



NEXT MEETING

2ARV - G5RV - VP4RV - VP5RV - VP6RV - VP7RV - PX1RV - EP2RV - ON8RV - 9Y4RV

With much pleasure we welcome a return visit by Louis Varney to address our meeting with "Reminiscences of G5RV" together with some of his latest findings on "Aerial Feeder Systems"; the meeting opens at 7.30pm on Tuesday 2nd August in the Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford.

The border for this announcement contains just a few of the many call signs that Louis has held, starting with his artificial aerial licence in 1927.

YJ8RV - F0RV - CX5RV - EI2VPL - TU4AJ - PY1ZAR - VK9LV - 8P6DF - PJ5CA - PJ5AA

FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF RADIO SPECTRUM

Our Secretary Charles, GØGJS prepared a response to the DTI on behalf of CARS which was debated and approved by the committee.

This submission was posted in time for the July 22nd deadline and copies were sent to the GM of the RSGB, our RLO and to the MP for our constituency, with a note of explanation.

A copy of the response for members to read will appear on the notice board at the next and future meetings. We are grateful to Charles for this initiative.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 2 Aug. CLUB MEETING - Louis Varney, G5RV.
- 7 Aug. RSGB WOBURN RALLY - Bedfordshire.
- 21 Aug. SOUTHEND RALLY - Rochford.
- 28 Aug. EAST COAST AR & COMPUTER RALLY - Clacton.
- 6 Sep. CLUB MEETING - Gliding.2 - Brian, G3CVI.

MORE POWER TO OUR ELBOWS

The DTI have approved some concessions to Radio Amateurs with effect from 18th July 1994 regarding power output on 160M and 6M.

Between the frequencies 1810 - 1830KHz, transmitter power can be 26 dBW (400 Watts) and between 50.0 - 51.0MHz also 26dBW; in addition the aerial height limitation on 6 Meters has been removed.

SAFETY REMINDER - Ken, G3PMW

Earth Leakage Breakers.

With the good weather and the necessity of doing lots of work in the garden, all of the power tools are in use, the most dangerous being the hedge trimmer with the possibility of cutting the power cable.

I am sure that most of us use the Earth Leakage Breaker for all of our outdoor use of electric tools. My question is - Do we remember to check the functioning of the trip circuit? There is some practical evidence that these breaker mechanisms can stick, and cause them to trip at much higher current than the design rating. The cure is simple, make the mechanism function by using the trip button several times. This brings the trip current back to normal. But best of all, is to operate the trip each time the breaker is used.

LOCAL EVENT - Ela, G6HKM

The Waters & Stanton 21st Birthday Party was held in very fine weather. Roy and I arrived early at Hockley for easy parking. There were good discounts both in Amateur Radio and Hi-Fi gear, we both enjoyed a turn on the Bouncy Castle but did not stay long as I was taking part in a 2M contest later that day.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held in Telford Lodge at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th August, you are welcome to join us.

LAST MEETING - Harry, G2HPF

We are happy to announce that the special security arrangements, which had been laid on to safeguard the life of Malcolm Salmon at the July club meeting, were not required. In a friendly atmosphere Malcolm began by telling us how the job was thrust upon him and what it entailed.

The answers to the original questions were as follows....

1.(G2HNF re HQ correspondence) Malcolm said the best course of action is to send queries to him and if he cannot answer direct he will channel to the appropriate person. Peter Kirby, GØTWW, is the General Manager, and letters addressed to him will also be forwarded to the relevant person; an acknowledgement of receipt would come from Peter that he had passed it on.

2.(G6HKM re QSL sub-bureau) Malcolm said that the copies of Ela's letters explained well how the position stood, and suggested that she should phone the person concerned and that if no satisfaction results then he would take the matter up himself.

3.(G3EDM re PACTOR) Malcolm did not know of this problem, but could not understand how a station could call someone else, expecting a reply, without having the calling stations call sign embedded somewhere in the transmitted information.

4.(C.A.R.S. Committee re frequency spectrum). A lot of time was spent on answering this question and Malcolm thought there would be no changes to the allocation to radio hobbyists, which include CB, Radio control and Amateur radio, on frequencies below 28Mhz. Above this there might be a curtailment of the 430 Mhz band if the M.O.D. had to pay for their large allocation there and gave it up. However the official reply by the RSGB would be published in full in RadCom when it is finalised.

5.(G3WHR re reciprocal licences) Malcolm thought that more updated information could be obtained by writing to the national society of the country involved. He said he has a lot of up-to-date information on address changes so contact him first!

