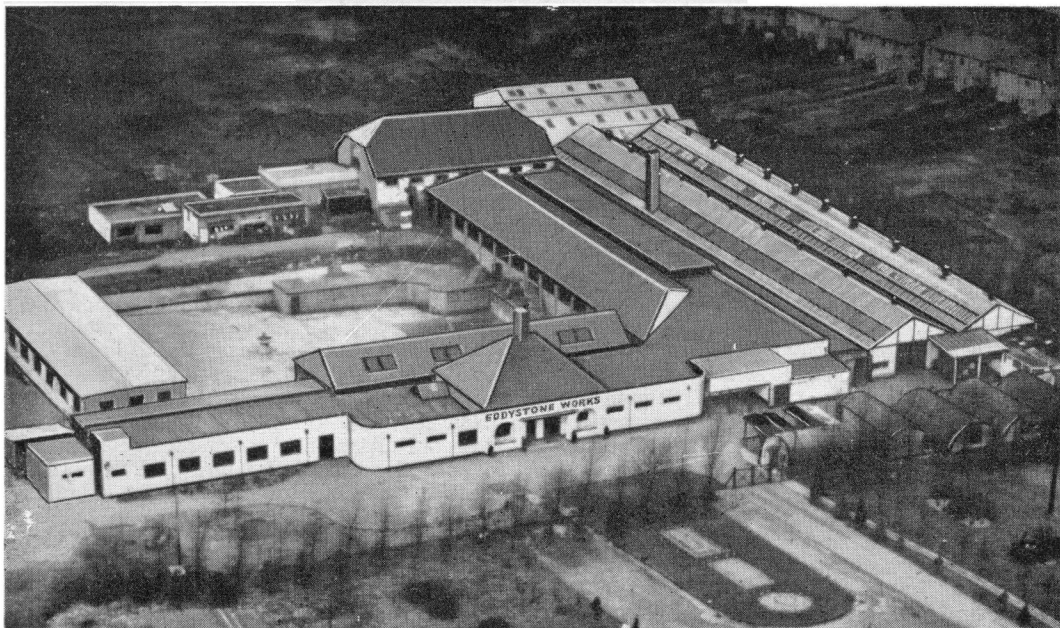
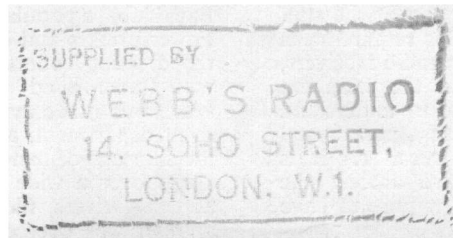


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EDDYSTONE WORKS, BIRMINGHAM, 31



STRATTON & CO., LTD.
BIRMINGHAM 31, ENGLAND

Eddystone Radio Receivers

SOME weeks ago a very ancient gentleman who suffered with a pronounced stammer tottered into the principal branch of Keith Prowse, Limited, in the West End of London. A fair proportion of the staff all had a hand in trying to discover his requirements and he was shown all the most modern radio receivers, television sets, etc. It was not until the shop cat strolled into view that they were able to understand that all the old gentleman required was a new crystal for his 1923 "home-made" crystal receiver. It is probable that seafarers, however, are among the keenest radio fans and obviously they require to have well-built, powerful receivers.

We have always been greatly interested in noting the types and makes preferred by our friends afloat and have been much struck by their apparent general preference for Eddystone models manufactured by Stratton and Co., Limited, Eddystone Works, Alvechurch Road, Birmingham, 31. Birmingham products are exported throughout the world, but few can be found in such remote spots as Pitcairn Island and Tristan da Cunha, which are among the places where communications receivers by Stratton and Company have been sold. The makers of the Eddystone receivers are the sole representatives of their particular industry in Birmingham. Naturally, being in the line of business they are, the firm receive many unusual requests and their products have a wide variety of applications. When the first Russian "Sputnik" orbited the earth there was a spate of orders, from America in particular, for high-frequency receivers to be used to track the satellite. Receivers of this type, ranging up to a frequency of 500 megacycles, have also been supplied to Russia and China—probably for the same purpose—and to Jodrell Bank Observatory.

A subsidiary of Laughton and Sons, Limited (known until 1958 as Jarrett, Rainsford and Laughton, Limited), makers of compacts, jewellery and plastics, of Warstock, Stratton and Co., Limited, have an interesting history. They were founded in 1912 to make general metal smallwares and hairpins. When the "bobbed" hair fashion for women came into vogue the trade in hairpins vanished almost overnight. At this time Mr. G. Stratton Laughton, eldest son of the present chairman of the company, Mr. G. A. Laughton, had just entered the business, and he was keen on radio. The result was that the company became one of the pioneer manufacturers of radio receivers, although they concentrated upon short-wave sets then being sold to tea-planters, rubber-planters and Colonial officials in order to pick up the programmes broadcast to the Empire by the Marconi Company. When the British Broadcasting Company were formed Stratton and Company were allocated one share; this is still held in the firm's archives; it is dated September 17, 1925.

