

diameter and magnetic parameters of the ferrite) the incident wave is fully matched into the transmitted wave. The only portion of the ferrite which contributes in an essential way to the effect is that located in the immediate vicinity of the joint; thus there is, so to speak, *no length* of active material involved in the principle. It is therefore possible to use only a small ferrite volume, with the advantage, among others, of minimizing the magnetic loss. When the ferrite is unmagnetized, the junction simply presents a transition to cutoff guide; the insertion loss available in this state is limited only by the precision of the mechanical structure.

The phase, insertion loss, and polarization in the transmitting state exhibit a number of well-defined features which agree qualitatively with the results of the simplified theoretical model. The latter, in turn, indicates how the effect may be exploited to fulfill the various specific application requirements. A full report on the theory and experimental data will be the subject of a forthcoming paper.

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### Some Measurements of Traveling-Wave Tube Attenuators at 2000 MC\*

Saturation in traveling-wave tube amplifiers, that is, the failure of the output to continue to rise as the input power is increased, can occur in several ways. The limit may arise through heating of the RF circuit, or if the circuit can be so made that this does not occur, the ultimate limit is provided by the amount of power that can be carried on the beam; large signal calculations of the behavior under these conditions have been made by several investigators.<sup>1-4</sup> It has also been observed, however, that the saturation limit is a function of the amount and distribution of loss in the attenuator, and recent calculations, for example by Rowe,<sup>4</sup> include the study of the limiting power output for various values of the loss parameter

$d$ . However, as pointed out by Caldwell,<sup>5</sup> the saturation limit in the attenuator may depend at least as much on any modification of the phase velocity in the attenuating region as on the amount of loss. This arises because in nearly all practical tubes the attenuator does not conform to either of the two ideal cases; *i.e.*, it is not completely distributed throughout the length of the circuit or concentrated at one point, but occupies an appreciable part of the total length. As a result of this, if the phase velocity of the circuit wave in the attenuating zone is modified, there is a reduced interaction between the circuit wave and the beam, since the beam velocity is arranged to give optimum interaction with the wave on the loss-free part of the circuit.

It is therefore of interest to know how the attenuation and phase velocity vary in practical attenuators, and the first object of the work described here is to relate these quantities to the surface resistivity of "Aquadag" colloidal graphite material coatings on the surface of ceramic rods, as has been done by Caldwell<sup>6</sup> for external sprayed attenuation.

Some measurements have therefore been made at 2000 mc using steatite rods which were sprayed with Aquadag mixture along the whole of the helix length. The coating surface resistivity was measured by the use of a four-terminal resistance bridge, from which current was passed through the coating between thin wire loops drawn around the outside, and the potential difference measured between two points 3 mm apart near their center. The resistivity was found to vary along the length of the coating by as much as 35 per cent, but since the total range investigated covered 8 decades the variations were not so great that a mean value could not be sensibly used (see Fig. 1).

The rods were then placed around a helix, which was mounted in a well-matched circuit, and the insertion loss was measured.

The phase velocity measurements were made by passing an external coupling loop along the length of the assembled helix, which for this purpose had a solid mandrel screwed into the end remote from the RF feed so that a large standing-wave was set up. The arrangement used is shown diagrammatically in Fig. 2. Because of the amount of attenuation present, and the need to avoid errors due to evanescent waves arising from the discontinuities at the ends, these measurements became progressively more difficult as higher surface conductivities were used. A better way of making the measurements would be to assemble the rods into sealed-off traveling-wave tubes, and to find the electron beam velocity for minimum attenuation at very low beam currents. This has not been possible because of the magnitude of the work involved.

Typical standing-wave patterns obtained are well shown in Figs. 3-6. Fig. 3 shows the pattern with no coating of "Aquadag" colloidal graphite material on the rods. It

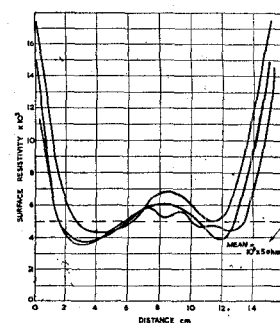


Fig. 1—Variation of surface resistivity with length.

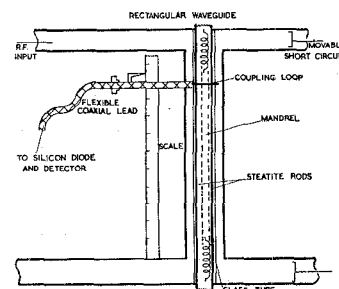


Fig. 2—Arrangement of pick-up loop.

may be seen that the pattern is distorted by the existence of evanescent fast-waves set up at the waveguide coupling, which could also account for the apparent increase of signal with distance shown in Figs. 5 and 6. The attenuation measurements were, of course, not made using this circuit, but instead a well-matched close-fitting circuit was used,<sup>7</sup> in which only the slow mode was present. The surface resistivity in this case was taken as  $10^8$  ohms so that a representative point for the "no loss" case could be included in the curves. Fig. 4 shows the pattern for rods with a surface resistivity of  $8 \times 10^6$  ohms. The wavelength measurements were taken over the four central minimas, since these were found to be uniformly spaced. In Fig. 5, the resistivity has been reduced to  $5.9 \times 10^8$  ohms, and in Fig. 6 to  $7.2 \times 10^2$ . The lowest resistance coatings that it was possible to measure in this way had a surface resistivity of  $3.4 \times 10^2$  ohms, which gave a total attenuation of 107 db, and a wavelength of 4 mm compared with the wavelength of 1.12 cm obtained for the uncoated rods. The results obtained from these measurements are shown graphically in Fig. 7. The measurements were carried out at 2000 mc, using a helix with a pitch of 1.5 mm, and for which  $\gamma a_0 = 1.3$  when mounted between steatite rods and enclosed in a glass tube. The rod diameter was nearly 0.3 times the mean helix diameter.

