



NEXT MEETING

We are proud to announce that our meeting on Tuesday 7th February has been arranged by two club members who will provide information on two highly topical subjects.

Chris Chapman, GØIPU will demonstrate the computer program JV-FAX which currently is gaining favour with amateurs world wide in its ability to send and receive SSTV and FAX pictures on both HF and VHF radio.

Fred Leach, G2HNF will describe and demonstrate his design and construction of a Radio Frequency Noise Bridge for optimising aerial systems.

Both Fred and Chris have already provided advice and assistance to individual club members on these specialised subjects so the evening will provide the opportunity to review the questions and answers which they have experienced.

The meeting will open at 7.30pm, in the Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford and we are sure that members can look forward to a most interesting evening.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7 Feb. CLUB MEETING - JVFAX/GØIPU & Bridges/G2HNF.

5 Feb. SOUTH ESSEX ARS RALLY - Canvey Island.

12 Feb. CAMBRIDGE & DISTRICT RADIO RALLY.

19 Feb. RSGB VHF CONVENTION - Sandown Park.

25 Feb. 10th RAINHAM RADIO RALLY (Saturday!)

7 Mar. CLUB MEETING - Vodaphone # 2 - Colin, G4IHK.

11/12 Mar. LONDON AR & C SHOW - Picketts Lock.

INTERNATIONAL MARCONI DAY - Pat, GØSBQ Saturday 22nd April 1995

A number of members and other amateurs under the name of the Chelmer Group are to set up and operate a Special Event HF Station on the above date between 0001 - 2359 Hrs UTC. The station will be located in The Writtle Hut which is now housed by Chelmsford Museums Services at The Old Waterworks, Chelmer village.

Any members who would like to assist in this operation either in the setting up, loan of equipment, operating, etc. is asked to contact Pat, GØSBQ (01245)467545, Charles, GØGJS, or Geoff, G7KLV at the February meeting. Operating will be mainly Voice, with some CW.

At present we have two transmitters and antennas available, but if members could provide extra equipment we would be very happy to have Amtor, Pactor etc.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR(S)

Dear Roy and Ela,

Thanks for the newsletter and am responding by sending some details about my ham operation here and some of the consequences. I think, maybe, it would be nice to hear what other members have and do on the air. So here goes with mine!

G3EDM was first licensed in 1946 as D2DM and operated amplitude modulation (AM) using a crystal controlled rig on 20M into a pair of colinear horizontal dipoles from Hamburg in Germany where I was working at the time. The thermionic device used for generating the transmitted signal was a 6L6 working as an Electron Coupled Oscillator (ECO) for CW only (the transistor wasn't invented until 1948 and this was only 1946!). Later a modulator was added in the form of another 6L6 to allow speech to be used.

But enough of the nostalgia. I think it was Roy, G3PMX, who first pointed out to me to what a privileged part of society radio hams belong. In my case I was making QSO's across the world in the days when telephone cables and satellites for telephone systems did not exist; the first flight to Darwin in Northern Australia had taken 132 hours pre-war (WWII); it was then all the more wonderful and exciting for that, especially, when the electric power being consumed was less than the average living-room lamp.

After more than 48 years on 20M and other bands it is still exciting to get a reply to a CQ from the other side of the world.

It cannot still be the sheer distance involved but must be the chance to get a reply from someone to whom one has never spoken before. Equally, replies from stations worked frequently throughout the years enable a rapport to be established, and built on, that is seldom possible by other means. Certainly, it is a privilege not experienced by many non-hams and now I refer to the fact that where ever I travel there will be someone that I have spoken to previously and who has often provided me with the information needed so that I do not arrive at my destinations unprepared. Thus I have had few qualms about going anywhere!

