

Restoring a Rogers-Majestic Model 12/62B – Gerry O'Hara

While doing some work at the SPARC Museum a couple of years ago, one of the volunteers there asked if I would like one of his radios - an 'ugly duckling' Rogers-Majestic model 12/62B (chassis type 7R613) with a large 'telephone dial' (five pre-set stations and one tunable Broadcast Band position) that he could just not muster-up any enthusiasm to restore. This poor set had been sitting in the workshop area at the Museum for as long as I could remember - looking-down at many other, more fortunate sets being restored and going to good homes. I took a quick look and felt a bit sorry for it - so of course I took the set home. It resided in my basement for over a year before I finally got around to doing anything with it. Eventually I removed the chassis from the cabinet and took the cabinet back into SPARC to start restoration work on it. Meanwhile, the chassis was placed in a plastic box under one of my workbenches and forgotten about!



The cabinet was in a rather rough state and needed gluing and re-finishing. Once stripped (using a scraper) it was obvious that the wood on the top and sides was a cheap poplar with poor grain definition. However, the front was mahogany veneer, though it was in poor shape, especially where the speaker grill was located. Some minor re-veneering was

undertaken prior to sanding down with 200 grit sandpaper and then 600 grit 'wet and dry', lubricated with lemon oil. Parts of the cabinet were masked-off and some dark brown highlights incorporated (using dark-brown lacquer) along the cabinet edges and trim grooves. The entire front was then masked-off and the top and sides (the poplar wood) were darkened slightly using a dark-brown lacquer. The front (mahogany) and then the entire cabinet were then given several coats of clear semi-gloss lacquer to finish the woodwork restoration. The large tuning knob was similarly re-finished. The telephone dial (a metal casting) was sandblasted and re-finished with a primer and several coats of acrylic dark copper and bronze metallic paints followed by several coats of car body clear-coat - I wanted something that would brighten-up an otherwise very dull-looking set.



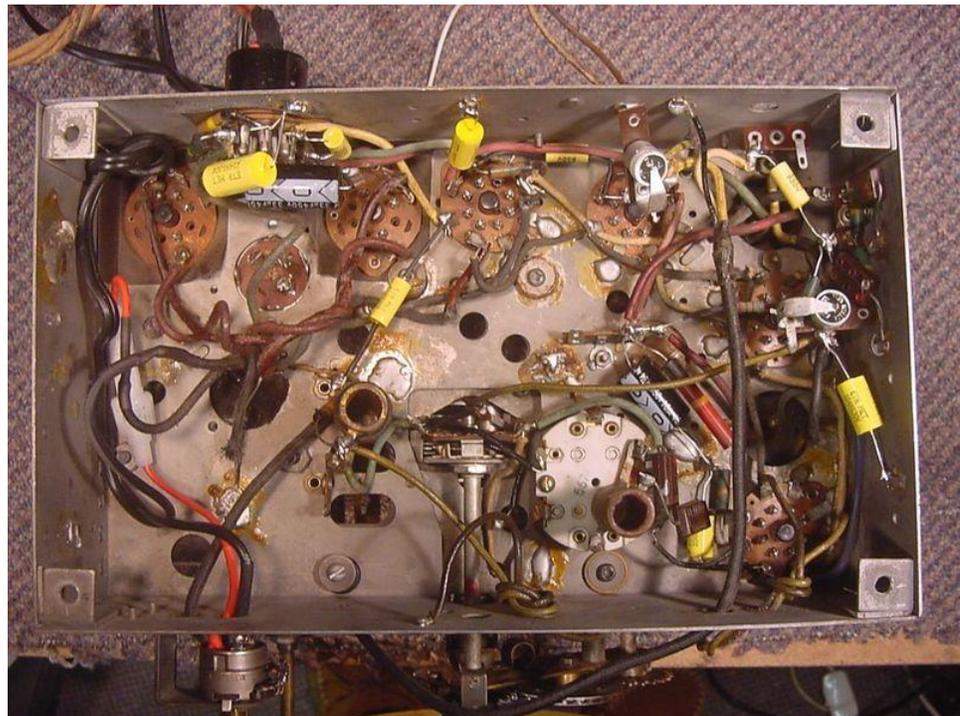
All the above took best part of 6 months due to many distractions (including restoring other, more interesting, sets) and other issues in my life that had to be dealt-with. One day while looking for something in my workshop I re-discovered the chassis and decided to start working on it. The chassis was given a thorough clean - first with a brush and vacuum, followed by rubbing alcohol/lighter fluid to remove the grime and oily/waxy deposits.



Electronic restoration was a fairly-straightforward re-capping job (all paper and electrolytic types were replaced), however, being a late-1930's Rogers set, it had bias cells that also had to be replaced (see other postings on the CVRS forum about these gizmos). A couple of resistors were also way out of tolerance, with the anode load resistor in the first audio stage (6Q7) being completely open circuit. The 6A8 pentagrid converter tube was missing and

a replacement was fitted - the grid lead for this tube also being replaced as it was slightly too short for the metal tubes currently fitted to the set in lieu of the original (taller) Rogers metalized glass types. I was pleased to see the two 2X3 half-wave rectifier tubes were ok (these are getting quite difficult to find).

After some careful cleaning of all the switch contacts and tuning gang contacts with De-Oxit and a very straightforward re-aligning exercise, the set worked very well. The speaker leads were frayed in parts and heat-shrink tubing was used to effect repairs to this rather than replace them completely. The rubber mountings on the tuning gang had completely perished and were replaced using vinyl grommets. The power switch (ganged with the tone control) was open circuit and a new pot/switch combo was fitted. A line fuse was installed, along with a grounded power lead and new pilot light. The speaker cloth was replaced with some generic 1930's design in a tone that matches the re-finished



telephone dial. The mongrel knobs were replaced with a matching pair out of my junk box and I will keep an eye open for more suitable ones.

So, the set is not so much of an 'ugly duckling' anymore and is a great set for everyday listening. Surprisingly, the diminutive speaker (5") gives a very good account of itself when in the cabinet. The final part of the project will be to make some new station marker inserts for the five pre-set stations to be fitted into the spaces on the telephone dial. I plan to make these such that the dial light shines through the station name, the remainder of the insert being almost opaque (so the dial marking behind do not show through). In the meantime I will just keep listening!

