



Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

Established 1936

Affiliated to the RSGB
President: Harry Heap G5HF
Secretary: Martyn M3VAM

Club Call Sign: G0MWT
Chairman: John Bowen G8DET
Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI

Newsletter No 482

Web Address: www.g0mwt.org.uk

April 2006

CONGRATULATIONS on CARS being 70 Years Old this Month

**This Month's Meeting - Tuesday, 4th April. 7-30pm at the MASC
RNLI - Illustrated Talk by Robin Butcher.**

The talk and film will cover the brief history of the RNLI and update us as to its latest work in saving souls from the Sea. The lifeboats and support vehicles have to have very good communication equipment to be able to talk to helicopters, Police etc so maybe we will hear about this aspect as well. The RNLI operate not only at sea but also on many beaches around our coasts and on some inland waterways in the UK.

Sir William Hilary, a past owner of Danbury Palace went to the Isle of Man in 1818 and campaigned for the introduction of Lifeboats. In 1826 he gave a Lifeboat to the four principal harbours of the Island. So started the first sea rescue service, so we have a local claim to fame.

Robin is flying back from Hong Kong by Cathay Pacific to give this Talk. If for any reason he is delayed, watch the CARS Web Site for further information.

Please come and support this Charitable Service.

There will be a "Celebration Raffle" run by Colin, G0TRM & Geoff, G7KLV.

Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 2 April	RSGB 1 st RoPoCo/CW Contest
3 rd , 12 th & 20 th April	RSGB Club Championship Contest
8/9 th April	Japan International DX/CW
Sunday 9 th & 23 rd April	VHF Contests
Wednesday 12 April	CARS Committee Meeting, DVH 7.30pm. All Members welcome.
Sat/Sun 20/21 May	Kelvedon Hatch, Secret Nuclear Bunker invitation

International Marconi Day - Public Opening times 10 am to 5pm - Free!

CARS celebrates the Birthday of Marconi on the nearest Saturday, which this year is the 22nd April. This is where CARS is looking for Operators and your support. We always have a core of Operators but would like to see more of the M3's, 2E0's & M0's attend. You do not have to Operate but why not get the feel of the operation by Logging. If you really feel you cannot Operate or Log, please turn up and Host - simply to tell the members of the public what is happening.

Contact Brian, G3CVI on 01245 471919 or E-Mail him on g3cvi@g0mwt.org.uk

Our grateful thanks to Denis and Joy for posting this Newsletter. Could it have gone by E-Mail?

Please keep our Membership Secretary, informed of any changes to your callsign or E-Mail addresses, etc.

For further details contact our Programme Secretary: Martyn M3VAM on 01245-469008 or look on the CARS Web Site.
Club Nets: Tuesdays 8-30pm: (2nd) 145.375 : (3rd) 1.947 : (4th) 1.947 : (5th) 145.375. All +/- QRM.

March Meeting - Satellite Weather Reception by Andy Tyler, G1GKN

Introduction

Andy started by explaining that his theme was how to receive weather satellite pictures using simple and low cost equipment. In 1985 his interest was aroused, but the equipment was very expensive and there was very little software available, but by the mid 1990s it was possible to use a sound card to interface receiver output with the computer and produce satellite pictures. His first attempt was to use a scanner fed by a Slim Jim antenna, but the quality of the picture was very poor. Andy commented "I could just make out Spain"

History

The first weather satellite was TIROS, launched in 1960 and it carried cameras for visible light only, but it only lasted 78 days. After several more TIROS satellites the NIMBUS series was launched and by 1978 seven had taken off. These were the first Polar Orbiters, and they used APT (Automatic Picture Transmission) and scanned Infrared images as well as visible light. In 1971 NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration) was formed to operate all US weather satellites after they had been launched and commissioned by NASA. There have been 18 NOAA satellites, four still in use. In Europe Eumetsat was formed in 1976 to oversee the European satellite programme and they launched the first Meteosat in 1978. This was Geostationary, orbiting around the Equator at the same speed as the earth and so appears stationary from the ground. Seven Meteosats have been launched and are to be phased out this year and replaced by the MSG (Meteosat Second Generation) series, two of which are already in service. Russia, Japan, China and India have all been active with weather satellites.