These days I have progressed through CW and AM to SSB and the DIGIMODES. As an engineer I have always been aware of the advantages of each of these modes and it is interesting to have seen the modulation methods come full circle (because Morse invented the first digimode). The latest mode I'm using is G-TOR where the letters TOR were coined by Peter Martinez, G3PLX, when he invented AMTOR which stands for AMateur Teleprinter Over Radio. Although most of us do not use teleprinters any longer, but computers instead, we are still 'tele' printing since tele means distance. The 'G' stands for M.J.E. Goly who, in 1949, invented the special error correcting coding system used in the Voyager spacecraft which sent back colour images from Jupiter and Saturn. His code has been adapted into a special form for use with G-TOR. It is fair to say that G-TOR has to prove itself on air against the pre-existing AMTOR and PACTOR systems.

In 1980 I had the privilege to have a holiday in western North America which commenced with flying to Vancouver in western Canada (an 11 hours trip), crossing the city by taxi late on the Friday afternoon and then picking up a camper van to drive back across the city in the Friday afternoon rush hour not really knowing my way and on a strange side of the road! As luck had it the camper hire had been arranged by a fellow radio ham I had worked a number of times. With his local knowledge everything worked out very satisfactorily.....it was the first time that I learned that North Americans did everything by phone rather than push a lot of paper around.

I never did have a formal letter to say the camper was reserved for me etc. That trip lasted a full month during which time I drove northwards up Vancouver Island to Courtney from Victoria (the Capital of British Columbia). There Sylvia and I crossed to Powell River on the mainland to commence driving south by 'Island hopping' using ferries to reach the Sunshine coast and Vancouver again. We had called on a few hams who had invited us to their homes and one in particular had insisted we tried his rhubarb champagne! I can assure you it was a pretty potent brew but especially enjoyable in the temperatures of 30°. British Columbia had lived up to expectations of being a most beautiful part of the world. That wasn't the end of the trip but we commenced our journey south into the USA with something like 60 gallons of petrol on board (the camper did about 10 m.p.g.... the American gallon being only 80% of ours). However, petrol in the States was about one third of the price here at that time so it really cost little more than running the Mini at home. (TO BE CONTINUED)

COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th February, in Telford Lodge, you are welcome to join us.

LAST MONTHS MEETING - Pat, G0SBQ

There was a good attendance on a cold and frosty evening for the Club's annual video show. This years offerings had been edited to fit the time available by Geoff G7KLV & Charles G0GJS our thanks for all their time and trouble.

The first film entitled The Secret Listener was an account narrated by Rene Cutforth (well known for his reporting on the world of espionage) of the part played by amateurs in the monitoring of German military and intelligence radio traffic in both the First and Second World Wars.

During the first world war amateurs with exotic call signs such as THX and HLX were asked to recruit amateurs known to them to form a network of listeners working from home and whose logs were then sent via post!! to a central intelligence office. Radio D/F stations were also set up along the East coast, which could take bearings accurate to within one or two degrees. A major success of the D/F stations was the detection of the German Fleet leaving their anchorage. This early warning allowed The Home Fleet time to put to sea and engage the German Fleet in The Battle of Jutland, so preventing them from reaching the Atlantic and reeking havoc among our Merchant Fleet.

Prior to World War 2, the RSGB in the person of Arthur Watts was approached to assist in the recruiting of Voluntary Interceptors (VI's).

Again working from home under such security that VI's interviewed in the film said that they were not aware of the origin of the signals they were monitoring. This was confirmed later by a senior member of the Club who was himself a VI but is not named here for security reasons!. Altogether a most interesting film.

The second film was shot by an amateur film maker circa 1934 and showed a day in the Marconi New St. Factory with commentary by Stan Wood the Company Historian. As one of the few members who have not been inside the hallowed walls I was interested to see the various machine shops, and testing areas which reminded one of the dark satanic mills of the North of England though Stan assured us that the factory was well lit. The equipment shown in various stages of construction and testing were in the main commercial broadcasting transmitters and appeared solidly built indeed. It was also very noticeable that the film was shot before Government Health Warnings appeared on cigarette packets. The exit of the workers provided an interesting view of the sartorial headgear of the time, flat caps, trilbies, and an odd bowler being worn with very few bareheaded. The sight of buskers playing on the pavement as the workers left was a reminder that the Depression was not yet over. The final shots of a very busy High Street with the London Road traffic junction controlled by a policeman contrasted with a shot of an empty High St. entitled "Chelmsford on Flag Day"!.

