



Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society Newsletter

January Meeting

Tue 7-Jan-2020, 7:30-10:00pm
Oaklands Museum, Moulsham Street

HF Propagation

By Steve Nichol G0KYA & Chris G0IPU

New Year's Greetings!

The January meeting features a video/slideshow giving colourful insights into HF Propagation by expert Steve Nichols G0KYA.

Steve is Chair of the RSGB Propagation Studies Committee and has made this available to CARs along with a shorter VHF one that we will feature later in the year.

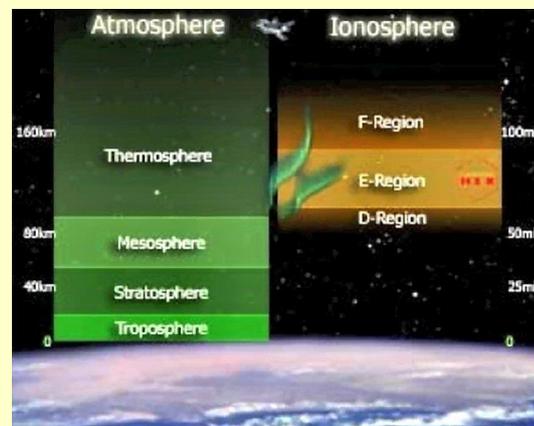
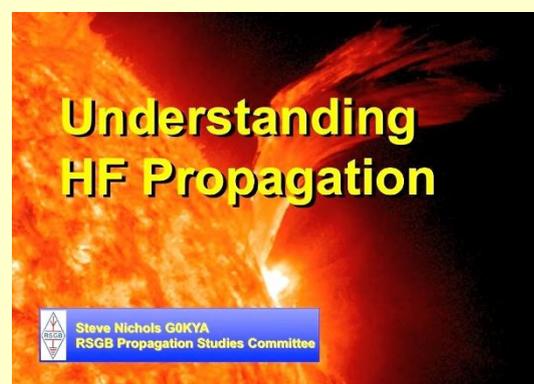
The video will be introduced by CARs Member and ex-Chair, Chris Chapman G0IPU. Chris has a keen interest in propagation and will facilitate discussions.

- All welcome (especially if you have paid subs/renewals beforehand by PayPal)

The famous CARs Raffle also features.

**NB: Following the AGM,
Subscriptions are now due...**

- Please pay online here



Volunteers Still Needed: Newsletter Editor, Events

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Club Diary

Tue 7-Jan-2020	HF Propagation video/talk	Chelmsford – Oaklands Museum, 7:30pm
Sun 2-Feb-2020	35 th Canvey Rally – CARS will be there!	Cornelius Vermuyden School, Dinant Ave, SS8 9QS
Tue 4-Feb-2020	Portable Operation and OAS, talks	Chelmsford – Oaklands Museum, 7:30pm

Club Nets

CARS meets for talks/events on the first Tuesday of the month. The subsequent Tuesdays have club radio nets as follows:-

- 2nd Tuesday in the Month – VHF**
 The CARS VHF FM Net uses GB3DA from Danbury starting at 8pm (local).
 GB3DA is 145.125MHz Input and 145.725MHz Output - and CTCSS-only (110.9Hz), 2min timeout
 If for any reason GB3DA is not available then 145.375 Simplex will be used. Vertical aerials are best for this
- 3rd Tuesday in the Month - UHF**
 The CARS UHF FM Net uses GB3ER from Danbury and starting at 8pm (local).
 GB3ER is 434.675MHz Input and 433.075MHz Output - and is CTCSS-only
 Vertical aerials are best.
- 4th Tuesday in the Month - HF**
 The CARS 80m Net on "3756kHz" Night, SSB and starting at 8pm (local).
 Horizontal aerials are best. The idea is to enable distant CARS Members to join the Net.
- 5th Tuesday in the Month (when there is one!) - MF**
 This is the CARS Top Band Net on 1947/1950 kHz +/-QRM, LSB and starting at 8pm (local).
 Horizontal aerials are usually used for this Net. A reminder - limit your power to a max of 30 Watts, please.

Training & Morse Classes

CARS is pleased to announce that **John O'Connell M0JOC** has stepped into the training coordination role as our new Exam Secretary, succeeding Peter M0PSD.

