

True confessions and the HMV Little Nipper

With regard to the Vintage Radio article on the HMV 64-52 Little Nipper restoration in the May 2017 issue, and my letter on the topic in the June 2017 issue, while I realise we are dealing with restoration rather than improvements to the original, I would like to make the following comment regarding the loop antenna.

After the loop antenna was wound on a mandrel, a current was then passed through it, of just sufficient strength to melt the wire's plastic covering and make it rigid to mount on the plastic back.

With the benefit of hindsight, a better grade of plastic covering could have been used, as the "welding" of the cheap plastic increased self-capacity and lowered the "Q", thus affecting sensitivity and selectivity.

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Cathodes don't glow; filaments do

I am writing about the HMV 64-52 Little Nipper radio featured in the Vintage Radio pages of the May 2017 issue (www.siliconchip.com.au/Article/10657).

I must have refurbished at least a dozen of these. I did a double-take at the statement: "I noticed that the cathodes were glowing all but the 6BA6 valve". Oops! Cathodes don't normally glow; filaments, heaters and globes do; plates may, but only when things are not right.

Also to be noted in that series is the screen resistor in this set, R6. Originally that was $2 \times 22\text{k}\Omega$, 1W, in parallel. Later versions used a single $10\text{k}\Omega$ resistor. As the dissipation exceeds 1W, that resistor often fails.

I actually have one of these sets. Its only failure since refurbishing, ages ago, was a sudden and massive "off-frequency" event. That was truly a bug in the system. A large arachnid had perished on the top of the oscillator coil!

Regarding the author's comment that powering up that 64-52 set "cold" (ie, without inspecting it first) was a bad idea; I have to agree.

One person that I know of decided that as his Dad had restored the set he was selling, it could be powered up to demonstrate for a buyer. That resulted in the immediate and spectacular demise of one type 80 valve. So he then replaced the valve and powered it back on again!

Fortunately, when the plates went red, they shut it down and the valve survived. However, inside the pan and on the floor of the cabinet was an impressive powder-coating job, done by the first unit to fry.

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Editor's note: keep in mind that some battery-operated valves use a directly heated cathode and in this case, the cathode would actually glow (albeit very faintly).