



Antique Wireless Association of Southern Africa Newsletter



226

May 2025

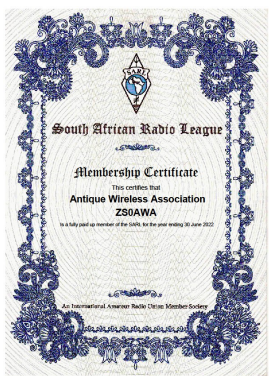
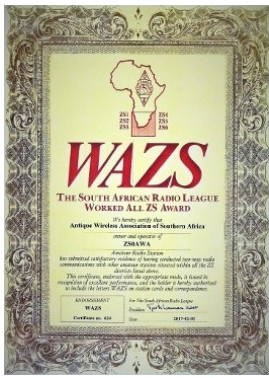


Johnson Viking Ranger

The Johnson Viking Ranger was THE rig to have if you were on AM phone in the 1950s. It was capable of 75 watts input on CW and 65 watts input on AM, could operate on all bands from 160m through 10m, and had a built in VFO. The Ranger was plate modulated, unlike many of the wimpy, carrier controlled screen modulated transmitters of the time. It had a robust, choke input power supply and a powerful modulator that could put out more than enough power to fully modulate the single 6146 final amplifier.

There are three versions of the Ranger. The first Ranger came out in 1954 and did not have the timed sequence keying. The next (standard) model came out in 1955 and added timed sequence keying. It was followed in 1961 by the Ranger 2 which added the 6m band to the transmitter. The Ranger was available either in kit form or as a factory assembled unit. My Ranger is the standard model, since it contains timed sequence keying but does not have the grey coloring scheme of the Ranger II. It was factory assembled because rivets were used extensively throughout to fasten tube sockets and other components to the chassis.

There is no doubt that the first two models look a whole lot better than the Ranger 2. I find their brown and maroon color scheme much more appealing than the grey color scheme used on the Ranger 2. Though the meter on the Ranger 2 is easier to read, the meter on the earlier Rangers is more attractive.



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- * Technical Advisor—Rad ZS6RAD
- * Secretary/PRO—Andy ZS6ADY
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- * WC—John ZS1WJ
- * Historian—Louis ZS6SK
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Chris's Musings

Recently, on the regular Saturday AWA net, the topic was AM, i.e. Amplitude Modulation. Or as some people refer to it as Ancient Modulation!

But, did you know that the first modulation technique used for radio communication was 'digital'? On-off keying has two binary states. Of course I'm referring to Morse Code as it became. We also know that AM was the second modulation method and was the first 'analogue' modulation method. So why the resistance to digital methods when discussing Antique Radio?

Reginald Fessenden is credited for discovering amplitude modulation (AM) radio and explaining its scientific principles. With his heterodyne principle, he put into practice the idea of mixing two high frequency signals to carry the audible low frequency of the human voice. A Brazilian priest and inventor, Landell de Moura, in 1901 described a radio communication method that effectively used AM and received a US patent in 1904.

So, where am I going with this?

Transmission of voice and music by amplitude modulation of a carrier wave is more than 120 years old. And, is still in use today. Radio amateurs have been involved in experimentation since the early days and continue today.

In South Africa, we have a unique licence condition that permits the transmission of music on the 80 metre band for test purposes. This allows for simple evaluation by ear of the quality of AM transmissions. Though one does not hear as much AM as in former days, there is still a regular AM net where so called 'musical frequencies' are practised.

Whilst AM operation is more difficult these days due to the level of electromagnetic noise caused by LED lights, Switched Mode Power Supplies and Solar installations, there is still plenty of scope to experiment with AM.

Traditional AM transmitters have used high level plate modulation, series modulation or grid modulation in valve transmitters, and low level AM generated in SSB radios. But, there are some modern topographies using semiconductor circuits for modulation which help to reduce the size and power consumption of AM transmitters. FET modulators in valve transmitters. How about fully solid state Class E transmitters, which are up to 92 percent efficient? Pulse Width modulators which generate almost no heat and are also 90% or better efficient.

