

Stable valve VFO

Written by Hans Summers

Saturday, 03 December 2011 13:35 - Last Updated Wednesday, 20 May 2015 09:13



This is the story of my quest to build an all-tube VFO for 26.0 to 26.5MHz, for use in a 21MHz SSB/CW

An oscillator needs to be reasonably stable - the frequency should not drift too severely as the temperature changes. This is more challenging with a valve VFO than a solid state oscillator. Even with solid state, it would be very difficult to build a stable enough LC VFO at 26MHz. The best approach is to build a lower frequency VFO and mix it with a stable crystal oscillator to get the desired output. Right from the start, my aim was to build an LC-VFO for 6.0-6.5MHz, mix it with a 20MHz crystal oscillator, and select the 26MHz sub with suitable filtering.



1. Sub-mini valve VFO

First attempt is to build a [stable 6MHz](#) VFO using a type CK512AX sub-miniature tube, originally used in



2. Mixer VFO mk1

The next attempt uses 1 [6AT7](#) crystal oscillator and VFO; 6BE6 mixer, and EF91 buffer. It produces a 26



3. Mixer VFO with insulated tank components

The same circuit as 2, but [Read more](#) with the tank components insulated, and the tubes in the open for better



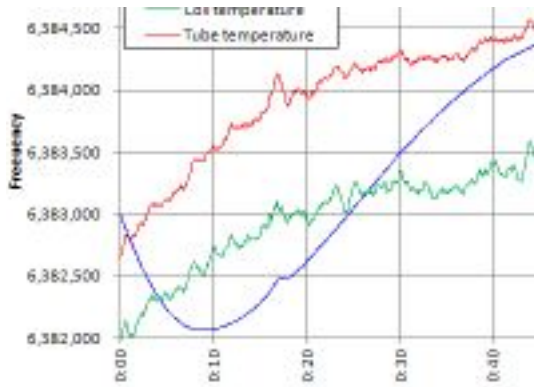
4. Mixer VFO using battery valves

To reduce the warm-up [Read more](#) time, this mixer VFO now uses low power battery valves - DF96 VFO, 1T4 crystal

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5. DF96 VFO and logger

The next rebuild abandoned [Redd's](#) idea of insulation, which seems to slow down drift but not eliminate it, in



6. 6088 submini-tube VFO

One reader kindly sent me [Redd's](#) 6088 pencil tubes to experiment with, and they seem much more su



7. Dual-6088 Franklin VFO

Another dream was to build a [Franklin](#) VFO. Here I did so using the pair of 6088's, and had no trouble



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8. BC221 Tuning capacitor

I found a very nice air-variable tuning capacitor in the junk box, which seems to have been designed for



9. Boxed Franklin VFO

Since the dual-6088 VFO is my favourite, and seems the most stable, of any of those so far tried on this

[Read more](#)