6.(G8DET re fees). Malcolm said that a look at the Societies accounts shows that it was not a profit making machine, and if you want it to continue there must be a big effort made to keep the membership numbers up. Many members are getting old (like me G2HPF) and becoming Silent Keys, so try to encourage the younger generation to join. A large income is received from advertising in RadCom and it was pointed out that if a suggestion to have a class of membership excluding RadCom was started, the advertising revenue would decrease due to the limited circulation.

7.(RadCom errors). Some typical errors were reported to Malcolm who noted them. However he did say that any commercial firm would make a prototype before going into production of a printed board to find those little snags that always pop up in a new product. As these articles are produced by amateurs who can not go to such extremes, surely it is not too much to expect those building them to have some common sense and resolve these problems. Otherwise go out and buy a commercial product in the first case.

The meeting continued to a very late ending, and thank you Malcolm for coming along to talk to us.

NATIONAL D.F. HUNTING - Andrew, G4KQE

We are now over half way through the 1994 National D.F. calendar, having done five of the eight qualifying events. For this season, I have teamed up with Phil Cunningham from Mistley, thus pooling our resources into one effective team. We have had a measure of success and certainly seen different parts of the country.

The first event in March was our "local" event, starting at Great Green near Bury St. Edmunds and finishing with the tea at Sudbury, by winning this event, we are guaranteed a place in the September National Final.

For the April event, we travelled North for the Coventry/Northampton contest. We lost a bit of time finding the first hidden Tx; by the time we arrived, everyone else was waving to us as they drove away - most disheartening!, however, we found it after a long uphill run across a field. For the second Tx we headed straight for a large wood, just west of Milton Keynes and having established from bearings exactly which part of the wood the Tx was hidden, we proceeded to run in. The DF set took us straight to the Tx and after signing in we then saw many other competitors getting totally confused under the miles of decoy aerial wire that had been erected. Our time of 15.40 gave us second place but the winner at 15.26 must have had wings!

In May we drove to the Slade event near Birmingham; this event provided an extra attraction as the first Tx was near the Severn Valley Railway and although I did not see any trains, I certainly heard plenty of steam engines whistling down the valley. Unfortunately we chose a long run in to the Tx so lost a bit of time. The second Tx was located close to the start, south west of Bridgenorth but up a very steep hill, so we were quite tired when we clocked in at 16.05. That gave us 12th place out of 19.

The June event took us to Yorkshire - for an 8am start!. The best part of the day was driving along the country lanes on the moors, looking at the rolling countryside, dry stone walls and enjoying the fine weather. The start was near Harrogate; one bearing went across the moors to the west, the other south, through a large wooded area and reservoir towards Leeds. We thought surely they would not put a station the other side of Leeds?, so we positioned ourselves for a 90 degree bearing on the wood. Two other teams had the same idea, as they were close to us by 2pm.

The next bearing however continued right through Leeds, so there was nothing for it but to drive right through the middle; I have never seen so many roads, traffic lights, junctions and one way streets! Needless to say we went round in circles and ended up aiming for the M1 just to get out of town. We thought the Tx was on a canal but a mile run proved that he wasn't. We eventually found the Tx in a little wood 2 miles south of Leeds but by then it was after 4pm, too late to try to find the other station.

Despite the earlier joys, we had not had a good day, as Phil had trodden on a rusty nail on the canal bank, so with the tea site a long way to the north, we decided come straight home. I had to drive all the way home. Later, we discovered we had come second from last; only one team however, had found both transmitters due to the hazards that Leeds and Bradford presented.

The Salisbury event in early July was again in glorious weather with lovely scenery. The first Tx was near the village of Berwick St. John but again as we arrived, we saw others rushing away. The second Tx was in The New Forest but was quite difficult to pin down but we eventually found it at 16.29, deep in a rhododendron thicket in Millersford Plantation. The contest ended at 16.30 and we came 10th.

Our DF exploits have certainly been great fun and we are really seeing some interesting parts of the country.

VHF/UHF DX CONVENTION - Ela, G6HKM

Roy and I had a most enjoyable weekend (9/10 July) in Cheshire attending this new venture, organised by the "Northern Lights" contest group and held at Reaseheath College, Nantwich. This was not a convention like the Annual event at Sandown Park, there were just 5 traders, very specialised for the true VHF/UHF enthusiast. The "Northern Lights" set out to achieve their idea of a VHF/UHF DX Convention, no junk stalls or teddy bears!

