

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Affiliated to the RSGB.

*President: Dick Brocks G3WHR
Secretary: Charles Shelton G0GJS*

Club Call Sign: G0MWT

*Chairman: John Bowen G8DET
Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI*

Newsletter No. 395

December 1998

The December Meeting

At the next CARS meeting on Tuesday, 1st December, TIM WANDER will give a lecture on:
"THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THE MARCONI WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANY".

Tim Wander, who works at GEC Marconi, has researched the early history of Marconi's in depth and has presented several lectures on his findings to organisations such as the IEE Essex Centre and The Chelmsford Engineering Society. He has also written a book on the early days of broadcasting. Tim is a good lecturer and his talks have proved very popular. So make sure that you are in your seat by 7.30pm at MASC to hear what will undoubtedly be a fascinating lecture.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 10 Dec.** CARS Christmas Dinner - The Beehive
Gt. Waltham. See notice below.
13 Dec. Verulam ARC Rally - Watford Leisure
Centre. Nr. M1 - M25 Junction .
5 Jan. CARS Meeting - Video Evening.

The Christmas Dinner

There are just three tickets left for our Christmas party at The Beehive on Thursday 10th. December. See David M0BQC at the next meeting or better still ring him on 01245 602838.

Club Subscriptions

Have you paid your subs yet? If not see our Treasurer at the December meeting or send them by post to Brian Thwaites at 118 Baddow Hall Crescent, Gt. Baddow, CHELMSFORD CM2 7BU.

Tuesday Evening Club Net

In the previous newsletter and at the CARS Meeting on 3rd November, Colin, G0TRM proposed that on the 2nd Tuesday evening of the month the Club Net should be on 145.325Mhz instead of 28.325Mhz, for a trial period. This would enable more members to take part. On the remaining Tuesdays the net would revert to 28Mhz.

The proposal was well received by members at the meeting and so on 10th November we had the first 2m Tuesday evening net.

It was very successful with 15 members calling in and taking part.

David, M0BQC was the net controller and he kept good order.

Comments made on the air suggested that the idea was very popular and would be supported in the future.

Committee Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, 9th December at 7.30pm at the QTH of Ela, G6HKM.

International Marconi Day

At its last meeting the Committee discussed a letter received from Pat, G0SBQ stating that because of his mobility problem he would no longer be able to organise the CARS IMD activity. Members were very saddened to hear this and thanks were expressed for Pat's work in organising IMD over several years.

As the Committee believes that members will wish CARS to continue to participate in IMD, it appeals for one or more members to take over the organisation of IMD. Carl, G3PEM has already offered to serve as the CARS IMD QSL Manager.

Last Month's Meeting - Brian G3CVI

Once again our gallant auctioneer, Colin TRM was MC for our re-circulation of surplus gear condemned by our XYLs as dust-traps and space-eaters. Ably assisted by Chris IPU and Dick our President as runners, the sales were slightly slow for the first half hour but the pace hotted up towards and after coffee-time.

As usual, I as Treasurer, ended up with about 50p more than was recorded....a matter of no importance....since every penny taken is welcomed and, after expences are paid, is destined for our banking account. Altogether we cleared a net sum of £187.40 whereas last year it was £142.61....who mentioned inflation?

Seriously, we believe that setting a minimum bid of 20p with a strong suggestion from the auctioneer to commence at 50p has resulted in more realistic prices. Even though the total number of items disposed of was less than previously the yield has been better. As Treasurer, I look forward to a continuation of this trend with prices of really USEFUL items being set just a shade higher. It would be less disappointing for the owners and bring in more money to assist in covering our increased running costs....DO NOT BE ALARMED...we are nicely placed just now but must build up a "hedge" against the inevitable rise in costs expected when/if we take that earth-shaking step we Brits are contemplating.

As I watched proceedings I formed the conclusion that the experimental layout of the room was quite successful. Possibly next year we could re-arrange the seats so as to bring the "shadowy characters" at the back closer to the action. It would mean less legwork for the runners and could enhance their view of the objects before being finally "knocked down".....my ears still ring with the crash of Colin's gavel.

On behalf of the Committee....thanks again to the team and yourselves for a super fun evening.

Further Thoughts On the AJS - Geoff G7KLV

Yes, as Brian said it was a very successful and enjoyable evening. I had taken along some of the left-overs from Ela's grand sale and I was pleased to find that I took home less than I brought, apart from my own purchases! I was pleased that two items of Roy's collection of valved test gear found a good home. There's not much demand for elderly test gear. People are put

off by its weight and bulk. Pity!

Being an indecisive individual, one that never snaps up bargains at rallies, always returning later to find them gone, it was a similar story on Tuesday! I fancied that Eddystone 640 but dropped out of the bidding early on! When will I learn?

I persisted, however, with one of those rather nice Farnell variable power supplies. 'Needs attention to the meter' our auctioneer said as the front cover dropped on the floor! It certainly did! Luckily I had a replacement with suitable scaling and after replacing the meter V/I switch it seems OK. I didn't mention that the mains quick-blow fuse was duff! The fuseholder legend said A/S which I didn't notice until I had tried two quick-blows! Sure enough with an anti-surge fuse it behaved itself. Searching amongst Roy's handbook collection I was lucky enough to find a circuit to help me!

