

## Rear View



How about this (found by Roger Kellow) electric conversion in USA. It does normal highway speeds and has a claimed 70 mile endurance. Might be the answer when ethanol has dissolved all the old 'A' series engines!

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MORRIS MINOR OWNERS CLUB

# Dorset Branch

## NEWSLETTER

© Dorset Branch MMOCC 2015

August 2015

Volume 18

Issue 9

[www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk](http://www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk)



## The MMOC Dorset Branch

was founded in 1977 by Graham Melly and chaired in the early days by Aubrey Batt. It is a Branch of the National Morris Minor Owners Club but has its own accounts and organisation (see Constitution for further details) **We meet on the first Wednesday of every month (7:30 for 8:00)** at the **Bournemouth Electric Club, Broadway Lane, BH8 0AA**. We have an active calendar of events throughout the year – particularly in the Summer months when we attend many rallies and other shows. The monthly Clubnight is an opportunity to meet the other enthusiasts and enjoy a presentation or other activity organised by the Committee. Please note that the Dorset Branch MMOC will accept no liability in respect of goods or services provided by advertisers. No recommendation is implied.

**Membership currently costs £10 per year, £12.50 for joint membership.**

Please ask Branch Secretary if you require a copy of the Dorset Branch Constitution. (Also available on website.) For more details contact Laurie Blewer on 01202 522673 or John Jenkinson on 01202 576690

Advertising: Cars or spares for sale or wanted £5 per entry (Free to members).  
Traders advertisements: £30 per year.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014

(01425 476634)

Newsletter / Website Editor: Brian Wood

(01202 573501)

( brian@dorsetmmoc.co.uk )

President: Graham Jarvis (07914 637429)

Chairman: John Jenkinson (01202 576690)

Secretary: Laurie Blewer (01202 522673,

07947 525884)

Treasurer: Jacky Wood (01202 573501).

Membership Secretary – Des Waller (01202

573403)

Events Organiser/H&S Supervisor – Neville

Gerry (01202 747687)

Product Development Mgr: Brian Ford

Welfare/Technical Adviser: Eddie Pateman

Non Committee posts:  
Raffle Coordinators: Chris Tilly and Margaret  
Pateman

Spares Manager: Brian Wood  
(07411 116336)

Regalia : Dave & Jackie Walker  
Catering Executives: -Sue Blewer, Lyn Gerry

### FRONT COVER

The 2015 Branch Rally on a slightly damp day in July with Colin Kuhn's dark blue saloon and Phil Traves' Traveller in the foreground.

**Dorset Branch of the Morris Minor Owners Club**  
**Helping to preserve the post war Morris Minor in the Dorset**  
**area and beyond**

## Forthcoming Events (see also [www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk](http://www.dorsetmmoc.co.uk))

### 2015

2nd August—Lymington Rotary Show

5th August—Club night Gardening Competition

7,8 & 9th August —Purbeck Rally

8-9th August—Morris Vehicles Association Rally—Thoresby Pk Nottinghamshire

15-16th August—Forest Fayre with Steam, Brockenhurst.

23rd-August - Mid Summer Saunter—Meet at Avon Heath—Road run 10:30 depart for Classic Cars on the Prom (Christchurch Quay). Finish at Dave & Jackie Walker's (High Tea)

30th August Brockenhurst Carnival and Fun Day, Brockenhurst College.

2nd September –Clubnight—Pub Quiz

5-6th September –Isle of Wight MMOC Rally, Havenstreet Railway, IOW.

5-6th September—Beaulieu International Autojumble

12th September-Rebekah Fund Charity Day, Hamworthy Club, BH21 3AP **SEE LAURIE**

19-20th September-Holnest Country Fayre

20th-Sep—Classic Cars on the Prom (Christchurch Quay)

26th Sep—Skittles v HAMMOC and Surrey Hants,Wellow Golf Club, SO51 6BD

7th October—Clubnight AGM

28th December—Mistletoe Meander

2016

January 9th—Dinner and Dance, Liston Hotel, Boscombe

***(Don't forget to check the website for latest updates to events)***

### TRAVEL LINK UK

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### New Morris Minor Spares

are available through the club. The current list is posted on the website under the 'New Spares' tab. **We can also order other items for you—usually saving the postage cost.**

**Brian. 07411 116336**

### BRANCH REBATE SCHEME

You may be aware that the branch receives a financial rebate according to the numbers of national MMOC members who attend the monthly clubnights. We therefore need to update our records so that we can take advantage of this scheme. Please would you advise Des Waller (or any Committee Member) of your **MMOC membership number** and renewal date and make sure that you sign the attendance sheet at the clubnights. Thanks.

