36 An 80 metre crystal-controlled CW transmitter

Introduction

A simple transmitter is ideally suited to anyone venturing into our marvellous hobby for the first time. If you are put off by the complexities and prices of the 'black boxes' then this is the transmitter you've been looking for!

The circuit

The complete circuit is shown in **Figure 1**. It is a single-transistor crystal oscillator which is *keyed* (switched on and off) by the Morse key in the +12 V supply rail. The circuit first appeared in *QST* (the American equivalent of *RadCom*) in 1982, and has since appeared in a modified form in the *ARRL Handbook*. The circuit can produce about 2 watts on 80 m, and can be constructed on a piece of plain matrix board; the prototype board measured 7 cm by 3 cm, and its layout is shown in **Figure 2**.

Note that a bare copper wire runs along the bottom edge of the board to act as an earth wire for the relevant components. The only 'difficult' part of the construction is the winding and wiring of T1. The main winding is 38 turns of 26 SWG enamelled copper wire, and there are two link windings of four turns each. Make sure that all windings are wound the correct way round the toroid – Figure 1 shows this and should be studied carefully. If the windings do not have the correct *sense* (i.e. a clockwise coil has been wound anticlockwise, or vice versa), or have been connected incorrectly to the rest of the circuit, the oscillator will not work!

When putting components on the board, wire in the crystal socket *without the crystal in it*. Crystals do not like to be subjected to the horrors of a soldering iron, so keep your crystal to one side during the construction process!

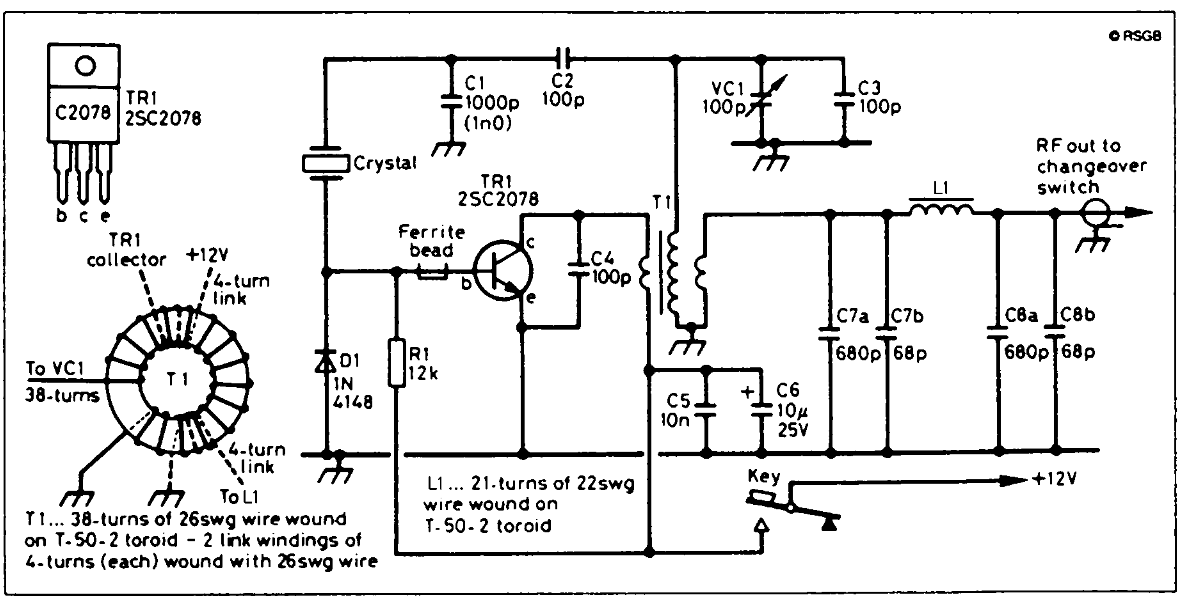


Figure 1 The simplest form of transmitter is a keyed crystal oscillator. Note that L1, C7 and C8 make up a *low-pass filter* which reduces unwanted *harmonics* (outputs at the transmitter frequency multiplied by 2, 3, 4, etc.)

