

When I Think Back...

by Neville Williams

Who can ever forget the post-war disposals stores — like A.C.E. Radio?

A memorable aspect of the post-war era, for Australian electronics hobbyists, was the appearance of military surplus disposal stores offering an intriguing range of bits-and-pieces, and redundant built-up units at prices which were often a fraction of what they might otherwise have been. Useful at the time, many of those same bits have since become interesting 'collectables' for public and private museums. Pardon me if I ramble a bit, but it's that kind of a subject!

First a personal observation: At one stage in the 1960s, at the height of the disposals era, I had seemingly acquired enough bits and pieces from disposals stores and elsewhere to start a modest museum of my own — posing a threat to our domestic living environment and the space available for the family car!

I recall that one stout, bulky carton contained an Australian made 'LW' (light-weight) radar transmitter, complete with magnetron but utterly useless for anything other than its original purpose. A few years earlier, its very existence had been a closely guarded secret, but I had later staggered away with one for virtually nothing — brand spanking new, by courtesy of Jack Lewis of the Classic Radio group.

At the other extreme, in terms of utility, I picked up a Paton SG-1 signal generator from A.C.E. Radio — again cheaply, because it wasn't working. But, given a few evenings of TLC (tender loving care), it came good and has worked ever since on my bench — valves and electrolytic capacitors notwithstanding!

An in-between acquisition was an American made field multimeter, in a steel case, using a large 50uA movement — this was before the era of protection circuitry. I hesitated to use it for everyday bench

work, because of its bulk and vulnerability to inadvertent measurement overload, and my faithful old Calstan 1000 ohms/volt meter still copped most of the work.

For the rest, most of my petty cash went on valves — dozens of them — from EF50 and 6AC7 RF pentodes to 807 beam tubes, 866 rectifiers, and imposing transmitter 'bottles' like the 803.

These, and useful little two-inch square meters, which turned up regularly on the bargain counter at Prices Radio in prestige brands like Ferranti, Weston and Jewell.

Drawing on my boxes of 'goodies', I built up a multi-band VHF transmitter using 'disposals' crystals re-ground by R&H's then Editor, John Moyle. A few months later, I came across an ex-disposals calibrated, tuneable aircraft transmitter which proved very successful as an add-on VFO. Was it from Waltham Trading, Metropolitan Radio, Paragon Radio, Deitch Bros, Lance Chapman, Mike Sheridan or someone else? I can't remember...

Another British aircraft transmitter, ratchet tuneable across the UHF band, set me up on the 144MHz amateur band — provided I didn't attempt to change the preset frequency too often. Operating within the noise field of a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, one mightn't have noticed; but in the comparative quiet of a suburban backyard ham shack, the ratchet preset tuning system generated a passable noise simulation of a machine gun — all by itself!

Both transmitters, along with a five-metre job from mainly disposals bits, have long since been pensioned off and there is once again room to move in the house! Such, for me, was the lure of disposals equipment.



On the job — a smiling Joe Ellison, posed against an assortment of valves in one of the tidier corners of the A.C.E. Radio display.

Home-ground crystals

Former Editor John Moyle's pride and joy was a heterodyne type frequency meter which, as I remember, he picked up from a Melbourne disposals dealer. Using type 30 battery triodes and dependent on its individually calibrated handbook, it was a tedious instrument by modern standards; but he used it to re-gain numerous crystals for his own transmitters, while also helping out other members of the magazine staff.

Not surprisingly, some of John's own petty cash went on stray crystals which, in those days, were mostly mounted in hand-assembled plug-in holders — some from overseas, others from AWA and Melbourne's Max Bowden.

Similarly for other members of the R&H staff, with the further observation: every one seemed to have hoarded hanks of assorted coaxial cable bearing obscure type numbers, for possible use with 'ham' rigs or TV sets. All too often the hanks proved to be of inadequate length, unsuitable impedance or too 'lossy'.

Any number of other old timers, I guess, will recall having invested in ex-disposals parts with the best of intentions, often to realise that, months later, many of the bits were still sitting in their original packing, untouched. Like me, they were on their way to having their own mini-disposals store on site!