There are still dozens of AM transmitters gathering dust in shacks and garages. Maybe because they are too big or not suitable to fit into a modern shack. Could this be one of the reasons is why there is not much AM about any more.

So I have a question. Is our heritage only about old radios or is it also about the modes of operation? AM is about as antique as it gets!

If we can agree that AM is not only about valves glowing in the dark and emitting enough heat to keep you warm in winter, but is also part of our heritage, should we not be preserving the use of AM too? Even if it means constructing or using equipment from the most modern components?



Johnson Viking Ranger II AM/CW transmitter

AWA Valve QSO Party

1. The aim of the AWA QSO party is to create activity on the 40 and 80 meter bands. It is a phone only contest.
2. Date : Sunday 04 May 2025.
3. Time. From 15:00 - 19:00 SAST
4. Preferably, Valve radio's, or radio's with valves in them may be used.
5. Frequencies - 80m 3,600 to 3650 Mhz
40m 7,050 to 7,100 Mhz and 7.130 to 7200Mhz (The frequency between 7.100 and 7.130 is contest free)
6. Exchange - call sign, RS and consecutive serial numbers starting at 001, plus type of radio used. eg HT37 Tx.
7. Scoring , (your radio)
All valve radio 3 points per contact
Hybrid (valve & solid state) 2 points per contact
Solid State Radio 1 point per contact
8. Certificates will be awarded to the first three places.
9. Sponsor : The Antique Wireless Association of Southern Africa (AWA).
10. An excel log sheet is available on the AWA website. Copy and paste the following link : [Downloads \(awasa.org.za\)](https://www.awasa.org.za/downloads)
Look in "Other Downloads"

All contact logs to be sent to:

email: andyzs6ady@vodamail.co.za



All Valve



Solid State



Hybrid

Reflections:

When I was first licensed in 1984 and after passing my CW 12 wpm, my first HF radio was a Hallicrafters SX100 receiver and an HT37 transmitter.

Being confined to CW for the first 200 contacts, I would often spend time listening on the bands to see what was going on and my first recollections of music transmissions was from a group of guys transmitting on 80m in the ham bands. I can't remember all of the call signs or who it was, but most significant was Munro, then ZS6IN and Phillip in Kroonstad, whose call sign I can't remember.

They would pump out musical transmissions almost every evening with a group of others who would kind of fade into the background because of the strength of signals put out by the two main characters.

Here I stand under correction, but if my memory serves me well, Munro ran a Viking Ranger using the output stage directly to a home brew linear and would run easily 100w of AM. Phillip also had a station that put out in excess of 100w AM.

I would spend many an evening listening to the MF transmissions, kind of longing to be able to join them, but with my 30w output from the HT37, I did not see much chance of the happening.

Almost a year down the line, my CW contacts achieved, I received my full ZS license and called in on the group to let them know I was listening. It was such a pleasure to be able to join in on an AM net using DSB from the HT 37.

I would continue to be an avid listener, not having the equipment to do MF transmissions myself.

Fast forward to 2003, after the formation of the AWA and OM Rod ZS5RK (SK) spent some time firstly convincing us that AM was part and parcel of the AWA and that we should be actively involved in promoting the use of AM on our nets. So began the AM call in on a Saturday morning before the SSB net which grew to around 10 plus stations at times. Then came the Wednesday evening nets which turned into transmitting MF sometimes until the early hours of the morning.

Let it be stated here, in those days 80m was probably the better of two bands to be working and propagation was just great. Solar systems had not been thought of then and QRM on the band was negligible.

Om Rod, the leader of the pack, used an NC100 AM transmitter and used to feed a turntable to the audio and played vinyl's, mostly 78's from his collection. The rest of us kind of followed along using PC's through some form of interface to feed the audio to our AM/SSB rigs of which we were constantly reminded by Rod, were not real AM. He had this way of putting things across that just kind of made you feel bad about what you were using, although it was not that obvious.

