

The Charm of D.X. Work

A Fascinating Aspect of Radio

(By "Observer")



DX.—The name is strange to many listeners. Yet to some it is the only phase of radio that is worth while. By "D.X." is meant the search for, listing, and the listening-in to stations that are remote, very remote in some cases, from the receiving set.

A strange fascination draws the listener with an average to good set to "chase D.X." On a good night, one goes to the set, turns the dial round, and at every few points hears something, something in the distance, that he cannot quite define. It is a new station, or it may be a station that has been heard and listed. It may be someone trying out a new wavelength. Slowly the dial moves round through the 180 degrees; stations coming in and going out as their respective wave-length is passed. Some roar in, and some come in at a whisper and fade out again—but they are there.

A Night D.X-ing.

FOR the first time, the writer recently had an experience D.X-ing. On going to the receiver, it was just an ordinary six-valve set, the dial was run round through its 180 degrees by one who was quite accustomed to D.X-ing, but to whom the charm was equally strong. Stations—they were coming in from everywhere.

It was just before sunset, when the American stations were having their last flicker before "signing off." Some were hardly audible (the output being fed to a speaker, 'phones being unnecessary), others came in good speaker strength. One particularly was heard, beautifully modulated, transmitting dance music with rhythm and syncopation that is rarely heard on this side. Attention was devoted to that station, for it was felt almost impossible to leave it.

For some moments the music came through with all the clearness of a local station. There was no fading; static was at a minimum. For a moment the D.X. enthusiast who was with the writer was at a loss to know just what station it was. It was an American, surely. His type of music and his modulation proved that, but whom? The wave-lengths had been recently altered, and for the moment it could not be decided who he was.

Then the music ceased, and a breezy, light voice said in colloquial American, "The Voice of Service, WENR, Chicago. Our next item will be, 'When You Come to the End of the Day.'"

"His closing piece," remarked the enthusiast who had listened in to him before, and regret was felt that not again that evening this distant station would we hear.

There were two attractions in listening to WENR. His music was really different from what we hear, and then again, one's thoughts went to far Chicago, that city of "machine-guns and strife," and this beautiful music was coming from this city so many thousands of miles away, and yet it sounded as if from a gramophone in the room.

Surely this is not the usual conception of D.X., and the listener who does not seek these stations is losing much of the enjoyment of radio. WENR closed down, and not till then were other stations sought.

They were coming in from all quarters; sometimes it was hard to separate them, for some were quite weak and close together. Then static became a little worse, and it was difficult in some cases to catch the call sign.

KFWB, operating just below 3YA's wavelength, was heard quite clearly, and when the big local station came on the air, KFWB was relegated to the background.

Shortly before 8 p.m. on turning the dial to 333 metres, an American station was heard.

"Now we'll solve the problem as to who is heterodyning 1YA!" remarked the D.X. man, and so the station was listened to attentively. Only a few moments were we in doubt, for the announcer's voice came over quite clearly, "Station KHJ."

"That settles it!" remarked the operator of the set.

Transmission from Palmerston North.

ANOTHER station—but one which which can hardly be claimed to be a D.X. station—was heard coming over beautifully to us some 15 miles out of Christchurch. His modulation was good, and his choice of items excellent. For a moment it was wondered who it could be, then a pleasant voice broke the silence: "Station 2ZF, Palmerston North."

This is the first time the writer had heard this station at such a distance, and he must compliment the operators of that amateur station on their splendidly modulated transmission. Their station came in with wonderful volume and clearness, and was really enjoyable.

By this time the clock showed 8 p.m. Sun had set, and the Americans were passing off the dial, for it was now after midnight by their time.

A station that had been "worrying" the operator for some time was being held very firmly on 467 metres.

"We'll soon get him," remarked he, for the announcement was just about to be made, but the fates decreed otherwise. ZMBY, operating on morse, burst in. At that moment he was most unpopular, for when he ceased his annoying morse, the station of 467 metres had closed down. Probably it was KFI, but a DX man will not take "probably" for granted. He wants to hear the call sign, and hear it distinctly.

The Christchurch Roarer lends a Hand.

BUT our friend, ZMBY, was not the strong, and spoiling reception, so that only source of annoyance that continuance was hardly warranted.

night, for just as we were enjoying an American programme, the Christchurch "roarer" started up on the air. This is evidently a power leakage of some description, and reception while it is on is impossible. Starting with a hiss, the noise soon mounts to a terrible roar, and it is a case of switch off until it stops. Already the authorities in Christchurch have had some interesting times in that town with this roarer. Everyone knows it. He is the bugbear of Christchurch reception. Once, the company's engineer, the radio inspector, and others with a loop were busy on a similar interference and were successful in locating it, and causing it to be stopped, but now, whether this is the same or not remains a mystery.

The local papers have waxed eloquent. DX enthusiasts have waxed more eloquent—and the writer in turn, hearing the noise and the effect it has on reception, waxed still more eloquent, but still the noise continues. Surely definite steps might be taken by the party or parties concerned to have this interference stopped.

Frankly, it is not fair to the listener in Christchurch, and in radio reception everyone has to play fair with his neighbour. We are all on a common footing when it comes to listening-in and one person can spoil the evening's entertainment. He can, in fact, lower the prestige of wireless simply through not stopping to think. Surely this menace can, and must be, suppressed in the near future.

Another New Zealand station operating on 220 metres gave his call sign as 2ZQ, Masterton. His transmission cannot be said to be very good, but as he is just new to the air he is wished every success.

The Australians make Their "Debut."

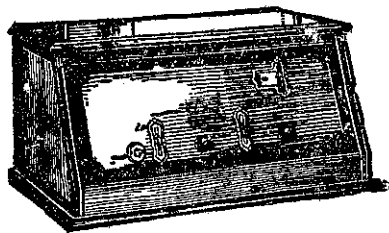
VERY few Americans were now coming in. One more was heard quite faintly under 2ZF, but all that could be heard was the word "Hollywood," which is not very illuminating considering there are a very large number of transmitters in that city of film actresses, actors and magnates.

But it was now 8.45. All the Americans were gone, and the Australians began to come in—4QG, 2BL, 2FC, and others.

"But these are not DX," remarked the operator. "We have had enough for one night," and so we closed down after a most successful evening.

Static was now coming in fairly strong, and spoiling reception, so that only source of annoyance that continuance was hardly warranted.

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