

December 1983.

Next Meeting.

Amateur Radio is such a diverse hobby. Under the general heading of "Amateur Radio", people can branch off to pursue their own particular interests, be it HF propagation, VHF Tropo, DF or mobile operating, but there is one thing common to every amateur that is essential to enjoy the hobby and that is an aerial system.

Thus, for the December meeting we are having an "Aerial Forum". Our Chairman Dick G3WHR will be directing the meeting, and the idea is to stimulate discussion and ask questions about aerials of all types.

This meeting should be of interest to all members, no matter how long you have been licenced and will take place on December 6th at the Marconi College, Arbour Lane at 7.30 p.m.

Meetings to come.

January - Film Show.

February - "My Rig" by members of the Society.

As mentioned last month, we are going to have members bring along their equipment to tell us about it and why they chose it. I have started a list of various gear, so if you would like to take part, please let me know. To give you the idea, Roy G3PMX will give a short talk at the next meeting about the Trio 9130-2m transceiver.

Committee Meeting.

Still no new venue found yet, possibly announced at the meeting, but it will be on December 14th. Committee members missing the meeting - give me a shout.

Last Months Meeting.

Despite having to change to a smaller lecture room, we all enjoyed an excellent talk by Les G4CUT about his experiments on the 50MHz band. Les told us about setting up the equipment for 6m and problems in getting hold of an aerial. The band is very quiet with only about 40 stations in the UK but Les has worked most of them in addition to several countries. A very interesting and informative lecture Les for which we all thank you for your effort in preparing your talk.

Other News.

Included with the newsletter is a report of the Practical Wireless QRP Contest in June by Tim Wander G6GUX. Thank you Tim. Contributions like this are always welcome.

Peter G4DAN still has some equipment that belonged to Eric Parker. He has a nearly new Welz Diamond five eighth λ groundplane aerial for two metres and a 4 over 4 array also for two metres in addition to some teleprinter gear. Modest figures around £10 are asked for these items.

Look out for the blue folder that circulates at the club this month, as in addition to various correspondence, there will be a complimentary copy of the new magazine "Radio & Electronics World", as forwarded by the new publishers.

Social Event.

We have given further thought to the Social Event. It will be on a Friday or Saturday evening towards the end of January. One possible venue is the Silver End Hotel. There is a Carvery in addition to a couple of lounge bars. We would be able to have a meal including a starter, main course, sweet and coffee for about £5.20 per head. Please think about this for the next meeting when we should have more information available and will be collecting numbers.

New Members.

The Society welcomes two new members Charles Olley G3AIZ and Richard Horton G4AOJ.

Here and There - ELA G6HKM.

Many thanks to all who have renewed their subscriptions, to those who have not, HURRY UP for this could be your last newsletter ! Whilst collecting subs at the START of the November meeting I issued a card but failed to put the name down on my list, if you paid and your call is not G8YZG, G3PMW, G3EHZ, G6SEW and G6JIR please let me know or you may miss a newsletter (I'm wondering if it was G4PVM ?)

I have had a letter from Virginia whom you may remember set sail about 4 months ago for a trip round the world with the family in "Kiwa". Unfortunately Virginia had a slight argument with a kerbstone in Gibraltar and spent most of October in Hospital and the boat is out of bounds for at least 3 months. Virginia expects to be flown back to England until she is fit enough to rejoin her family. Our commiserations to Virginia and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

DF News - The National Final, 18th September - G3WHR.

From my first look at the map I could see it wasn't going to be just another Qualifying Event. OS sheet 103 Blackburn & Burnley has more contours per square cm than I've ever seen. With the start being so far north it seemed better to travel up a day early and stay overnight. Not that it was easy to sleep - for the sound of rain lashing against the windows. With the dawn came a surprise, bright sunshine and a stiff breeze - ideal DF weather. On arrival at the start near Padiham, competitors were met by the RSGB President and a past President - there to discover what DF was all about. Unfortunately someone gave them a duff set at the start so they have yet to be enlightened.

The final means 3 hidden stations to find in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, so no hanging about to admire the scenery. The first transmissions at 12.50 gave bearings West, South and East. Opt to go for the West station first and set off to find a suitable location ready for the next timed transmission at 13.30; from then on transmissions are at random until 1600. After careful consideration, decide on a high point 3km South of the West bearing to get a good cross-bearing. At 1330 the E station was inaudible, the S similar strength to the start, and the W so strong it had to be within 500m. Ah, but what a 500m - all thick rhododendron bushes and aerial wire in all directions. It took ages to find the transmitter lurking by the side of a small pond.