How it works

There is no such thing as coloured satellite pictures, all transmissions being in greyscale (black and white) which gives the best resolution. Polar satellites have 14.1 orbits per day at a height of about 800km and they pass overhead at about the same time each day. The current US Polar satellite is NOAA 18 and has an expected life of 2 years. Life of a satellite is usually determined by the fuel needed for positioning it and keeping it on station. The most important instrument on the satellite is the AVHRR (Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer) which scans the earth's surface and produces the pictures in visible light and various frequencies of infra red. Satellites also carry SARSAT equipment for Search and Rescue, handling emergency radio calls from ships and personal distress beacons.

NOAA 18

The latest orbiter has three transmissions - APT on VHF, HRPT (high resolution) on 1.69GHz and

Beacon and SARSAT. Power is about 5 watts and the resolution about 4 km. There is a 2.4 kHz sub-carrier modulated with an FM carrier holding the AM picture data. Doppler Shift would normally distort the picture data, but the 2.4 kHz carrier acts as a reference and avoids the need for Doppler correction. There is also optical distortion caused by the earth's spherical surface, but this is corrected before transmission. The transmission is RHCP (right hand circular polarisation). Six data channels are used from the sensors, but only two at a time are transmitted, giving two pictures, side by side. In daylight one picture is visible data and the other infra red, but at night two different infra red channels are used.

APT Data

This is very simple to receive, uses a low cost antenna, and there is no need to track the antenna and only a low end computer is required - a 486 should work well. The resolution is low, but good enough for most amateurs needs. HRPT gives higher resolution (1.1 km) but is encrypted and uses 1.69-1.71GHz. The power is about 6 watts with a digital split-phase phase modulated signal requiring a more expensive receiver and a tracking antenna. A faster and more modern computer is also required to handle the data. Full information can be obtained from the Internet, search for 'NOAA KLM Series'.

The current Geostationary satellite is Meteosat 8 (formerly MSG 1) and uses linear polarisation. It uses a SEVIRI radiometer (Spinning Enhanced Visible and Infra Red Imager) which provides twelve simultaneous channels of data, three visible and 9 infra red. One complete earth image is received every 15 minutes and animation is easy to arrange and stunningly spectacular.

Fortunately (for us) the MSG 1 lost its main amplifier just after launch and the downlink is now provided via the commercial Hotbird satellite, which can be found at 13 degrees East (just East of South). The system is now called Eumetcast. Last August MSG 2 was launched and at present is being commissioned. (See the MSG system live on Marconi day, Sandford Mill on 22nd April - G5HF)

What is required

For orbiting satellites you can use a cross-dipole antenna with or without reflector, but a better antenna is the QFH (helical) made from 8mm copper tube. The receiver is crystal controlled in 10 kHz steps and has a 30-40 kHz IF bandwidth, which is necessary to get good picture quality. A scanning facility is necessary, but commercial scanners are not usually satisfactory because the IF bandwidth is too low. If you are capable of modifying a scanner, you might be

able to replace the IF stages. The 2.4 kHz sub-carrier is used to stop the scan. A 5 kHz low pass filter is used in the output to the computer soundcard.

The simplest software is WXSAT which is free on a floppy, but a better one is WXtolmg (WX to Image) which is about 7MB. There is also JVFX or JV-COMM 32. To obtain tracking information you need WXTRACK from David Taylor or one of several others such as TRACKSAT and SPACETRACK. Most tracking software will enable you to update the Kepler Elements which can be downloaded from Internet and provide the data to define the orbit of each satellite.

Costs

- Kit for receiver costs from around £50
- Cross dipole antenna £50
- Software is mostly free but for Geostationary a good package would cost about £200.

Eumetcast

The datastream from MSG1 is encrypted but Eumetsat will give amateurs and schools a three year licence free of charge, but charge £55 for the software. This satellite also provides images from other satellites around the world, so you can watch hurricanes, volcanoes and other disasters as they happen. Be warned you need a modern computer to handle 180MB per day!

To receive Hotbird you need a dish and LNB at least 60 cm, but bigger if you can, and a DVB receiver or card to put in the computer. The latter is designed for data transfer and gets very hot, so you may need extra cooling. Password encryption is on a key which plugs into the USB port of the computer.