One could doubtless ramble on in this fashion, but I will simply add an observation by Selwyn Sayers, *EA*'s long serving Advertising Manager. Having joined the staff around 1960, at the height of the disposals boom, he branded this present article as "timely because, in advertising terms, it marks the end of that whole era".

In point of fact, the notion of covering wartime electronic 'disposals' stores in these columns arose in part from a letter mentioned in the March issue, from Terry Parritt of Upper Hutt, NZ. Terry said he had picked up a basic familiarity with radio in the 1930s from discarded 20's-style radio sets and government surplus bits, plentiful in second-hand stores in the UK at the time. He wondered whether we'd had similar stores in Australia.

About the same time, Editor Jim Rowe mentioned in conversation an ex-patriot English radio engineer who had inquired whether we planned to cover Australian surplus stores like A.C.E. Radio, which he used to visit regularly in the old days. If we were interested, he had taken a number of colour slides at the time, which would be available for publication.



The A.C.E. Radio premises in Marrickville, just before the building was sold. When formed in 1934, the company was registered as Excelair Radio and supplied built-up radio chassis.

When I finally got to talk to the aforesaid radio engineer, John Rich, he proved to be a much younger man than Terry Parritt — born in 1940. But he was nevertheless able to confirm that well stocked second-hand ('junk') radio shops had indeed been plentiful in the UK in the 1930s. Such had not been the case in Australia until after WW2 — an era, as I said, that is now passing into history.

Australian stores

It gave me cause to recall the early 1930s when, as an impecunious wirer, I used to haunt the wireless shops in the Sydney CBD during my lunch hour — partly to fill in time and partly in the hope of spotting an affordable bargain.

There were three or four shops in the Royal Arcade which, very occasionally, offered a tempting addition to their standard display. Near the George Street end was the store which originally belonged to Mrs F.V. Wallace. Further down was Joe Keeps' shop, carrying telephone oddments from the PMG Dept.

Across the road, in nearby Pitt Street, was (Joe) Levenson's Radio, noted more for buzzers, Morse keys, mini-telescopes and other such technical toys than for radio parts.

Further up Pitt Street was Radio House, with an excellent display of radio and electrical parts, keenly priced but with few clearance bargains. And then there was Murdochs, a men's emporium diagonally across from the Town Hall, with a handyman section stocked with

tools and radio oddments but, again, few clearance bargains.

If Australian hobbyists were to collect unwanted surplus wireless components in those days, they had to obtain them privately rather than over the counter.

At the end of WW2, however, Australia was suddenly awash with surplus military equipment. It was then that entrepreneurs with some knowledge of electronics and capital to spare realised that there was money to be made, by buying surplus electronic whatnots in bulk from government stores and marketing them to enthusiasts directly and/or by mail order through technical publications like *Radio & Hobbies*. No less to the point, apart from long term enthusiasts, there was a whole new generation of potential hobbyists who had been introduced to electronics during recent military service.

Their would-be suppliers ranged from novice investors to executives of established electronic firms who saw the chance to grab a share of the action. Harry Carter of A.C.E. Radio, specifically mentioned by John Rich was one of the latter.

We are indebted to the late Allan Falson for an account of how the system ultimately worked out in practice (*EA*, Dec.'92).

Getting their bargains

Government Stores would publish details of what was to be auctioned, at certain times and places. Professional dealers would confer beforehand and decide on the likely demand for the

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various items on offer, an end price that would appeal to the public and how many units each dealer would be prepared to buy.

At the auction, bids were conventionally invited first for one-off items so that private buyers could be accommodated. Bids were then called for specified lots, and only one prearranged dealer would appear to be interested, with no more than purely token competition. A bid having been accepted, orders would be placed to cover the total needs of the group. Similarly for other items, with different dealers leading the bidding on each occasion.

At the end of the day, there would be a grand settlement with members of the group covering their respective cash commitments and arranging to pick up their share of the purchases. Chatting with Lance Chapman during the preparation of this article, I mentioned what Allan Falson had told me. Said Lance: "The 'cartel' approach was the only effective way for us to buy!"