## For Sale & Wanted & Club Notices

Please mention where you saw the ad when you respond, thanks

**1958 - 4 Door Morris 1000** - deluxe 'Mabel' I have owned her 32 years, reasonable body work - some small rust coming through but pretty superficial - original trafficators - original leather seats in excellent condition. Serviced yearly - I have just had her checked over & greased up by my mechanic who highlighted :- Front brake shoes low, N/S/F front cylinder weeping, both rear shock absorbers weeping, (all easily fixed) She is 57 years old!

I am looking for **£2750** tel: 07786 233820 I live in Bromley, Kent



### FOR SALE

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4.0mm £13	(with any others)
All Four £45	Both (or all 3) £15

Wheels are all painted silver

(There is one other cross ply tyre on a rim which is £5.) See Brian.



### FOR SALE:

1968 Trafalgar Blue Traveller, new MOT, New wood, good condition. £5,500  
Brenda Ward 01202 873203.

*For those going to the IOW rally, you can get a discount on the ferry. Go to [wightlink.co.uk](http://wightlink.co.uk), and where it asks for a code, enter RALLY, in capitals. The earlier you book, the better the price!*



**CLUBNIGHT ACTIVITY:**  
Gardening Competition

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**NEXT CLUBNIGHT— Pub Quiz**

The Dorset Branch Newsletter is published on the first Wednesday of the month and sent by post to paid-up members. It is also available for download from the Internet usually about 10 days before the clubnight.



## Editorial

Well, we survived another successful Branch Rally a few weeks ago at Avon Heath, despite slightly dodgy weather. The anticipated attendance was the highest we have had for a few years, but probably due to the weather, some never made it. We hope you had a good day—if you were there. There are some photos on the website if you would care to have a look under 'PHOTO GALLERY'.

Thanks to this month's contributors: Dave Holton for his account of the visit to the National MMOC Rally near Scarborough and Roger for his essay on the rise and fall of EKCO, the British radio manufacturer. Also, thanks for the comments (below) on the Branch Rally. There is still lots more in the way of events etc. this season, so let's hope for good weather and no breakdowns!

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Charlie Ware on 4th July. The Branch sends its condolences to Zac and the family. (See obituary on p.7) Some of the longer established members of the Branch will remember a club visit to the Bath premises sometime back in the 90's. We were treated to a tour of the facilities by Charlie himself and we were made very welcome!

*Hello Brian, many thanks to you and all the team for an excellent time at the Dorset Rally last Sunday. We have not been for a number of years due to many reasons however it was worth the wait. It was so good to chat with many old friends including our El Presidente !!! Graham. The weather gods played up however it did not dampen people's spirit. The cup for best restoration has pride of place at home and will be kept polished ready for hand back next year, all the very best wishes Andy (Dibb).*

*Hi Laurie,  
Enjoyed Sunday's rally, pity about the rain, thanks to you and your team for all the hard work.  
Could you let me know the details of the Lymington rally please as we would like to come. Let's hope the weather is better eh?  
Cheers Colin Whiffen.*

*Despite the damp weather, the Dorset Rally was another resounding success with a great spirit of camaraderie. Many thanks to all the organisers, helpers and stallholders for such an enjoyable event.*

*Nick and Angi Odell*



The 2015 Branch Rally

*Hi Brian and Jackie, Just a word of thanks to all of the committee and helpers for their hard work in organising the Rally, shame about the weather, but very well appreciated all the same. Peter and Valerie Webb*

*Just a note to thank the committee and your loyal band of helpers for all the effort that obviously went into creating yet another successful and enjoyable event --- in spite of the weather. Nice to see such a diverse assembly of cars and have interesting chats with different people. I particularly liked the 3 door traveller and the Transit rally service barge. Well done to all concerned.  
Peter Coates*

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We have obtained some new Minor 1000 door pulls for sale to Branch Members at the favourable introductory price of only **£7.50** each. These are available in four colours: Green, Blue, Black and Red (as shown). (Branch Spares) (\*Currently £11.88 from ESM and £10.78 from Bull Motif)

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(discount on MOT's for Club Members)

Tel: 01202 883243 or 01202 886980  
We specialise in all aspects of car repairs (ask for Colin)

The Branch Website has a '**Spares Shop**' which advertises (mostly second hand) spares. Why not browse the bargains or send me an ad or two with a picture.

