

# The Vin-Plonk Special

*The Vin-Plonk Special is a simple 14MHz band transmit/receive antenna based on the principle of "electrovineology". As this word does not appear in 1987 dictionaries, it can be defined as "the science of using wine bottles as indoor and portable mini-tower transmit/receive erections" says Richard Q. Maris G2BZQ.*

It is a matter of fact; good, bad or indifferent—depending on your point of view—that if you have £X00 then you can go out and buy a "super duper commercial h.f. antenna" and erect it in your garden. For a further £X000 a black box h.f. transceiver can be attached to the antenna; and if you "press the key" or "switch on the mic" then you will work the world. This goes on for a year or two. You have done the lot! Bearing in mind that amateur radio is a hobby, then what can you do next? How about a bit of experimentation with antennas?

The *ARRL Antenna Book* states that a h.f. TX can be used to load up just about anything, as an antenna, such as bedsprings, gutters, downpipes, tin roofs, metal flagpoles, TV antennas, wire reinforced plastics clothes line, wire fences and even a tree trunk (if you have one). Unfortunately they then rather smartly proceed to the next chapter—without giving very many actual details as to how this act should be performed!

The Vin-Plonk is a fun project! It works! It uses:

- 1½ litre wine bottle (empty)
- coffee jar
- biscuit tin lid
- wire
- piece of wood
- length of coaxial feeder
- junk box variable capacitor with knob.

Some (many?) readers will say "the man is crazy—he must be joking!"

Believe it, or not, it resonates excellently as an indoor 14MHz band RX antenna, and it can also be loaded with the transmitter. The QSO, which

proved the latter point was with a DJ on 14MHz c.w., during the middle of one morning. The distance? Well, 800/950km! Maybe not a DX antenna, but it does prove that just about anything can be "TX loaded" with a bit of ingenuity. Incidentally, for some time the author has had his beady eye on a large metal-framed window 4m x 1.5m.

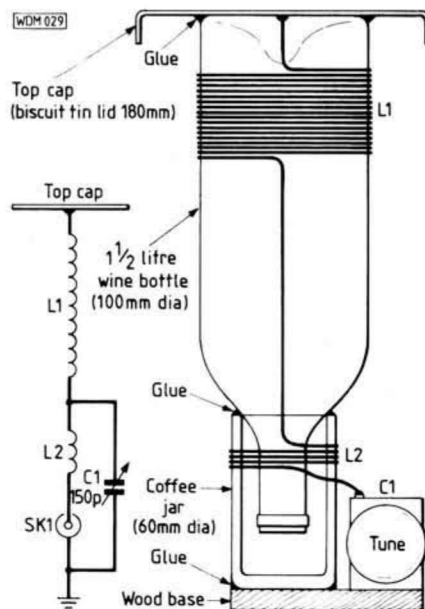
The circuit is shown in Fig. 1a. It consists of L1 wound around the bottle, L2 is the loading/matching coil around the coffee jar with a 150pF air-spaced receiver type variable capacitor of unknown parentage, it could easily be 100pF. At the top is a "top hat", which is a biscuit tin lid.

Construction is shown in Fig. 1b. A 180mm diameter biscuit tin lid is glued to the blunt end of the wine bottle, the "instant" type glue is best. Onto the bottle body, as shown, is wound 11m of 1 x 0.6 pvc covered wire, but no doubt any thin pvc covered wire or flex would do. The wine bottle "body" is 100m diameter. Solder the top end of L1 to the top hat.

The bottle is then glued to a 60mm coffee jar, as shown. This is a tricky job as the glue sets instantly so that you don't get a second chance. The prototype looks a bit like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, as the glue set while still doing the vertical alignment of the bottle and coffee jar!

Inductor L2 is 3½ turns of 20 s.w.g. tinned copper wire, spaced about 6mm between turns, with the wire anchored in place with glue.

The base of the unit is a piece of 25mm thick wood. The coffee jar/bottle contraption is glued to one end of



**Fig. 1a** the base. The 150pF capacitor is mounted down the other end on a small bracket. Though the coaxial socket is shown, in the circuit, the author dispensed with this and went straight into a length of coaxial feed-line, which was cleated to the base board.

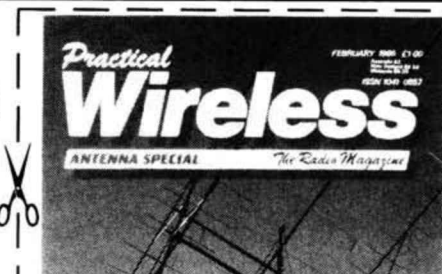
Tuning? If you have a transceiver, then resonate C1 for maximum signal on receive, and it does not have to be adjusted on transmit. At least, that's what happened to the author.

A few simple connections, with bits of wire and a soldering iron and you have the Vin-Plonk Special! And the thing didn't cost anything—it was all lying around somewhere in the house or garage. **PW**

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