Collusion it undoubtedly was, but it was probably reflected in a more attractive price to the ultimate purchasers. One also has to take into account that a significant quantity of war surplus and lend-lease equipment never went under the hammer at all — being written off, dumped at sea or buried as landfill in disused brick pits. Anything to get rid of the stuff!

(I mentioned this to Geoff Wood, a former advertiser in this magazine, who told me how, as a member of the RAAF maintenance staff and under orders, he had personally supervised the postwar dumping of surplus aircraft engines and machine tools into the depths of Darwin Harbour...)

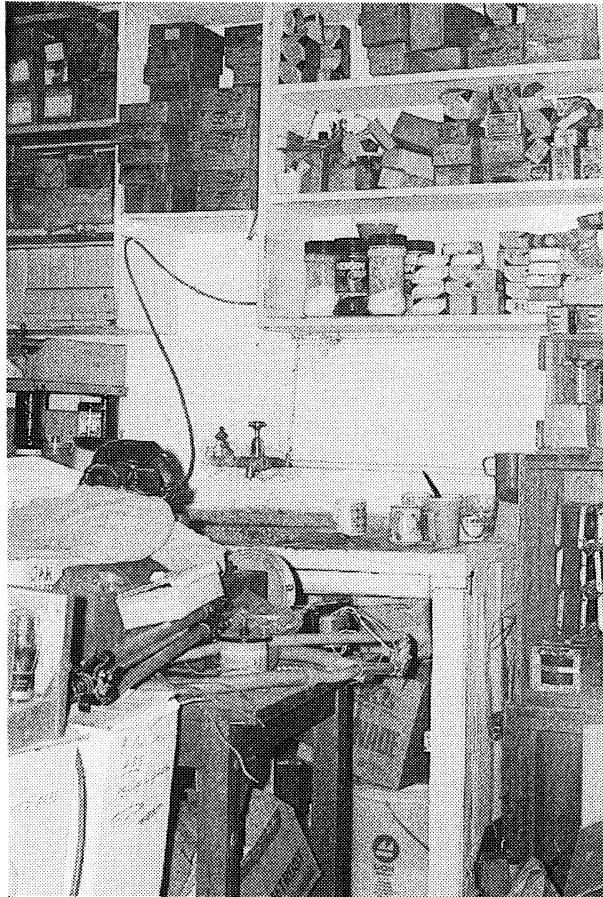
In conversation, John Rich said that his own interest in disposals stores — A.C.E. Radio in particular — was not primarily as a source of components for personal use, but rather because such stores were a repository for apparatus and components that belonged to electronics history.

Paid to enjoy himself!

Born in the South of England, he had trained and worked in the UK as an industrial electronics engineer until he felt

that he had endured more than his share of overcast, biting winds, sleet and cold. He had accordingly headed for Australia, where he found that he could pursue his interests and career in a warm environment, under sunny skies and 'be paid money to do so'!

In fact, he has done just that for the past 25 years, tending to specialise in digital control of industrial processes 'from blast furnaces to icecream factories' — much of the work being at the 'cutting edge' of design. He worked with Philips in the early 1970s, during the development of their microprocessor controlled traffic signals — a world first.



Once the kitchen sink, by the time this picture was taken there was barely enough room remaining to make a cup of tea.

Chatting informally about such matters, as a couple of C-60 tapes slid obtrusively through my cassette recorder, I sensed a man who combined a practical respect for modern microtechnology with a genuine affection for the patient and ingenious methodology of other days.

That is why his mind returns easily to the historic RAF (Royal Air Force) and RN (Royal Navy) installations which still dot Britain; why he now spends much of his spare time getting his hands

dirty, to reclaim and maintain historic boats/ships for the Sydney Maritime Museum; and why he is also on the lookout for the bits and pieces to recreate historic wireless rooms on such ships.

Again, when the subject turned to the 'Sixty Milers' that once hauled coal from Newcastle to Sydney for the coal-gas suppliers, before the days of natural gas, he told me of the North Sydney terminal that he had visited; of the wheelbarrows and shovels that were still right where the workmen had left them; and, as it were, the ghostly presence of the men themselves!

