TEX'S TIPS & TOPICS

Hello and welcome to the occasional column that, although it's called Tex's Tips and Topics, its really about your ideas, tips and tricks. So, here are a few suggestions from readers seeking to win book vouchers for every tip published!

Chin Up

A letter from **Peter G4EVY** says to "keep your chin up" when considering the cost of some simple items. His letter also shows that, sometimes the most unusual items can be pressed into use within the hobby. Peter is the Unit Radio Officer with 213 (City of Rochester) Squadron, Air Training Corps (ATC).

Peter wrote (of his suggestion) "I thought that it might prove of interest to those folk who would like to make up some 400Ω (approximately) open wire feeder, but who have been perhaps put off by the relatively high cost of spreaders. I use the excellent Gillette Blue 2 (disposable razors) and one day thought that the handles looked about right for use as spacers in the open wire feeder that I was proposing to use at the Squadron".

Peter then went on to describe removing the 'head' of the redundant razor with a pair of pliers, then using a file to smooth over the ends before drilling a hole in each end of the handle. Each wire of the pair, is fed through the holes in the handle spacers before being spaced about every 500mm along the run. The spacers are secured in place with small twists of wire similar to the method shown in the illustration of **Fig. 1**.

A great suggestion Peter, and as you mentioned in your letter, if you ever do find a use for the no-longer 'sharp' end, then let us know!

Painted Insulation

Now for a letter from **Dave G4OER** who wrote in to tell me about a 'painted on' insulating material called **Liquid Electrical Tape**. Dave mentioned that he noted an advert for Liquid Electrical Tape in a recent copy of *QST*. On contacting Plasti Dip International (**PDI inc**), the suppliers of the paint-on insulator, he found that there was a UK outlet for their products.

The Liquid Electrical Tape, shown in **Fig. 2**, is an air drying synthetic rubber coating that may be brushed onto electrical circuitry, to act as a sealant against both moisture and corrosive chemicals. After fully hardening, Liquid Electrical Tape won't peel or crack and it remains flexible under extreme conditions. It could be the ideal way to finish of an antenna project, and it's available in several colours.

Fig. 1: Using small lengths of a thinner wire to fix open wire feed spreaders in place. The wires may be left, as shown or soldered in place for slightly more stability.

Fig. 2: Two typical cases where Liquid Electrical Tape would prove useful in any antenna installation.

For more details about Liquid Electrical Tape and similar products that could be extremely useful to your hobby or perhaps even in your work, contact **Plasti Dip** at **Unit 1, Harvesting Lane, East Meon, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 1QR**, or **Tel: (01730) 823823**.

Corner Dipole

A short letter from **Robert Morison** laid out plans for his Corner Dipole that he has created to improve the Band II f.m. signal for his home stereo system. Robert wrote "I started by screwing a two section terminal block (choc block) connector to the face of a picture rail in the corner of the room. Using miniature 75Ω coaxial cable, I connected the outer and inner each to one connector of the block.

"Into the other ends, I connected a 680mm length of bell wire (with the ends twisted together) and each wire is held out along the picture rail with a small panel pin forming a horizontal L-shaped dipole. The antenna is so successful, I expect readers may develop outdoor versions".

I don't know about others Robert, but it will probably cure the problems I have with my radio in the kitchen at home.

But that's all I have space for this time. Vouchers go off to Robert, Dave and Peter, with Peter getting the extra voucher for best tip of the month - it was a close shave though!

Tex

Errors & Updates

Looking At ... The Voltage Regulator Part 2. July 2002

In the drawing of the switch-mode regulator shown on page 23 of the July 2002 issue of *PW* there was a link missing that makes the circuit non-operable as shown. In Fig. 2 (p23) transistors Tr5 and Tr6 have no supply line. Please make a link on the diagram, as shown here, between the junctions of R1,R2 and R3 and the the junctions of R6, R7 and R8.

My apologies for the mistake that crept into the drawing. **Editor**