



# Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

*Affiliated to the RSGB*

*Club Call Sign: G0MWT*

*President: Harry Heap G5HF*

*Chairman: John Bowen G8DET*

*Secretary: David Bradley M0BQC*

*Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI*

**Newsletter No.433**

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

**February 2002.**

## **The February Meeting - PSK 31 by Ian Moffat G0OZS.**

Many data modes are in use today, but one of the more recent to become popular is PSK31. Developed by Peter Martinez G3PLX after an idea by SP9VRC. The mode uses, as one would expect, Phase Shift Keying. But why 31? This will probably be explained during the talk. In PSK operation the phase of the carrier is shifted by 180 degrees instead of the more usual FSK or on/off keying. Early experiments used a specialised modem but nowadays the sound conversion qualities of the average 16-bit computer sound card are widely used. A freeware software program is required, both DOS and Windows versions are available, and a simple interface between the radio and sound card is required. A quite modest computer completes the requirements. The 14 MHz band is brisk with PSK traffic and operators keyboard chat to each other in a similar way to RTTY contacts but using considerably less bandwidth.

Interested? Well come along on **Tuesday, 5th. February to the MASC at 7-30pm when John G8DET** will introduce our guest speaker **Ian Moffat G0OZS** who will tell us all about it. You will leave the meeting far wiser and, we hope, fired up with enthusiasm to go home and have a go, combining radio and computers! As usual we will be having a raffle which is being run this time by our **Deputy Chairman and QSL Manager, Carl G3PEM.**

### **Dates For Your Diary.**

**Feb 3 Sth.Essex ARS Rally. Long Road, Canvey.**

**Feb 5 CARS Mtg. 'PSK 31' by Ian Moffat G0OZS.**

**Feb 13 CARS Comm. Mtg. 7-30pm D'bury Village Hall.**

**Mar 5 CARS Mtg. Marconi's Early Experiments. 7-30.**

### **Last Month's Meeting - The Junk Sale.**

Although the quantity of goods on offer was down on last year the quality with a few exceptions was, as expected, pretty good useful junk. The attendance however, was very good indeed, perhaps the best yet for this event, with lots of new faces to be seen. Adopting an aggressive sales drive Geoff KLV, not content with just selling raffle tickets at the door, took to the floor and with a little persistence managed to make a profit of £53!

After a sufficient period of time for viewing our Chairman called upon Colin TRM to commence the sale. He started with one or two reserved high priced items, some 2m rigs and a 20A PSU, for which little initial interest was shown. Things were slow to start, but as other items made their appearance things began to move. Items ranging from a working video recorder and a dot matrix printer down to smaller items such as a pair of working 2m handhelds were all offered. One or two items caught the imagination however, such as box of co-axial connectors and a pair of oilstones attracted very keen bidding. Towards the end of the sale the higher value items made another appearance and although not reaching their reserve prices did eventually change hands. David BQC, well supported as always by Jill, kept the accounts in order, to the tune of over £40. Colin was ably assisted by Chris IPU, Martin EFL and Ken RFT. Many thanks to all those who donated their goods, bought raffle tickets, or paid some commission to our funds and helped in any way. An enjoyable evening!

If the interest is still there next year would you like another one? We would welcome your thoughts! Perhaps we could combine it with the TableTop Sale?

### **Bradwell Power Station.**

Trevor AKA has pointed out that this site is due to close in about two months time. Anyone interested in a Club visit? The idea is to get there under one's own steam and form a party. If so contact him on 0794 103 9832 but bear in mind that time's running out.

### **Members News.**

We would like to offer a warm welcome to all those new Members, joining as a result of the Foundation Licence. They are Christine Cheverall, Suzanne Tokely, John Sanderson, Jeremy Barley, Rob Barrick, Paul Northover and Barry Townsend. Ron Spooner and Denis Falconer are existing Members who have joined the Foundation Course. Good luck to you all! We hope you will come to our meetings, stay with us and enjoy our activities in the future.

### **The CARS Christmas Dinner.**

Just when we thought we had produced the perfect January Newsletter we realised, when it was too late, that we had made a serious omission. The earlier part of the month had been a very busy time for the Club with the Marconi celebrations. We managed to give a brief account of each one but then we completely overlooked the main social event in the CARS calendar. I'm afraid we made no mention at all of our very enjoyable Christmas dinner at Pleshey, organised with their accustomed flair and attention to detail by Jill and David Bradley. As always the event was a great success, enjoyed by all those who attended; the highest attendance ever recorded. To keep us occupied between courses Colin TRM had organised a brainteaser for us. Our favourite dinner party entertainer, Harry 5HF, gave us another of his accomplished renditions of a Stanley Holloway type monologue, complete with hat and moustache! As usual the MC for the evening was our incorrigible Chairman, John G8DET

Thank you Jill and David. Please accept our abject apologies for this rather late appreciation.

## **Situation Vacant.**

Having organised the Christmas Dinner for the last 4 years Jill and David have decided it is time for them to relinquish this task and for someone else to take over!