Slowly but surely, we became more ofey with the intricacies of transmitting AM and the revival of pure AM rigs was on the increase.

A few Viking rangers came out of the woodwork, and every now and then something unique would come along.

I rescued a Viking Valiant from the scrap heap when Transworld Radio started to do a lot of modifications at their transmitting station in Swaziland, which was promptly taken

over by Don ZS5DR.

I was fortunate enough to come across a Collins 75A-4 and 32V-3 transmitter. Unfortunately the previous owner had tried to do some modification on them and the Tx never really worked on the right frequency after that, but one could tune it in to a receiver to transmit on the desired frequency. This was the mother of AM transmitters, putting out 100w of pure AM.

Have we seen the best of AM in SA ? I think its one of those modes that in its heyday, worked extremely well and proved its worth in many ways. But like RTTY, PSK and CW has been relegated to the historical files to be used only by some diehards. I might include myself in that category.

Will we ever really see a revival in AM ? I know that there are still many AM broadcast stations that operate in the US and Europe, but am not aware of many Amateurs that still use it.

With the inception of the Wallwart type power supplies, solar powered systems and many other that cause such a lot of QRM, especially on 80m, I feel we may be fighting a losing battle, but that is only my opinion. Lets hope we can turn the tide and see a resurgence of AM transmissions, if only for test purposes.

Best 73

Andy ZS6ADY



Viking Valiant

Carl & Jerry: Wrecked by a Wagon Train

February 1962 Popular Electronics



By John T. Frye W9EGV

Carl and Jerry were sitting in the office of the Psi Kappa Psi fraternity house on the campus of Parvoo University listening to short, wiry Police Captain Dirkson seated behind the desk.

"Last week at an FBI school I was talking over a problem of mine with Police Chief Morton of your home town," the captain explained, "and he suggested that you two might be able to help me. Here's the deal.

"In the past few weeks the campus has been hit by a series of fraternity house thefts. Last weekend it was the Sigma Chi house; the week before it was the Sigma Phi Epsilon. All the thefts apparently are the work of one man young enough to pass for a col-

lege student and with plenty of savvy of fraternity house living. He only works on weekends when there are likely to be guests in the house and the presence of a strange face isn't noticed. He simply walks in, saunters around, and takes whatever cash he can find. Fraternity brothers trusting each other the way they do, that's likely to be plenty. He never takes watches, jewelry, billfolds, or anything else that can be identified.



"Obviously we can't keep a constant watch on all the fraternities ; so I've decided to do the next best thing and set a trap in a likely place. Sooner or later I figure he'll try it here at Psi Kappa Psi, and when he does I want to be ready for him. This house has been picked for a reason. I have a nephew here, and he has two buddies we can trust. They use this desk, and one of the three is in the house practically all the time.

"Now here's where you fellows come in. My men can't work here without arousing suspicion and talk, but you boys can. I want an alarm of some sort fixed up on this desk so that when an unauthorized person starts going through the drawers the alarm will be heard all over the house; yet it will have no significance except to those in the know. I want this done quickly, before this coming weekend. Also, keep in mind that we can't put too much money into such a long shot. I realize that's a tall order, but what do you say ?"

Before answering, Jerry pulled out a desk drawer and peered into the opening. Then he looked closely at the intercom unit resting on one corner of the desk. Finally he and Carl had a whispered colloquy in a corner of the room while Jerry did some sketching and figuring on the

back of an envelope.

"Well," Jerry finally said, "if we can borrow that intercom unit for a few hours, if we can use your shop tonight, and if you will hold still for a cost of about twenty dollars, I think we can do it."

"The answer is 'yes' on all three counts; you have yourselves a deal!" Captain Dirkson said promptly.