John can be contacted via training2020@g0mwt.org.uk

See later in this issue for a Bio on John and training news and dates for 2020

- John also has some nice background info on his QRZ page at <https://www.qrz.com/db/M0JOC>

For Foundation we will be running a newer FastTrack format along with revised Foundation slide sets for the updated RSGB Syllabus

Opportunities for Exam sessions have also been arranged

More info including dates and other updates are at: www.g0mwt.org.uk/training



Follow @TrainWithCARS

December Meeting: Xmas Social and Talks

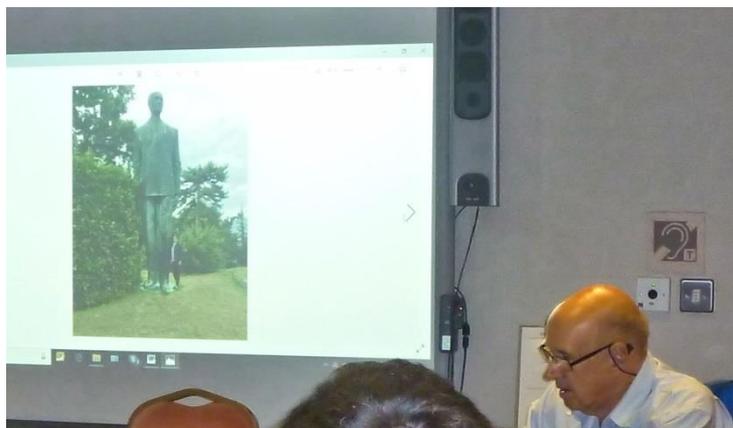
December featured the CARS Xmas Social and had the bonus of a couple of short presentations.

The first by Bob G4MDB offered a hands-on opportunity to look at some fake VHF and UHF antennas purporting to be reputable brands – Nagoya and Diamond. Bob had mounded their match to be awful and when disabled found no internal matching at all!



Fake VHF/UHF Antennas: Nicely labelled and packaged but no-matching and abysmal VSWR!

This was followed by a short illustrated talk by John Bowen G8DET using a series of photos his daughter Lorraine recently took at Marconi's original home 'Villa Griffone' and surroundings in Bologna, Italy. This is now commemorated for his very early wireless experiments before Marconi came to England. The grounds now have plaques, the Marconi's mausoleum and even some of the remains of his yacht Elettra.

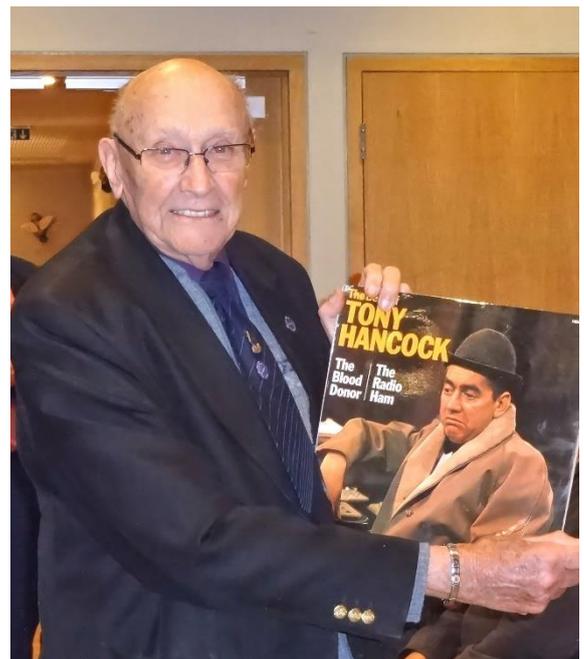
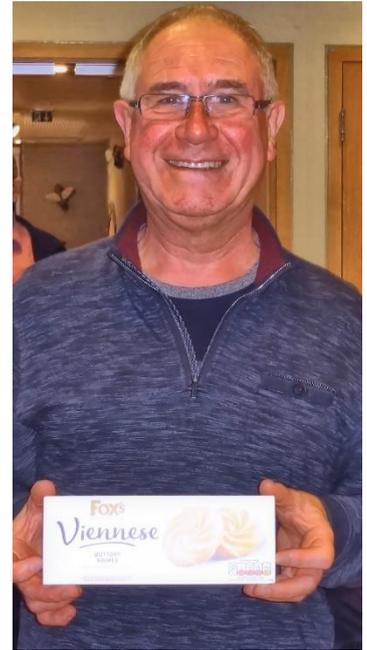
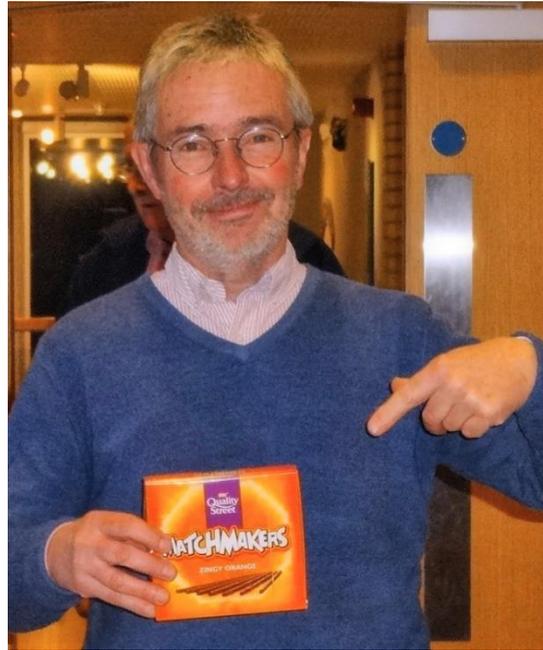