As for voices, he is also active in oral history and is well acquainted with the efforts of the ABC's Stephen Pratley, producer of the historic wireless history tapes 'Bright Sparks'.

But, jumping several decades, he is also on the committee of the Computer Museum Society, and grateful that examples of the 'world first' Australian Philips digital traffic controller, which are just being decommissioned, may be offered by the RTA (Road Traffic Authority) to museums, thus preserving them for posterity.

Surprise! Surprise!

Getting back to A.C.E. Radio, he said that one of his most intriguing discoveries among the 'junk' was a couple of very light weight 19-inch equipment racks. He was told that they once held communications equipment carried on sleds and used by an Australian expedition to the Antarctic. Only the racks remained...

In conversation, I mentioned finding a particularly handsome transmitting valve that had probably belonged once to the Royal Navy. The glasswork was flawless and unclouded, the nickel electrodes as shiny as the day they were

mounted and the nickel base similarly unmarked. It had adorned our mantel shelf at home with all the aplomb of a Venetian ornament, until it was crowded out by family photos.

Said John Rich: "There were boxes of magnificent old valves like that at A.C.E. Radio. I tried to talk Joe Ellison into supplying polished wood stands, which could be drilled to accept the base pins, but he wasn't interested. They would have made magnificent 'conversation pieces' on an executive table..."

"Joe would have been happier if they'd been like the stacks of high frequency power transformers he collected, unusable on 50Hz mains. He could have piled them in a heap and flogged them off to a scrap metal dealer."

There were also lots of cathode ray tubes, as I recall, some still in their original cartons, others piled bare into boxes as exposed and vulnerable as eggs in a paper bag. The most useful ones were American 5-inch diameter 5BP1's and British 6-inch VCR97's. I tried them both in a home made bench oscilloscope and a junk-based TV receiver, producing a green picture the size of a visiting card.

Quite a few readers followed suit (*Editor's Note: Including me!*), and found as I did that one would logically buy two or three extra tubes for future use — in case the originals became gassy. The spares weren't heavy, but they did add significantly to the stuff piled up in the home!

In fact, I also took home couple of 10-inch diameter tubes in the forlorn hope that they would provide a larger TV picture. Most of them, unfortunately produced a blue, long persistence image which was hardly appropriate for the action on a TV screen. Worse still, they tended to build up a static charge on the screen which smeared the image randomly, like an oil slick on a wet road!

Short on facts

So much for what I warned at the outset might be a rambling treatment of the subject. When it comes to the actual history of A.C.E. Radio, I find myself lamentably short of facts. Maybe — just maybe — there is someone out there who can help fill the gaps.

According to John Rich, Harry Carter set up a business at the Victoria Road, Marrickville address in 1934 — about the same time that I left High School and started work as a wirer at Reliance Radio. Joe Ellison had told him that Harry had claimed advertising support of *Radio & Hobbies* in just about every issue since Vol.1, No.1.

A check through as many issues as I had access to suggested that the one ad-

vertiser who can justly claim 'never missed an issue' would be RCS Radio.

John also alerted me to the fact that Harry's company had been registered under the name 'Excelair Radio', which I remembered vaguely but could not find in my 1939 copy of Mingay's *Radio Trade Annual*. Nor was there any mention of Harry Carter himself.

However, thumbing through my time-worn bound volume 13 of this magazine — from April 1951 — I came across regular full page advertisements for Ex-

Deitch Bros, Motor Spares Ltd, Electronic Equipment Co, Surplus Stores, Waltham Trading, Goodman — an incomplete list, in the order I came upon them. Looking at the contents, it is evident that, having established their credibility with war surplus trading, some of them had also tapped into left-over stocks held by local manufacturers/distributors.

All in the family

At about this same time (1952) Harry Carter was joined by Joe Ellison, who sealed the arrangement by marrying one of Harry Carter's daughters, thereby becoming a son-in-law.