- DVB card costs £50
- DVB Receiver £80
- Encryption software costs £75
- David Taylor Software: £50
- **Warning:** setting up the software is not easy.

The Future

The next European is METOP, a polar orbiter and this will start the digital age. The datastream is on 137.1MHz (low resolution) and 1.69/1.71GHz for high resolution. There are several ways to receive it, including Eumetcast TV. The low resolution will be free, but digital and there is no software available yet, but the Launch is due in August and no doubt some software will emerge later this year. The NOAA orbital system will continue to 2016, so it is still worthwhile setting up some equipment to receive it.

Conclusion

Satellite weather pictures have never been easier to receive. You can buy a kit or build your own and set the whole thing up for £200, provided you already have a computer. Two organisations to help you with information are GEO and RIG.

Andy then gave a splendid live demonstration of receiving a picture from NOAA 17 including the simulated Tracking program on which we could watch the satellite approaching the UK from South Africa. We must congratulate Andy on staging a live demonstration, which went without a hitch, mainly because of his considerable knowledge and experience of the subject.

Note from G5HF:-

If you have a modern computer with a fast processor and lots of memory, you can receive the MSG high resolution pictures for about £180, using a commercial DVB receiver, Eumetsat software to de-encrypt the data and David Taylor software to process the pictures. However, the setting up of the software is not easy. I tried for 18 months and failed! But Dave Cawley of Timestep will set it up for you. He will wipe out everything on your computer and return it with a fully working system)

Harry Heap, G5HF

Group for Earth Observations

Francis Bell, Director of Group for Earth Observations kindly donated a number of their quarterly magazines to the Meeting which were eagerly taken from the Raffle Stand as prizes. He has also kindly offered to send anyone reading this (in the UK), a Back-copy of their quarterly magazine on receipt of four First Class UK Stamps together with their Name & Address. This offer is for only up to two copies - after that you are requested to join the GEO Group.

Write to:- Francis Bell, Coturnix House, Rake Lane, Milford, Godalming, Surrey. GU8 5AB. Quote "CARS"

Tom Frankland, G4INM - Silent Key.

I first met Tom at the Club fourteen years ago but I didn't really get to know him until I started going to rallies with him accompanied by Stan G0SXK, Alan G0LSH and silent key Ralph G3NAA. He was very good company and I soon learnt that the rather provocative statements he sometimes made was his way of getting a discussion going. It could range from politics to all subjects under the sun but always came back to radio. It was just his way!

Tom was very keen on Morse and helped to train many amateurs but he had a wide range of interests apart from radio. He edited a retired civil servants newsletter, he was interested in model engineering, he was an artist, a horticulturist, he read the classics, he listened to music; you name it he did it or had done it! His working life was radio.

When his sight started to fail we still went to rallies, taking it in turns to guide him round and describing what was on each stand. He accepted the loss of sight without complaint or bitterness and adapted, managing to continue to lead a full but different life, finding new comradeship at St. Dunstons.

Tom was a family man, with a son, "Young Tom", and daughter Pat who looked after him following the passing of his Wife, Gladys, some years back.

As a CARS Honorary Member Tom attended Club meetings regularly until his general health failed. He will be missed by his many friends and 'on the air' contacts. Our sympathy and thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Geoff Lovegrove, G7KLV

Tom Frankland G4INM

Tom went silent key at the Farleigh Hospice on the 6th March after a short illness. His funeral was held at the Chelmsford Crematorium on the 15th of March. The Chapel was over full and people were standing both in the hall and the foyer. CARS was well represented with many members and some with their Wives and Partners. A contingent from the Civil service Fellowship; which Tom had in the past been Chairman and more recently the Secretary, until his sight became too bad to continue. Representation was also given by members of the St. Dunstons Radio Society and Essex Kite Group.

His son (also called Tom) and Tony, G4YTG gave the eulogy and told us of some of his career exploits. He had been in Radio servicing all his life and was in the RAF in the Second World War servicing the Radios in Hurricanes and Spitfires. As he was small in stature he said he always got the jobs where it was required to get down inside the fuselage towards the tail. During WWII D-Day landings he was operating in a communication Radio Vehicle on one of the beaches but always refused to detail the horrors he experienced.