Stratton and Company's receivers became well known and in keen demand throughout the world for all applications for which short-wave sets are required. The bulk of production still goes to Government and professional communications services. There is also a big demand for short-wave receivers for use in ships and some of the makers' distributors are ships' chandlers and compass adjusters at many ports. A very large number of the sets are purchased by seafarers for personal use in their own cabins. The total production of such receivers, which are marketed under the trade name of "Eddystone," exceeds 30,000.

Prior to the outbreak of the second World War, the company's works were in Bromsgrove Street, Birming-

ham, and much Service equipment was made there. In 1940 the factory was completely destroyed by enemy action, and premises known before the war as "The Bath Tub," a popular lido at West Heath, were acquired. Power presses and other machinery were installed and the dressing rooms became offices; the "fun-fair" was transformed into a packing department and space was made available for the tool-room, development department, and assembly shops. So great was the shortage of hand tools that ironmongers and tool shops over a wide area were scoured for such items as screwdrivers, files, drills, etc. One difficulty after another was overcome and production of Eddystone receivers was resumed.

The type of receiver used for maintaining communications is designed to meet the most rigid specifications and has to be capable of operation on a 24-hour-a-day basis with little or no maintenance; it has to be equally suitable for use in temperate, tropical or Arctic climates. The sets made in the West Heath factory are, therefore, given the most rigorous inspection at several stages of production. Parts supplied by other manufacturers (resistances, valves, etc.) are given an inspection on receipt, and the extent of such inspection (ranging from five to 100 per cent.) depends upon the part. Specially-designed equipment is used to give 100 per cent. mechanical and electrical inspection to all parts made in the factory.

Accuracy of tuning is an important requirement, and during manufacture such things as coils are artificially aged to ensure no trouble for the operator later on. Assembled receivers are checked for dry joints and mechanical faults, and then the tuning is checked by feeding in a signal of a known frequency from an oscillator. The sets are then given a "soak test" which involves running them for a week. After that the calibration is checked to make sure it is the same. Finally, in a specially-constructed, quieter part of the factory, the sets are checked for any tendency to drift off frequency.

Stratton and Company make the major part of all receivers themselves, including variable condensers (which are also sold to other radio manufacturers), coils, receiver chassis, cabinets, and they have recently undertaken the silk screen printing of tuning dials. Another recent development is the production of uncalibrated tuning dials for supply to amateurs. Silver plating of condensers is carried out by the parent company, Laughton and Sons, Limited, who also undertake the manufacture of various parts for the radio department.

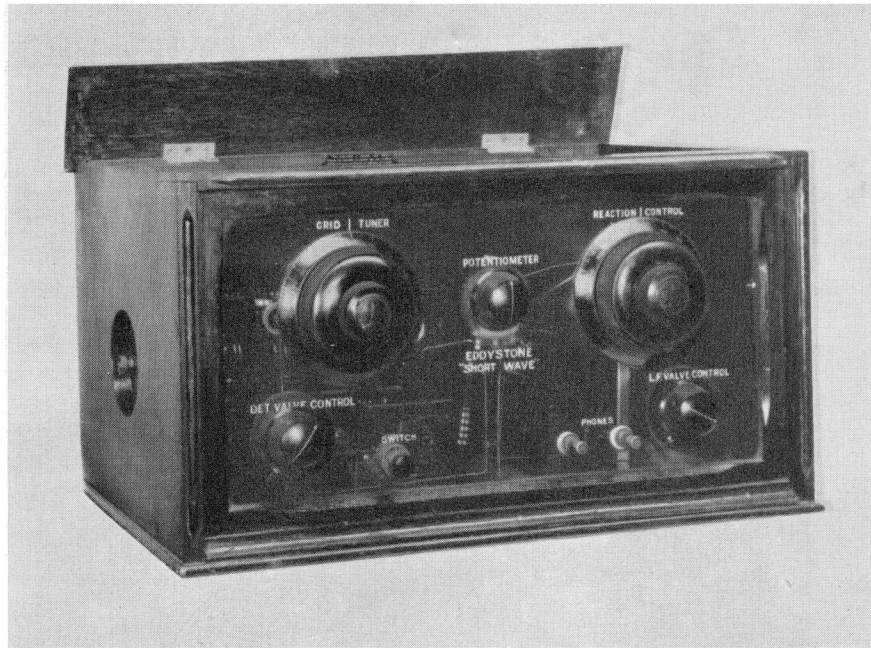
There are three production lines: one for marine sets, one for professional equipment, and the third for V.H.F.—and the flowline method is used for each. A range of about nine standard sets is made and others are built to customers' specifications. Quite often modifications are called for, and the development department, which was rehoused in a completely new building in 1956, advises customers on technical possibilities. This department, equipped with the most modern testing apparatus, also develops new equipment and the tendency is for higher frequencies and greater stability of frequency setting. The regular arrival of new stations on the air and the consequent congestion of wave bands are points requiring constant attention.

