



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

Web Address: www.g0mwt.org.uk

Newsletter No. 444

January 2003

The January Meeting. Homebrew Construction Techniques, Discussions and Demonstrations. Tuesday 7th. January, 7-30pm at the MASC.

The problem with the January meeting is the uncertainty of the weather. If we invite a speaker, particularly from a distance, will he be able to make it through the snow and ice and other assorted hazards associated with January? Who knows! In the past we used to organise a video evening but that seems a bit old hat these days, what with CD's and DVD's not to mention the humble VCR!

This month we have persuaded a few Members living locally to demonstrate some construction techniques, such as soldering and cable terminating. Murray JYB will hold one of his popular computer clinics and Brian CVI will be demonstrating operation of our new rig. All simple stuff but what we would really like to do is to fire up the imagination of complete novices in such matters and persuade them to have a go and build something.

Just one new recruit to home construction would make the evening worthwhile. Don't worry, there are plenty of Members willing and able to help you on your way. Just imagine the sense of achievement in actually using a piece of kit you've built yourself. There will be a number of demonstrators dotted round the room. Go and talk to them. And, even if home construction is really not for you, it's an ideal opportunity to socialise.

We will be holding our usual raffle. This month it will be organised and run by the Newsletter Editors Geoff G7KLV and Colin G0TRM.

It is with regret that we record the sad passing of **Ron Spooner M3RJS** after a short illness. It doesn't seem so long ago that Ron joined the Club to take the Foundation Course. It must have been very easy for him as he had been a ground radio operator with the RAF in WW2. He was only recently persuaded by his friend Jim Batchelor M1GUS to do the M3. He soon became a very enthusiastic Morse operator. After wartime service he had various jobs but towards the end of his working career he was a civil plant machinery salesman. He had always maintained a keen interest in radio and communications equipment. I only met Ron at the Club meetings but my lasting impression is of a very cheerful and positive personality. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts are with his family in their sad bereavement. Geoff G7KLV.

Dates For Your Diary.

January	7	CARS Meeting. MASC 7-30pm, as above
January	15	CARS Committee Mtg. Danbury Village Hall 7-30pm.
February	2	Sth. Essex ARS. 10am, "The Canvey Rally", The Paddocks, Long Road.
February	4	CARS Meeting. VHF & UHF Propagation, Les Barclay G3HTF & EGM.

Notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting

There will be an EGM at the end of the February meeting to approve a revised Constitution, copies of which will be available at the January meeting. The purpose of this is to update the existing Constitution and bring it into line with the latest RSGB recommendations

The Canvey Rally

For a number of years the Club has had a stand at the Canvey Rally and our Retail Sales Manager Colin G0TRM has already booked our stand. In the past this has been a good little earner for Club funds. With your help 2003 will be no exception. If you have any electrical or electronic goods that your wife would like to see the back of, we would be only too glad to dispose of it for her!

Our Manager is assisted by Chris IPU, Martyn VAM/EFL and me, Geoff KLV. Have a good hunt round and bring your contributions to the January meeting or let us know and we will arrange collection for you.

A Happy and Prosperous New Year to all our Readers

Last Month's Meeting.

Our December meeting was in three parts and, although it over-ran, most Members stayed 'till the end, so they appreciated the contributions from our three Club Members.

Brian G4CTS's Question & Answer

BRIAN G4CTS was first. He lives in South Woodham Ferrers with his wife, Julie and son, Philip M0BDY. I introduced Brian and asked him to explain how he coped. He said, "I don't cope, I live. Life is for living and as we only get one chance I make the best of it." This was a typical response from Brian whose outlook at all times is so positive.

At a very young age he was confined to hospital having orthopaedic operations but he didn't get on well in the hospital school because he couldn't see the board, so they gave him a GEC SW radio to play with. This taught him geography because all the stations he listened to were talking about their own countries. The radio was an AC/DC set and kept giving him shocks. One day he heard two fellows "yakking" on 40 m AM and they did this every day. Brian mentioned this to a man from the Pru and he said, "I know a man who does that. I'll ask him to visit you." The man turned out to be Jack G3OPA who explained all about amateur radio and Brian joined the Loughton Radio club who lent him a better radio and he then went on to learn the RAE course.

