

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Affiliated to the RSGB

President: Richard Brocks G3WHR

Secretary: David Bradley M0BQC

Club Call Sign: G0MWT

Chairman: John Bowen G8DET

Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI

Newsletter No. 416

Web Address www.g0mwt.free-online.co.uk

September 2000

Next Month's Meeting - The TableTop Sale

Following the undoubted success of last years table top sale we hope that our next meeting will be equally successful. It was Colin G0TRM's suggestion to hold such an event, so who was the obvious choice of organiser? Yes you've guessed it!. As well as being Asst.Secretary he is now our Table Top Manager! We gave you warning last month to look out for suitable items. This sale is not to be confused with our annual Junk Sale, so no junk please. Unsold items must be removed by their owners. Items offered for sale need not be amateur radio related. A small table fee will be charged to non-members. Otherwise there are no fixed charges apart from a small percentage, about 10%, to Club funds.

Colin is spreading the word around the media and we look forward to welcoming visitors from other clubs, as we did last year. There is no admission fee but we request they support the raffle. If you've got nothing to sell and you are not buying come along anyway, it should be a nice social evening The bar will be open all evening and is not too far away!

Our Chairman John G8DET will be calling us to order at 7-30pm on Tuesday 5th. September next at our usual venue, the MASC Beehive Lane. Jill will be running the raffle and will be selling the winning tickets, and others as well!. The prizes will include one of her sought after fruit cakes!

Dates For Your Diary

Sept. 13 Committee Mtg. Ela's QTH 7-30pm.

Sept 22/23 Leicester ARC Show. Castle Donnington.

Members Miscellany

The Club Net Controller for September is Ken G3PMW.

Congratulations to Tony YTG's Mum who has reached the remarkable age of one hundred and two!

Apologies to Chris G0IPU for the duff Jamboree info.!

Apologies to new Member Donald Imber. He is G0VIS and not an SWL. Sorry about that!

It is with regret that we have to record the sad passing of Jean Pring. I always knew as 'Mother In Law', that is G0IPU's mother in law!. She was the lady who cheerfully and unflinchingly served us tea and biscuits when we met at Marconi College. Jean was the housekeeper at the College and was always very helpful when problems arose! She was an Hon. Club Member! Our condolences to her family, particularly Rhona, Lorna, Chris and her grandsons Daniel and Matthew in their sad loss.

PMR Test Set – Geoff G7KLV.

The Club has recently acquired a PMR Test Set. This compact unit consists of a signal generator, deviation meter, audio source and voltmeter, a 50ohm load and a power meter. It is therefore suitable for the fundamental transmitter and receiver parameters. It covers 2m and 70cms. The main reason for its purchase was to enable Members to readjust their deviation on 2m for the new 12.5kHz channeling. The equipment is kept at my QTH and any Member is welcome to use it there.

Last Month's Meeting

EMC by Robin Page-Jones G3JWI

Our speaker for the August meeting was Robin Page-Jones G3JWI, Chairman of the RSGB EMC Committee. The subject for the meeting was EMC and he covered this wide ranging topic expertly.

The number one lesson to learn is "Avoidance of problems by good radio housekeeping". More on that later.

Robin began by describing the European EMC standards, the EN 55 series specifications which cover the required EMC performance of equipment sold in the European Union. All are

relevant in the United Kingdom and some of these European standards have been incorporated into BS specifications but, as yet, not all. The RSGB is represented on the relevant BSI Committees.

The specifications are in two categories and cover immunity and emissions, which are defined below:

IMMUNITY defines the level of electrical interference to the equipments at which they shall still operate.

EMISSIONS defines the permitted radiated interference levels from the equipments.

The biggest problem these days is from radiated emissions which generate noise within the HF receivers. For example Digital TV receivers meet EN 55013 but generate broadband noise of which the radiated level is not covered by the current specification.

Good Station Housekeeping should mean less chance of interference to the neighbours, and, equally importantly, your own household electronic equipment. From an EMC point of view it is preferable to use horizontal polarized antennas as opposed to vertical polarized antennas with no radiating part of the antenna close to or over the roof of the house, this reduces the field strength near to the house and mains wiring, thus the less chance of causing an interference problem. Another tip was to try and keep in with neighbours and fix problems before they become of gigantic proportions!

Each situation is nearly a one-off as it is difficult to model the near field of an antenna. Make sure that the earth currents in the mains earth are small compared to the RF earth current by fitting a couple of ferrite beads over the mains earth lead which will help to force the RF current down the RF earth.

Robin then discussed proposals for sending DATA on power lines (PLT). The RSGB was one of a number of organizations that opposed this data distribution method, which has since been dropped, for now! Data signals on telephone lines, proposed by the telephone operators, is the next challenge. These are under the acronym ADSL & VDSL collectively known as xDSL. ADSL uses frequencies up to 1.1 MHz and it is believed that the system should not cause a problem to HF operators. VDSL will use frequencies up to 10 MHz and the distribution equipment should have transmission notches for the Amateur bands. Robin expressed an opinion that he did not believe that

VDSL will be used immediately as the lines into the houses cannot accept the bandwidth. The specification MPT 1570 will cover these systems. Another problem on the horizon is home radio LANs, which are being developed to connect several home computers together around a house.