After the War he worked for EMI in Audio, Radio and Television and serviced TVs in Downing Street and in Buckingham Palace. During the Queen's Coronation he was positioned on Admiralty Arch keeping the Cameras working. Before his retirement he worked for the Home Office and moved to Chelmsford and worked at Springfield Police Headquarters, servicing the Radio systems to the cars and stations. He was a very keen Radio Amateur and Morse Code Operator. He ran the RSGB slow morse transmissions every weeknight for 20 years and was responsible for getting many fellow Amateurs their 'A' Licence qualification. His main interest in the Hobby was QRP or low power working and he would go on

the air early every morning working stations all over the world many of them regular friends using less power than would light a torch bulb.

During his later years of retirement when he began to lose his sight he became a member of St Dunstons and frequently ran their morning radio net. He took up kite flying, originally to erect aerials, joined the Essex Kite Group and became a popular participant in the activities of two line fun flying. He was well liked and respected by so many, one of life's Gentlemen!

We will all miss him greatly.

Tony Gilbey, G4YTG

CARS Member Helps Recover Satellite

Communications with the Amateur Radio Satellite Cute-1.7 was lost on Wednesday, 8th March and an appeal was put out for Amateurs to monitor the CW telemetry beacon frequency of 437.385 MHz. See:-

http://www.southgatearc.org/news/march2006/cute_urgent_appeal.htm

David Barber G8OQW had been supplying the Cute-1.7 team in Japan with telemetry data and on Thursday 9th March he received the following email from the Project Manager which indicates that the satellite has now been successfully reset.

*Dear David Barber,
We were successful in reset and recovery of Cute-1.7 + APD CW transmitting on recent Tokyo visible pass. If you have some time to receive on the next pass, please confirm the CW HK data.
Thank you for your every receiving!!*

*Naoki Miyashita
Tokyo Institute of Technology
Cute-1.7 + APD Project Manager.*

Cute-1.7 information:

On the web more info can be found at:

http://lss.mes.titech.ac.jp/ssp/cute1.7/index_e.html

Cubesat Cute-1 (launched June 30, 2003) has now been allocated Oscar 55.
Cubesat Cute-1.7 (launched Feb 22, 2006) has now been allocated Oscar 56.

Thanks to David & Trevor for the info.

BYLARA - British Young Ladies Amateur Radio Association

CARS has been informed of the existence of the above Association who are always looking for new Members. E-Mail Carol Ann Hodges, 2E1RBH at: -

carolonfraggle@tiscali.co.uk

BYLARA membership is just £3.50 per year, which includes a quarterly Magazine. Their website is <http://www.bylara.net/>

Feedback

This section is reserved for items where more information has come to light since a previous Newsletter has been published.

The Compact Electric Light Bulbs referred to in the March Newsletter are now cheaper at Netto, Heybridge, near Maldon at under £1.00 each. They only have Philips 18Watt, made in China for mainly the Scandinavian market. Asked whether it was a price-error -"No".

<http://www.netto.co.uk/>

Ken, G7RFT says that he has reduced his year's electric consumption by 20% by doing all the things in the March CARS Newsletter - this being about what his supplier has increased his charges by! Thanks for the feedback, Ken.

Your Committee would like to hear from YOU.

What Lecture/Presentation would you like to see at CARS Monthly Meetings?

Would you be interested in a coach outing to Bletchley Park in June or July?

Would you like to go around the BAE Systems Anechoic Antenna Range at Great Baddow, one evening during the Summer?

Please tell us.

Wind Farms

A bright "spark" on a recent TV show dealing with the energy question said "Why don't we just build windmills close to houses and just connect them straight into the houses?" Well this is why....

The wind is very variable in strength so a minimum must be set below which the rotor will not be able to

generate. Also that and the maximum strength at which the blades must be feathered for safety reasons is the useable range to drive the dynamo in the turbine head. The dynamo is not very efficient electrically (60% is possible) and produces about 400 volts DC which is sent down the tower via cables (lossy due the high current) to an inverter which produces 3 phase 11 kV at 50 Hz. This has to be synchronised and fed to the National Grid.

