

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society.

NEWSLETTER No.280

May 1989

NEXT MEETING - KW Communications for Ten-Tec.

This month we welcome Mr. F. J. Church of KW Communications Limited who will describe and demonstrate some of the products manufactured by Ten-Tec.

There will be the Transceivers 'Argosy', 'Century', 'Corsair' and 'Paragon' as well as a Linear Amplifier to view at close quarters and to sample the receive capabilities, local interference levels permitting.

The talk will begin at 7.30pm and we look forward to meeting you all on Tuesday 2nd May at The Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 2 May CLUB MEETING - KW Communications for Ten-Tec.
- 7 May SOUTHEND & DISTRICT MOBILE RALLY - Roachway Youth Centre, Rochford.
- 28 May EAST SUFFOLK WIRELESS REVIVAL - Bucklesham, Nr. Ipswich.
- 3/4 June NATIONAL FIELD DAY.
- 6 June CLUB MEETING - Constructors' Competition.

NFD 1989.

The engineering planning meeting has taken place and most of the equipment necessary for running a good station is available. All that is needed now is the commitment of members to set up and run the station. We know there are some very good operators in our ranks and we would like to put up a fine score this year, so how about it chaps? Please make your offers of a time slot to Dick or Gwyn at the May meeting.

LAST MONTHS MEETING - Computers, Amateur Radio Uses - Bill G4JW.

Retirement is a time for exploring new interests, learning a foreign language or perhaps taking up sky diving; Harry, G2HPF, decided he would buy, and master, a computer - which is as intellectual as the former, and somewhat safer than the latter. For the March meeting he described to us what computer gear he was using and what he did with it.

Advances in radio technology have been static compared with the changes the last few years have brought to computer products. Harry told us how he started with the ubiquitous Sinclair ZX-81, graduating to a Spectrum and finally to a QL (or rather two of them).

The acquisition of equipment is satisfying in itself, but how much better if a use can be found for it all - and Harry showed us several ways he uses his computers in the shack. As a calculation tool there are many applications to which they can be put such as working out the NGR locator of a DX station, or designing a Yagi antenna.

From January this year, along with other changes to our licensing conditions, came the opportunity to keep a log by computer rather than in the traditional Log-book. In the best Ham "home-brew" tradition Harry wrote a program to do this, which he demonstrated. This piece of software included some nifty tricks to save time when searching for a call-sign. The program is "Public Domain", and is already in use by a fellow Ham.

Keeping track of QSL cards can be a problem. Harry showed us another program, again written in BASIC, which allowed him to check if a station had been QSL'd or if a card was awaited - that is to say, on his "black list". It was interesting to see that in both of these programs Harry had acknowledged the need for on-screen help to remind him what the various commands meant. That's what I call being "User Friendly".

The last application demonstrated was Morse practice. Speeds of "Lets wait for the next dit" to "Was that Morse?" could be sent by changing a value in the program. However, the reception of Morse is best left to the human ear, says Harry. Someone else's ear, I say! (Sorry Gwyn).

32 members attended, thank you Harry for a most interesting evening.

MEMBERS NEWS - E1a G6HKM

The Society extends a welcome to Colin Merry, G4CDM.

DF NEWS - Dick, G3WHR.

The first Chelmsford event took place on 14th April when I was the hidden station. Six teams started from Tiptree Heath with a beaming of 270 degrees - due west to Witham.

The start is only 8km from the edge of the map so it wasn't surprising that some teams were investigating a piece of scrubland near the railway station at 8.00pm.

Then the 'fun' began, everybody found two earth stakes and a single aerial wire between them - but where was the transmitter?

By 8.30pm it was dark and they were still looking, it wasn't a large area of scrub and most teams had covered it pretty well. Alan Williams was regretting leaving his torch in the car, and nobody had a spare to lend him. 9.00pm came and went, everybody was out-of-time. Hints from the hidden station of "I'm near the earth stake" and "I'm in a tree" caused all the teams to assemble round one tree near the earth stake but still no sign of the transmitter.

