

Model S.799T, the Eddystone TV Receiver, by Gerry O'Hara, VE7GUH/G8GUH

Introduction

During a recent radio amateur fleamarket, I noticed an unusual-looking cabinet near the back of an old-timer's stall – difficult to see clearly because of all the folks in front of the stall and the clutter around the set. From what I could see though, it had a familiar louvered front but was much deeper than any Eddystone set I had knowledge of – so maybe it was not an Eddystone. On the first 'go-around' of the stalls I therefore ignored it, but by the time I had walked around again, the crowd had dispersed and I could see that the strange set was indeed an Eddystone. But an Eddystone with a cathode-ray tube in it where the dial should be? "Most likely one of the panadapters" I here you say. Not this one though – this was definitely a TV receiver!...

I normally have no affinity whatsoever with TV sets, but in this case I just had to buy it – and the asking price was not high. I thrust the wad of cash into the old guy's mitt and staggered back to my Jeep with my prize – boy, was this a heavy set!

Background to the S.799T



The 'Quick Reference Guide' ('QRG') most certainly does not list an Eddystone TV receiver of any description. But there are sets that are not listed in the QRG, eg. the 'Super Six'. So, is this a newly-discovered legacy of the Bath Tub? Perhaps a prototype that never made it to the market, but that made it out of the Bath Tub and eventually to this stall on a fleamarket? This set was S/N S.799T – P1.

I do recall seeing a 1940's advert for the S.358X (illustrated, left) that has an intriguing graphic, linked to the sentiment "...looking into the future at the shape of things to come...". This suggests that by 1944, Eddystone were already looking at the next decade and were likely developing television designs to hedge their bets after the war ended. And who could blame them for that? - who knew where radio technology was going at that time? – maybe radio receivers would be totally obsolete and the post-war

public would only be satisfied with seeing what they were listening to?

Checking the Set

When I got the set home I had to pinch myself when I took a closer look. The set was definitely an Eddystone and looked almost new. Distinctive features included:

- Eddystone badge on the front panel above the (rather small) screen;
- What looks remarkably like an S.750 fingerplate behind the control panel;
- Black wrinkle finish;
- Die-cast front panel with louvers;
- Die-cast chassis components;
- Stratton's serial number tag on the rear apron;
- Eddystone pattern control knobs; and
- Lift-up lid on the upper surface to access valves and the channel change coilpacks.



Above: The set after initial clean-up – what a find!



Above: Lid open – the picture tube is hidden below the upper (tuner) sub-chassis visible in this photo

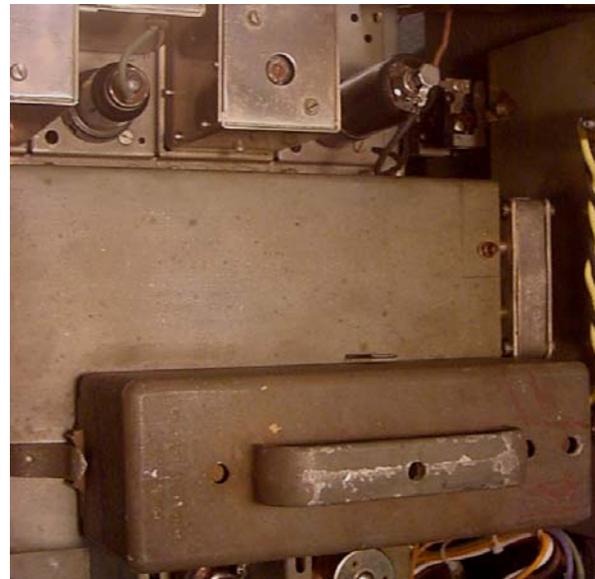
I would date the set around 1949 given the design of the cabinet and the use of an S.750 fingerplate on this prototype.

Circuit Description

As far as I can tell, the set contains a fairly standard black and white TV circuit (I am no expert though) on a massive multi-part chassis – this was built to last! However, I did notice several quite unique

features I have never seen before on a TV set, including:

- Plug-in die-cast coilpacks with Band 1 VHF coils accessible through a side panel (photo, right);
- Option for crystal-controlled channels, switchable from the front panel;
- Flywheel fine-tuning control;
- Vibrator power input connector;
- A BFO (for CW TV?);
- Noise limiter (could come in handy for certain programs, as could the 'send' switch (but where to?); and
- Selectivity control (they must have had a premonition of the quality of future programming).



Test Program



I decided to check-out the set. To do this I took it to the SPARC museum where they have various standards converters for TV signals. After a bit of fiddling and some good luck (our resident TV expert was in that day) we had a suitable test signal applied to the aerial socket. I fired the S.799T up... no blue smoke, but a loud high-pitched whistle could be heard. Then a picture started to appear on the small picture tube (photo, left) – faint at first, but becoming brighter and clearer with each passing

second, accompanied by TV sound. The test program – a pre-recorded tape – was a rather boring cowboy film and after a few minutes I was nodding-off to sleep. I awoke

with a start only to find that I was at home, the QRG open on my knee, empty whisky glass in hand and our regular TV set playing-away in the corner – Aaargghh – this had all been a dream!

Conclusion

Well, you never quite know what you will find at a fleamarket or swap-meet do you? This may only have been a dream, but it was so real – real-enough to make me think... do we really know the whole Eddystone story? – and what if Stratton's had taken a different route after WWII? – Eddystone iPods, laptops and game consoles?

73's

©Gerry O'Hara, VE7GUH/G8GUH (gerryohara@telus.net), Vancouver, BC, Canada, April 1, 2010



Above: View through rear panel – note Vibrator/S-Meter connector and pick-up input