

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. 397

January 1999

The January Meeting.

By very long standing tradition the January meeting is a film night. Carl G3PEM has been dilligently searhing for something interesting and has selected two films of broad appeal; 'Getting Started in HF Contesting' and 'Getting Started in Amateur VHF & UHF Satellites'. If all this sounds rather serious, don't worry. No, you are not getting a dose of T & J! Instead there will be some light entertainment with footage from Fred G6FXM's cutting room floor! Remember the July meeting? 'Nuff said!

Our Chairman John G8DET has been forbidden to mention computers on this occasion and will be strictly programmed to get the meeting underway at 7-30pm sharp on Tuesday 5th. January at MASC Beehive Lane.

Humble Pie No.1 - Geoff G7KLV.

We get so involved in font sizes, text blocks and other abstruse technicalities of DTP in the Editorial Office that we tend to forget the obvious. Even a much appreciated Christmas card to the EO didn't alert us! The penny only dropped when I had a phone call from our Chairman. He was suggesting a New Year's message. I said it was just not on as I had finished the NL and put it to bed - excuse this technical jargon! Anyway, a call from Chair is only ignored at one's peril, so I have hastily re-cast the front page!

We trust you all had a very happy Christmas and wish all our readers the very best for the New Year!

We'll try to get it right next year by wishing our readers a happy Christmas before the great occasion!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Jan 1 New Year's Day. We're on the ball. At last!
- Jan 5 CARS Film Show - MASC
- Feb 2 CARS Mtg - Amateur Radio Software Dem. - MASC
- Feb 7 South Essex ARS Rally - Canvey
- Feb 14 Cambridge & DARC Rally - Addenbrookes - C' bridge

Committee Meeting

The next meeting will be held at Ela G6HKM's QTH on Wednesday 14th January at 7-30pm. All are welcome!

Club Subscriptions - Last Call

Any unpaid Club Subs. are long overdue. Contact Brian on 01245-471919. No further Newsletters will be sent unless Subs. are paid by 31-1-1999.

Sorry, but that's how it is!

CARS Christmas Dinner - Colin G0TRM

Once again we had a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas Dinner at the Beehive Gt. Waltham; everything went without a hitch!

After a warm welcome to Members, and our Guests for the evening, Geoff and Helen Bowles, Chairman John G8DET asked Geoff G2AMQ to say Grace after which we tucked into our chosen starters. The many menu choices available, selected by diners weeks beforehand, were co-ordinated by Jill and David M0BQC and noted on decorated menu cards for each guest. Their organisation even coped with last minute diners, Don G0LLA and Doreen, with their last minute menu choices and taken by the chef, all in their stride!

Starters ranged from herring roes to soup and from melon to king size prawns, a choice of starter that David and Chairman John favoured. A choice also shared by others, but at least they peeled their own!

The main course of turkey was most popular but variations of cod, venison, nut roast etc. were also sampled. Christmas pudding and other delights rounded things off together with mince pies and coffee.

Fred G6FXM kept his video camera close at hand, recording events for posterity and, we suspect, the forthcoming Film Show. Events such as Chairman John's opening remarks, his toast to Absent Friends, numerous comic interjections, the triumphant entry of the blazing Christmas pud borne aloft by our Host, accompanied by his singing staff, the selling of raffle tickets and the subsequent collection of excellent prizes, to the auction of the table centrepieces were all faithfully recorded!

I did say 'without a hitch'. Not strictly true! There was Ela's unfortunate taxi experience (which will not occur again!) and David and Jill's *faux pas*! They were almost home before they realised they had forgotten to pay the bill. David, an

accountant to the last, taking very good care of our money! All was put to rights the next morning however!

It was agreed without reservation that the whole evening, the venue, the food, the company and the organisation was excellent. Our thanks must go not only to Mike, our Host and all his staff for their warm hospitality but, above all, to both Jill and David for organising such a grand evening for us.

The Tuesday Evening Club Nets - Colin G0TRM

As some members will know the Tuesday evening Nets are now preceded by 15 minutes of CW provided by Charles G0GJS on 28.325MHz. The aim is to encourage reluctant and new operators to dust off and oil their keys and take to the air. Charles will be very pleased to hear from anyone so inclined.

Chris G0IPU reported another successful 2m net on the 8th. with some 11 operators calling in. A well run net Chris. Keep up the good work.

Following Chris as net controller will be Colin G0TRM for January. February will see Geoff G3EDM in the hot seat. Ken G3PMW will take charge in March followed by Harry G5HF in April. If anyone would like to try their hand sometime in the future please call me on 01245-223835.

