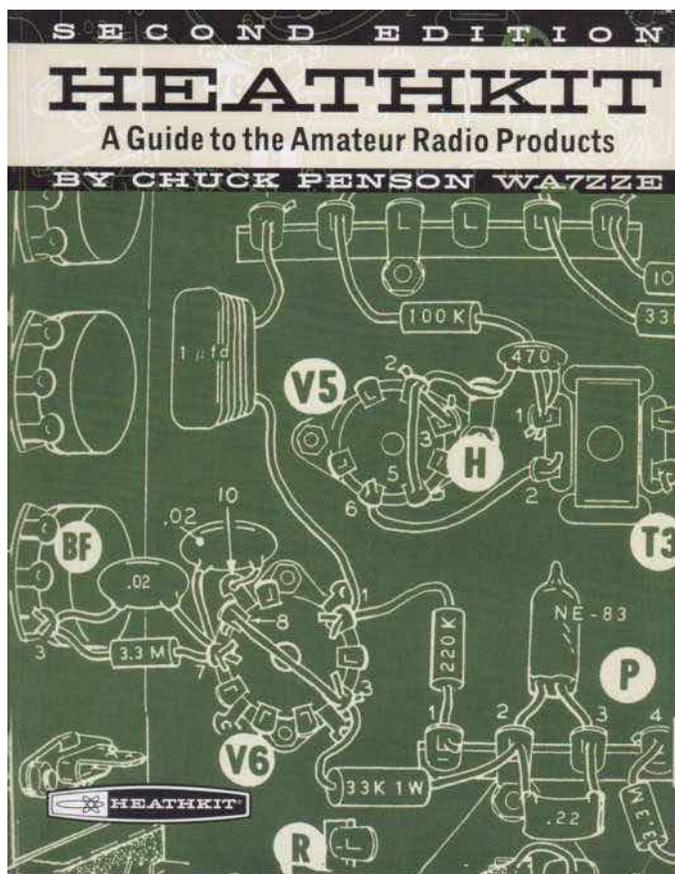


Book Review

by Bob Eckweiler - AF6C



**Heathkit - A Guide to the Amateur Radio Products**  
by: Chuck Penson - WA7ZZE  
ISBN 978-0-943016-23-8  
(No longer in Print)

In the August 2014 issue of the *RF* Newsletter I reviewed *Heathkit Test Equipment Products* by Chuck Penson - WA7ZZE. In 1995 Chuck released his earlier Heathkit book that covers the amateur radio products produced by Heathkit over its existence. It was originally published by Electric Radio Press. The book was very popular among Heathkit aficionados and quickly sold out. A second edition with first and second printings was published by CQ Communications in 2003. It again sold out.

When you open the book you are in for a treat. After a short, but interesting, introduction

**Another New Heathkit Book:**

Chuck Penson-WA7ZZE continues to stay busy. His next book: *Heathkit Hifi and Stereo Products* should be out before the year's end - perhaps as early as November. This book takes a look at all the HiFi, stereo and other miscellaneous audio product that Heathkit sold in kit form.

and acknowledgements, the book, in 31 pages, covers a lot of the history of Heathkit, focusing on products related to amateur radio, and it introduces you to some of the people who made Heathkit products what they are. Every successful company has its failures too, and they are also noted in the history. The HW-19 "Ten'er", while engineering-wise was sound, failed to gain acceptance among hams, and the SB-104 and HW-2026 had numerous engineering problems that were later fixed in the SB-104A and the HW-2036 and HW2036A.

The next section discusses the collecting of Heathkits, what to look for, and how to shop to choose the best kits for your collection. Here are a lot of good hints for anyone buying off eBay or at a flea-market, collector or not.

The fifth section is the starting point of the heart of the book. The title page calls it *A Guide to the Amateur Radio Products*. This section contains a one to two page synopsis of every ham related kit Heathkit ever made. The list is organized alphabetically by model #. It starts with the AC-1 antenna coupler and ends with the XC-6 six-meter converter. Some ham-related test equipment is also included such as dip meters and a line voltage monitor. Also included are some of the Heathkit weather instruments. This would please my former coworker who often comments that all the hams ever talk about on their radios is the weather! The only Heathkit weather instrument I own is the ID-2295

Relative Humidity Indicator (Indoor/Outdoor) which is not included in the book. The included weather kits are the type hams might be interested in while on the air: wind speed, temperature, and rainfall. Also included are a couple of the weather stations and desk clocks. This section takes up 226 pages and covers around 260 kit models and accessories.