More than 60 per cent. of the company's products are exported, and both tropical and Arctic tests are carried out to ensure that the equipment is suitable for diverse climates. A typical example of a modern

Eddystone set compared with a specimen of a set produced in 1927 is shown in the accompanying photographs. The modern set is the Model 760/A, designed specifically for cabin use in ships. A receiver renowned for "station-getting," its reliability over long periods of use, and for receiving programmes of considered entertainment value, the 670/A is a fine engineering job designed and constructed expressly for the particular conditions obtaining at sea. The wave range is wide: at one end, it includes the 10, 11 and 13 metre bands, now coming into considerable use again; and at the other end, the long wave band, of great value to those aboard ships voyaging in European waters.

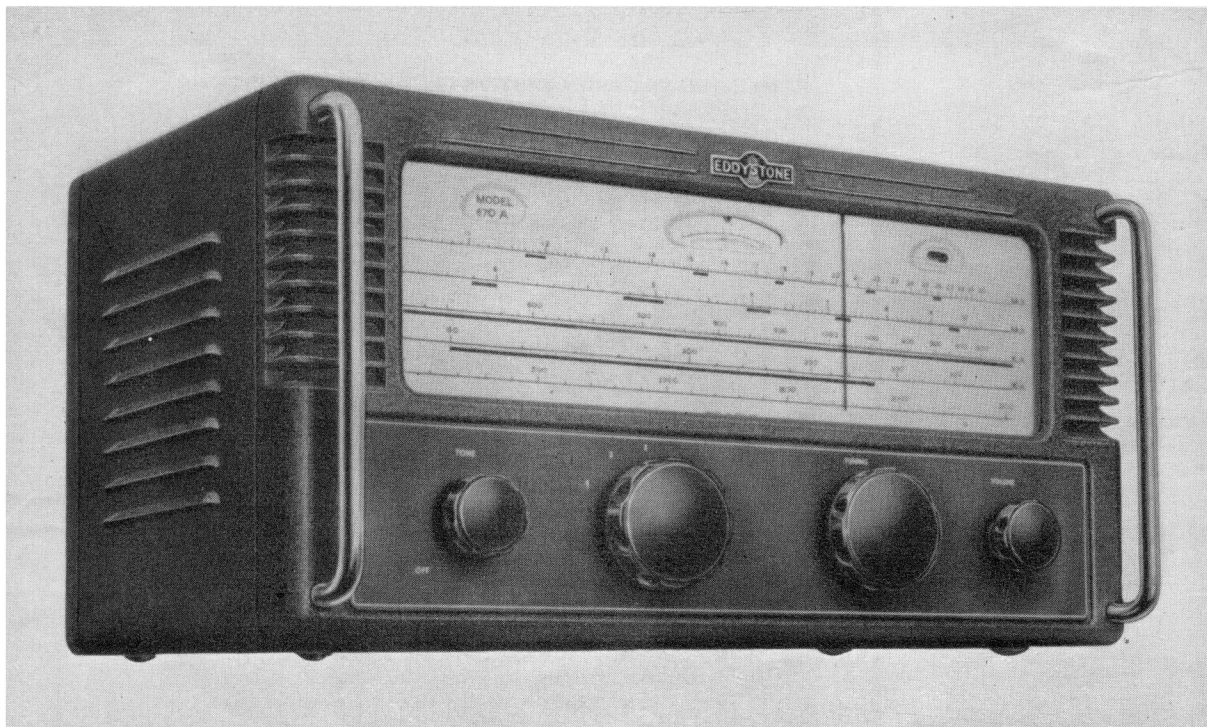
In a lower price category comes the 870 receiver. This is capable of excellent performance and, being small, compact and of light weight, the model will admirably suit those seeking a set which is semi-portable, yet at the same time robust and with a range called for by sea-going conditions. Short, medium and long waves are covered and operation is from a.c. or d.c. mains. Alternative colour finishes are available.

Mr. G. A. Laughton, who is chairman of both Laughton and Sons, Limited, and Stratton and Co., Limited, although now 76 years of age, is still active in the business and this year he paid a visit to the



A 1927 Eddystone radio receiver

United States where the companies have offices in New York, in addition to extensive showrooms. Mr. G. Stratton Laughton is at present visiting Australia where the company have a factory in Sydney, New South Wales. Other directors are Mr. Jerome Laughton and Mr. Malcolm Laughton, Mr. H. N. Cox (technical director (radio)), and Mr. A. C. Edwards, (commercial director (radio)). Because of the frequent ocean voyages they make, most of these gentlemen will already be known to many of our readers.



In contrast to the above we reproduce a photograph of a modern Eddystone receiver—the model 670/A which has been specifically designed for cabin use in ships