We are appealing for a volunteer(s) to take on the organisation of this event. No organiser, no Christmas Dinner! Please contact our Chairman John G8DET.

## **The New Rig by Brian G3CVI.**

You will remember that at the AGM I hinted that we were contemplating the purchase of another rig with VHF capability. After much discussion it was decided to go ahead and so we now are the proud owners of a Yaesu FT 847, the required power supply GSV 3000 and an MFJ 941E ATU or ASTU as it should be named. The latter was not in stock but is expected to arrive "soonish".

I have had the rig on the bench in my shack and spent many happy hours setting up the menu and checking the results on all bands. Top Band to 70cm even 4m at 10W is an enormous coverage yet the system appears to function perfectly on each and every one. The front panel is jam-packed full of knobs and buttons but after a few careful readings of the handbook the "usual" controls stand out in ones mind and the performance is really very impressive. Reports from all over the globe remark upon the fine quality of the transmitter audio which even with the RF processor on, sounds well above the static background. The "moni" facility enables one to listen on phones to the transmitter signal so as to get it correctly adjusted. The DSP system is very effective in SSB and CW and the CW narrow selection gives virtually single signal reception. I found the heterodyne eliminator or "whistles chopper" as good as any I have tried on rigs costing twice as much.

The power supply was chosen firstly because our good friend "Uncle Bob" recommended it and secondly we wanted a supply, which did not have a fan running continuously with that unpleasant hum which can spoil the weaker signals. Although I had it running for hours at about 22 degrees C ambient it did not get heated and the fan did not start although there is one fitted for "summer" conditions I guess. John DET said "get a supply which is not easily picked up and shoved under a jumper by some sly visitor".....I assure you that is the last thing you could do with the GSV 3000....the mains transformer must weigh at least half the total and the whole item has a solid and reliable air about it.

I will not publish the financial aspects involved except to state that we are very lucky to be special customers of the establishment we deal with and are, as a Society very grateful for the kindness and consideration given.

The new rig was in use during the recent Marconi Celebrations from Sandford Mill on December 12th. It acquitted itself faultlessly and attracted compliments from a number of contacts.

## **The Foundation Course - Geoff G7KLV.**

Members will be aware of the need to attract new entrants to our hobby. They probably have some misgivings about the adoption of somewhat lower technical requirements to gain a Licence. There are three classes; Foundation 10W, Intermediate 50W and Full 400W. The hobby is changing. Once it was essentially a constructional hobby needing a really

sound understanding of basic principles but it has now become much more of a black box hobby!

It is only natural that established Amateurs view the changes with some scepticism but it is a fact of life, so we must all accept it. We must give the newcomers all the help we possibly can, in any way we can, to help them become good Amateurs and enjoy the hobby to the full.

That said, what is the Club doing towards this end? Quite a lot, actually!

A number of enthusiastic Club Members have got together and are running a Foundation course. There are presently nine students, including two of the fairer sex, ranging from an 11 year old to a gentleman at the other end of the age spectrum!

To bring their activities to your attention I went along and sat in at one of the classes (and I learnt a thing or two) to see what it is all about. This was the second evening; the first one was a general introduction to amateur radio and operating procedures. On my visit the evening was divided into two parts, the first part consisting of technical instruction. The instructors took it in turns to talk about a specific subject on the syllabus. The first talk was about the all important subject of safety and included safety to oneself, to others, mains isolation, three pin plugs, aerial erection, safety aspects of aerials, the hazards of batteries, RF power burns, damage to hearing and many other aspects. The second talk concerned coaxial plugs and coaxial cables. Students would not be required to make up coax leads but to be able to recognise the various types which would be encountered. Then followed instruction on good operating techniques, the correct order of usage of call signs and the essential wait to see if a channel is in use and the use of calling channels. Oddly enough, the Q code is not required but it was stressed that knowledge of a few of the more commonly used ones would be a distinct advantage.

Then the company was split up into three groups, each instructor taking three students and they assembled round the three operating stations, 2m, 70cms and HF which had been set up. Due to the site limitations it wasn't possible to have an HF TX working. The 2m link was fully operational with Brian CVI at the other end. Martyn EFL manned the far end of the 70cms link but there were local problems at our end which will be sorted for the next session. Naturally this part of the evening's activities was very popular amongst young and old. Incidentally the younger students had fully licensed fathers so they had a bit of a head start!

And who were the instructors? With his successful experience and leadership of SCARF, Chris is the obvious No.1 organiser. Able and enthusiastic assistance was provided by Trevor AKA and Carl PEM. There are four more evenings to go including the exam and results will be known on the night - no agonising wait. Chris would welcome any assistance from Members. His phone is 01245-269207.

My impressions? Whatever one may think of the Foundation Licence one cannot fail to be impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of all those Members who are giving up their time to support this project!

## **Joint Editors.**

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**Deadline for the March N/L is Wed. 14th. February.**