

# Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Affiliated to the RSGB

President: Harry Heap G5HF

Secretary: David Bradley M0BQC

Club Call Sign: G0MWT

Chairman: John Bowen G8DET

Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI

Newsletter No. 417

Web Address [www.g0mwt.free-online.co.uk](http://www.g0mwt.free-online.co.uk)

October 2000

## The October Meeting - The Annual General Meeting.

It's AGM time once again! This is your opportunity as Members to let us know if you have been pleased with the Committee's efforts in the past year. Throw your brickbats but, more importantly, let us have your ideas and suggestions for the improvement of Club activities. **Chairman John G8DET** will guide us through all the necessary formalities which will include nominating and voting in a new Committee, setting the subscription rate and AOB, which includes all the other things we've forgotten to mention!

Harry G5HF (see our new heading) will be carrying out his Presidential duties and will probably have a few words for us. Brian G3CVI will be presenting his New Look, readily understandable, accounts. What will Fred G5HNF have to say? CVI is sure to have a new story for us! He has been frantically juggling the books and, unlike the financial wizards at the Millennium Dome, knows where every half groat has gone. There will also be our Secretary's report reminding us of our activities in the past year.

It all adds up to an interesting and entertaining evening but that's not all! Colin TRM has, as usual, come up with one of his bright ideas! He's organised a quiz to test our amateur radio knowledge. Don't worry it will be a very light hearted affair but, we are sorry to say, there are no prizes!

**Join us, usual place, usual time, 7-30 at the MASC on Tuesday 3rd. October and don't forget to buy your Raffle tickets. As an encouragement to attend the AGM there is also the Jackpot Raffle, free to ticket holders, to win a years Club Membership.**

### Dates For Your Diary.

Oct. 3 CARS AGM MASC 7-30pm.

Oct. 11 Committee Mtg. 7-30pm. John G8DET's QTH.

Oct 21/22 JOTA GB4CDS Chelmsford District Scouts.

**The October Net Controller is Harry G5HF.**

### New Committee.

Due to a number of resignations, and other reasons, there are a number of vacancies on the Committee. Let John DET know if you are interested in standing or would like to nominate a Member to stand.

By the way, any Member will be made very welcome at our Committee Meetings.

### CARS Christmas Dinner.

How many shopping days 'till Christmas? Plenty!

More importantly, David M0BQC and Jill have organised another gourmet Christmas extravaganza at the Beehive, Great Waltham. He is taking provisional bookings for the great event to be held on Thursday 7th. December. There's nothing to pay until the menu is available. The cost will be £14 including one glass of wine. Contact them on 01245-602838.

### Last Month's Meeting.

#### The G0TRM Table Top Sale.

The Table Top Sale was again a great success. Colin G0TRM's idea has proved very popular. Feverish viewing and buying began soon after 7o'clock and continued for about two hours. The items for sale were extremely varied ranging from Ladybirds to an oscilloscope, and modems to morse tapes. There were transceivers of indeterminate age and status together with a Lafayette CR Analyser.

Fred had a whole range of radio spares for the keen constructor. Andrew's daughter had shared his table with plants and artistic pieces, while John's daughter was represented on her CD "Lorraine Bowen Experience". Ela had an interesting collection of tools on her table near Dave G3PEN with an assortment of spares and equipment.

Bob Boddy *et al* on the Waters & Stanton table contained many treasures, in particular the World Wide Radios- a PLL Digital

set that was very popular at £5. Following tests after the Table Top Sale the radio has proved a good performing addition in several members households.

Harry and Ethel had a large table full of items for the Farleigh Hospice which drew much attention and money as well.

Voting took place during the evening on the Amateur of the Year award. There was considerable social chat both in the hall and the bar that has become a feature of the Table Top Sale.

The raffle was drawn at 8.45pm with many people collecting first rate prizes, fruit cake included. Well done Colin!

*Report by David M0BQC.*

*Colin TRM sends many thanks to everyone whose great support for this event helped to raise nearly £80 for Club funds.*

### The Tale of a Dinosaur....

#### By David Barlow.

I remember my introduction to the construction of radio very well indeed. In about 1949 my father G3HGI (known as Dai on air) took me to a shop in Wolverhampton, an emporium that, to me, seemed like Aladdin's Cave. Our purchases included an old army compass box, sheets of clear Perspex, capacitors and coils, crystal with cats whisker and a coil of wire! Not to forget the pair of headphones with the khaki head band.

Over a few afternoons all these components were assembled and the end product was a battery-operated crystal set, all neatly assembled in the box with knobs on the top and one was able to see all the bits. The wire went from the set to my bedroom window and thence to the garden fence.

I spent so many hours listening to Radio Luxembourg that the set was taken away for a while. The beauty of headphones was that no sound could be heard by others, but the problem was that the lights had to go on in order to adjust the cat's whisker. Later the crystal was replaced with diodes and tuned circuits

I continued my interest in radio at school when I joined the Signals Section of the Cadet Force (what is worse - carrying a rifle or an 18 set?). This is where I first learned the Morse code. I recall going on camp to Sennybridge in the Brecon Beacons; we were in the observation area of the firing range but the wireless failed to operate. I noticed that two valves were not lit and changed

one of them - the set worked and I was given a Lance Corporal stripe!