The venue was in a delightful rural setting, which until 50 years ago was a large country mansion, complete with courtyard, stabling etc, the College has added buildings to the site but has not spoilt the appearance in any way. The vast grounds and large lake are well maintained with the trees, shrubs, plants etc., all identified with metal plates. The local 70cms repeater is sited within the College complex.

We arrived late Friday afternoon so as to be ready for the 9.30am start next morning. Our accommodation was a twin room, en suite, at Old Hall Farm, part of the College but not on the campus itself, this was most comfortable.

After a hearty breakfast we attended the lectures in a very well equipped theatre. The topics were:-

(continued) ➡

1. 6M Past and present - Chris Gower, G3WOS.
 2. Computer Optimised Yagis & a practical 70cms EME System - Ian White, G3SEK.
 3. A year on 3cms - Sam Jewell, G4DDK.
 4. Sporadic E Observations - Jim Bacon, G3YLA (Anglia TV Wx fame).
 5. How to work 70 hrs a week and still catch the DX - Andy Cook, G4PIQ.
- During the evening a DX Dinner was held, and afterwards a great time had by all in the Bar.

On Sunday about 40 of us visited Jodrell Bank; this included a tour of the visitors centre, a lecture given by a senior Engineer, (who was an amateur) and a very interesting tour around the Laboratories seeing the new equipment, 24GHz receivers etc.

We had a great time meeting everyone, quite a contingent came from Scotland, including GM4IPK from Shetland Isles; Isle of Man, Jersey Dorset, Essex, Suffolk etc to name a few. All I can say is well done lads, this event will take a lot of beating.

RESTORING OLD EQUIPMENT - Geoff, G7KLV

The main pleasure for me at rallies, apart from the social side, is ferreting around the junk stalls. How attractive the stuff is until you get it home and then you wonder why you bought it at all! Still it all goes to swell club funds on the "redistribution" evening. To me the star rating of a rally is directly proportional to the number of car boots there. Dunstable Downs is the winner by a long chalk in my book.

I am fascinated by the amount of test gear on offer. Asking prices are quite low for the older, bulkier valve and transistorised equipment. Prices plummet towards the end of the day when traders can't face the prospect of taking it all home again.

I have recently acquired, quite cheaply, a number of quite exotic items of test gear by West German makers, beautifully made, mostly working but alas without handbooks.

There is a lot of Marconi Instruments equipment available and handbooks are generally obtainable though not necessarily with the instrument itself.

I recently bought a very scruffy Universal Impedance Bridge. Apply mains, switch on, sweet nothing! Not such a bargain as I thought. However on investigation the 240 volt mains tap was open circuit. Shifting down to 220 volts livened things up. Correct heater and HT volts were restored with the addition of a few resistors. This bridge has two working frequencies and the lower one wasn't working but eventually the fault was traced to a leaky coupling capacitor.

An MI low level HF voltmeter worked fine after the valve pins and holders were cleaned up with contact cleaner/lubricant. The seven and nine pin types seem particularly prone to corrosion as compared with the older octal types. The meter housing was battered but only required a little first aid.

Some years ago I acquired two MI signal generators - one to be used for spares. These were type TF867, the very heavy ones which came out in the early fifties. I think they were intended as a replacement for the TF144G but alas, stable they were not. The coils were mounted on turrets which enclosed the variable capacitors and the valves. It was a novel arrangement but one I've never seen since. After forty years there were problems with the coils. They used a horrible type of sleeving to terminate the coil ends and when stored in damp conditions something in the sleeving started reacting on the copper wire producing open circuit coils. Short circuiting between windings also occurred. The spares were used up and some coils had to be rewound. Nil desperandum as someone once said!

Eventually I obtained a TF144H which was a direct descendant of the 144G and very much lighter than its cousin the TF867. I still have the latter and keep it as piece of nostalgia. In my youth I could man handle one of these brutes but nowadays I have to wait for one of the sons in law to help!

The second part of this interesting column will follow next month.

73 from Roy & Ela Martyr,
G3PMX & G6HKM

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R.A.E. CLASSES IN CHELMSFORD

We are advised that the Chelmsford College (Moulsham St.) will run evening classes providing they can enrol 12 students.

Details are:- Enrolment, Monday 1st August. First evening class, Tuesday 13th September, 6.30 - 8.30pm. Fees, £46 for tuition, £40 for examination (each part can be enrolled separately).

Queries to Ron Burg ☎ (0245)265611 Ext: 5436.