

hams. Arthur, ZL1HV, was good enough to arrange for us to visit the Auckland Technical Institute on two Saturdays. The teaching aids available, and set up by him, made some of the more complex theory so much more understandable.

Christmas came and went and examination time was fast approaching on 4th of March. As we had a reasonable number of candidates, I enquired whether Wellsford could be an examination centre. The radio inspectors readily agreed that one person travelling 50 odd miles both ways was better than nine doing so and would co-operate readily. This was much appreciated. All this time we met regularly every Wednesday. Only three weeks were lost during the Christmas-New Year period. Cyclostyled questions were handed out at frequent intervals, based on previous exam questions, to gauge progress. These were marked and returned. The last two weeks were spent revising and checking up on past papers. An up to date "Questions & Answers" book would have been most helpful at this stage but unfortunately was not available.

Came the 4th of March, the day we had been working for. I went along to the hall we had hired for the occasion to make sure everything was in order and to wish the best of luck seeing it was the last time Alan and I would meet them. This is what I thought, but not so our pupils! They were going to be at my place as per usual that night, to have a post mortem. This was duly held and then "they" decided to carry on! In order to learn morse an audio oscillator would be needed. So a printed circuit board was designed around a standard circuit. Some low impedance phones were procured as well as a lot of keys ex 19 sets. Components were ordered and a circuit diagram, together with P.C. board template and development sketch was handed out. By the way, the circuit had a deliberate error in it. The result was a satisfactory morse practice oscillator and experience in making a printed circuit.

By now the exam results came to hand in dribs and drabs. On final count of 10 sitting, six were successful. (John, of course, had been successful before). A very satisfactory result all round. It made the long grind worth while.

The next practical step was the construction of a G.D.O. This would be a valve version utilising the power supply previously constructed and the multi-meter as an indicator. The valve would be a 956, a dozen of which had been donated to us. As sockets were scarce, they were to be soldered directly to a P.C. board accommodating all components. Again, components were purchased by the group. Aluminium for chassis work was obtained from a caravan builder by way of window cut outs. Coil formers are cardboard tubes from a drapery. Dials, a piece of cardboard and acetate, suitably ruled. The rest we had to pay for. But

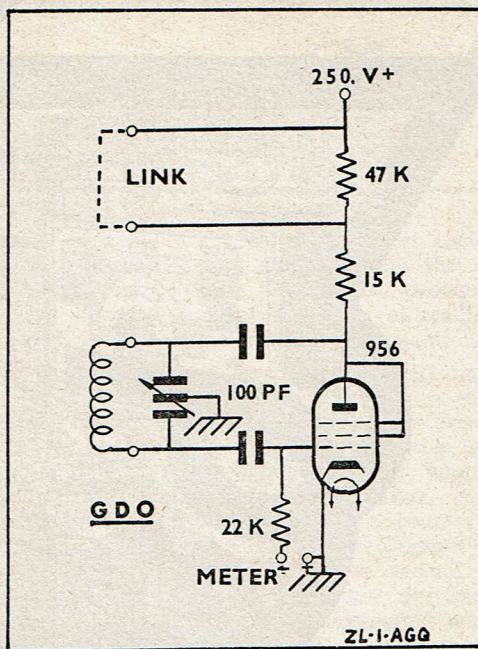


FIG. 1

the cost per member was \$1, which was also the cost per member of the audio oscillator, the balance being met out of kitty. A very reasonable figure for a precision instrument plus good practical experience. The finished article works well up to 2 m. The circuit used is shown in Fig. 1. The link forms part of the coil and is used on the high ranges. A switch was fitted in the H.T. supply so that the unit could be used in absorption mode.

This brings us to the present. What about the future? We intend to build, as a group, a low pass filter to prevent T.V.I. if and when new transmitters are fired up. After that, perhaps a simple solid state 2 m transceiver to be fitted to our vehicles. Just to keep in touch and supplement C.D. communications. Meanwhile, everyone has learned the rudiments of morse and is listening to ZKY. Also a former naval telegraphist has offered his services for C.W. coaching. Those who were unsuccessful in the March exam are being coached in theory and will have another go in September. At present we intend to cease our organised weekly activity some time in September and to carry on fortnightly or monthly from then on. We also have a waiting list of six new prospects whom we will enrol in the next course commencing February next year. Who knows, there may be more in this second group than the first? In any case if two hams in a small community like this can increase the ham population by 2 to the power of 3, then what is the potential throughout the country?