"Okay. Suppose you have your nephew and his friends here tomorrow afternoon about this time so we can show them how the alarm works," Jerry suggested as he and Carl disconnected the transistorized paging unit and started for the door with it.

The two electronics enthusiasts went straight to a radio store and bought several items which they took with them to the police station workshop. They spent a couple of busy hours at the bench and then dashed back to their room in the residence hall and, before turning out the lights, put in four more hours at their number one job : studying.

The next afternoon they got to the Psi Kappa Psi house an hour before their appointment with the captain, and by the time he showed up with his nephew and the other two youths everything was ready. The desk looked just as it had the day before.

"Behind each drawer is a leaf-type micro switch held open by the closed drawer," Jerry began, as soon as the introductions were over. "When the drawer is pulled out, the switch closes. All drawer switches are in parallel and are in one side of a line running from a low-voltage power supply to a pair of war-surplus relays inside the case of the intercom unit. The power supply, fastened beneath the desk top, consists of a bell transformer, a silicon rectifier, and an electrolytic capacitor. It delivers about 25 volts filtered d.c. from the half-wave rectifier circuit. A switch just under the edge of the desk turns this power supply on and off.

"When a drawer is opened with the power on, it actuates a multi-pole relay in the intercom that takes over all functions of the push-to-talk switch and at the same time transfers the input circuit from the regular microphone to a tiny hearing-aid microphone also inside the case. Still another pair of contacts actuates a second relay. A heavy springy wire soldered to the armature of this relay strikes a little bell mounted beside the hearing-aid mike. The sound goes out over the paging system to any speakers connected to the output.

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now is wait for our rat to take the bait. This is Wednesday; so we'll probably see no action at least until the weekend, but I'll keep in touch."

Carl and Jerry were sitting in their room after supper that evening preparing for a chemistry quiz the next day when the telephone buzzer sounded for Jerry. He went to the telephone booth in the hall and picked up the receiver.

"Get over to the fraternity house right away!" Captain Dirkson's voice urged. "The thief crossed us up and tried it this evening. I'll meet you there." The boys ran all the way to the fraternity house and arrived just as Captain Dirkson's car, its red light flashing, stopped at the curb. His nephew came running out the door and down the steps.

"I was up in my room studying when that bell sounded off like Big Ben," he explained excitedly. "I made a dash for the stairs and was just in time to see this guy running out the door. He must have gotten suspicious when he heard that bell. I didn't get a good enough look to be able to recognize him, but when I ran outside I saw him take off in a green Chevy coupe. As he went under the street light, I got his license number. It was SS7351. I was so rattled I forgot to tell you that when I called."

"How long after you saw him drive off did you call me?" the captain snapped.

"Just as long as it took me to run back inside and dial your number. I guess it couldn't have been more than a minute."

"Your call was logged in at 7:46; so he must have driven away at 7:45, give or take thirty seconds. It's straight up eight now; so he's had fifteen minutes." The captain picked up the mike of his car transmitter and ordered an all-points bulletin on the car. Then they all went inside to see if they could pick up any clues.

The detectives who had come with Captain Dirkson were still dusting the desk for fingerprints when the telephone rang. It was for the captain.



"Come on you two," he called over his shoulder to Carl and Jerry. "A cruiser has just found the car at a restaurant near here, and they are holding the owner of the car there. He denies having anything to do with the robbery attempt."

It took less than ten minutes of driving to reach the restaurant. Two uniformed officers were sitting in a booth with an angry-looking young man.

"If you're the big wheel of this outfit, I wish you'd tell me what this is all about," he demanded of the captain.

"Your Little Boy Blues have been asking a lot of pretty personal questions. What am I supposed to have done, let the air out of the dean's tires or painted a mustache on the statue of John Parvoo?"

"I suppose you weren't anywhere near the Psi Kappa Psi house at 7:45, now were you, Buster?" one of the detectives who had come with the captain said sarcastically.