Humble Pie No.2 - Brian G3CVI

After the junk sale I was a little surprised by the amount of money we had taken. Since the selling had been rather slow, as I reported in the Newsletter, the sum appeared to be very satisfactory. At home I came down next day with a raging toothache and subtracting the refunds, declared a net of over £180. Later doing my usual bi-monthly tot I was shocked to find that I was £74-32 short in the "till".....wow!!!!...Three icebags later and after the fourth recount I saw in front of my very eyes the sum of £74-32 written on the box lid...it was the FLOAT with which we started the sale.....I had in my befuddled mind completely forgotten to deduct the float. So with sackcloth-and-ashes, hair-shirt etc., I must give you the corrected amounts as follows: Junk Sale gross £ 141-38.....and the net was £113-08...HOWEVER additional money came in due to the grand effort of your newsletter editor Geoff and the coffers gained an extra £109 so effectively the junk sale did very well indeed in spite of my clumsy mistake. Please may I be forgiven and emerge from the punishment cell?

Come on out, all is forgiven, Brian!

Last Month's Meeting - Tony G4YTG

Tim started by saying that some ten years ago he commenced his lecturing career with C.A.R.S at Marconi College and was pleased to be invited back again. He then asked us a question to ponder over....."What is the invention which had the greatest impact on mankind during the last few hundred years?" He mentioned many things for us to consider: The "Zero" said to have broken the Roman Empire, the telephone, the printing press, gunpowder, the atomic bomb and lots more.

Inventions, he said had to be made at the right time and many "firsts" were forgotten as were their inventors with later developers making their names in the history books by bringing things to the fore at a period when they were needed. History likes winners and they include a surprising number of people who were not

first but gained international kudos such as...Frank Whittle, Watson Watt, Logie Baird, Babbage and Marconi himself who were all preceded in their particular fields. In Marconi's case by Hertz, Maxwell, Faraday and Morse, all... familiar names to us; they played their parts. Doctor Lumis set up a radio communications system over a 14 mile hop using kites at very great heights, some ten years before his first Wireless patent in 1872. His Aerial Telegraph Company failed after the works burnt down and he died penniless in 1886.

What of Marconi the man?...He was not very academic; having failed his examinations for college but he was a "do-er" with great confidence in the radio business. Also he had the ability to get people to work for him and remain loyal. Kemp and Paget and other men of brilliance such as Fleming, Franklin and Eccles were all chosen by him for his team.

Tim reminded us that Marconi was never a poor inventor struggling in a garret to earn a crust but was the son of an Italian Count and his mother was the Jameson Irish Whiskey heiress. He was encouraged by them and he was rich.

He tried to sell his early ideas to the Italian government without success and so he came to England. In 1896 he took out his first patent (No 12039) for telegraphic transmission using Hertzian waves. Marconi then became a showman giving demonstrations to all and sundry attracting much attention to his experiments and increasing the distance covered at every event e.g: 1895 Salisbury Plain 1.75 miles then 4.5 miles from Loverock Point to Weston-Super-Mare (over water) for 9 miles. In 1897 returning to Italy he achieved 11.1 miles for their Navy and in 1898 he set up for the yacht race from Ballycastle to Ruthin thence to Salisbury Plain and a link to Bath a total of 34 miles. Now the Royal Navy was interested and he pushed the range even further.

Marconi came to Chelmsford when the communications monopoly of The Post Office restricted his operations to outside a 30 mile radius from London. Cromptons and Christy Hunt were already known to him and were established here as was the railway. He set up the first Wireless factory in the world in Hall Street; the electronics age was indeed born in Chelmsford.

Marconi now became certain he could span the Atlantic and risked the company to prove it. He had been lucky in the past with his contacts, helpers and sponsors but now his luck ran out when the aerials at both Poldhu and Cape Cod were destroyed by gales. The rings of masts at Poldhu were replaced by a fan configuration on two masts and the Signal Hill Newfoundland station used a kite-borne system.

Tim said that many expert and knowledgeable people have discussed whether or not it was possible that Marconi actually did hear the transmitted "S" at Signal Hill. He is convinced that some mechanism of propagation did in fact span the distance and Marconi continued with confidence in his experiments. Although he had his sceptics he was now a celebrity and his company was assured....his luck was back!!!

Within 5 years he was operating a transatlantic commercial communication service and was world famous.

Tim showed us a picture of a Broomfield Road site which was the back-up for the Transatlantic Ballybunnion Station in Ireland from 1905 till 1929...the IRA blew it up.

The New Street works were built in 1912 by a massive work-force in 17 weeks. Marconi's luck was holding up as he cancelled his booking to America on the Titannic (transmitting Marconi signals to the last) to be present at the opening.

Now back to our original question...the invention with greatest impact upon the world...it has to be Radio Communication. Mr.Marconi was given the greatest and most impressive gesture of closing down the entire world's Wireless stations for two minutes on the occasion of his death.