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## Chairman's Report

Good evening and welcome to August Clubnight. I would like to thank all the members and friends for supporting the branch rally this year at Avon Heath Country Park. As you know we had some issues and restrictions on room but I think the committee and members who helped out did well. It was a shame about the weather on the Sunday, but Saturday night's dinner was good as usual. So thanks to Marion, Amelia and the staff at the café for a good night.

Tonight is the gardening competition so I hope all you gardeners have been busy in your greenhouses to support tonight's event. It is nice to do something that does not involve Morris Minors or cars.

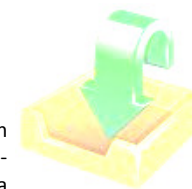
We had a pleasant day at the Holdenhurst Village fete on Saturday. This was a real village fete with cups of tea at 50p and a big chunk of homemade cake for £1. Just like the old days.

I have just been in touch with a weekend break company that has some new ideas so I will post them on the club notice board. One is a coach to London, Greenwich and the Cutty Sark, then on to a hotel for evening meal, accommodation and a cooked breakfast. The next day there is a trip on the Waverly Paddle Steamer down the Thames to Southend and back to Bourne-mouth by coach. Another one is the Chelsea Flower Show. If you would be interested, please put your name on the notice board to give me some idea of interest and numbers. Don't forget your slips for the Mid-Summer Saunter that will finish at Dave and Jackie's for Strawberries and Fizz.

That's all for now, John.



## Editor's In-Box



### MORRIS MINOR NATIONAL RALLY : SCAMPSTON HALL 2015

This year's Morris Minor National rally at Scampston Hall near Scarborough, North Yorkshire certainly was not very well attended compared to National rallies of previous years. But hey-ho I was there along with Phil Traves and his trusty Minor - a mammoth journey for Phil - only 220 miles for me!

There were several "branch avenue" displays, one of which was from Scotland - a long journey for them. One of their members had brought his bagpipes with him and he tried to entertain us on the camp site in the evening. Thank God he soon ran out of wind.



I spent about 3 hours on Saturday trawling through the auto jumble looking for little gems and managed to find a second hand van petrol tank in good condition. It seems that new van tanks are currently unavailable at present - is that right Brian? For us 'vanoraks', we have to convert saloon tanks to the van specification. (Yes just the unpainted 9.5 gallon LCV tank currently available from ESM—Ed)

Thanks to Brian we are well looked after for spares for our Minors for the time being compared to some breeds in classic circles. But I do have concerns for the very long term future.

It is always good to see the MMOC young members at these events as they always seem very enthusiastic about their minors. And let's face it the future of the breed depends on them as many of us are getting to be old gits!

As the saying goes "it's a small world", I was chatting to a guy on the campsite on Friday evening and said I came from Silverstone and asked him where he came from. He uses his Minor every day and it turns out we only live 12 miles apart. We had never met before but 220 miles from home we got chatting.

So despite the rally not being too well attended I'm very glad I went and thank you MMOC for all the effort in putting it together. So for me that's the National Rally and Moggyfest for this year done but lots more to look forward to including (at the time of writing this) the Dorset Rally, the Classic Van and Pick Up show at Gaydon in August (where we hope to have a good showing of Minors). For me the Dorset branch display at Moggyfest couldn't be beaten with the showroom display and parts counter. FANTASTIC.

Happy Minor-ing from Dave Holton, Silverstone. Dorset Branch Member 272

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"At Woodies we specialise in the Morris Traveller but we can fabricate timber frames for all classic cars. We have completed many Morris Travellers over 30 years, as well as many other wood framed vehicles."

**New Morris Minor Spares**  
are available through the club. The current list is posted on the website under the 'New Spares' tab. **We can also order other items for you—usually saving the postage cost.**  
**Brian. 07411 116336**



## Secretary's Report

Good evening and welcome to August's clubnight. Thanks to everyone who came along to Bloxworth last month for the skittles match versus the 2CV Club. It was a very close run thing but we were beaten by the 2CV's. Tonight is the annual gardening competition organised by Eddie so good luck to all the entrants.

