered. To have an argument or get involved in one was logical enough, but the idea of 'Buying an Argument' defied all linguistic logic!

As it turned out, Byer had sub-contracted some of the tape recorder work to the Aegis Manufacturing Co., and he ended up in Aegis' busy little 20-person factory in St Kilda Road, opposite the Shrine — virtually the manufacturing arm of J.H. Magrath's parts store in Little Lonsdale Street. He adds:

Magrath's shop was a virtual Mecca for a radio enthusiast. It was the first and



Said to be unique to 1932, the de-luxe receiver built for a friend in Burnie by Howard Love. Unmarked and capable of magnificent sound, the set is now owned by Jim Davis of Latrobe, Tasmania.

stood about 5ft (152cm) high and 3'6" (106cm) wide and covered the broadcast and two shortwave bands, with a sensitivity (RF gain) control, phono-radio switch and audio control. A push-pull output stage drove a 12-inch (25cm) Rola Auditorium electrodynamic speaker, with a separate power supply to excite the field.

Opening the lid revealed a then-modern Astatic crystal pickup which, at the time, lacked offset to counteract tracking error. But not in this player; Howard Love had fitted it with a 'parallelogram' type arm which completely cancelled tracking error and



An Astatic crystal pickup from the early 1930's. The original rigid arm has been cut and rejoined using parallelogram rods, which substantially obviate tracking error as the pickup moves across the record.

only self-service radio shop for years, selling to home constructors for little more than trade prices. (Employees of Aegis got a further 10% off!)

At Aegis, Mr Martin got to know the Product Engineer 'Chuck' Van Scy and gained an understanding of Aegis products, as well as tape recorders.

One memorable weekend, he helped clean out the cellar to gain extra storage — to discover that it contained workshop equipment that had once belonged to Kingsley Radio, including presses for extruding iron cores. In conversation, Chuck told him that Kingsley had been pushed into bankruptcy by the National Company of America. National was said never to have granted a formal licence covering wartime manufacture of the AR7 receiver, and had supposedly laid claim to all wartime profits made on the Australian version.

Following the sudden death of Howard Love, it was presumably not a contest for which the surviving board members would have had any relish; hence their hasty decision to wind up the enterprise.

According to our correspondent, the contents of the cellar he cleaned out was what remained after Mr Magrath had taken what he could use in the Aegis Factory. The larger presses and other heavy machinery was acquired by Anderson & Roudie — A&R, the transformer manufacturers.

To Mr Martin, dispersal of the hard-won factory equipment that had been assembled by Kingsley to produce their unique tuning system had to be the final chapter in the saga! ♦