The Ether was as quiet as it had been before Marconi !!! It will never be so quiet again.

Thanks Tim, it was a most enjoyable evening.

Starting Life on the Ocean Waves - Charles G0GJS

Charles is a former commercial Flight R/O and is a member of the Radio Officers Association. He obtained permission from the ROA for us to publish this amusing account of a Marconi Marine radio officer's first voyage, which appeared in the their Newsletter. The author prefers to remain anonymous for some strange reason! Read on

Having passed out from Liverpool Radio School with a PMG2, I set off to conquer the world and, being Liverpool born and bred, someone with a perverse sense of humour in Marconi Marine sent me to Southampton!

I spent the first three months on a cross-channel ferry to Jersey before getting the clarion call to report to the office with my blue pay book, prior to signing on as 3rd.R/O on the RMS Asturius on the emigrant run to Aussie. I knew nothing about uniforms so had the ROU arrange a sub from Marconi (a first) and bought a full set of whites.

On board equipment included a Worldspan TX and a CR300 RX. The

Worldspan was an Oceanspan with a Linear - very posh and could have housed a Third World family. But because the rotary generator was housed above the Chief's cabin we were not allowed to use it. Not only did it keep the Chief awake, he could read what we sent from the note difference of the generator.

The Chief was a nice man - a one time Jap prisoner who had been torpedoed. He would take Press every evening with me but he smoked the most foul cigarettes which he would leave burning under my nose. The 2nd R/O was called by me at 'one bell' (I was 12 'till 4) whereupon he downed a neat gin and eventually appeared any time between 4 and 5am - if he could stand. He was eventually relieved by the Chief on our way home and never reappeared from his cabin.

Leaving Suez a nice old lady asked me to send a bunch of flowers to her sister and promptly thrust a bunch of Port Said best into my hands. I took the flowers, charged her full rate and gave them to my gay steward. I had a nice tidy cabin after that.

The Asturius was a four R/O ship - the 4th did the 8-12. I did the 12-4 and the 2nd the 4-8 watch. I had responsibility for the PA system which meant I could roam the passenger decks without incurring the wrath of the Master at Arms. So 'tooled up', I first visited the PA room which was a cabin in passenger accommodation where a mattress lay on the deck. The previous 3rd must have taken the job very seriously - or was I too innocent at the tender age of sixteen? My biggest PA problems seemed to occur regularly in the crews quarters where they had a bad habit of regularly ripping out wires, stuffing the speakers with old socks. Catering staff of a 'different orientation' gave me a hands on legs experience which necessitated my visit to 'The Queen'. Resplendent in lace frock, which matched the flowers and lace cabin, 'The Queen' listened to my insistence that I was 'not of their flock', gave me a drink and assured me my problems were solved.

We off-loaded all the £10 Poms, went to Tanjong Priok (that'll send the shivers down many Blue Funnel mens backs) and loaded 1500 natives destined for Holland. No sooner had we started but the fire alarms started. The natives thought they were back in their kampongs and had lit fires in cabins and alleyways etc. Following instructions over the PA this problem was solved but the next was a total strike by the stewards. Having never seen a toilet, most of our passengers just relieved themselves at will. The trip to the Dining Saloon was a nightmare. This again was solved and strict instructions issued that there would be no fraternising.

Soon after I received instructions to attend a funeral at the stern at noon and the ceremony duly carried out. Next day the Old Man was heard to say "At this rate we'll never get home". Now as Marconi men this posed a dilemma for we were paid on a daily basis on the number of souls on board. And our pay was going down daily. Very bad news but then the good news! The doctor said they were overstretched in the birth department. All told 45 had died but 46 were born, so we were in profit.

On the way back we had to take Dutch Press - two hours of total gobblede-gook. British press was OK. You could fill in the gaps and even make up stories while you had a bite of a sarnie. Liverpool always won every Saturday and Manchester lost. I often wondered how the reports would look if checked against the real thing. But with Dutch Press every letter had to be taken down.

On arrival back in Southampton I reported to the office and was told to sign on the Empire Medway immediately for troop transport to Korea. That's when Marconi and myself started to fall out and Blue Funnel started to look good!

BARGAIN CORNER

For Sale

YAESU HF Receiver Type FRG 7.

In good working order. Only £80.

Contact Fred Ott G0SQP on 01245-354028 for further details.

For Sale

YAESU HF Transceiver Type FT102, 160-10m AM/FM.

One non-smoking owner. GWO £300.

Further details from Martin G4TOO on 01245-266728.

For Sale

KENWOOD HF Transceiver Type TS440S, all modes.

With extra filters and internal ASTU. GWO £475.

Further details from George G3GNQ on 01245-256199.

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Deadline for the next News Letter is Sunday Jan. 17th.