

# Auntie's 45 Year Love Affair with ET4336 – Part 1

by David Porter, G4OYX

It was as a young teenager living in Nottinghamshire in the mid-1960s that my interest in radio was spawned. It may have been the profusion of off-shore, MF pirate radio stations or the Christmas 1965 acquisition of the Philips Electronic Engineer Kit allowing the reception of amateurs in the then predominately AM 160m top-band. Whatever, the result was that I was hooked and eagerly devoured technical publications for knowledge, examples being *Practical Wireless*, *The Radio Constructor* and my father's copy of *Wireless World*.

At the time *WW* was a thick tome and had many advertisements, one of which was regularly placed by the London-based company PC Radio/Colomor Electronics of 170 Goldhawk Road, W12. Within the half page advertisement was the description, but alas neither illustration nor price, of a 250/350 watt 2-20MHz HF, AM and CW transmitter, type RCA ET4336. Rather mysteriously, and therefore of special interest to a prospective youthful purchaser, it was described as "For Export Only".

Being 150 miles from London on 2/6d a week pocket money the prospect of viewing, negotiating 'export to Notts' and purchasing such a perceived treasure was not possible, so ownership remained elusive.

## Daventry

It wasn't until I started work as a Technical Assistant in the BBC Transmitter Department at Daventry in 1971 that I discovered that others *within the UK* had been rather more successful than me with regard to the procurement of said transmitting

equipment! For at Daventry was stored a MTT unit, a Mobile Transmitter Trailer. There were apparently a number of these around the country at MF and other HF stations and they were available for deployment around the UK if needed.

The trailer contained two of the RCA ET4336 transmitters set to an MF channel, usually 1295kHz, 1484kHz or 1546kHz with a combiner and a 22 inch bay containing programme input equipment and a crystal-controlled RF drive source.

A pair of Adastral 3-232, 76 foot guyed 'Cigar' masts, each stowed in three sections was also on board to support a simple single wire antenna. The antenna tuning unit was in the roof of the MTT with sample settings. A test load was provided in each transmitter.

As part of the training I accompanied one of the engineers to check out this installation. As you might expect being on test-load, on a fixed frequency, 1295kHz, kept in the dry and with background anti-condensation heaters on there wasn't much to go wrong and it worked a treat. So I had finally seen the subject of the adverts!

Whilst working at Droitwich in 1972 there was in a test workshop the HF version of the ET4336 as advertised in *WW*! It had an on-board, plug-gable crystal drive unit and differed from the MF version in that it was some 12 inches shorter. Also at Droitwich, the term DF meaning Deferred Facility came up when references were made to the MTTs and some other sites including one at Twigworth on the A38 called Gloucester MF. The Engineer-in-Charge was the person responsible for

periodically visiting the DF site and checking for correct operation. I recall he would sometimes bring back to Droitwich bits of the Programme Input Equipment (PIE) bay equipment for repair, usually the fault was electrolytic capacitors or wiring damage due to mouse action!

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Part of the Colomor advertisement showing the "Export Only" ET4336