If looks were lethal, the one Captain Dirkson gave this detective would have dropped him in his tracks. The young suspect instantly gave an exaggerated sigh of relief and said, "I most certainly was not. I've been right here since 7:40. I had a date at 8:15 - which you've made me late for - and I remember glancing at my watch and noticing I had about 25 minutes to kill as I was driving by the restaurant; so I came in for a cup of coffee. The counterman may remember when I came in."

The captain glanced at the chubby man behind the counter. He shook a close-cropped head that looked as round as a bowling ball.

"Afraid not," he said. "I was interested in the "Wagon Train" story on the TV here in back of the counter, and it was getting real exciting when this fellow came in the door. A runaway wagon smashed into a boulder and upset at the very instant I heard the door close behind that guy. I remember because at first I thought the sound of the slamming door was the sound of the wagon wheel hitting the rock. Right after that a couple of out-of-towners stopped in to ask for directions on how to get out of here for Chicago. They were the stupid type, and it took me quite a while to straighten them out. I honestly couldn't tell you if that bird came in at 7:40 or eight o'clock. Sorry."

A dejected look started to spread over the captain's face, but when Carl leaned over and whispered in his ear he brightened up considerably.

"Take him down to the station and book him on suspicion of entry to commit a felony," he ordered the two officers who had located the car. "I'll be down as soon as I drop these boys off at their residence hall."

On the way Carl told Jerry what he had whispered to the captain: "You remember the counterman said the guy came in the door just as the wagon on the TV crashed into a rock. I suggested to the captain here that he call the TV station at Center City and ask them to hold a stopwatch on the Wagon Train tape as it ran through their monitor. Their log will show the exact second when the show started, and the timing of the tape is very precise. I'm confident they can fix the time that fellow entered the restaurant very closely."

"It's surely worth a try, anyway," Captain Dirkson said as he let them out in front of the H-3 building. "I'll put through a call to Center City as soon as I get back to the station, and I'll let you know if anything develops."

The boys went up to their room and started again on the chemistry. After all the excitement, it was a little hard to settle down to studying, but they had learned you had to keep beating the books no matter what happened if you expected to stay in school; so soon they were concentrating on the job at hand. It was almost midnight when the buzzer sounded for Carl.

"Just thought you'd like to know your idea did the trick," Captain Dirkson's voice reported on the telephone. "The TV station established that the wagon-upsetting incident was aired at precisely 7:54 and eleven seconds. That knocked the restaurant alibi for a loop. When we laid it on the line for the guy, he cracked and confessed to all the robberies, some of which hadn't even been reported."

"Actually the fellow was in school last year at the university down state, and he lived in a fraternity house there. That's why he was so familiar with fraternity life. He pulled some jobs at that school and got away with them, then decided to favor us with his talents. If it hadn't been for you two, he'd probably still be running loose. I'll certainly tell Chief Morton what a help you've been, and I want you to know we appreciate it. Now you'd better go to bed. That's where I'm heading."

It was a good suggestion, and the boys took it. For a few minutes after the light was turned off, they lay there silent in their beds thinking about the other young man their own age lying in a jail cell. Finally, Jerry said slowly:

"You know, electronics was a nemesis for that poor guy. Electronics put the finger on him in the first place, and then a TV wagon train wrecked his alibi. His second mistake was transferring his operations from a liberal arts university to one with a strong accent on electronics."

"Well, you wouldn't expect a guy dumb enough to make the first mistake of starting to steal to be very bright," Carl muttered sleepily.



