

## STATION 1ZJ - JOHNS LTD

By John W. Stokes

As will be known by anyone interested in the history of broadcasting in New Zealand during the 1930s, the main reason why various radio dealers and music stores established 'B' class broadcasting stations was to obtain some legal, albeit very limited, on-air advertising by mentioning the firm's name and address, but nothing else.

An additional reason for some radio dealers establishing stations was that it enabled them to put something on the air at times when the 'A' stations weren't broadcasting thus allowing radios to be demonstrated at shop premises, particularly during the busy lunchtime period.



Although not actually a pioneer, the Auckland firm of Johns Ltd was certainly one of the earliest broadcasters, having established a 'B' class station, 1ZJ, in 1930. Its assigned frequency was 1310 kc/s (later changed to 1320), and its power rating was increased over the years from 35 to 65 watts.

During the years 1ZJ was in operation, the hours of broadcasting were extremely limited. Originally broadcasting was allowed from noon to 2pm on two days a week and from 7.30 to 9pm on one evening a week. Political and controversial matter could not be broadcast and to add to operating difficulties there was a constant threat of legal action over the use of gramophone records.

In spite of these restrictions 'B' station operation continued in the hope that some day these stations would be allowed to gain revenue from advertising, but this was not to be, the Government of the day decided in 1937 that only its commercial stations would be allowed unrestricted advertising. 1ZJ was sold to the Government at nominal cost and ceased transmission in December 1938.

The following information on 1ZJ's construction and operation was contained in a letter received in 1973 by this writer from one of the technicians involved at the time, Waldo (Wally) Hunter.

*'The first transmitter was built by Russ White (ZL1AO) and Norm Edwards (ZL1AA). I wasn't involved, being still the floor sweeper around the establishment of Johns Ltd who were the Licensees. The first transmitter was remarkable because its high tension supply consisted of 1000 volts of lead-acid cells, which gave great regulation!'*

*Then, in about 1934, it was decided that a bigger and better transmitter be built. Design by Norm Edwards - construction by yours truly. RF output, one 211 valve modulated by another*



211. Remarkable, in that it was not only crystal controlled but it had a constant-temperature crystal oven. We'd gone about as far as we could go!

From memory it operated on 1320 kHz. It was supposed (most optimistically) to have a radiated power of 50 watts into a centre-fed aerial system - one leg running across Warspite St to the top of what was then called "Southern Cross Building" (corner of Chancery and Warspite Sts) - other leg ran across Chancery St to the vicinity of Mills Lane and was more of a counterpoise than anything else. How the contraption ever radiated out of such a reinforced concrete canyon would completely confound present-day engineers, I have no doubt - yet radiate it did and pretty well too.

For a few weeks in the life of this transmitter it was set up at the Pukekohe Show Grounds and was quite a feature of the annual shows in those potato lands. At this time we could accept sponsored sessions, the advertising being limited to announcements of the name of the sponsor. I was in charge of the operation, my age at the time being about 17 and my wages around five pounds per week. The operation consisted in (a) Canvassing the local shopkeepers for sponsorships, (b) Running the transmitter, with appropriate announcing, including the broadcasting of opening speeches by local bigwigs, presentation of prizes, etc (c) Setting up the PA system for the show (d) getting a display stand ready for the salesman to come out from Auckland and peddling radio sets. Seems rather good value on five pounds per week, but those were the days when Vic and Clive Johns were keeping the old firm one jump ahead of the Bank anyway, and at least I had a job in those deep depression days!

The following two articles from Johns Ltd's annual catalogues add to this story of 1ZJ

### 1ZJ

The call 1ZJ was heard for the first time last year when we constructed a small power station and, began to operate on a limited but regular schedule as follows:

Tuesday, noon - 2 p.m.

Wednesday, 7.30-9.00p.m.

Thursday, noon - 2p.m.

Our object was to set a high standard for clarity of broadcasting coupled with a quiet dignity in connection with programmes.

We have frequently been told that 1ZJ IS received with remarkable clarity, but our customers can judge this better for themselves.

Shortly after completing our own station we received a contract to instal a similar but more powerful plant for Messrs Lewis Eady Ltd, 1ZR. In three weeks, 1ZR was quite ready to go on the air, and has maintained a very full schedule ever since.

Recently, Messrs Lewis Eady decided to increase their power and, at the time of writing, we are enlarging their station for them, being responsible both for the design and construction.

### 1ZJ

All listeners know that the latest releases of Gramophone Records branded "N.Z. Patent 52657" and "must not be used for Radio Broadcasting" are not allowed to be broadcast here.

The problem of securing a supply of records is not easy for the smaller stations, but we wish to express our very great appreciation to those listeners who, in response to our requests, have loaned us their records for broadcasting.

We trust their generosity will be maintained. If any customer or listener feels disposed to help us further in this direction, he can do so, either by loaning us a number of records for broadcasting, or, better still, by presenting the station with, say, one or more for its permanent collection.