The curves obtained by Caldwell for externally sprayed attenuators of "Dixonac" colloidal graphite material for use in the 500 mc region are shown for comparison in Fig. 8.

It is interesting to note that the general form of the curves is similar, although the values of attenuation are much lower for the 2000 mc curves, and the effect of resistive coatings on the phase velocity is apparently greater. This similarity is more surprising when it is borne in mind that in

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<sup>1</sup> A. T. Nordsieck, "Theory of the large signal behaviour of traveling wave amplifiers," *Proc. IRE*, vol. 41, pp. 630-637; May, 1953.

<sup>2</sup> P. K. Tien, L. R. Walker and V. M. Wolontis, "Large signal theory of traveling-wave amplifiers," *Proc. IRE*, vol. 43, pp. 260-277; March, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> H. C. Poulter, "Large Signal Theory of Traveling Wave Tube," Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., Tech. Rept. 73; January, 1954.

<sup>4</sup> J. E. Rowe, "Design information on large signal traveling-wave amplifiers," *Proc. IRE*, vol. 44, pp. 200-210; February, 1956.

<sup>5</sup> J. J. Caldwell, "High power traveling-wave tube gain and saturation characteristics as a function of attenuation, configuration and resistivity," *IRE TRANS. ON ELECTRON DEVICES*, vol. ED-4, pp. 28-33; December, 1953.

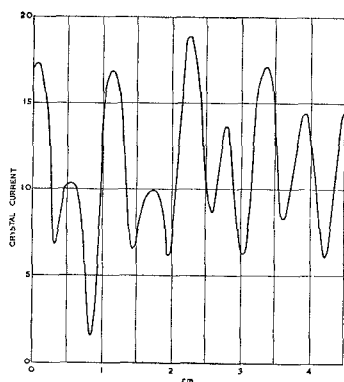


Fig. 3—Signal level along helix with no coating on rods.

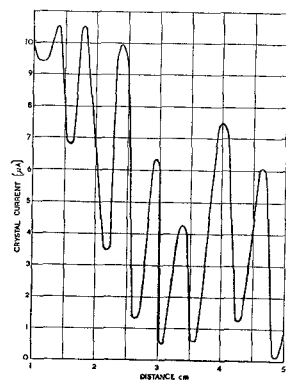


Fig. 4—Signal level along helix with surface resistivity  $8 \times 10^8$  ohms.

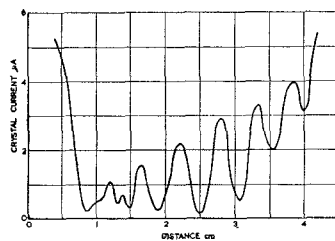


Fig. 5—Signal level along helix with surface resistivity  $5.9 \times 10^8$  ohms.

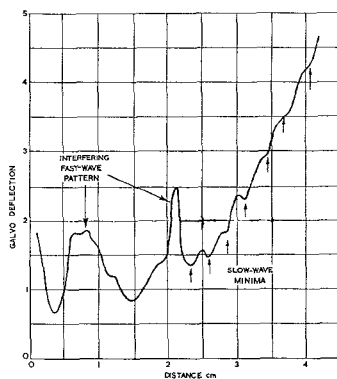


Fig. 6—Signal level along helix with surface resistivity  $7.2 \times 10^8$  ohms.

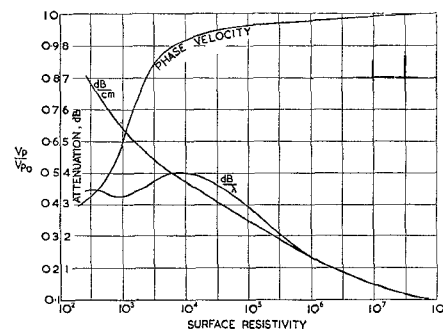


Fig. 7—Velocity and attenuation as a function of attenuation resistivity. Steatite rods at 2000 mc.

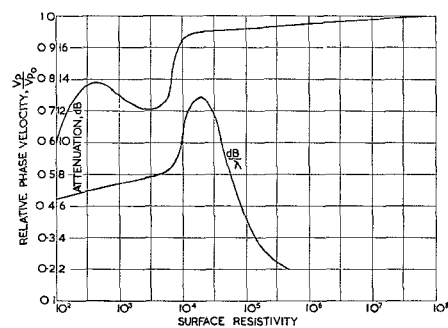


Fig. 8—Corresponding curves for attenuators, external, by J. J. Caldwell.

addition to the difference in frequency, attenuation obtained by resistive coatings actually in contact with the helix differs from that obtained from resistive coatings in the external field in that the attenuation obtained depends very critically upon the pressure of contact between the rods and helix. Indeed, it appears that with the configuration used very little attenuation can be obtained until there is actually a conducting path between the turns of the helix,

for example, on rotating a single rod coated over only  $180^\circ$  of the surface, the attenuation changed abruptly from 2 db to 18 db when the helix came into contact with the coating.

A preliminary conclusion which might be drawn from these curves is that if it is desired to obtain the maximum gain from a travelling-wave tube of a given length, in which the attenuator occupies an appreciable part of the helix length, the resistivity

of the coating should be considerably greater than that for which maximum attenuation /cm is obtained. In this way, the phase velocity of the wave can be maintained fairly near the value for the loss-free helix, and hence a larger degree of interaction in the attenuating region would be expected.

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