Ken Owen was teaching him and started with a battery and a bulb to show how electrical connections are made, but Brian couldn't see the bulb go out when disconnected, so Ken replaced the bulb with a bell! Everything built up from there. Brian calls radio his window on the world and, although local people know he is disabled nobody HAS to know, and on the radio no one does know. We are all equal!

Q. How does he tune up his radio? Today it is simple because of Auto-ATU, but in the old days he used an RF Sniffer with a tone output to indicate max and min and he claims to have tuned up more accurately than a sighted person because he could hear a change in the Sniffer tone before the instrument needle moved. He said, "What makes it simple for me, is people like you building the right kit."

Q. How did he learn Morse? These days it is more difficult because the regulations have changed. He did his Morse in 1971 and the regulations said you have to send and receive Morse at not less than 12 words per minute. It didn't say that you have to understand it! So he and the examiner "worked to rule" by shouting the letters at the examiner as he sent the Morse and the examiner shouted the letters for Brian to send. These days you have to carry out a QSO and he didn't think he could manage that in Morse.

Q. How do you manage a computer? Brian's computer speaks to him and reads what is on the screen and a program lists all the commands but he said he preferred "good old DOS" because using Windows is like using a foreign language

Q What set do you use? Brain uses a Kenwood 570 and the alternative mike with PTT. Up and Down, and four function buttons. Modern sets have knobs that go on forever, with no top and bottom stops, but if a sighted person sets it all up, Brian can control virtually everything from the microphone.

Q How does a speech chip work? The computer has a special program that reads the screen and a speech synthesiser reads it out in English. This is easier than Julie reading it out to him, because she would get tired and the computer doesn't. You can ask the computer to read a word, a line, a sentence or everything. It is important that the program works quickly and you must have a "shut up" key, because there may be things on the screen you don't want to hear. For example, on e-mails there are ads and lists of addresses which are not wanted. On the radio, frequency is spoken in figures and the mode (USB, LSB etc) is given in Morse.

Q How did you manage the RAE? To pass the exam you have to display the same understanding as a sighted person and Brian said he was lucky to get his RAE before it was changed to multichoice. He was given all the discrete components to feel and large circuits were built breadboard fashion and he learnt these as maps. The components were not soldered but connected by twisting the wires. In the exam he had to describe the maps and there was no time limit for the exam, which he took at home.

Q Are you planning any trips? He has been to Australia and America and has no plans at the moment, but on the way to Australia, they had to pass through Singapore with a handheld rig in the luggage. He advised that if anyone wants to pass through a foreign country with radio gear, even if they are not proposing to use it there, make sure that all the paperwork is completed correctly. There have been cases where the equipment has been impounded.

Q How do you get around? It doesn't matter whether you go on legs or on wheels as long as people provide ramps as well as stairs and fit large enough doors to the loo. (Contrary to what some people say, he has to go too!). Parliament is debating a Discrimination Bill, but this may not help and can even bite back. If Brian goes to Hylands House he pays half price because he cannot go upstairs, but the Discrimination Bill may rule that he has to pay full price, but he still cannot go upstairs. He hopes that the politicians and everyone else will use common sense, although he realises that common sense is not very common!

Q Is there anything you cannot do? Brian faces problems every day, but it isn't often that they cannot manage. Next week they are hoping to come to the

Club Dinner, but before then Julie will take him to the Pub to make sure that the wheelchair will fit under the table. Forward planning is essential, but it doesn't stop him doing anything.

Q Do you get any help from the Radio Society? He is very grateful for the Newsletter in Text each month, because he doesn't like PDF. He updates his Anti-Virus program every day and he is very grateful for Honorary Membership of the Club, something he didn't ask for. Also club members help with practical problems. He has heard that his aerial problems have been discussed on the 21 net and then Tony G4YTG comes round to sort it out! He said, "I feel that Amateur Radio is not as friendly as it used to be and it is following the trend of general society - I'm alright Jack. People are so busy that they do not have time to help others. I'm all in favour of the Foundation Courses, but I hope that newcomers will be taught the importance of helping others and good manners on the air. It isn't only disabled who need help and if the club starts a list of experts who are willing to give help, I would offer to be included on it. I cannot climb masts, but there may be other ways I can help. But we MUST emphasise the friendship side of Amateur Radio!"