The inverter efficiency is about 60% at best. The overall electrical efficiency is therefore about 36% and even though wind is free, the whole system makes an Engineer blush.

The layman does not realise that DC cannot be transformed, especially to the high voltages required to transmit electricity over the grid. High voltages are essential to keep the current as low as possible because losses are proportional to the current squared ($P=I^2R$).

As for the energy output from wind-driven generators...well the less said the better. It will require many thousands of them to replace a decent power station driven by "other" means. If someone were to ask "why not put an alternator in the turbine head"...the answer is because the rotor speed is far too variable to stay synchronised with the mains.

I have said nothing about the initial costs (or noise) and the highly dangerous maintenance required especially for those sites at sea....another story; .ask the Danes!!!

Brian G3CVI

GB3VHF - A Beacon for the 21st Century

After several decades of excellent service, the 144.430 MHz beacon located at Wrotham in Kent (JO01DH), was replaced on Sunday 26th February 2006 with a new state of the art beacon incorporating several new RF and digital features.

To enable the beacon to be monitored at extreme ranges, the beacon additionally transmits it's callsign and locator using WSJT JT65B mode.

The GPS also provides for the precise timing of the keying sequence, such that the JT65B sequence will start at every even minute past the hour for 48 seconds duration.

The Morse sequence commences at the start of each odd minute past the hour and last for 13 seconds. The RF power output of the beacon is 30 Watts.

The new hardware is only the fourth to be employed, since the beacon first became operational in 1959 just after International Geophysical Year (IGY).

The beacon antennas which comprise of two 3-element yagis are provided 48 metres AGL are unchanged, and have been employed since the mid-1980's when the current mast replaced the original. The base of the mast is approximately 213m ASL.

The beacon website is <http://www.g0afh.com/gb3vhf/>

Trevor M5AKA

Foundation Courses

On 16th February 2006, nine candidates passed their Foundation exam at the Danbury Village Hall. They were: - Richard Beck, Jim Salmon, Chris Mills, Aaron Payne, Alex Lees, Chris Layton, Gail Osborne, Grant Stockbridge and Adrian Booker.

All should by now have received their call-signs. Congratulations to all, including the CARS Tutors.

A group picture taken after the exam can be seen at <http://www.g0mwt.org.uk/training/photos/p-found.htm>

We are now taking bookings for the next Foundation course which starts Thursday 25th May. To book a place contact the Training Co-ordinator Clive Ward G1EUC Tel: 01245-224577 Mob: 07860-418835. Email: training2006@g0mwt.org.uk Web: <http://www.g0mwt.org.uk/training>

73 Trevor M5AKA

CARS 2 Metre Net Report

The monthly CARS VHF Net on Tuesday, 14th March was well supported by G3EDM; Geoff; G3CVI, Brian M0XAP; Patrick; MODUT, Jeremy; M0BQC, David G0TRM; Colin; 2E1GUA; James; G5HF/P, Harry G8JLM; Paul from Maldon called as did G0VPH from Camberwell, London.

Topics discussed ranged from Gozo & honey, Frogs, Electric Power Meters going backwards (more about this in next months N/L), closing of Goonhilly Earth Station, the Solar Cycle & Niger food for Finches.

Also in the Net was Jim M3RMI from Springfield who had only got his License the week before. Jim explained that he and his wife had attended Carl, G3PEM's presentation on Radio Caroline in January. She said to him "You should be an Amateur". He promptly signed up for the CARS six-week Foundation Course in Danbury Village Hall, passed, applied for and was granted his Licence.

It transpired that Jim is the leading light in the Community Radio Station "Chelmsford Calling" which transmitted four times since 2001 playing "our kind of music". Well done Jim, welcome to CARS.