Curiously, Harry gained another son-in-law in the person of Jack Lewis, the owner and manager of Classic Radio, operating from premises in Parramatta Rd, Ashfield — obliquely across the way from the old AWA factory. Jack also supplied built-up equipment, but had separate outlets to handle disposals trading.

Returning to Harry Carter, it is evident from the advertisements that disposals activities gradually swamped Excelair Radio. Room after room in the Victoria Road building — an ordinary brick cottage — was filled with disposals equipment, as was the original front verandah and patio space at the rear. After that the purchases were stacked in the backyard, with or without protective tarpaulins.

I well remember, as do others, the dismay at seeing equipment in crates or cardboard cartons, dripping wet in the rain — equipment for which we might otherwise have found a nice, dry spot on our own workbench!

Inside the cottage, out of the rain, the 'office' had shrunk to a mere break in the endless procession of boxes and bits, with just enough space to accommodate a chair and kitchen sink, telephone, paperwork and a few relevant magazines. Nearby was the wherewithal to make a cup of tea. Elsewhere, according to John Rich, all evidence of a one-time radio workshop had been buried under boxes and bits.

In 1950, the name of the company had been changed to 'A.C.E.' which signified



PHONE LA 3845

136 VICTORIA RD. MARRICKVILLE, SYDNEY, N-S-W
AND 636 KING STREET, NEWTOWN — LA7008

EVENINGS and WEEKENDS: "KALUA," Hilma St., Collaroy Plateau — XW5956
DULWICH HILL, UNDERCLIFFE, EARLWOOD, BUS AT DOOR, STOP No. 42