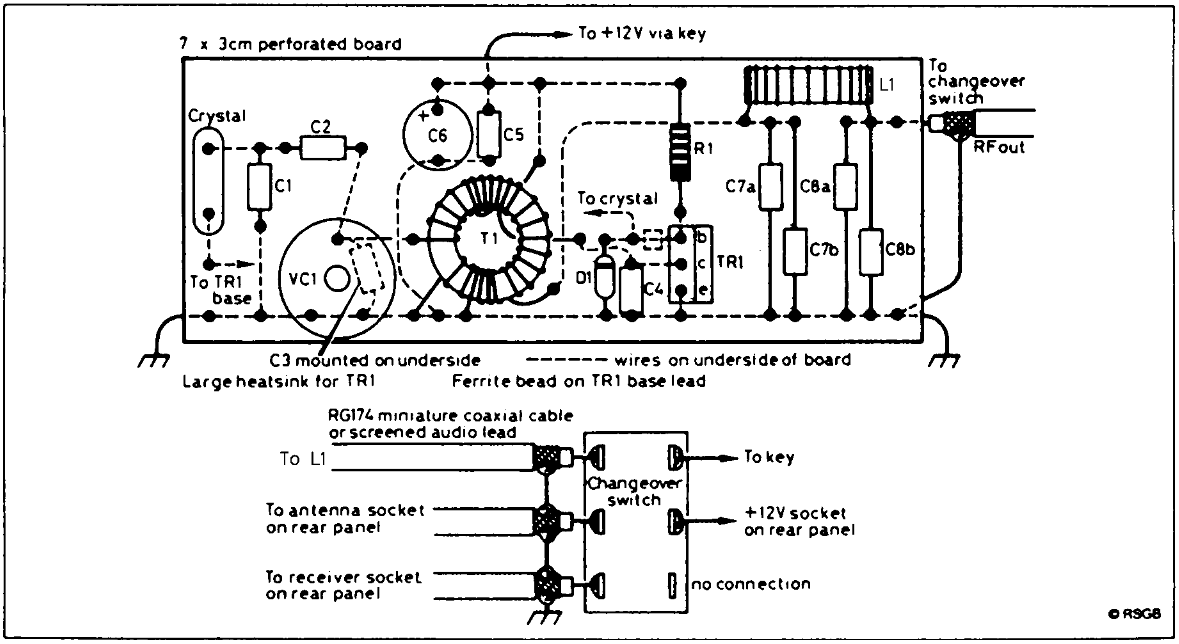


Figure 2 Component layout is straightforward on a 'matrix board' (it has holes but no copper strips). The dotted lines are the connecting wires. The lower part shows the connections for the transmit/receive switch

The output filter, which comprises C7, C8 and L1, is a *low-pass* filter, which helps reduce any *harmonics* present in your signal. Harmonics are integral multiples of your transmitter frequency, so if you are transmitting on a frequency, f, harmonics will be present at frequencies $2f$, $3f$, $4f$, . . . and so on. L2 is another inductance using 22 SWG enamelled copper on a ferrite toroid. The changeover switch is external to the transmitter board, and is used to switch your aerial between the transmitter and the receiver; its wiring is shown in Figure 2.

Use a dummy load

A dummy load enables you to test your circuit without actually transmitting a signal. If you haven't such a thing already, it is easy to construct one to use with this transmitter. Don't use it for transmitters of more than 2 watts output, though. Use two 100 ohm, 1 watt resistors, connected in parallel across the end of a short piece of coaxial cable, terminated in a BNC, PL259 or N-type free plug, as shown in **Figure 3**. Plug this into the aerial socket on your transmitter, plug in your crystal and connect the transmitter to a 12 V supply. Have another receiver switched on and tuned to the crystal frequency. Although the radiation from your dummy load is minimal, it will

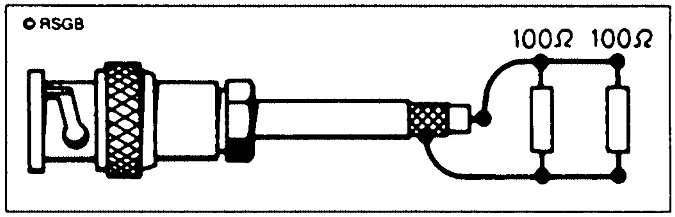


Figure 3 A simple 2 W dummy load can be made from two 100 Ω (ohm) resistors in parallel. The plug should match the socket on your transmitter

be enough to be picked up by a receiver in the same room. Send dashes with the Morse key, and adjust VC1 until the received note is *clean*. It should not sound rough, or have a *chirp* (change its frequency during a dash or dot). Avoid tuning for maximum power; this is seldom the correct setting!

