



Astor 1948 model KP

By Graham Parslow

Astor were pioneers in Australian radio production creating models for every niche of size and power source. The parent company was Radio Corporation of Australia, founded in 1926 and based in South Melbourne. A new exhaustive compilation of early Astors has been undertaken by Jim Easson (HRSA treasurer) and availability of the book can be checked on the HRSA web site.

The portable model KP featured here followed on from the Astor *Porta* models marketed pre-war that were innovative in both circuitry and cabinet design.

Another First to ASTOR
A NEW LONG DISTANCE PORTABLE

FEATURES

- 5-valve Superheterodyne with stage of R.F. amplification incorporating 3-gang condenser. ● Full 8" Speaker gives tone equivalent to console receivers. ● Weights only 18 lbs.
- Beam power output. ● "A" battery consists of nine ordinary torch cells. ● "B" battery—2 standard portable 45's. ● Heavy duty batteries can be plugged in if required.
- Provision for A.C. power pack. ● Easy touch control dial. ● A separate reading for each State with main stations therein prominently marked. ● Styled on new slim lines (only 5" deep) makes for the utmost ease in carrying, etc.

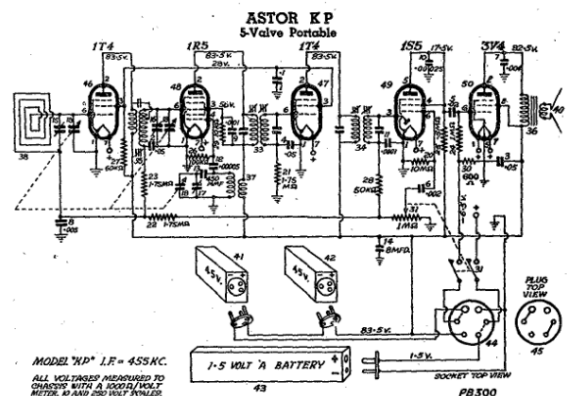
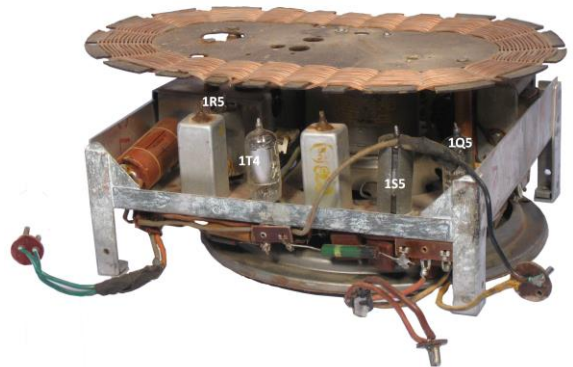
Which all goes to make the most ATTRACTIVE, POWERFUL, and BEST TONED Portable ever.

The Astor de luxe Portable sells for . . . **18** Gns. Retail

RADIO CORPORATION PTY. LTD.
DIVISION OF ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES LTD.
126 - 130 GRANT ST. SOUTH MELBOURNE, VIC 4.

Radio & Electrical Retailer, February 6, 1947

In 1940 Astor offered the CJ portable (see advertisement). The shape of the CJ followed through as the cabinet shape of the KP. The style of the tuning dial and station calibration also carried forward from the CJ model to the KP. The 1940 CJ portable used directly heated low voltage valves 1N5GT, 1A7GT, 1N5GT, 1H5GT and 1Q5GT that had octal bases. The circuit of model KP is comparable to model CJ, but enhanced by the incorporation of new miniature valves. A 1T4 provides RF amplification for sensitive reception, followed by a 1R5 converter, then another 1T4 as an IF amplifier. A 1S5 is the detector, AGC generator and first audio stage before the final 3V4 output pentode. The 3V4 has its two 1.5V filaments wired in parallel (pins 1, 5 and 7).



The efficient valves result in quiescent current draw of 12mA from the B-batteries (2 x 45V) and 300mA from the 1.5V heater battery, resulting in a total power dissipation of only 1.5W. The 3V4 output pentode was rated as giving 250mW of audio output (100mW before distortion). This made for a satisfactory sound

level from the relatively large and efficient Rola 8M speaker.

Luckily the radio featured here still had its last set of batteries in place. The batteries are retained by four screws at the base of the radio and the large filament battery (Eveready No 745) occupies all the space under the chassis. Two 45V Eveready No 482 batteries slip in either side of the chassis.



The circuit diagram shows how a plug was provided at the rear to power the radio from either a mains adapter or external batteries. In the example featured here someone had removed the power plug and its connections so the battery plugs went directly to the radio, as can be seen in the photos.

Before clean-up the radio looked unkempt and had damage from being damp.



The ply wood casing is of low sophistication requiring only a small amount of steam bending to round the shoulders.



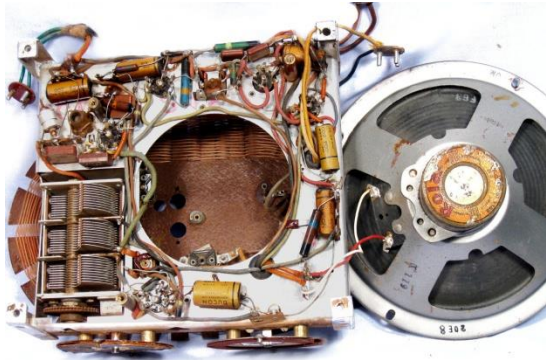
Cabinet restoration involved replacing corroded screws, painting the cream external covering of leatherette cloth. The stiff woven plastic speaker grille material was brought back to uniform appearance by painting with mission brown.



Astor introduced the swan motif in 1940. The Astor swan badge is one of the few elegant aspects to this cabinet that is otherwise in the mould of military austerity that prevailed through the 1940s. The model designations of Astor radios can be overwhelming with alphabetic randomness, but the KP is easy to remember because of the military acronym Kitchen Patrol (KP) for cooking duties.

The chassis construction is strong and neatly laid out as shown by the photographs. The speaker transformer is clearly dated 1 APR 1948.

moulded entirely from new thermo-moulded plastics.



The major appeal of this radio is its good performance. Also as a collectable radio it does make a statement about the materials that were available and in vogue at the time. The Peter Pan portables, also branded Monarch, from Eclipse Radio were comparable in all aspects of materials and styling. This did set the Astor and Peter Pan cases apart from nearly every other contemporary portable that was a rectangular box with a flip-down lid. The 8 inch speaker of the Astor KP gave it a performance edge over the majority of smaller coned competitors. Very soon Astor would offer much more stylish 1950s portables with cases