<p>NEW Transmitter Valves</p> <p>211 1200 H.F. 2.00 212 1200 H.F. 2.00 213 1200 H.F. 2.00 214 1200 H.F. 2.00 215 1200 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>NEW 24V MOTORS</p> <p>216 24V 1/2HP 1.50 217 24V 1/2HP 1.50 218 24V 1/2HP 1.50 219 24V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>ENGLISH I.F.F. UNITS</p> <p>220 10 valve, Transmitter Receiver 4.00 221 10 valve, Receiver 2.00 222 10 valve, Transmitter Receiver 4.00 223 10 valve, Receiver 2.00</p> <p>NEW C.R.O. TUBES</p> <p>224 1000 H.F. 2.00 225 1000 H.F. 2.00 226 1000 H.F. 2.00 227 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>NEW 3BZ TRANSMITTERS</p> <p>228 3BZ 1/2HP 1.50 229 3BZ 1/2HP 1.50 230 3BZ 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>NEW 240V A.C. MOTORS</p> <p>231 240V 1/2HP 1.50 232 240V 1/2HP 1.50 233 240V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>DON 8 TELEPHONE</p> <p>234 8 Line 1.00 235 8 Line 1.00</p>	<p>AMERICAN WALKY TALKY</p> <p>Complete with Valves and Circuit E2/15/76 Postage: N.S.W. 7/6, Interstate 10/0</p> <p>6V VIBRATOR POWER SUPPLIES</p> <p>236 6V Filtered, 1000mA 1.50 237 6V Filtered, 2000mA 2.00 238 6V Filtered, 3000mA 2.50 239 6V Filtered, 4000mA 3.00 240 6V Filtered, 5000mA 3.50</p> <p>NEW AIR TESTED TRANSMITTERS</p> <p>241 10 valve, Transmitter Receiver 4.00 242 10 valve, Receiver 2.00 243 10 valve, Transmitter Receiver 4.00 244 10 valve, Receiver 2.00</p> <p>12V Lighting Plants</p> <p>245 12V 1/2HP 1.50 246 12V 1/2HP 1.50 247 12V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>NEW VALVES</p> <p>248 1200 H.F. 2.00 249 1200 H.F. 2.00 250 1200 H.F. 2.00 251 1200 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>RELAYS</p> <p>252 12V 1/2HP 1.50 253 12V 1/2HP 1.50 254 12V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>NEW AMERICAN HI-FI HEADPHONES</p> <p>255 100 Ohm 1.00 256 150 Ohm 1.50 257 200 Ohm 2.00 258 250 Ohm 2.50</p> <p>NEW VACUUM PUMPS</p> <p>259 1/2HP 1.50 260 1/2HP 1.50 261 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>NEW 2V ACCUMULATORS</p> <p>262 2V 1.00 263 2V 1.00 264 2V 1.00</p> <p>TYPE F TELEPHONES</p> <p>265 8 Line 1.00 266 8 Line 1.00</p>	<p>GENEMOTOR FOR PORTABLE TV</p> <p>267 24 to 220 Volt, 500, 1000 M.A. 4.00 268 24 to 220 Volt, 500, 1000 M.A. 4.00 269 24 to 220 Volt, 500, 1000 M.A. 4.00</p> <p>NEW POWER TRANSFORMERS</p> <p>270 240V 1/2HP 1.50 271 240V 1/2HP 1.50 272 240V 1/2HP 1.50 273 240V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>C.R.O. Transformers</p> <p>274 1000 H.F. 2.00 275 1000 H.F. 2.00 276 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>Vibrator Power Transformers</p> <p>277 12V 1/2HP 1.50 278 12V 1/2HP 1.50 279 12V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>Inverter Transformers</p> <p>280 12V 1/2HP 1.50 281 12V 1/2HP 1.50 282 12V 1/2HP 1.50</p> <p>NEW SMITH AIRCRAFT LOCKS</p> <p>283 1/2" 1.00 284 1/2" 1.00 285 1/2" 1.00</p> <p>New Coils and Intermediates</p> <p>286 1000 H.F. 2.00 287 1000 H.F. 2.00 288 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>GENEMOTORS</p> <p>289 1000 H.F. 2.00 290 1000 H.F. 2.00 291 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>MINIATURE HI-POWER MOTORS</p> <p>292 1/2" 1.00 293 1/2" 1.00 294 1/2" 1.00</p> <p>TELEPHONES</p> <p>295 8 Line 1.00 296 8 Line 1.00 297 8 Line 1.00</p> <p>NEW R.F. METERS</p> <p>298 100 Ohm 1.00 299 150 Ohm 1.50 300 200 Ohm 2.00</p> <p>WANTED</p> <p>301 1000 H.F. 2.00 302 1000 H.F. 2.00 303 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>OIL FILLED CONDENSORS</p> <p>304 1000 H.F. 2.00 305 1000 H.F. 2.00 306 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>NEW RESISTORS</p> <p>307 100 Ohm 1.00 308 150 Ohm 1.50 309 200 Ohm 2.00</p> <p>NEW CONDENSERS</p> <p>310 1000 H.F. 2.00 311 1000 H.F. 2.00 312 1000 H.F. 2.00</p> <p>VALVE & CIRCUIT TESTERS</p> <p>313 1000 H.F. 2.00 314 1000 H.F. 2.00 315 1000 H.F. 2.00</p>
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Although somewhat reduced in size, this reproduction of a page from an A.C.E advert in May 1959, gives a good idea of the range of disposals items on offer.

celair Radio, offering kits for radio homebuilders and/or a range of complete chassis, built up and tested. Harry Carter had set up the Marrickville cottage as a small radio factory, possibly supplemented by enthusiasts working on a cottage industry basis. Either way, he was obviously doing well enough to pay for full-page advertisements.

Some issues contained a second Excelair page offering war surplus clearance items, as also were Prices Radio, Metropolitan Radio Supplies,

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Amplification, Communications and Electronics. Hence the full points after each letter in the registered logo.

When I compared notes with Selwyn Sayers, EA's Advertising Manager, he recalled some of the agonies of the company's advertisements, of which I was also a witness from the editorial chair. In the 'old days', when Excelair was seeking to promote new radio chassis, the advertisements were well planned and attractive — probably the work of a professional advertising agent.

Difficult adverts

When the emphasis turned to non-descript disposals oddments, the presentation changed from commercial art into an urge to cram in as many items as possible. Compositors were presented with tiny illustrations and descriptive paragraphs to be set in the smallest practical typeface.