That's another Dorset Branch rally over and done with then. Despite the best efforts of the weather I hope you'll agree that it was very successful again. Graham and I had quite a job doing the judging as the quality of the cars seems to get better each year. The full list of the winners is on the home page of the web site. Many thanks to everyone who helped out over the weekend.

The weekend after the rally saw us out and about again. Thanks to those of you who brought your cars along to Holdenhurst Village Fete on 18<sup>th</sup> July. The organisers have asked me to pass on their thanks for what was a very popular display at their event. The following day saw us taking part in a new event (for us) – Classics at the Castle in Sherborne. It was rather an early start as we had to be on site and set up for 9:30 but I think it was well worth the effort. There were hundreds of cars on show at what can only be described as a beautiful site with literally thousands of members of the public. There was a good selection of autojumble and other trade stands and the bacon sandwiches were very good! I think it's definitely one to do again next year.

By the time you read this we will have been to the last ever Bygone Days show at Ibsley. This really is a crying shame as it is an event which we particularly enjoy each year. We will also have been to the Lymington Show again. Some more bad news about events is that there will be no Frogham Fayre this year. The weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August is the Purbeck Rally. We will not be attending this year as we are going up to Thoresby Park in Nottinghamshire for the Morris Register National Rally incorporating the inaugural Morris Vehicles Association Rally – more in that next month.

August is also the Brockenhurst Show with Steam. We have been asked to attend the Rebekah Charity Day and Classic Car Show on 12<sup>th</sup> September at The Hamworthy Club. Please let me know if you would like to attend as I have the passes already. We have also been invited to take part in a Tri-Branch Skittles Challenge on 25<sup>th</sup> September against the Hampshire Branch and the Surrey/Hants Branch. This will be held at The West Wellow Golf Club near Romsey. The food menu for the evening should be enclosed with this newsletter and if you are planning to support us please let us have your food choices as soon as you can.

I think that's probably enough from me for this month so until next time  
Happy Minoring  
Laurie. (Photos of Sherborne Castle show right and below).



John Jenkinson, Chairman  
Morris Minor Owners Club, Dorset Branch





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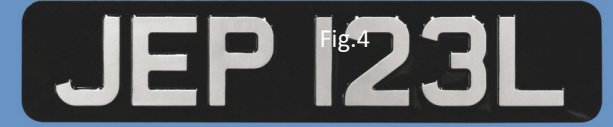


Fig.4

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## DORSET BRANCH SPARES NEWS

We have the inner wing liners (LEFT) at **£24.99** for the front wings kit complete with all fittings and instructions.

We also have the improved 2-stage bonnet stay (right) which allows the bonnet to be raised almost vertically! On special offer **£25** each to Branch Members only. (**£27.50** normally) (Postage-add **£2.00**) **WHILE STOCKS LAST**



## LEAF (Lukaemia Educating and Fundraising)

LEAF is our Charity of the Year, this year and our charitable effort will be directed towards them. We usually make a donation of the proceeds of our blind auction (and other donations). Leaf fundraises to help young people and adults living in Dorset and Hampshire affected with a blood cancer who are receiving treatment or who have needs since being discharged from hospital.



radar (RDF) and the backing up of the famous Orford Ness communications research establishment team at such a crucial time, was significant. Together with military and public services wireless communications manufacturing it was significant for this country to help in winning the war.

The arrival of peace and the return to production at the Southend factory in 1945 onwards, saw Ekco employ 8,000 making mains and portable radios, television sets, car radios, tape recorders, 'Thermotube' heaters, electric blankets, extensive ranges of household plastic moulded items, toilet seats, baby baths etc,etc.

In 1954 Ekco bought the top range radio, tv, and radio-gram company Dynatron.

Meanwhile the electronics development division were soon within the forefront of modern radar systems and military communications. Amongst other aircraft the Hawker Hunter and the Vulcan Bomber each had specialist radar systems installed by the company.

Weather radar was also a speciality developed by Ekco and this resulted in systems being installed in civil aircraft such as the Bristol Britannia, De Havilland Comet, Vickers Vanguard, VC10, BAC 111. Then in the 1960,s 'supersonic speed' Concorde was supplied with weather radar.