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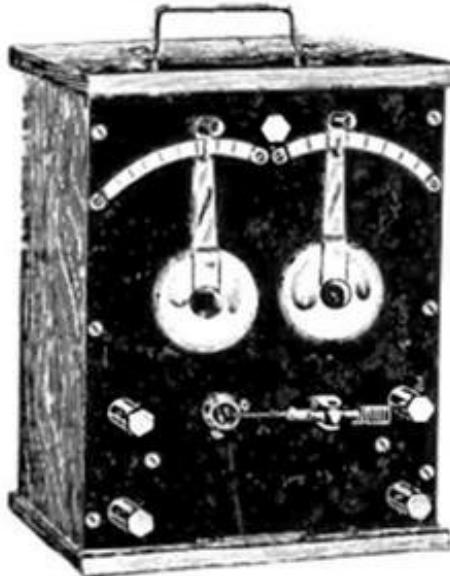
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Why the English Call EL84 "Valves" and Americans Call Them "Tubes"

"The EL84, a popular vacuum tube used in audio amplifiers, is known by different names on either side of the Atlantic. In England, it's often referred to as a "valve," while in the United States, it's called a "tube."

This linguistic divergence reflects historical, technical, and cultural differences in the development and adoption of vacuum tube technology. Let's explore the reasons behind these distinct terminologies.

The Technical Roots: How Valves and Tubes Work The EL84 is a type of vacuum tube, a device that controls electric current flow in a vacuum between electrodes. Invented in the early 20th century, vacuum tubes were critical to early electronics, powering radios, amplifiers, and early computers.

The EL84, introduced by Philips in 1953, became a staple in guitar amplifiers and hi-fi systems due to its compact size and warm sound. The terms "valve" and "tube" both describe the same technology but emphasize different aspects of its design and function:

Valve:

The term "valve" highlights the device's ability to regulate electron flow, much like a valve controls the flow of liquid or gas. Early vacuum tubes, such as the triode invented by Lee De Forest in 1906, were described as "electron valves" because they could amplify or switch electrical signals by controlling electron movement.

Tube:

The term "tube" refers to the physical structure of the device—a sealed glass envelope, often cylindrical, containing a vacuum or low-pressure gas. The glass "tube" encases the electrodes and is a defining visual characteristic of the component. Both terms are technically accurate, but their usage reflects regional preferences shaped by history and industry.

Historical Context:

The British "Valve" In the United Kingdom, the term "valve" gained prominence during the early 20th century as British engineers and scientists developed and refined vacuum tube technology. The British electronics industry, including companies like Mullard (a key manufacturer of the EL84), emphasized the functional analogy to mechanical valves.

This was reinforced by the academic and engineering communities, who often described the triode and subsequent tube designs as "thermionic valves" due to their reliance on thermionic emission (the release of electrons from a heated filament). The term "valve" also aligned with the British tendency to use precise, functional descriptors in technical language.

By the time the EL84 was introduced, "valve" was entrenched in British technical literature, marketing, and everyday usage within the audio and radio industries. British amplifier manufacturers like Vox and Marshall, which heavily used EL84 valves in their iconic guitar amps, further cemented the term in popular culture.

The American Preference for "Tubes" In the United States, the term "tube" became the standard descriptor, largely due to the influence of American manufacturers and the colloquial nature of technical language. Companies like RCA, General Electric, and Sylvania, which dominated the American electronics market, marketed their products as "radio tubes" or "vacuum tubes" in the 1920s and 1930s. The word "tube" was simple, catchy, and descriptive of the glass envelope that consumers could see in their radios and early televisions.

The American electronics industry also catered to a growing consumer market, where straightforward, accessible language was preferred in advertising and product manuals. "Tube" was easier for the average person to grasp than the more technical "valve." By the time the EL84 arrived in the U.S., often rebranded as the 6BQ5 by American companies, the term "tube" was firmly established. American audio brands like Fender and Ampeg, which used the 6BQ5/EL84 in their amplifiers, consistently referred to them as tubes, reinforcing the terminology.

Cultural and Linguistic Influences Beyond technical and industrial factors:

Cultural and linguistic differences played a role. British English often favors terms rooted in function or metaphor (e.g., "valve" for control), while American English tends toward literal or visually descriptive terms (e.g., "tube" for the glass shape).

