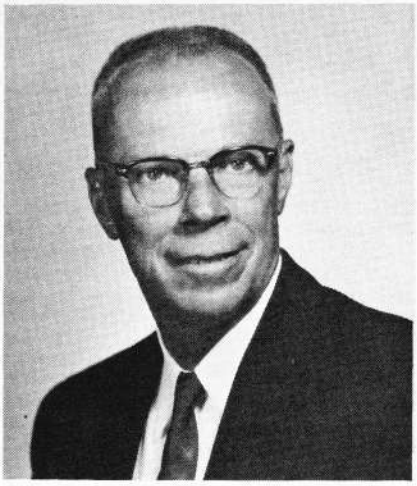

Stuart Babcock

Babcock

With announcement last Fall that he has resigned his position as an officer of Babcock Electronics Corp., purchased the assets of Babcock Models —and formed a new concern—Babcock Controls Inc.—Stuart Babcock has almost completed the circle, since the model end of the business was started by him under another corporate name and in another location, back in 1953. Formed as a Division of Babcock Radio Engineering, Inc., in Van Nuys, Calif., the model outfit was housed in the same plant.

The entire concern moved to Costa Mesa, Calif. in 1957 and Babcock Models was set up as a separate entity, though still located in the same building with the parent organization, which was then, and still is, engaged entirely in military production. It soon became necessary to move to larger quarters, though, and Babcock Models was shifted a few blocks away (and into neighboring Newport Beach) to its own 5000 square foot building.

Next development was severance of the model plane business entirely from the parent concern; the Eck brothers and John Zweers (all long time hobbyists) set up Eck-Babcock, but remained in the Newport Beach location. Not many months after this, came an amicable split, with the Ecks leaving to form their own R/C concern, and John Zweers remaining as sole proprietor of Babcock Models. John moved the plant back to Costa Mesa in mid-'63. And in October came announcement of formation of Babcock Controls, Inc. in a considerably larger plant at Laguna Beach, some 13 miles away. With 6000 square feet of floor space, it's doubtless the largest Babcock plant devoted to model R/C yet, and it is again under the direct control of original founder Stuart Babcock, who is President and a major stockholder. John Zweers is also a stockholder and will act as Assistant to the President. Dick Schumacher, long time model plane and R/C enthusiast, is again listed in an advisory capacity; he too was one of those responsible for original Babcock entrance to the model R/C field.

The early history of the concern was given in more detail in the Nov. 1960 *American Modeler*. Briefly it went like this: B.R.E.I. landed a contract to supply receivers for an R/C target drone trainer (generally refered to as the RCAT). The Babcock equipment worked fine, but the drone itself caused no end of trouble. It had been designed and built after some six months of work by aeronautical engineers far more familiar with full sized planes than with "models"—which this drone really was. Though not concerned with the airframe, Stu Babcock was appalled at what was supposed to carry his receiver. An ardent hobbyist himself (model boats, planes, ham radio) he knew a much better drone could be designed, asked Dick Schumacher (who was and still is a full time Western Airlines pilot) to try. Applying standard model techniques, Schuey produced a new RCAT in several weeks. The final design was a 6′ span job, weighed 13 lb., used a Fox .59 engine and was a most satisfactory performer.

This taste of model R/C really intrigued Babcock, and he had his designers modify and simplify the drone receiver, which he soon marketed as the BCR-3. It was a single channel tone set, to be operated by the companion hand held BCT-2 transmitter —a 2 tuber. These units were followed by escapements, a revolutionary (for the model R/C field) 3 channel filter-type tone receiver, 465 mc equipment etc.

The move to Costa Mesa came at a time when the model R/C line was being developed and expanded by several full time and well known modelers, including Chuck Hollinger, Doug Spreng and Keith Storey. Several R/C plane kits were added to the line; the first was Breezy Jr., a Schumacher design, and there was the larger Breezy Sr., which could carry multi. Senior was a sleek Goodyear Racer style mid-wing by Hollinger, and you still see them being flown.

Hollinger was also designer of several all-plastic semi-scale planes for lightweight R/C equipment (which Babcock was marketing by this time) and the plastic line included a couple of slick all-plastic scale boat models, kitted especially to carry Babcock R/C gear, which now included steering and control units for this purpose.

The lightweight radio gear included the Magic Carpet receiver and Magic Wand transmitter. At the time they were developed, CW apparatus was still widely used and these units were CW—no tone operation was involved. Both of the "Magics" are still useful in areas where there is no C.B. phone interference.

With the formation of Eck-Babcock, all boat and plane kits were dropped, to concentrate on the R/C gear. Babcock escapements have always been good sellers (some 150,000 have been sold), from the very first right up to the latest, and even now new models are being added to the line. John Zweers introduced the concept of "add-on" equipment. To a basic transmitter or receiver you add keyers (for the transmitter) and decoders for the type of receiver operation you have in mind. To this end, John marketed the BCT-12 transmitter (a tone and CW outfit), one of the earliest of the all-transistor units which are now being offered by most manufacturers. Receiver end of the system is the BCR-16, a super-het "front end" adaptable to various audio output circuits.

Zweers, who originally worked for Babcock Radio Engineering, says he is not a very accomplished R/C flier, but prefers R/C slope soaring and is an active member of the Harbor Slope Soaring Soc. Like Stuart Babcock, he is an avid boatman, both full size and model, keeps a 36″ craft in condition as a test bed for new radio developments. As an active ham, John dreams of sometime designing a really *good* 40 meter ham receiver!

Our personal visit with the Babcock organization came when Zweers had just moved his whole plant from Newport Beach back to Costa Mesa. We interviewed John standing up—chairs were at the bottom of heaps of tools, materials and fixtures just shifted from the old plant to the new one. John has done much of the design work on equipment manufactured since he became involved with Babcock Models. He decries what he feels is the present trend toward "professional modeling", claims that single channel fliers are much closer to being true hobbyists. Expecting the biggest volume in R/C business will always be in single channel (and since he has been selling 400 to 600 escapements a month, he has good basis for this feeling), he agrees that multi has all the glamour and makes the most noise. During the move John brought along complete sets of precision dies for vacuum forming the several R/C planes and boats that were once part of the Babcock line. With no plans to utilize these dies himself, John just couldn't bear to junk them, told us he would be happy to sell any or all at practically junk prices. Maybe we'll again see kits for the sleek Little Breeze yacht, the North Star trawler and other former Babcock plastic models.

The spacious Laguna Beach plant started out with eight employees, two of whom (in addition to Pres. Babcock) are engaged in engineering. The concern still services and repairs any R/C equipment Babcock has ever made.

Proof that the new firm—Babcock Controls Inc.—still believes in single channel is seen in announcement of

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Babcock

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the BCT-18 Digitran and matching BCR-18 super-het reciever. The transmitter has a built-in digital keyer controlled by a single panel stick; it sends the proper pulses to provide R and L rudder, U and D elevator, and a foolproof quick blip for motor speed change. The relayless receiver operates on 9 volts and special high resistance Hyper-compound and MC escapement are part of the system. Stu Babcock notes this new control system ". . . is aimed at a large volume market for a greatly neglected segment of the modeling public who is afraid of the complexity of multi channel equipment but too mature for single channel push button equipment".