I was a member of Stourbridge and District Amateur Radio Society (StARS) at the age of 15. In the late 1950's the Scouts World Jamboree took place in Sutton Park, Birmingham. StARS were invited to participate in the first Jamboree on the Air. I remember attending and spending a day in a smoke filled tent - it seems that all radio hams smoked in those days. Into the 1960's StARS was one of the leading contest radio clubs in the country, winning NFD in 1962 & 3.

On leaving school I had insufficient exam passes to take me to university. Why a lad who had spent his life in Malvern and North Worcestershire and, who had never been on a ship larger than a ferry, should want to go to sea is beyond me. I wanted to be involved with radio and go to sea and so enrolled at the Wireless College, Colwyn Bay.

The first lessons were to be the Morse code. A large room with wooden tables with two wires running down the sides, and wooden benches. Five students in a row, the one at the end sending for ten minutes then each in rotation. This for two and a half-hours a day. On Fridays there was a test and progress was carefully monitored. Within months one is moderately proficient at 20 wpm plain language and 15 wpm code.

It is worth pausing here to mention that the morse instructor was "Tubby" Nelson a partner on the College board. He could read morse by watching your wrist move! If a student sent three four two dots and a dash (flows quite nicely) and Tubby was watching, he would get a ruler across the back of his hand. Today I am a member of POLDHU ARC and the president is George Banner G3AHX, who sailed with spark transmitters in the 1930's, Tubby Nelson also taught George morse, thirty years before me. It is said we have very similar "fists".

The beauty of this method of teaching morse is that everyone has to send to a standard and your colleagues will soon tell you if your sending is no good. Secondly we sent articles selected from the newspaper and this was good practice in case you ended up on passenger ships where you would need to receive news, football and stock exchange reports for the benefit of the passengers. While there were some bad operators at sea, I must say that I never heard bad morse from anyone who attended at Colwyn Bay.

The aim was 20wpm plain language and 15 wpm code for a Second Class Postmaster General's Certificate and 25/20 for a First Class Certificate. In fact by the end of the course, we had contests to see who could send fast accurate morse on a straight key. 35 wpm was not unknown.

The remainder of the day would comprise lectures and practical work. These were to prepare us for the required examinations. The theory side had two exams: - Technical Electricity. Example question: Explain how the anode current of a triode valve is controlled by the potential of the grid with respect to the cathode. Define the terms Amplification Factor, Mutual Conductance and A.C. Resistance.

Radiocommunications. Example question: Upon what factors does the efficiency of an aerial depend? Describe a ships main aerial and explain the maintenance necessary to ensure its efficiency as a radiator. (more on ships aerials later in this article).

Practical exams included the morse test, adjustment, maintenance and practical working of equipment used on board ship, a very elementary test "sending and receiving spoken messages by telephone" and an oral test on knowledge of regulations relating to the safety of life at sea.

The College had a radio room with an early Marconi Oceanspan transmitter, an Electra receiver and a Lodestone

direction finder. One soon learned to use ones eyes first (is a fuse missing? Are the valve heaters alright?) then use the meter. We were taught how to use a soldering iron. There was also the all important battery room.

In the 1950's conscription was still with us. If one attended Wireless College and then spent six years at sea as a Radio Officer one could be excused call up. As can be seen this was not a decision one would take unless one had the real desire to follow a career in radio. The National Service rules were changed shortly before I was due for call up but it made no difference to me anyway.

*Charles GOGJS obtained this interesting story for us. There's quite a lot more to come. Next month David gets his PMG Certificate and goes to sea.*

## Member's Correspondence.

*Free for the asking!*

Geoff,

I have 10 years of Radcom from July 1970 to December 1980 to dispose of free if anyone's interested.

73 Dick Baker G4DJC.

01245-256416 or richard@g8hxl.freemove.co.uk

*It is with much pleasure that we publish the following Email received by John DET from Peter Naish who was a very active Club and Committee Member in the sixties.*

Hi John,

I was delighted to find a picture of myself with my dear friend Louis Varney G5RV, now SK, on the CARS web site. I well remember the occasion when we used GB2CRA in the Park in Chelmsford. I was a very young person at that time and a graduate engineer at Marconi's in New Street. I thought you would be interested to hear that I still retain my G3EIX callsign and often use it when I am in UK most years. I was a member of CARS for many years back in the sixties and was RSGB Regional Representative for East Anglia region for several years. I have lived in Sydney since 1967 and am very active as VK2BPN on the HF bands, mainly CW.

Louis was a great family friend and I recall with pleasure my many visits to his home in Galleywood Rd. Chelmsford where he developed his range of Elizabethan TVI proof transmitters and subsequently his famous multiband antenna. I also spent time with him in Venezuela in the mid-sixties when he was the Marconi representative in that area. Latterly in the seventies he was based in Papua New Guinea as VK9RV and he frequently operated from my station in Sydney as VK9RV/2 when on leave. He will be sorely missed.

I am still very active in the administration of amateur radio being the Federal President of the Australian national society, the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA). I have also just been elected a Director of IARU in Region 3. By the way, last week I was at the Conference in Darwin of IARU Region 3 and had the pleasure of meeting Don Beattie G3OZF, again after 33 years. As you know he is also a former CARS member and lived in Baddow. We recalled with nostalgia our times together in Chelmsford. He is of course my opposite number in RSGB. Please pass my very best regards to all those at CARS who remember me, especially Arthur Butcher G3KJP. If I can manage it I will try to attend one of the CARS meetings next time I am in UK.

73 Peter Naish VK2BPN, G3EIX. petern@alc.net.au

### Joint Editors.

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**Deadline for the next N/L is Wednesday 18th. October.**