Ekco had merged with PYE in 1960 to form a new holding company named British Electrical Industries Ltd, with E K Cole as Vice Chairman. but in 1961 he took a back seat on the board and decided on retiring from actively running the business.

1966 however culminated in being a sad and all too eventful year for the company . Eric Cole tragically died in a bathing accident in the Bahamas.

Later that year it was discovered that the merger had been very unsuccessful. This was compounded by the sudden loss of E K Cole and to make matters worse it was also discovered that the PYE division had been involved, in a financial scandal. Facing increased competition with competitive radio and tv sets and electronics from Japan etc. attempts were made to sell off considerable excess stock for no profit.

Towards the end of 1966 Pye-Ekco had sadly all but ceased and was no longer was a viable company, deserting the famous Southend Site.

It is interesting though that the Ekco car radio repair workshop was maintained until 1977.

Phillips (Netherlands) purchased what remained of Pye -Ekco and now owns the trade names.

Eric Kirkham Cole's legacy lives on in his pioneering work with early radio technology, voltage transformers, product design, radio valves, and of course the major Ekco contribution during WW2 with crucial work on military communications, RDF radar and later weather radar technology.

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Motor show advert



**Charles Ware 1936-2015**

Charles Ware is probably best known for his establishment of the Morris Minor Centre in Bath in 1976 with the express philosophy of preservation of these cars.

Originally trained as an artist, he went on to teach at Art College. During this time in the 60's he developed an interest in historic buildings and was involved with a London based building company working on small housing conversions in Islington. Having an eye on market potential, he built up a considerable

portfolio of property. Whilst visiting Bath, he took a dim view of the tendency for older, historic property to be cleared in favour of unsympathetic, shorter lived properties being built in their place. He tried to convince people that it was a sensible proposition to renovate their homes and save the city for future generations to enjoy. Taking an active role, he would buy and renovate properties, many of which had been earmarked for demolition as well as several major projects including a large former hotel and a 100 acre estate on the edge of the city. His main residence was a grand, Georgian house in the Royal Crescent, where the parties he hosted were legendary, earning him the nickname 'Champagne Charlie'. He purchased the city's Theatre Royal and during this time he befriended the band 'Roxy Music' who were trying to make their way into the music business and agreed to give them financial backing. Sadly, though, the property market crashed in the mid-seventies and Charles was declared bankrupt. Charlie, his wife and young son were loaned a basement flat to live in.

Charles then turned his attention to cars and applied the same philosophy of preservation to cars and started off with a handful of them in a small back yard. He later moved to a site west of Bath and gained national publicity after an article in the Sunday Times, when the business really took off. In 2006 the business moved to bigger premises in Bristol and now employs a dedicated workforce of about 20.

The idea that an old car was worth saving and repairing had not really caught on in the seventies and Charles did a lot to convince people that, just like repairing your house, rather than replacing it, it was economically and practically sensible to do this. His book 'Durable Car Ownership' was first published in 1982 and explained in detail how this could be done over a period to spread the cost to end up with a valuable asset and breaking the cycle of throwing cars away and buying new ones every 10 years or so. In 1991 the 'Durable Car Company' was opened in Sri Lanka, where panels were produced by the local workforce using traditional hand-forming techniques.

If there is one name that almost everyone who has an interest in Morris Minor has heard of – it is Charlie Ware. Next time you go to a car show and see the Morris Minors there, just think how things might have been very different had it not been for this man.

Charles Ware died on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

(some information from The Bath Magazine September 2011)



## 'A-Z' of British Industrial Legacies—Roger Kellow

### "E" is for EKCO

Our 1960's era London Motor Show Guide parts and accessories section of exhibitor listings, following Dunlop last time, now leads us into companies listed under 'E' and here we find, the then, extremely well known name, **EKCO** who were displaying their quality range of car radios Earls Court .

How many of us (of that particular age group) will always clearly remember that gentleman, in that era on the radio announce daily, with a rather comforting 'Oxbridge' accent, after the time 'pips' - "*This is the BBC Home Service, Here is the news, and this is Alvar Lidell reading it*" ? I appreciate a slightly younger generation may wonder who I am and what am I talking about. But life in some ways seemed less complicated then as we only had the sum total of three regular radio stations in the 50's and early 60's to listen to, all exclusively from the BBC. 'The Home Service', 'The Light Programme', with the 'The Third Programme' being perceived by a majority at the time as rather limited highbrow classical music and perhaps generally regarded more for the discerning intellectual listener. (So in reality that was actually down to only two stations for our every day regular listening !)

