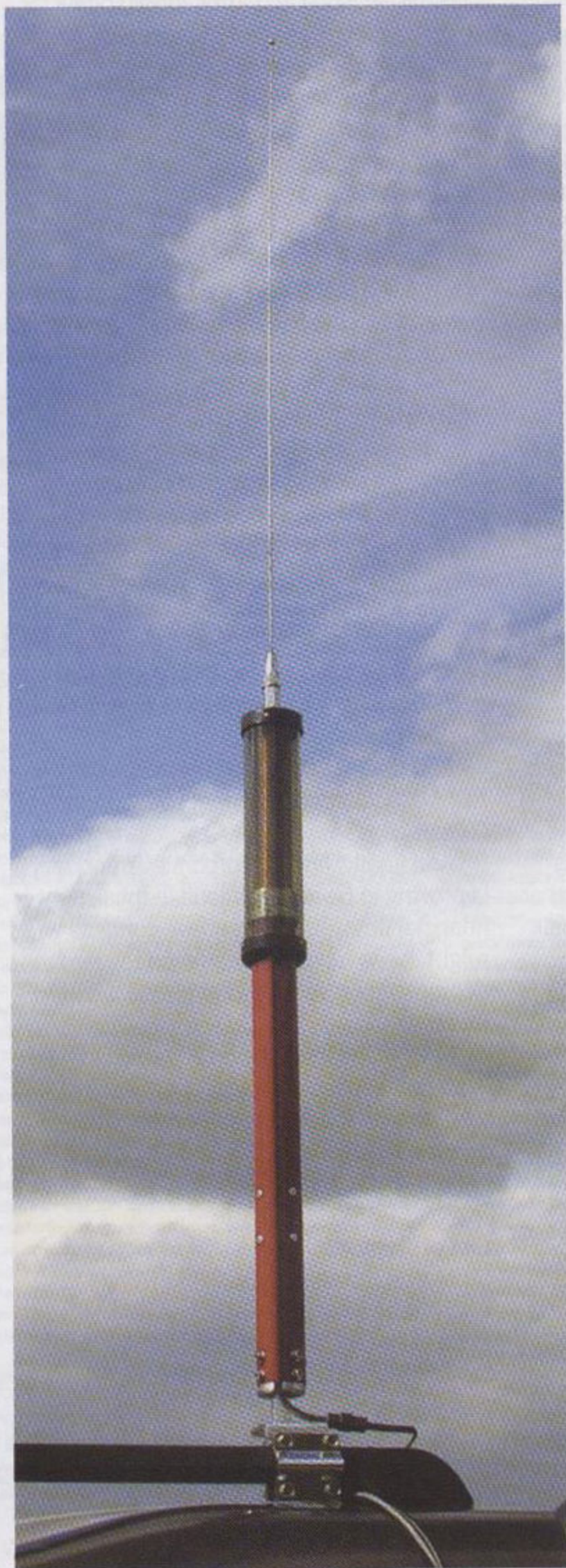


# Little Tarheel II antenna

This mobile antenna promises continuous tuning from 80m-6m.  
But is it any good?



**VARIABLE FEAST.** Mobile antennas, particularly those for the lower HF bands, are always something of a compromise. For a start, they are generally far less efficient than their full-size counterparts. Secondly, the 2:1 SWR bandwidth tends to be pretty narrow – 20kHz on 80m is pretty good going. The Little Tarheel II addresses the second issue by using a continuously variable loading coil and high quality materials and construction to try to reduce losses to the absolute minimum.

**WHAT'S IN THE BOX?** The review antenna consisted of a 32" (~81cm) stainless steel whip and a motorised loading coil section that was about 16" (~40cm) closed. The bottom of the loading coil is 3/8" stud mount. Also included were a 20ft (6m) control cable, a control switch, and a ferrite core. The control cable connects to the bottom of the antenna and leads to the switch that controls the position of the coil (and hence the aerial's operating frequency).

**CONSTRUCTION & ASSEMBLY.** The overall impression is that the motorised coil assembly is very well made. The lower part, which houses the motor, is made from aluminium, while the coil is visible through a clear plastic shroud. The whip screws in at the top.

At the bottom of the aerial, a short control cable emerges, terminating in a 4 pin Molex-type connector. The area from which the cable emerges is not sealed, which means that any moisture build-up in the bottom of the aerial will have an easy escape route.

Assembly posed no real challenge – it's simply a case of screwing the whip into the top of the loading coil assembly and fitting the supplied 3/8"

stud to the bottom of the coil. Putting it on the vehicle is only slightly more involved than mounting a single band aerial. It is advisable to use a heavy-duty mount though because this is a relatively heavy aerial with a reasonably high windage – you do not want to find the aerial overtaking you when you brake heavily! No mount is supplied as standard. On my Land Rover Discovery, I used a simple roof bar mount that was mechanically strong and gave a decent electrical ground.

The next challenge was to fit the ferrite core to the motor control lead. The instruction manual recommends that the ferrite should be mounted as close to the antenna as possible so that it decouples the antenna from the control wire and reduces motor electrical noise during tuning. It also acts as a handy anchor for the cable when the antenna is off the car! The ferrite accepts several turns of the control cable, and clips together. I put a layer of insulating tape over it to provide some measure of weatherproofing.



The antenna requires a meaningful mounting bracket. The control cable ferrite core (foreground, left) is wrapped in insulating tape.