For the following month they would be likely to receive a copy of the previous advertisement, with hand-written instructions to 'change this', 'delete that', or 'insert this instead of'. As the months rolled by, the instructions became more involved, requiring more frequent reference to past issues.

These days, with computerised setting, they wouldn't have posed such a problem, but 20 years ago illustrations involved zinc 'blocks' attached to rectangles of type metal. Text comprised individual lines of type metal, set and cast by linotype machines. To make up a

page involved stacking and packing the lines and blocks into a page sized metal tray, to satisfy the layout instructions.

As if that wasn't problem enough, the contents of the tray rested face up on the compositor's bench so that *he* had to manipulate in metal a mirror image of the layout instructions to produce a finished page that was the right way round. Needless to say, setting up an A.C.E. advertisement was not the most sought after assignment among the Fairfax 'comps'!

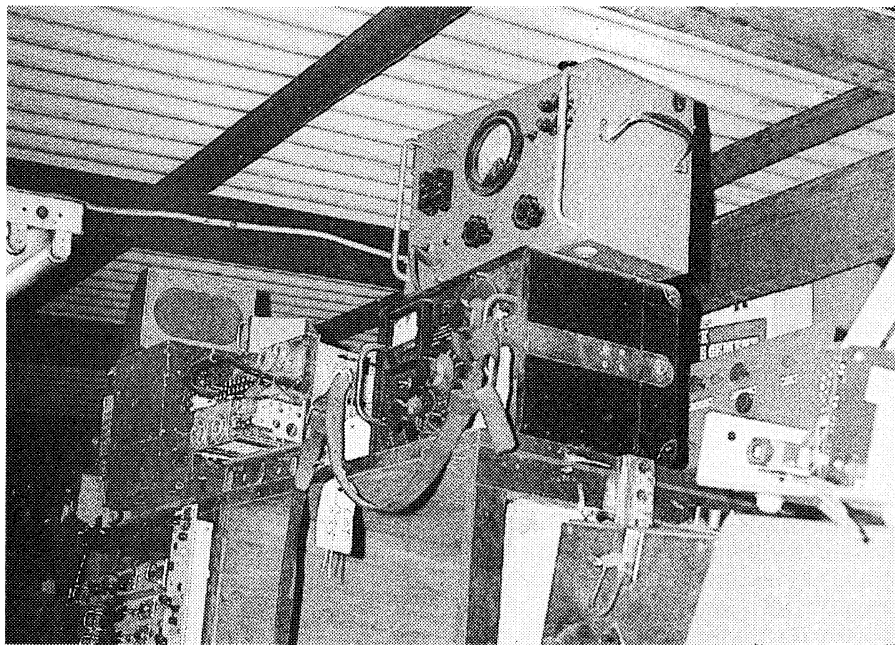
One other story related by Selwyn Sayers is worth re-telling.

Completely hemmed in by disposals whatnots, Harry Carter found it difficult to keep up with his mail, with the result that Selwyn Sayers received more than his share of complaints about A.C.E.'s slow response to orders. He, in turn used to ring Harry to warn him that he'd have to adopt a better system — or risk having his advertisements refused.

A different level

Harry was reputed to be affable and honest, even if a 'rough diamond', but he seemed not to comprehend why a bloke 'in the sticks' would need to write to the magazine, just because A.C.E. took a few extra days to fill his order! Did they think he, Harry, was some kind of a shyster?

When Sel finally threatened to 'pull the plug' on A.C.E. for the next issue, Harry felt sure that the publishers had a hidden agenda — their real concern



Stacked to the sloping roof on a verandah, this display may well have contained some interesting items for those who could recognise them.

was probably his ability to pay the bill. His response to Sel: "I want to talk to your boss"!