Robin concluded his talk by showing some photographs and talking about noise floor measurements he carried out at his QTH in Shenfield.

This talk generated a lot of questions and discussion from the floor. One point worth mentioning is reports from members regarding the noise generated by the ECO lamps. The EMC committee was requested to look at this problem again.

An excellent evenings talk and our sincere thanks to Robin for his extremely informative presentation.

Report by Carl G3PEM

PC's Are Not Very PC by Andy Hobsbawn.

Charles G0GJS came across this thought provoking piece in the Financial Times magazine 'The Business'. We re-produce it here with acknowledgements and by kind permission of that august publication!

The godfather of cyber-punk literature, William Gibson, once said that he could feel his new PC "obsolescing" before he'd even taken it out of the box. There is a vicious, self-perpetuating cycle of computer consumption where new and improved software with 'must-have' features demands bigger, faster hardware to run on. As a result, today's technology has the useful life span of a fruit fly. The rate of change is simply not as fast as the people selling us beige boxes, and the bits inside, would have us believe. As in the auto industry which introduced planned obsolescence in the 1920s with the concept of "this year's model", the basic ideas behind many software programs haven't changed since the technology was invented.

Real damage is also done when peoples computing knowledge, not just the products they buy is made obsolete by design. Microsoft's move from DOS to Windows wiped away overnight most people's understanding of how to use PC's (and for a generation raised on text based interfaces. there was never anything especially intuitive about clicking on graphical icons). Human beings tend to regard the technology they're first taught as natural, and their learning capacity decreases with age. Unnecessary change forces people to learn more than they need to and keeps their know ledge in a perpetual state of flux; retooling this knowledge becomes increasingly painful.

Henry Tillotson, a London University computer support specialist, thinks this has trapped people in a virtual tower of Babel, unable to communicate effectively, separated by different levels of knowledge about the ever-changing interfaces and uses of technology.

We are becoming more aware of the harmful effects unsustainable technology has on our environment. Only 6 per cent of PCs are recycled. compared with 70 per cent of most domestic appliances. The number of US desktop computers discarded annually is expected to triple to 63.5m in five years. And studies by the Environmental Protection Agency have shown that approximately 80 per cent eventually wind up in landfills (a computer contains not a single biodegradable element). In a surreal twist, technology's declining life expectancy coupled with a growing stockpile of about 200m abandoned computers, means that soon more PC's will become obsolete each year than are shipped new by the makers.

For a generation of late1960s students, modern technology is clearly a squandered resource. PCs on the scrap heap today are

more powerful than the machines that once handled all of a university's scientific and statistical analysis. They are outraged at being asked to consider technology prehistoric when it's less than a couple of years old and still does what its needed to do. Meanwhile. some of us hang our heads in abashed consumer echnolust and, as Kurt Vonnegut once observed " hurry along like the White Rabbit, always late for that very important date with that faster modem, the bigger hard drive, the new, more powerful machine."

That said, it's not so easy to resist the intense commercial pressures!

Member's Correspondence.

This is a copy of an Email received, and translated, by Geoff G3EDM from one of our overseas Members, Alois DL3PD, and expresses feelings which, perhaps, we are too reserved to express ourselves!

Dear Geoff,

Please excuse me for writing to you in German. What I am going to write to you now I can only express in German; in my English it would sound different from what I'm going to express. On the 19th of July, Inge and I watched the parade celebrating the 100th birthday of your Queen Mum. We were very impressed and at times we had tears in our eyes with the emotions that we felt. We admired your 100 year old Queen Mum for her participation in this celebration. Not every person is fortunate at that age with such health, and her mental attitude, to be able to experience such an event.

We admire not only the Queen Mum but also the English people, who have shown a beloved person honour and the festive spirit. We congratulate the English people for the successful parade in this form, which would not have been possible in Germany.

Best wishes,

Alois

Come to think of it, we do these events rather well, don't we!

Can anyone help?

I would like to do some some aural experiments. Can anyone lend me a graphic equaliser, please?

George G3GNQ

An Email from Gwyn G3FKH to John G8DET

John,

As promised, herewith a few words about the "Dengie-100 Radio Club" dx-pedition to Skye. Everyone will remember that a few months ago the Dengie-100 club were looking for volunteers for their trip to the Isle of Skye. I thought it sounded like a good idea so contacted them. Three of us were to go and it was decided to have a radio station each.

I borrowed the Club's radio equipment, which worked perfectly the whole time, the narrow CW filter was especially useful. We had wonderful weather throughout which was great for aerial erection. I was the only CW station and managed 750 QSO's in the week, the other two stations managed about 150 QSO's on SSB between them. We even met several local amateur's one of which I contact regularly on the key anyway. All-in- all, it was a wonderful experience. My only CARS QSO was with Carl G3PEM. All the best,

Gwyn

Joint Editors

Colin G0TRM 01245-223835 colinpage@ukgateway.net
Geoff G7KLV 01245-473822 geoff@g7klv.free-online.co.uk
64 Vicarage Lane, Gt.Baddow, CHELMSFORD CM2 8HY
Deadline for the next N/L is Saturday 16th.September.