The seasonal social feature includes some excellent mince pies, stolen and other refreshments. Our thanks to John G8DET for doing some vital research and testing ©

The famous CARS Xmas Raffle also had some seasonal prizes



Xmas refreshments included seasonal goodies – Mince Pies and Stollen



Some of our happy Xmas Raffle Winners (Photos by Colin G0TRM)

Exam Secretary - John O'Connell M0JOC

A short bio by our new Training Coordinator and Exam Secretary...

I gained my Foundation licence in Nov 2018, Intermediate in March 2019 and Full in July 2019.

My main interest is in CW - Learning to use a twin paddle (Bencher BY-2) as it's been a lifelong ambition since my days as a Radio officer in the British Merchant Navy in the 70's.

I got back into radio after a visit to Bletchley Park and the RSGB National Radio Centre GB3RS in October 2018 – three weeks later I took my Foundation exam at Danbury with CARS!

I took early retirement in April 2018 following a career in voice and datacommunications. I've worked as a field service engineer, product specialist and training, pre-sales support specialist, network designer and senior consultant in Managed Wide Area Networking and Local Area Networking. My last few years at work were as European Business Development Manager and Sales Expert for Integration Services at Orange Business Services.

In my spare time I'm Tour Manager and Stage Technician for a 12 piece jazz funk band - Incognito. Last year was busy - gigs and festivals all over the UK and Europe including The Royal Albert Hall, Indigo2 at the O2 Arena, Cheltenham jazz Festival and the strangest a cave in Hungary.

I recently joined the committee at CARS and took on the role of Examinations Secretary. I'm looking forward to being involved in developing the new syllabus training material and courses with the help of Murray G6JYB and the team of Registered Assessors (some newly appointed).

So far we have three candidates booked on the February 2020 Fast Track Foundation course, practicals and exam with more expected shortly. There's also a Fast Track Foundation scheduled for April 2020 – one candidate booked already!

If you or someone you know is interested in training courses or exam places, contact me via training2020@g0mwt.org.uk or 07868 004380 - and also see www.g0mwt.org.uk/training



Events & Subscriptions Requests

IMPORTANT: Volunteers still needed for talks, events (inc Canvey Rally assistants) - and a newsletter editor!

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Following the AGM, Membership subs have been retained at the same £15 level as last year and are now due!

To ease administration, please use the CARS online PayPal facility (which accepts debit cards online as well, if you don't have a PayPal account)

<http://www.g0mwt.org.uk/society/membership/e-form.htm>

Note that this is preferred to post, cheques or cash



Training in 2020

As per the previous page, our new Exam Secretary John O'Connell M0JOC is already busy signing up candidates for the new Foundation courses we have in 2020:-

Shorter 3-week fast-track courses are scheduled for February and April along with slots in July and December for the Full or other exams. The key Foundation dates are:

- **Course 40F:** Feb-6th, 13th, 20th - fast-track practical's revision, mock and exam
- **Course 41F:** Apr 9th, 16th, 23rd - fast-track practical's revision, mock and exam

It was also pleasing to start and have a first success with Willem passing his Full exam on Thu Dec-5th

Meanwhile the popular CW classes also restart on Thursday 16th January - led by Andy Kersey GOIBN

Training – A Great Finale to 2019

The very last CARS exam session under the old syllabus was organised by Peter M0PSD and held on Thursday 28th November.