You will need to put your completed transmitter in a metal box, using sockets for the power supply, aerial, receiver and Morse key. The sockets can be chosen to match your existing equipment.

Figures 4–7 are taken from the RSGB book *Practical Antennas for Novices*, and may give you some ideas on the type of aerial to be used with your transmitter.

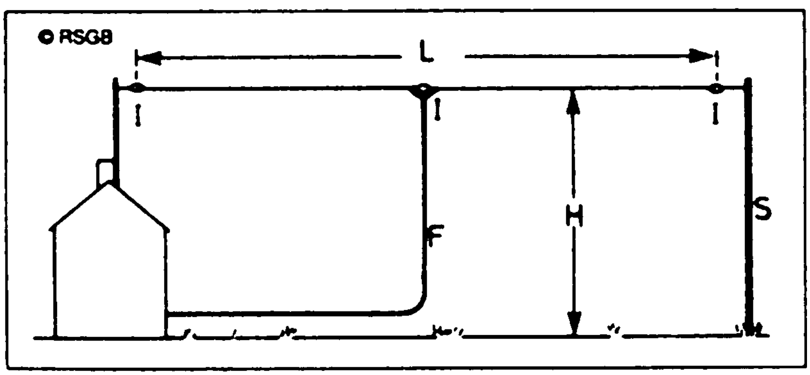


Figure 4 A simple dipole can be very effective. For the 3.5 MHz band, length L is 40 metres and height H should be as large as possible. The far support S can be a tree, pole or building. Insulators I may be home made from strong plastic and the feeder F should be 50 Ω (ohm) coax cable

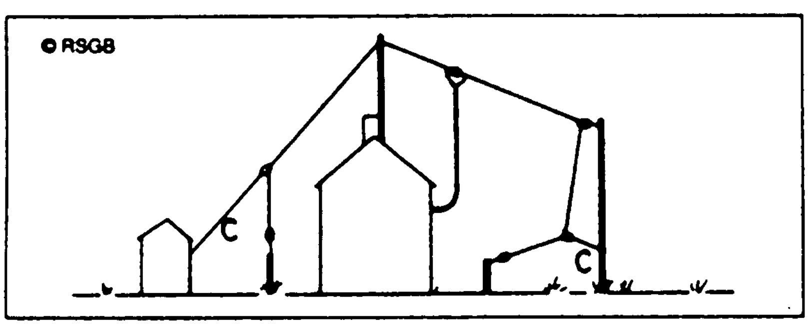


Figure 5 Your signal is radiated mostly from the centre of the dipole so the ends can droop or even be bent but the length may need shortening by a few centimetres because the ground and the bends will detune the dipole. Cords C are best made from strong plastic rope from a sailing or camping shop

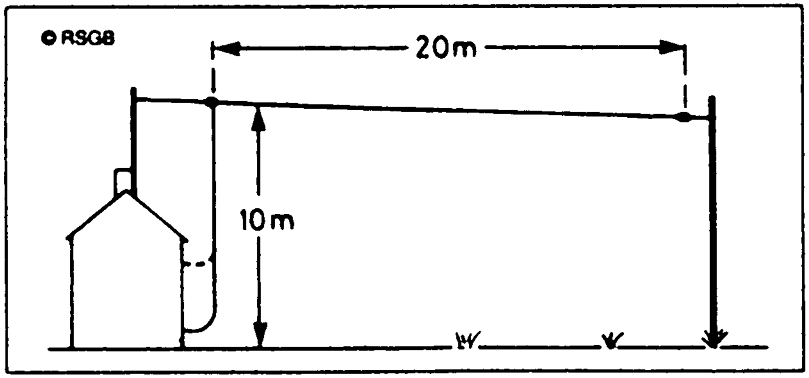


Figure 6 An 'inverted-L' takes up less space than a dipole and doesn't need coax cable. Like the dipole, the end can droop or be bent to save space as in this case most of the radiation comes from the area around the top of the vertical part