There was rather a nice motor switched ASTU which I snapped up - quite out of character. I knew someone who was looking for a ceramic wafer switch and this one had a real beauty! After a little bargaining I managed to make a profit on it adding another £10 to Brian's last total. Pity we didn't quite make the 200 mark!

On a final note, don't forget the Canvey rally in February. Chris IPU and I will be pleased to store any items left unsold at the Junk Sale or any other items your XYL has decided you don't need!

The DF National Rosebowl - Andrew, G4KQE

The National Direction Finding season is now almost over, the Final being held a few weeks ago in Kent, and once again we have had an enjoyable and successful season. Our team has featured at or nearly at the top of the league for most of the year, considerably helped by our second placing at the Torbay event in May, and our local win in June. Dick G3WHR's team also enjoyed a measure of success mid-season, taking second at Mid-Thames, and first at Salisbury. The 6th event at Banbury was a disaster for us all, with both teams appearing well down the result sheet - 'nil point'!

Up until that point, we were only keeping an eye on two other teams who could be in the running for the Rosebowl, but you cannot afford to close your eyes for one minute, as on the penultimate event at Echelford, Dick's team came snapping at our heels, by winning the event 5 minutes ahead of us in second place!

The last qualifying event in the Northampton area in September therefore promised to be an interesting and hard fought event, with the Silver Trophy still available to any one of three or four teams. We took our bearings and guessed that the first station would be at the edge of the map on a disused railway and drove straight there, but who should we find already there, but Dick's team. They just beat us in to the station by a few minutes...we were now neck and neck!

We then chased them across the map towards the second and most crucial station, and were absolutely delighted to see a piece of aerial wire blowing gently in the breeze as we were running down another disused railway line. A quick scramble up the embankment to find the transmitter, clocked in...and we had won!

The final Rosebowl league table put us on 35 points, 11 points clear of the next competitor, so the Silverware remains in Essex for the third year running.

As for the National Final....well.... you've got to give other teams a chance haven't you!!

A New Computer - Geoff G2AMQ

This newsletter is being produced via my 4th computer since I retired about 12 years ago. The first three were all purchased complete from commercial sources but No.4 has a somewhat different origin. But first we must go back to No.3: this was bought about 5 years ago for an Open University course. It uses a 486SX25 processor and over the years I've added a second hard drive, a CD ROM Drive, sound card, extra memory etc. However such has been the rapid march of technology that it won't now run some new software (not even this year's Inland Revenue Tax Return Program!).

In the summer I spent some time deciding whether to buy a new computer or whether to upgrade my existing No.3 with a new motherboard and processor etc. Notwithstanding the fact that new computer prices are falling fast, I decided that I'd get more satisfaction by upgrading (if it worked!) and hopefully would learn something. The decision was also helped by a book on "Upgrading ..." which I read whilst on holiday.

However I soon realised that a new AT format motherboard with a 266MHz AMD K6 processor, heatsink and fan on top was not going to fit into the existing desktop case due to the mounting of the various drives. So that became the excuse to buy a new midi-tower case and build a new computer rather than upgrade the existing.

The first problem to surface was with the Power Unit. Three out of the four dc output voltages were significantly below (eg -20%) normal limits and the replacement unit (which the vendor said they had checked) was not much better, but at least the main +5v, 20amp line was within limits. I was also not impressed by the 'cavalier way' in which the salesman handled the processor and memory modules which I was purchasing - no antistatic precautions were taken at all!

I decided to minimise the amount of assembly before testing, wherever possible. So, for example, I 'borrowed' the hard drives (with their stored programs and data files) and the video card from the old computer to test the new motherboard and memory module before installing, partitioning and formatting the new hard drive.

Nevertheless the whole process of assembly and testing took longer than anticipated (will I never learn!) & there's still a problem of video card to sound card interference to solve. So I had to put the new computer into service still using one or two cards borrowed from the old as I have regular computer tasks to do for several organisations. But the cards, etc will have to be replaced soon as my wife is to take over No.3 to replace No.2.!

There's more to tell, but no space. Was it worth doing? For me yes, but I had the advantage of having a computer guru (GIOGY) to talk to if I really got stuck!

For Sale

YAESU FT102 HF Transceiver 160-10m. AM/FM fitted with SSB, CW Narrow and AM Wide Filters. Boxed with mic and manual.

One non-smoking owner! Good working order. £300.

Contact Martin G4TOO, 01245-266728.

For Sale

Kenwood TS440S HF Transceiver, all modes, 1.8-30MHz + Rx general coverage: internal auto ATU: SSB & CW Filters. One owner; excellent condition as new: £475. For further details & working demonstration ring George, G3GNQ telephone 01245-256199.

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Deadline for the next News Letter is the 16th December.

CONGRATULATIONS ANDREW! (EDITOR)