This saw CARS Chair Elliot Riddle and Martin Harvey both pass their Advanced exam. Peter was as pleased as the candidates! - commenting it made a rewarding end to his time as training manager.



CARS Chair Elliot Riddle - was 2E0JSE, now M0JBY



Martin Harvey was 2E0MNH, now M0JBV

Messages from Afar

John G8DET ended up with this interesting exchange from two former CARS members who are still about:-

From: Ken Easty G3LVP

Sent: 23 December 2019

To: John - G8DET; G3KRZ

Hello John & John,

Good to hear from you both and John 'DET thanks for the QSP. I see from my electronic log that I've not worked either of you since I started the log at the beginning of 2000 (I have almost 25k entries in the log so I'm still active!) I don't know how far I'd have to go back through my paper logs to find either of your calls! I see from a quick look in QRZ.com that John' KRZ is now up in the wilds of Lincs. I'm sorry to see that John DET has had to leave the Danbury hilltop QTH.

We've now been living in the depths of Cheltenham (on the 'wrong' side of the Cotswolds so no good for VHF!) since 1987 and visits to Essex are infrequent these days, however we spent a couple of days in Essex during October visiting friends and I made a number of calls on 'DA, 'ER & S20 but was disappointed to only make one contact & heard no other activity which also seems to be the case in many other parts of the country these days (60k amateurs in the UK but where are they all, it's rare to hear anyone operating from inside the M25 these days, remember the monthly East London RSGB meetings at Ilford Town Hall when about 100 members attended?). I've only made one brief contact with anyone in Essex recently and that was a very brief CW QSO with Howard 'PGN on Top Band (I don't have a proper antenna for that band)

Wishing you & your families Season's Greetings & HNY & John DET please pass my greetings to CARS members who might remember me.

73...

Ken, G3LVP

+++++

From: John Greenwood G3KRZ

Sent: 22 December 2019

I Notice that Ken, G3LVP, is still active: was a CARS NFD stalwart. Knew him first in the Ilford RSGB Group. Remember working him on 4m AM many years ago when he was way out west and we were both mobile using PYE Cambridges as I remember. Conditions deteriorated and we had to resort to CW using the pressel switch as a key.

Anyway, happy Christmas to you both and hope that next year better than this.

73

John, G3KRZ

(later, Writtle used 700m / 428kHz and then 400m / 750kHz MF)

Letter from Norwich – Steve G4GHO

From Steve Webb G4GHO – the previous newsletter Editor!...



We got established here in the summer of 2017 and set to with a lot of gardening work, just clearing the garden of (we believe) about ten tons of rocks, flint and builders' debris. The soil here is very flinty by nature and there are frequent sink holes from where mining has taken place and/or water has undermined the structure of the ground. We are on top of a hill (for those who may know Norwich, we are very close to the County Hall buildings) so no problems of that sort are expected, but there are often many problems with the wind. In itself, not too strong, but fairly persistent, and the nature of the housing estate we are on leads to the wind being funnelled between buildings. This accelerates the gusts and it can be quite entertaining.

For reasons best known to themselves, the builders chose to install the back door so that it opens outwards, contrary to what was shown on the plans. This makes for some exciting times as the door is sometimes all but ripped from your hand as you open it. The prevailing wind direction is from the south and that 'catches' the door every time. One day, I'm sure it will come off the hinges. Several neighbours have already experienced broken hinges on their patio and back doors...

As the summer progressed, we cleared the garden and I had half an eye on what I would do with my antennas. The garden was to be landscaped and I wanted something that would be reasonably effective, aesthetically acceptable but not too permanent. There were several problems to be overcome. First and foremost, there was a covenant against external antennas, so that ruled out VHF – even a white stick would have stood out like a sore thumb. The roof is pyramidal in nature with huge extents of lead flashing on the ridges (or corners) of the 'pyramid' edges. This proved problematic for reception and even our TV suffers from reception problems, even though the local transmitter is only about 10 miles away. There are three storey town houses in the way and even the slightest hint of a lift completely flattens the reception of the BBC News channel. All the others are still fine, with reception being reported as 100% by the TV or STB signal strength indicators. Under normal conditions, the News channel also shows 100%. Strange...