Well said, Brian!!

Logging Software by Carl G3PEM

Carl G3PEM carried out a review of logging programmes available, because the speaker we hoped to invite was unable to come. His survey included comments taken from Radcom, Bartg magazine and DX News. He emphasised that he was not making recommendations, but was reporting what he had found.

There are about 85 packages available. Of the 40,000 DXers in the world, about 2000 have voted for the best packages, but before selecting one, it is important to note the RA requirements on logging, (see BR68 which comes with the licence), which are:-
DATE. UK = Day-Month-Year US= Month-Day-Year Universal=Year-Month-Day

Bear in mind that Universal may eventually be standard.

TIME UTC (by Atomic Clock) is the same as GMT (Astronomical)

FREQUENCY BAND Since 1971 you need only log the Band.

CLASS OF EMISSION M3 licences put in words eg SSB. Full licences must put designator eg J3E

POWER LEVEL In the UK mandatory, but not in USA, Holland etc. M3 licences put 10watts, Full licences put xdBW

INITIAL CALLS

STATION WORKED

TESTS PERFORMED

LOCATION if temporary Can be put in REMARKS column

The Log can be written in a book, kept on magnetic tape or other electronic storage method, but there must be a means to produce and view a hard copy at the main address of the licensee.

Some shareware does not allow printing of a hard copy unless you register and perhaps pay a fee. Steps must be taken to ensure there is adequate back-up of the log and it must be stored for six months. The most popular programs are DX4WIN, LOGGER (which is good at psk31, has a good helpline, but needs lots of data for maximum benefit) and CT (costs \$100, needs at least 386 chip and 2MB of RAM. It is easy to use and used widely in the USA). WRITELOG uses Windows 95, costs \$100 and is easy to install with a good helpline. NA is DOS based, like CT, costs \$50 and will run on a 286 chip.

SD (Superdooper) is the one used by our Club, costs \$25, and is easy to use and will run on any PC. LUXLOG will track Awards, is easy to use but needs a large disc. PROLOG2K comes from the American Datamatrix and is Windows based. XMLOG prints QSL cards and is easy to use. YPLOG is free, but you only get upgrades if you register. AM RAD is designed like the RSGB logbook and is free, but you can only print from it if you register.

WINLOG32 is free and you are invited to register. It tracks Awards and is quite good. SHACKLOG was developed by Alan Jupp G3PMR and is easy to set up and use. It is widely used in the UK.

FREEVIEW TV by Murray G6JYB

FREEVIEW is TV broadcasting on terrestrial transmitters using digital techniques and they are at present run in parallel with existing analogue transmissions. Analogue is scheduled to be phased out in 2010 and the changeover will start in five years. It is possible that before then there will be legislation to forbid sales of analogue sets and video recorders. Freeview is free, no subscriptions, and you can see it by adding DVT adapters to your existing sets.

Several channels are collected together into digital streams and each stream is called a Multiplex. Each Multiplex occupies the same 8 MHz width that an analogue signal uses and they have been fitted in between the existing TV channels. With analogue, the video is AM, the sound FM and the colour is phase modulation. With digital in each megahertz slot there are 1705 carriers and this is how you kill multipath interference. The system is designed to be very robust and free from interference.

Advantages of the system include extra channels (including radio) kids programmes documentaries, news, entertainment, shop & travel, and music. The six multiplexes will provide the following channels for the Sudbury transmitter-

MUX1 BBC 1, 2, 3 and News 24 (CH 49)

MUX2 ITV 1,2, Ch4 and 4 xtra (CH 56)

MUXA Ch5, ITV News, QVC, TV Travel (CH 48)

MUXB BBC4, BBCi video, BBC Parliament, Community, BBC radio (CH 39)

MUXC UK History, SkyNews, SkySports, SkyTravel (CH 54)

MUXD TMF, The Hits, UKTV, tba?, Commercial radio. (CH 50)

NB BBC1 (CH 51), BBC2 (CH 44), ITV (CH 41)
CH4 (CH 47), CH5 (CH35).

The Table shows channels and power, indicating the greatly reduced levels for digital. This may lead to some difficulties in receiving Sudbury because the present aerials in use may not be able to receive the higher channels.