Throughout the entire production run of the model range of Morris Minors from 1948 through into the early 70's, the considered 'luxury' of a car radio was only available as an after market fitted accessory. An option for an 'approved' radio could be fitted to any new or used Minor by the BMC service dealer of course (often Radiomobile or Motorola) but it just seems that after market fitting of radios fitted to the Morris Minor in any larger numbers came later on. A few car radio makers offered a nation wide fitting service network, This was indeed a service that was marketed intensively by 'Ekco Radio' in particular as part of their 'quality' service. .Although , within the early 1960's, together with some required basic car wiring knowledge . many of us would most often choose to install a Long / Med waveband suitable polarity model ourselves in our own Minor.

**Eric Kirkham Cole** left school in the early 1900's with a keen interest in how radios worked and how to build his own. He very soon succeeded with his version of a working radio.

During a 3 year apprenticeship in electrical engineering young Eric became known in his home town Leigh-On-Sea, Southend, as being the person to ask to fix a troublesome radio. E. K. Cole started up business in 1924 with his girlfriend (whom he later married) in a small room over a confectioners shop in Leigh-On -Sea, mending radios and re-charging customers radio batteries. Their improved 2 valve radio complete with earphones became popular and sold for £6.10.0 . The enterprising couple had soon to make at least 6 per week to meet customer demand. Eric Cole's thinking at this time also recognised how inconvenient it was to constantly have to re-charge and also regularly purchase expensive replacement batteries in order to listen regularly to the radio. He worked on and then perfected a device that he named 'The Battery Eliminator', and later received a patent for his device. This resulted in, and became the universally used 'mains voltage transformer'. The popular feature appealed to the



E.K.Cole



customers was as it simply plugged into a convenient household mains socket to power their radio set providing the required low voltage power, (thus 'eliminating' the reliance on costly radio batteries)

From 1928 and into the 1930's saw the Ekco company (the trademark created from E.K.Coles initials) become very well known and soon established in much larger premises at Southend building their very popular quality domestic radio sets.

During this time several key personnel were attracted to the company including John Wyborne who left his important role at Marconiphone, also A.W. Martin, who as chief engineer, worked on the idea of what became famous historical British design icons. The classic series of Ekco 'round' moulded Bakelite cabinet radio sets. Huge investment was made by Ekco, (considered a gamble at the time) with the installation of their own large scale Bakelite production and pressing unit. Two top architects of the era were even employed to further develop the choice range and variety of Bakelite art deco cabinet designs that simply could not be mass produced in traditional cabinet making materials. The gamble paid off and soon 1,000 employees were needed to fulfil the demand for Ekco radios, and they soon became the wireless design leaders of the era.

Ekco radio valves and components were also produced at the site in a specialist unit.

The spacious new factory became the major employer at Southend and from 1932 onward with an average of 3,000 employees.

The first Ekco car radio was introduced in 1934. Quality and reliability was always promoted as in the 1949 advert, quoting 'installed into top range Alvis, Daimler, Bristol cars etc. and the later 1951 advert describes their innovation of 3 'modular' units, claiming to assist easy installation in 'any' car model, - receiver unit, power unit, and speaker unit.

Previous to the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, Ekco had already researched and worked on a version of projected television that showed great promise but the imminent threat of hostilities shelved this development. The government were very interested in the research and early work that Ekco had in fact already started in the mid 1930's in the possibilities of radio direction finding (RDF) radar technology ,and also their substantial knowledge and expertise in radio two-way communication. The conspicuous location of the large Southend factory was considered too much of a target risk and the government placed Ekco specialist divisions into various secret 'ghost' factories within 'safe' locations around the country to carry out essential secret war work.

Radio transmitters and receivers were made for tanks and for various RAF fighter aircraft. RAF Bomber Command relied on Ekco installed transmitter and receiver radio sets for the famous Lancaster Bomber (an upgraded and improved version of the original design by the Marconi Co.) Large numbers of 'one man pack' portable field radios were also made for the fighting forces.

In all the war effort, the important contribution that Ekco made and part played in helping perfect



Lancaster wireless operator