

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. 399

April 1999

We Brits spend an inordinate amount of time discussing the weather. We are going to discuss weather for the whole evening at our next meeting. This will be the second time we have had an evening devoted to the subject. The first occasion was eighteen months ago. The intended speaker had to cancel at the last minute. Our Chairman had one of his brainwaves and suggested Meteorology as the theme for the evening with short presentations by Members. On that occasion Harry introduced us to El Nino which, to be honest, was unknown to many of us. The media took up the subject shortly afterwards!

Harry G5HF is our speaker for the evening and he is going to tell us about the role, and latest developments, of satellites in forecasting, followed by some of the attendant problems. He will give examples of the kind of pictures that can be received with modest equipment and show how they can help in understanding forecasts. He will give an account of the equipment needed for reception. Finally some notes on storms, because the media are notoriously inaccurate when it comes to extreme weather. It's time you heard the truth!

We meet at 7-30pm at MASC on Tuesday April 6th, weather permitting, that is! Ladies and guests are always welcome. Don't forget to support Ela's raffle, it goes a long way to meeting our expenses!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Apl. 6 CARS Mtg. Weather Harry G5HF - MASC.
 - Apl. 10/11 Int. Maritime Coast Station Event ***
 - Apl. 14 **Committee Meeting. 7-30pm - Ela's QTH.**
 - Apl. 18 Cambridgeshire Rpt. Grp. Rally - Bottisham.
 - Apl. 18 Rainham Radio Rally - Rainham, Kent.
 - Apl. 20 Aerial Erection for IMD - 9-30am - S'ford Mill.
 - Apl. 24 International Marconi Day - Sandford Mill.
 - Apl. All mth. Commonwealth Area Stns. DX Event. ***
- *** For details see last month's Newsletter.

Local Nets - Colin G0TRM

The Club Net. 2nd. Tuesday on 145.325MHz at 8-30pm.
3rd, 4th, and 5th Tuesdays on 28.325MHz at 8-30pm
Net controller is Harry G5HF. If channels otherwise occupied try shifting up or down. Charles G0GJS will pre-empt each net with 15mins. of CW at your own speed..

Slow Scan. Chris's SSTV every Thursday on 28.680MHz at 8-30pm

Members News

When he is not persevering with the Morse, Brian Miller, one of our SWL's, has been acquiring and setting up a new business venture in Ledbury. He is now in the holiday apartment industry. Anyone who fancies a holiday in delightful Herefordshire should ring him on 01531-632839.

Newsletter Contributions Please.

Although we are nowhere near our own Millennium, the next issue will be our 400th. In celebration we propose to make it a little longer than usual. We invite Members to offer contributions on any amateur related subject of their choice. Nostalgia, perhaps!

International Marconi Day.

Once again, due to the courtesy of Geoff Bowles and the Chelmsford Museum Service, we are celebrating this event, organised by the Cornish Radio Club. Saturday April 24th is the day. Members and friends are welcome at Sandford Mill. Just ring the bell and wait! The aerial working party will assemble at 9-30am on the 20th. Willing hands, and others, are always welcome!

STOP PRESS

Due to altered domestic arrangements, Colin G0VDL has a 40ft. tilt-over Tenna Mast surplus to requirements. He is offering this item free to anyone interested, together with a load of magazines! Contact him on 01375-384179.

LAST MONTHS MEETING - Presentation No. 1

QRP - Tom G4INM

Tom's subject was the joys of operating QRP. The pleasure Tom derives from this activity extends to the construction of receivers and transmitters for use on QRM. However Tom first advised us that QRP is Q code for, 'Shall I reduce power?' It has come to mean using power below 5 watts on CW and 10 watts PEP on SSB.

Tom explained the challenge in working with only a few watts compared to 100 watts possible. With 100 watts a 5.9 report is common place whereas to wrinkle out an S0 signal from the noise and QRM and to be given 5.2 gives far more satisfaction. For Tom, nothing is quite like working ZL or VK with a couple of watts and a wire aerial.

QRP has the same activities as QRO. There are skeds, chats and contest. Tom said that when contesting QRPers have an advantage as they usually receive extra points. However the same 599 report applies when using only 1 watt in contest.

Tom continued by describing some of the many kits that are available for QRP. He recommended that one should start with a simple kit, with separate receiver and transmitter, and then progress to a superhet receiver in a transceiver. Tom showed us the kit he has from NORCAL (North Carolina) QRP club. For each kit they sell, one is donated to the Third World. Tom stated that the most popular receiver is a direct conversion, (mixer with local oscillator but the conversion is direct to AF without an intermediate frequency). Hum or out of band signals can be a problem but by using batteries and filters these problems can be overcome. Tom's demonstration receiver was so small it had been lost, but Colin found it in the folds of a coat. The matching transceiver Tom then wished to show had also been lost! Being 2cm square this was not difficult. After some rummaging in his bag Tom recovered the transmitter. The DC oscillator can be used for both rx and tx. G4INM mentioned that the tx was crystal controlled on 3.560 with some movement either side.

Some transparencies were then shown on the overhead. These were of an OXO all band transmitter by GM3OXX. This tx works on all bands by changing crystals. Next was the JBS by the same designer. Then Tom showed the QSK 1 watt for 20m illustrating the VXO method of fixed L and switched C's. 'Break in' is possible.

Reading material on the subject was then presented: QRP Note book, G-QRP Circuits Handbook, QRP Classics. Geoff G7KLV said they are all available from the library. Sprat magazine was shown which is a quarterly publication and is the journal of the G-QRP club, founded by Rev. George Dobbs G3RJV. At £6 per year Tom said this magazine has many worthwhile articles on varied subjects.

Colin gave an impressive demonstration of his Mizuho SSB & CW 2 watt transceiver for 80m by finding a live QSO.

Before taking questions Tom mentioned that aerials for QRP are usually wire, G5RV etc though some people do cheat with beams.

In response to a question Tom said that he has worked ZL and VK on 1 watt and that 5 watts will take you all over Europe. In the morning of the meeting Tom had worked IK, LA & HA. If you call with CQ QRP the person replying is usually QRP. Replying to another question Tom said his G-QRP club number is 786 and that after 20 years the latest membership numbers are in the 9000's. Tom stated finally that there is far more CW on QRP than SSB.

I am sure that Tom has wetted the appetite of many people with his informative and interesting insight into the world of QRP. Thank you Tom.

Write-up by David M0BQC

LAST MONTHS MEETING - Presentation No. 2

COMPUTER VIRUSES - Murray G6JYB

What are they? Sources - Symptoms - Strains - Spread - Prevention. These were all explained. The worst thing to do was to think it could not happen to you!

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