To receive digital you need some decoder and at present the safer plan would be to buy one of the separate adapters and they may soon be cheap enough to feed a video recorder. Be careful to buy a box with after sales support. At the moment it is cheaper to buy an adapter than to buy a digital TV set. The ITV digital boxes have no support or updates.

Beware of Sky Boxes which often block frequencies and cheap aerials from market stalls and make sure you get the right aerial group. You need broadband, but not too broad.

For further information see attached references. The DTG site is best for checking what the signal levels are likely to be at your postcode.

References:-

Freeview -- www.freeview.co.uk
BBC Digital -- www.bbc.co.uk/digital/
Digital Television Group (DTG) -- www.dtg.org.uk
(Best for Postcode searches)
Independent Television Commission (ITC) --
www.itc.org.uk
Pace -- www.pace.co.uk &
www.pacefreetoview.co.uk
Antiference -- www.antiference.co.uk
DigitalSpy -- www.digitalspy.co.uk (Terrestrial)
Newsgroups -- uk.tech.digital-tv & uk.tech.broadcast

Our thanks to Harry G5HF for this report.

HF. My Experiences by Martyn M3VAM.

When I took the Morse Assessment on 7th November 2001, together with Jim 2E1GUA and other Members of CARS at RSGB HQ (this was the first of the pilot schemes) little did I know how much enjoyment I would get from operating on the HF bands. I was, and still am, a very keen VHF operator particularly 6m but HF is just giving me so much enjoyment.

My very first contact on the HF bands was on 1st January 2000 at 0.15am on 80m with, guess who, and this was only by chance! Yes you are right, non other than Chris GOIPU. My signal report was 59+. Well he does live very close to me!

To date, I have made 774 contacts all USB. This consists of 67 countries with 24 confirmed. Thanks must go here, to Jim 2E1GUA/M3GUA for looking up the addresses on his computer. Believe it or not, at the present time I still don't possess one.

I have already received QSL cards from Canada VE,

Japan JH, Svalbard JW, India VU, Israel 4X, Algeria 7X, Cape Verde D44 and the USA W, to name just a few. My favourite band is 15m with 20 m a close second. I do take part in the HF contests but not seriously. However, over the weekend 26th/27th October 2002 I really enjoyed myself in the World HF Contest and worked 32 countries 6 of which were new ones for me. They included Brazil ZX, Barbados 8P, French Territories TO, Venezuela YV, United Nations 4U, and Federation of St Kitts and Nevis V4.

This only goes to prove that with 10 Watts you really can work the world. My aerial is a long wire 27 feet long and 18 feet high and is pointing East. It is tuned by a SGC 237 Auto Tuner which is located on the outside wall of the house under the eaves.

My radio is an Icom 746. I hope that this short piece will encourage others. You can really, really, send your signal around the world with a small station. My Aim for the future? Well it must be to get my DXCC on HF.

One closing point, my callsign M3VAM is formed of my wife's initials, Valerie Ann Medcalf. I chose this to say thank you for putting up with me playing Radio!

The CARS Christmas Party

To those of us with a superstitious frame of mind Friday the 13th. didn't augur well for our Christmas Party. However, as it turned out, the event was a great success under the expert guidance and hosting of Ken G7RFT as he welcomed us all into the cosy hospitality of the Anchor at Runsell Green. Promptly at eight our first course arrived, served by a bunch of energetic and charming young ladies. So it was to continue throughout the evening. Between courses our minds were occupied by a John DET callsign quiz, won by Geoff EDM. Harry entertained us with a poem to be followed by a jolly sing-song led by Tony YTG on his accordion.

There was the usual draw with a range of excellent prizes. Even if one was not one of the lucky ones we all agreed it was a most successful and enjoyable evening and I am sure that Jill and David M0BQC were able to sit back and relax, having been in the 'hot seat' for so many years!

Our thanks to Ken RFT and Jean, who no doubt assisted him, for organising such a delightful evening. Thank you both.

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Meetings at :- MASC, Beehive Lane
CHELMSFORD.

Secretary: David Bradley 01245- 602838

Newsletter Editors

Colin G0TRM 01245-223835

colinpage@ukgateway.net

Geoff G7KLV 01245-473822

geoff@g7klv.free-online.co.uk

Deadline for the February N/L is Wed.15 Jan