The bearings on the second station crossed near a reservoir, and a timely random transmission put the tx somewhere at the far end from the car park. About a $1\frac{1}{2}$ km run but most of it flat ground. Once in the wood it was a case of look-out for footprints in the soil - no need to search areas which were deviously undisturbed. Found the tx. between two felled trees. On the way back to the car saw some other competitors running in from a nearby road - same distance as the car park but 7 contour lines meant they didn't go back so quickly.

Last station, - and here I blew it, the bearing from the start said go north at a particular junction, and there was Peter Lisle waiting by his car for the 1600 transmission. At 1600 the bearing said S and so back to the junction - no Peter this time. Continuous transmission, 10 min and 10 contours to go. Arrived at the top to find a smiling P.Lisle and a number of frustrated DF hunters. Found the tx on a precipitous hillside accessed via a 25m long diagonal path. Turned round to see Roger Parsons half way down and Mike Hawkins still at the top. Then saw Mike run along the top and descend 10m in 3 paces to beat Roger. Two minutes after getting back to the car the heavens opened and it pelted down.

Unofficial Placings

| | | Time |
|---|----------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Peter Lisle | 1620 |
| 5 | Alan Williams - Ian Butson | 1628 |
| 6 | Dick Brocks - Paul Clark | 1629 |
| 7 | Mike Hawkins | 1629 42s |
| 8 | Roger Parsons | 1629 50s |

OS map contours are at vertical intervals of 10m.

These days it seems to be the fashion if not a necessity for 2m men to run up to (and I suspect often exceeding) the legal power limit for both DX chasing and contest work. Consequently during any type of lift, aurora or open contest the 144MHz portion of the band can degenerate into abject chaos especially if stations do evil things to their 4CX250B's producing nasty signals at the best of times. It has also become evident that the scoring system used in 'standard' 2m contests (radial rings) tends to favour stations located on the east coast due to their uninterrupted sea path to the continent coupled with all the midland stations having to look straight down the back of their beams. A station running 400 watts to 4 x 16 element tonnas 20 miles away is going to take a fair portion of the band up regardless of signal and receiver quality. For the past 3 years as a resident of Birmingham city centre (500 yards from the power station, 200 yards from the police repeater, 10 yards from a busy lift shaft) I appreciate the frustrations of loosing a weak signal in QRM be it in a contest or not. When Practical Wireless announced their QRP contest it was met with many derogatory statements about the quality of the magazine, the fact that no one would bother to go portable for a QRP contest, and the fact that it was aimed at the novice operator led some to cast doubts on the standards of contest operating to be expected. With the 3 watts power limit negating the advantages of large linears the scoring system was also altered to using the number of different QRA squares worked as a multiplying factor for the number of contacts made. This I feel placed the emphasis back on skillfull operating and provided the chance for many out of the way stations to work new squares as to do well beams had to be continually moved.

The contest took place on a beautiful summers day, most of which I spent in a disused cleaners cupboard under the stairs, known to this day as the University of Aston Amateur Radio Society shack. Like most other entrants I was using the much maligned FT290R, a single 16 element tonna at around 30 feet and a suspect homebrew 3SK88 preamp to 'cope' with the 43metre cable run. As the contest started at 8.00 GMT the band opened as if by magic, 10 squares being worked in the first 14 contacts (ZK,ZN,YO,AL,YM,ZL,YN,ZM,YL,XM) all with the beam pointed roughly SE from Brum (ZM41a). I was also extremely pleased to find that operating conditions were very good, no wide signals, no abuse or bad manners with a very high standard of operating all round. Unfortunately the band closed down as the day got hotter, as did my voice so I was forced to hand over the mike to Mike G8ZEE but in doing so deprived myself of a real Practical Wireless Certificate, (sad). Fed, rested, watered and suntanned I returned an hour or so later where in the last chaotic moments of the contest I managed to work XL,AN,AK and XN making 20 all told despite missing XO and all the Irish squares. We came 17 out of 161 entries, having worked 191 stations, the second highest joint operator station and the second highest non portable station which considering the site and equipment pleased us both.

Overall I found the contest one of the most enjoyable for a long time and I've operated in quite a few, but yes mountains are still the way to win. Congratulations to the winners GW6GW/P and their massive total of 30 squares and 332 contacts showing just what QRP 2m operation can do if people are prepared to try. I enjoyed working PA land on 2.5 watts tropo from Birmingham almost as much as a Russian on 400 watts tropo from by home town of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

73 and good luck in the contest.

73,

Andrew.

Witham 512316 (Day)
Silver End 83094 (any other time)
or GB3DA

9, Abraham Drive
Silver End, Witham.

WANTED. Pye PF1 Transmitter. G4KQE.