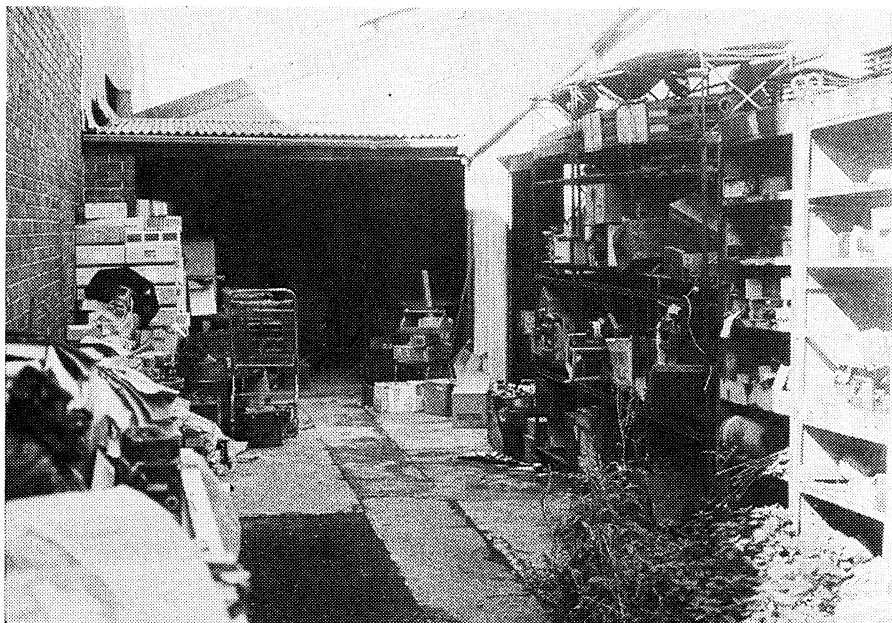
At the time, that translated into Angus H. McLachlan, the urbane General Manager of John Fairfax Ltd and a director of Associated Newspapers Ltd, then publishers of this magazine. Arrangements were duly made for Harry Carter to meet Selwyn Sayers outside the Broadway building at a certain time, and be conducted to the management offices on the top (14th) floor. This floor was referred to sometimes as 'Heaven'; at others as 'The Mausoleum', prompted by its demurely panelled wooden walls, acres of carpet and pervading silence.

Ordinary mortals entered only when bidden, with bated breath and respectful countenance.

When Harry arrived at the front entrance of the building, he'd come direct from his shop in his work clothes: non-descript trousers, odd shirt and socks, old style tennis shoes, and carrying a time worn Globite case. Thus clad, he was ushered into the Management lift to the 14th floor and thence into the GM's sanctuary.

The reason for the visit was duly explained, but Harry seemed determined to make one particular point. Picking up the Globite case, he unclipped the lid and emptied the contents all over McLachlan's desk — a great untidy pile of banknotes! This with an insistence that "I've got the money. I can pay my bills, better than you all seem to think!".

Who said what next is not part of the story. All I can say is that Harry Carter's adverts continued to appear, and readers complaints about poor service seemed to diminish. Mission accomplished!



It was tough, but there just wasn't room inside for this lot. Visitors to A.C.E Radio were often dismayed to see surplus gear standing outside in the rain.

In 1970, Joe Ellison became the owner of A.C.E. radio and it was from him in the 1970s that John Rich picked up most of the information and his impressions relating to the disposals era in Australia.

What became of A.C.E.?

So what happened to A.C.E. Radio? John says that Joe Ellison decided ultimately to sell the business and move out of Sydney. Seeking further information, I asked repeatedly where Joe went and where he is now, but no one appeared to have the answer. I simply don't know.

Both John Rich and Selwyn Sayers said that the business had been brought by a Paul Fullagar, who moved it 'lock,

stock and barrel out Manly way'. In so doing, he forfeited the customers who had habitually dropped into the Marrickville premises 'to have a sticky' — but he didn't attract an equivalent number from his new locale. As such, the venture was a failure.

Paul Fullagar, I was told, donated the best of the antique equipment to local schools, etc., and consigned the apparently unsaleable residue to the tip.

John Rich tells me that the A.C.E. cottage has been replaced by a modern building. But maybe, just maybe, some young secretary on the site may one day glimpse a shadowy figure in workclothes and tennis shoes, soldering iron in hand, bending over a radio chassis... ❖