Each synopsis starts with a photo of the model, usually about 1/2 page in size. The text below includes the years the kit was sold, the initial factory price, the net weight and the size. It also lists related products by their model number so you can look them up easily. Between the factory price and the net weight are “**Comments**”. This can be a short paragraph, a paragraph covering over a page-and-a-half or something in between. In this paragraph you will find information of interest on the model. This might include:

- Important specifications.
- A brief history of the model.
- Differences between the kit releases. (i.e. HP-23, HP-23A, HP-23B, HP-23C, PS-23, etc.).
- Tables of information. Pinouts, resistances, etc.
- Photos or drawings showing some info of interest.
- Common problems for the model.
- “**Note**”s: Things to lookout for when purchasing, especially if a model can be wired for more than one use when being assembled (An example is the different IF frequencies on the SB-620).
- “**Caution**”s: Common mistakes that can be made to damage the device, operator or surroundings.
- “**Warning**”s More serious than “cautions” relating to possible injury or death. Most noticeably Heathkit left bleeder resistors out of some of their power supplies.
- Whether the model is common or rare.
- Other things a prospective collector would want to know.

In the sixth section the book covers Heathkit CB Radios and Walkie-Talkies. Heath sold CB radio kits starting in 1959 with the CB-1. The style and design of this model later was used in the *Ten'er*, *Six'er* and *Two'er* “Benton Harbor Lunchbox” transceivers. By 1968 Heath was mostly out of the CB kit market with just one CB radio still in production, the GW-14A.

The final section, is called the Indexes and is full of useful data:

- **Heath Master Product Index By Model:** Page number of synopsis by model #.
- **Heath Master Product Index By Type:** Page number of synopsis by model type.
- **Product References:** An index of articles appearing in CQ and QST magazines by model #.
- **Tube Chart:** A chart of tubes used by each model that uses vacuum tubes.
- **Product Timeline:** Graph of model’s period of manufacture.
- **Sales Data:** Partial information on unit quantities sold by Heathkit.
- **Electric Radio Index:** Index of relative Heathkit articles in the online publication *Electric Radio*. (Subscription required). Some of these articles are by Chuck Penson - WA7ZZE.

I purchased a copy of the second printing of the second edition of this book in 2014 from HRO in Anaheim. While the book fascinated me with all the useful information I was disappointed at the photographs. Especially since a review of the second edition stated: ***This well-produced book features unusually large and sharp photos.*** The photos in my book were dark and blurry with a moire pattern in every background. I was told the original photos were lost between the first and second printing of the second edition, and the only guess I can make is that the publisher must have used Xerox copies of the photos from the prior printing.

So why did I write a review of a book that is out of publication? You could go up on Amazon and look for a used copy; the second edition range from an unbelievable \$500 to an even crazier \$1,299\*. You could buy a lot of used Heathkits for that amount of money. The good news is that a revised and updated third edition is planned. It probably won't be available until 2019 though. Even better news is that a lot of the information from the book, including color photographs is available online for free based on *Evernote*, and here's where you can access it:

**<http://tinyurl.com/ppj83b3>**

You don't need to have Evernote installed on your computer, it works within your browser window. However, some smart phones and tablets might need to download an Evernote app to view on those devices.

After the page loads click on **View Notebook**. Then find the **View Options** tab at the bottom of the screen towards the left; click on it and select Sort by: **Title Ascending**.

Once you're set up, start by glancing over the 00 sections. Also, consider sending a small donation as he has just saved at least 💰 500. To view a synopsis, click on the item in the left column and the photo(s) and text for that Heathkit will appear on the right. Enjoy.

**73, from AF6C**



\* Actual used book prices on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) on Oct 1, 2017 for the second edition