April Contests by Steve G4ZUL

RSGB 1st RoPoCo / CW

Sunday 02 April
Starts: 07:00 UTC
Finishes: 09:00 UTC
Band: 80 Metres
Exchange: RST + Postcode received

RSGB Club Championship

Dates for April as follows:
CW 03 April. 20:00 – 21:30 Local
SSB 12 April. 20:00 – 21:30 Local
DATA 20 April. 20:00 – 21:30 Local
further information from <http://www.rsgbhfcc.org/>

Japan International DX / CW

8/9 April, 30 Hrs
Bands: 3.5, 7, 14, 21, 28Mhz
Exchange: RST + CQ Zone
Full details from <http://www.jidx.org/>

VHF Contests

First 70MHz contest
Sunday 09 April, 09:00 to 12:00 UTC
Sections: SF,O, (Special rules S2)

First 50MHz contest
Sunday 23 April, 09:00 to 12:00 UTC
Sections: SF.O, (Special rules M3)
further information from: -
<http://www.blacksheep.org/vhfcc>

All other VHF contests are listed in January Radcom, Page 33. For any further information please email Steve G4ZUL contests2006@g0mwt.org.uk

Steve says to enter 'sm3cer' into Google, and look on his Web Site. It is a very comprehensive Contest Web Site.

E-Mail Scam

You often "hear of someone having a scam message sent to them". Well, this was received by a CARS Member. They did not click on any of the provided links but used Google to find the telephone number of O2 Customer Service Dept who, obviously, did not know anything about the E-Mail. As received, but with the E-Mail codes changed!

From: O2
To: Info@CARS Member's E-Mail Address
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2006 7:16 PM
Subject: O2 Online Bill

Dear O2 customer,
Your O2 bill for 13/03/06 is ready for you to view online. We will collect £86.82 from your account in accordance with your payment terms.

Please return to the shop
<http://www.O2.xxxxxxxx/shop> to access your account. Simply click on the View My Bill section on the top left hand corner of the screen and enter the username and password you chose when you placed your order.

Can't remember your password? Please go to <https://flash.o2.xxxx/login.html> and follow the online prompts. In future, you will simply be charged monthly in advance.

If you need any help understanding your bill, please go to <http://www.O2.xxxx/help> and enter your mobile number under Bill Enquiries to view our FAQs.

Thanks for choosing O2. Got a mate who's always a bit strapped? Save them some money - tell them about O2 <http://www.o2.xxxx/shop>

Please note that this email has been sent to you from an unmonitored email account.

This is the end of the Scam E-Mail. Remember, any genuine company knows your Name & Account Number and in the case of the O2 Mobile, your Mobile Number. Thanks for contacting the Newsletter Editor so that we can share the Scam message.

CARS Reaches 70

The April 1936 issue of the RSGB "T&R Bulletin" carried this announcement:

"With a view to forming a Chelmsford section [of the RSGB], will members living within 10 miles write to G6LB, Mr. L. Fuller, 85 High Street, Chelmsford promising him their support. If this is obtained a meeting will be arranged."

The first meeting was held towards the end of April and the June 1936 T&R Bulletin carried this short report of the meeting:

"Chelmsford, the first meeting held in this area was organized by G6LB and held at G5RV [Louis Varney's house in Galleywood Road] Chelmsford, when an attendance of 26 was recorded, this included a party of 15 from Southend."

The club name was changed from Chelmsford RSGB Group to Chelmsford Amateur Radio Club in 1957 and then in 1963 it went from being a Club to a Society.

The club has had many well-known Amateurs as members. Probably the most famous was Louis Varney G5RV. In the early 1950's he developed the G5RV antenna in Chelmsford. It was such a successful design that it's still being used by tens of thousands of Amateurs around the world.

One of the early members of the club was James Watt G6ZC who joined in 1936. He is still a member to this day.

CARS have always been renown for having first-class technical presentations at their club meetings. In 1965 they were probably the first club in the UK to have a talk about ATV actually delivered over the air from the QTH of G3NOX-T to the meeting room in Arbour Lane.

More recently in 2001 the club collaborated with the Marconi Company in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Marconi's first Trans-Atlantic radio transmission. CARS members operated the station 2MT using all Marconi equipment.

Over the last four years the club has developed an extensive Radio Communications Training programme based around PowerPoint slides. The teaching material that members developed for the courses has been supplied to clubs as far away as Australia to enable others to start up their own courses. As a result the training material has helped literally thousands of new Amateurs worldwide gain their licences.

The club has a proud history and continues to make a vital contribution to Amateur Radio.