Finally they discovered that this apparently very solid and healthy tree had rotted between the roots, leaving just enough space for me to crawl in and camouflage the opening with ivy. The earth stake and attached wire were all a dummy to distract attention.

DF NEWS - Continued.

Results:-

1 Peter Graves	9.01	3 Philip Cunningham	9.01	5 Ian Butson	9.01
2 Andrew Mead	9.01	4 Roy Emeny	9.01	6 Alan Williams	9.01

This months events :-

5 May Colchester. 14 May R.S.G.B. Banbury. 19 May Chelmsford.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The May Committee Meeting will be held in the Telford Lodge (Marconi College Residence) at 7:45pm on Wednesday, 10th May. You are most welcome to join us.

HOUSE EARTHING, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY! - Roy, G3PMX.

There has been an excellent response to my request last month for further information on house earthing. We will publish the first of the three articles received this month:-

DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL EARTHING - Brian, G0BDS.

A short article on earthing in the home was requested, so here goes:-

The various requirements and conditions under which the earthing in a house is installed are enormous. The I.E.E. 15th Edition Wiring Regulations (THE BIBLE) Chapter 54 gives all the requirements if you can De-Code them.

To help, the main points are given in the EASTERN ELECTRICITY NOTES OF GUIDANCE OF SUPPLY INSTALLATIONS, copies of which I hope to have at the next meeting. In the meantime I have listed below some points to check:-

1. Check to see you have a MAIN EARTH terminal next to the incoming supply with an earth wire coming from it and running to a proper earth stake, or directly to the sheath of the incoming service cable. If an earth stake is used then a RESIDUAL CURRENT CIRCUIT BREAKER (R.C.D) should be fitted. A water service pipe is not now classed as a sufficiently good earth stake.
2. Another earth wire should run to the Consumer Unit or separate Switch Fuses which should then have inside them a connection to the earth conductor that runs to the socket outlets and lighting points around the house.
3. The bare ends of the earth wire inside the sockets and lighting points should have Green Sleeving pulled over them, between the connection and the cable entry.
4. The HOT and COLD water pipes should be electrically connected together (BONDED) by single earth wires, this includes any central heating pipes. The connections should be made near to any sink or bath and to the sink or bath itself if they are metal ones.
5. Check that all the connections are sound, clean and obviously good electrical paths.

If the above points seem OK then it does not sound too bad. However the final check is to measure the total Earth Loop Impedance, but this can only be done properly using the right instrument and can be dangerous if you try to do it any other way, as you need to pass a mains voltage and current through the earthing system, so DON'T DO IT. As a rough guide it should be 1.5 Ohms or less.

If you are concerned that your system is not up to scratch then get it checked by a qualified electrician with the proper equipment.

However the R.S.G.B. and the I.E.E. both recommend that places like Workshops and Radio Shacks should always have the additional protection of an R.C.D. of 30ma Tripping, and on top of this it is a good idea also to have the whole house protected by 100ma R.C.D. This could be installed by EASTERN ELECTRICITY I am told for £73.00. They could of course at this time check your installation and advise on any work required to update it.

Remember safety in the home is "YOUR RESPONSIBILITY", so what's it to be a new RIG or peace of mind, it may not be so expensive as you thought.

REGISTER OF SKILLS.

Taking up an idea proposed by Fred, G2HNF we are starting a "Register of Skills" whereby members who want to chat over a particular subject can contact another member who has some knowledge in that field, e.g. Antennas, power supplies, batteries, sheet metal work, QSL cards and Bureau, Computers (by model), etc.

If you are willing to lend an ear to an occasional phone call or discussion at our meetings there will be a list on the notice board for you to add your name and skill.

SIGNING IN.

To save interrupting the club meetings we would like members to sign in on arrival (or as soon as the signing in book arrives), thank you.

MAILING THE NEWSLETTER.

Before you discard the envelope of this newsletter will you please check if we have your correct address.

We note that some are lacking post codes, so if you know yours or wish to make any amendments please note on a piece of paper and hand it to Ela at the next meeting.

73 from Roy & Ela Martyr, G3PMX & G6HKM

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