The third film 'The Essex Floods of 1953' opened with animation of the reasons for the floods (Movement of a High pressure system following a Depression producing high winds from the North, coupled to a high tide) which recalled the warnings given by Pat Gowen G3IOR in his lecture.

The film then showed in great detail the flooding of the Van de Berghs & Jurgens margarine factory at Purley which was inundated by some 15 feet of water when the Thames overflowed its banks and only sterling work by a large work force filling sandbags at a local sand pit and then off loading by a human chain from Thames lighters prevented further damage being caused at the next high tide. The factory and its surroundings were then pumped dry and the work of restoring the factory machinery, electric wiring, etc. commenced. It is remarkable to note that the Factory was in full operation some six weeks from the start of the disaster. During the close down of the Purley works output was doubled at the Bromborough Cheshire works to make up the shortfall, and it is interesting to wonder if this event had occurred in today's climate whether production would have restarted!

After the break for tea and the Raffle, one of the prizes your scribe is enjoying as he types these lines.

Our final film was an excerpt of the 1994 Farnborough Air Show; a colourful display as ever from fixed wing and rotating wing

aerobatics, the latest transport aircraft both civil and military; to formation flying with the Red Arrows not only live but in the latest side-show thrill a simulator. The appearance of Concorde in the film prompted your Chairman John G8DET in his closing remarks to tell of his wish to fly in this aircraft with which he had connections in its' construction days. However barring a super raffle prize he may have to wait a visit to Danbury of the "Flying Digits".

NOSTALGIA - Roy, G3PMX

During the process of planning the club meetings for 1995, the committee have discussed the possibility of arranging an evening of nostalgia when past milestones of the club and its members activities can be remembered.

Having started to gather material for this meeting we have discovered that the actual history of the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society, prior to 1959 is very hazy and we should try to complete the jig-saw before memories get even more hazy!

Some of the missing dates are:-

When and where were the first meetings in Chelmsford?

When did meetings start at the Marconi College?

In early Amateur Call Books, circa 1928 what is significance of "6ZC Marconis (Chelmsford) Wireless Society" and "5DY Chelmsford Radio Engineering Co., Rainsford Lane"?

Since the publication of the first Newsletter in January 1966, club activities are very well documented; Ela and I have maintained a master set of every edition. Before this however, the notices of club meetings were circulated in random fashion on small slips of paper and we only have a few, the earliest being September 1959 when "The speaker this month will be Mr. L. Varney (G5RV), the designer of the well-known Elizabethan Transmitter. He will discuss and demonstrate his newly designed CW, AM and SSB transmitter. Anyone interested is cordially invited to attend"

May I suggest that if any member has memoirs that relate to the early days, please let us have them. If you find the task of writing your thoughts rather daunting, an easy and relaxing way is to talk to a cassette recorder and let us type your words into a word processor. A recorder can be loaned if you do not have one.

Geoff, G7KLV and Harry, G2HPF have volunteered to compile our history and Geoff is currently ploughing his way through the Hon: Secretaries papers which have been handed down.

HINTS AND TIPS - Colin G0TRM

Thinking about carrying out some repairs to the outside Shack this week-end or maybe putting up some new shelves for text books or radio equipment in-doors?, then read on.

If you will be using nails of any sort to fix up a few new feather board planks or something similar you will know there is a tendency for the wood to split. This tendency can be readily overcome by using the hammer once on the POINT of the nail first to form a thickish point.


As the point is now somewhat chisel like it cuts it's way through the wood fibres rather than separating them which is the cause of the splitting. This method can be used for quite small nails, the sort used when making that picture frame for the special QSL card or Certificate.

Not using nails? Then don't forget the old trick of using a little dab of soap on the end of the screw to ease its passage through the wood or into the rawlplugs you are using for the shelf brackets. I collect all the little pieces that are too small to wash with and keep them ready wetted in a screw top jar. You do not use soap? Well never mind, candle grease, best salt butter or washing up liquid also work.

Thanks for the input this month - keep it coming!

73 from Roy & Ela Martyr,
G3PMX & G6HKM

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