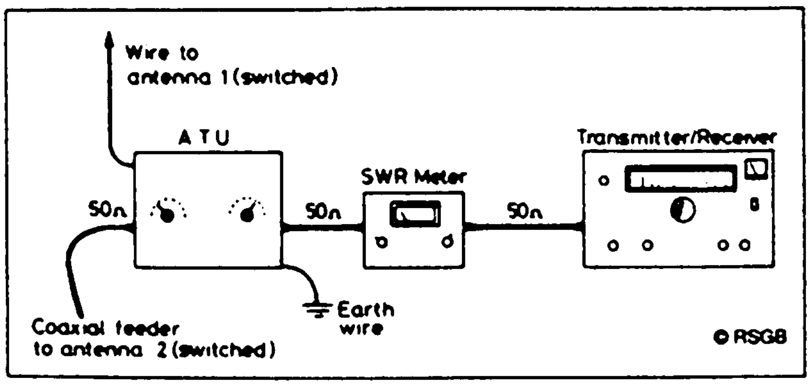
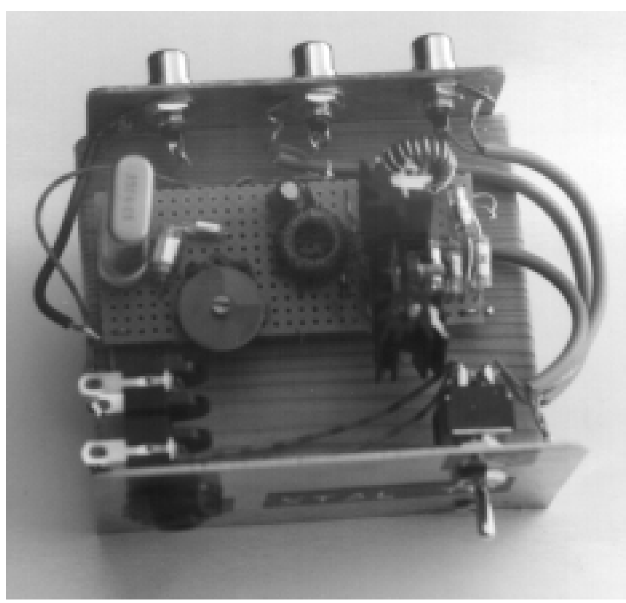


Figure 7 Almost any length of wire more than 10 m or so long will work (though it will work better the longer and higher it is) but an Aerial System Tuning Unit (ASTU or ATU) will be needed



Parts list

Resistor

R1	12 kilohms (kΩ), 0.25 watt, 5% tolerance

Capacitors

C1	1000 picofarads (pF) polystyrene
C2	100 picofarads (pF) polystyrene
C7a, C8a	680 picofarads (pF) polystyrene
C7b, C8b	68 picofarads (pF) polystyrene
C3, C4	100 picofarads (pF) ceramic
C5	10 nanofarads (nF) polyester
C6	10 microfarads (μF) electrolytic 25 V
VC1	100 picofarads (pF) trimmer

Semiconductors

D1	1N4148
TR1	2SC2078 (see sources list)

Inductors

T1	38 turns 26 SWG enamelled copper on T–50–2 toroid, with two link windings of four turns
L1	21 turns 22 SWG enamelled copper on T–50–2 toroid

Additional items

- Ferrite bead
- Crystal (e.g. 3.579 MHz) and holder
- Metal box
- Socket for Morse key.
  This must be totally isolated from the metal of the box, as *both* connections can be at +12 V.
- Sockets for 12 V supply, aerial and receiver
- Switch – DPDT
- Heat sink for TR1
- RG174 miniature coaxial cable for signal leads (see Figure 2)

Component sources

Special components

2SC2078	Cricklewood Electronics Ltd, 40 Cricklewood Broadway, London, NW2 3ET.