Trevor M5AKA

For Sale - Ex G3WWC, Silent Key.

Kenwood TS 2000 - HF/6/2/70cm, as new £990 ono.
Heil Microphone HM10, with desk stand £50.
Watson 25Amp PSU £70 ono.
Two Yaesu FT817's. Boxes.
One with DSP & Filter. £325 and £375
Bencher Paddle Key BY2. As new £75 ono
Set Mobile Whip Aerials, 20, 15,10m: £25 the lot
Three sets of four Aluminium sleeved Masts.
Each to make 20foot length. £20 each set
2m Yagi with Rotator. Buyer to dismantle. Offers

Contact Denis, M0FHA - 01245 440788.

Ofcom Licensing Statement

Ofcom received 1,466 responses before the consultation period closed on 18 August 2005, many of which were in favour of Ofcom's key proposals although the majority were in favour of maintaining the existing licensing regime but with an extended renewal period of 5 years.

MORI received 1,572 completed questionnaires by the closing date of 20 June 2005 which showed that when licensees were asked specifically whether they supported or opposed Ofcom issuing licences that remain valid for the life of the licensee, 58% claimed to support this move.

Following the consultation Ofcom held further informal discussions with several key stakeholders to ensure that plans were developed appropriately. Following these discussions Ofcom has decided to implement the following reforms:

- From October 1st 2006 Ofcom (not RLC) will issue 'lifetime' amateur radio licences which will remain valid for as long as the licence details remain correct or until such time as the licence is either revoked by Ofcom or surrendered by the licensee. Such licences will be personal to the licensee and will not be transferable.
- To provide an online, web-based, self-service licensing service as an alternative to the postal service;
- To issue electronic licences (probably PDF® documents) to users of the online, web-based, self-service licensing service. Users of this service would print a hard copy of the licence which must be kept at the main station address;
- To make paper lifetime licences available (but subject to a small administrative charge);
- To modify the original proposal by requiring licensees to validate their licence details at least once every five years in order to maintain their lifetime licence;

In responses 902 out of 1466 respondents disagreed with the proposal to issue electronic amateur radio licences free of charge, compared with 457 who agreed and 107 who didn't answer the question specifically. Licence charges will be determined as part of the Wireless Telegraphy Licence Charges consultation process.

Licensees who validate or amend their licence details at least once every five years will not receive a five year reminder/revocation notice from Ofcom.

£100 On the Spot Fines

Ofcom is also proposing the introduction of fixed penalty, on-the-spot fines in the region of £100 for such offences. For serious cases of misuse, Ofcom will prosecute, for which the maximum penalty on conviction is a £5,000 fine and/or six months imprisonment. The courts may also order forfeiture of any radio apparatus used in connection with an offence. CARS is responding to the DTI/Ofcom consultation on the new £100 Penalty.

Determination of Licence Fees

The following fees will be the subject of a separate (Licence Charges) consultation which is anticipated within the next few months:

- The amateur radio licence fee;
- The administrative charge applied to partially offset the direct costs associated with processing paper based licence applications;
- The fees applicable to individual applications to vary the amateur radio licence (NoVs).

Maintenance of Licence Details

Licensees will be required to validate their licence details at least once every five years in order to maintain their licence. Licensees must also continue to update their licence as and when necessary.

Ofcom will invoke the licence revocation procedure five years after the date when the licensee last amends the licence or last confirms that the licence is still valid (depending on which of these events occurs last). Licensees who either amend their licence at least once every five years or who confirm that the licence is still valid at least once every five years should not receive a five year reminder / revocation notice from Ofcom.

Ofcom will ensure that licensees with electronic licences are sent e-notifications at regular intervals to serve as reminders that they are required to keep their licences up to date.

Ofcom will consider sending postal reminders to those opting to apply and receive licences by post. These processes will help to ensure that the integrity of the amateur radio licence database is maintained.

More on <http://www.g0mwt.org.uk/go/ofcom>

Contributions are appreciated for the Newsletter. Cut-off date for the May N/L is Friday, 14th April.

Edited by John, G8DET with the aid of Colin, G0TRM, Trevor M5AKA & Murray, G6JYB.