This mirrors other transatlantic linguistic divides, such as "lorry" (UK) versus "truck" (US) or "petrol" (UK) versus "gasoline" (US). Additionally, the British electronics community maintained closer ties to academic and engineering traditions, where "valve" was the preferred term in technical papers and patents. In contrast, the U.S. electronics industry, driven by mass production and consumer markets, leaned toward simpler, more marketable language.

The Role of Standardization and Branding:

The EL84's dual nomenclature was also influenced by standardization and branding practices. In Europe, the EL84 designation was part of the Mullard-Philips naming convention, and the term "valve" was consistently used in tech-

nical documentation. In the U.S., the same component was often labeled 6BQ5 under the Radio Electronics Television Manufacturers Association (RETMA) system, and American manufacturers marketed it as a tube. While engineers on both sides understood the equivalence, the different names stuck in their respective markets.

Modern Usage and Legacy Today,

The terms "valve" and "tube" are used interchangeably by many audiophiles and engineers, but regional preferences persist. In the UK, guitarists and hi-fi enthusiasts often refer to "valve amps," while in the U.S., "tube amps" is the dominant term. Online forums and globalized markets have blurred the lines, but the EL84 remains a case study in how language evolves within technical communities.

The distinction also carries a certain charm. British "valve" evokes a sense of precision and tradition, while American "tube" feels approachable and iconic, conjuring images of glowing glass in vintage amplifiers. Both terms celebrate the EL84's enduring legacy in music and electronics.

Conclusion

The English call the EL84 a "valve" due to its functional analogy to controlling electron flow, a term rooted in British engineering tradition and reinforced by companies like Mullard. Americans call it a "tube" because of its physical resemblance to a glass cylinder, a term popularized by consumer-focused manufacturers like RCA. These differences reflect not only technical perspectives but also cultural and linguistic divides. Whether you're tweaking a Vox AC15 in London or a Fender Deluxe in Nashville, the EL84—valve or tube—remains a beloved component, its dual names a testament to the rich history of electronics across the Atlantic.



(Reproduced from an article on FB by “Amateur Radio Kits.In’s Post “)

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Mission Statement

Our aim is to facilitate, generate and maintain an interest in the location, acquisition, repair and use of yester-days radio's and associated equipment. To encourage all like minded amateurs to do the same thus ensuring the maintenance and preservation of our amateur heritage.

Membership of this group is free and by association. Join by logging in to our website.

Notices:**Net Times and Frequencies (SAST):**

Saturday 07:00 (05:00 UTC) — Western Cape SSB Net — 7.140; Every afternoon during the week from 17:00—7.140

Saturday 08:30 (06:30 UTC) — National SSB Net — 7.125;

Echolink—ZS0AWA-L;

ZS6STN Sandton repeater—145.700

Kempton Park Repeater—145.6625

Relay on 10.125 and 14.135 (Try all and see what suits you)

Saturday 14:00 (12:00 UTC) — CW Net—7025; 14:20 10.115/14125

AWASA Telegram group:

Should you want to get on the AWA Telegram group where a lot of technical discussion takes place, send a message to Andy ZS6ADY asking to be placed on the group. This is a no-Nonsense group, only for AWA business. You must download the Telegram App first.+27824484368

SARL AGM Sat 17 May 2025:

The AWA will have a display at the AGM celebrating 100 years of the SARL. There will be a Mega Fleamarket after the AGM and we will have a stall there too. Anyone wanting to bring along some Jewel's to dispose of are welcome to do so.

Contact Andy or Renato.

The address is the Royal Elephant Hotel and Conference Centre; Cnr Willem Botha & Wierda Road, Eldoraigine, Centurion.

FOR DISPOSAL:

YAESU FT200 met power supply - NIE IN WERKENDE TOESTAND.

Maak 'n arme pensioenaris 'n aanbod Silver Willows Equestria of 17-05-25 by PARC mega flea market.

Jannie

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