Before we moved, I had bought an IC7600 to replace the old Kenwood rig that I just could not get to work on digital modes. I think the audio interface was faulty and spares were getting difficult to obtain, so thought it best to upgrade. I didn't even get the 7600 out of the box until several months after the move. I had a huge room that I was using for a shack/workshop, had drilled antenna feed holes in the walls and was expecting to be able to do great things.

Anyway – the 10m fishing pole vertical which should have been ideal and which was almost lost in the garden at Chelmsford, proved to be just too big and imposing in the middle of the 10m square garden here, and too close to other properties at the side of the garden so, not wanting to have to keep taking it down for temporary use, I shelved that idea. Next up, I tried a loop of wire around the plastic guttering of the house. That had about 36m perimeter, so should have been reasonable, fed with an open ladder. Not so. The impedance analyser showed some horrendous losses. Perhaps the lead flashing was interfering and sapping energy.

The receive noise levels were horrendous, and every piece of electronic equipment objected to the transmit signal in one way or another. The touch lamp kept switching itself on, the Sonos system, cordless phone and the Wi-Fi router kept playing up and so on. Even the MSF radio clocks were being reset. That idea had to go, so the next up was an inverted L with the remote ATU feed at the base of the house, the top of the vertical leg supported off the gutter and the end supported just at the apex of the garage roof. That gave me about 19m of wire in the vertical length and garden diagonals combined. That was just as bad. Everything in the house was rattling in ferrite beads and chokes and I was still plagued by outrageous noise

levels on receive. The layout of the garden was just about impossible to accommodate a loop with acceptable aesthetics, so even that idea was out of the window.

I did use the 7600 portable one day with the club, but that's a real faff, too. Portable operation doesn't really work for me. I have to keep out of the sun and wet and cold do not appeal, so that's another avenue that I didn't want to explore. I got onto the digital modes and found, in common with others, huge distances could be covered with flea power and the external noise could be overcome to some extent, but that just didn't float my boat. It was interesting for a while, but that soon palled and I think I only made a couple of QSOs before I lost interest in that. Next up was a Kenwood TH-D74 DMR that I got cheap at the Show. That was OK for a while, but ultimately limiting. It never went out of the house except to the club one evening for someone to tell me how the hell to get it to work...

The club collectively ordered about fifty QCX CW transceivers at a discount and I didn't want to be the only one without the building experience, so I added my name to the order list for a 20m version. I'm not sure why I chose that, really, other than that a 20m dipole would fit the garden, as 20m is a daylight band and I just never have time or inclination to use radio during the day. I have only ever wanted to use it in the evenings. Anyway, I built it, set it up and even installed a 20m dipole but I have never got round to using it. I used it for CW practice in its Tx mute mode, but then couldn't see the point.

I eventually got fed up with the receive noise levels I was experiencing and wondered how else I could make use of the hobby. I did try and interest the club in some test equipment demos and talks but there seemed to be little uptake. I decided to sell up in the end. Everything went locally at club table top sales or via eBay. It was sad to see it go, but ultimately pointless keeping a set of stuff in a cupboard (or several cupboards) when it wouldn't see light of day. I relinquished the shack to Mara for her embroidery work/college course studies and moved into a smaller room that would accommodate other hobbies.

Whilst all this was going on, we had other problems with the house. There were many snagging problems that you get with new houses and those were ultimately sorted out to varying degrees of satisfaction, but one biggie remained. Soon after we moved in, we noticed some staining in the lower courses of bricks around level the damp course. There were white efflorescence salts appearing and we put the staining down to splashed mud or something – possibly from rainfall from the roof if the gutters had not been installed at some point. The efflorescence could be expected in new brickwork, but we were dismayed to see that the staining was obviously due to rising damp and it just got worse and worse. For two years, we battled and argued with the builders to find out what the cause was, but they kept saying there was no cause for concern. We had some of the bricks removed after about a year or so and found the internal cavity insulation was wet in places but they said that was just normal condensation and that it would dry out. It didn't. It just kept getting worse and the damp patches (albeit only in the external walls) kept rising and reached about 5-6 bricks above the damp course.

Eventually, I engaged a surveyor who agreed there was a problem with the damp course and we went to the NHBC. They instigated an investigation and we found that the DPC had been laid onto the hollow faces of the bricks without the normal mortar bed under it and this caused it to pull back from the brick face anywhere between 20 and 35mm. This was leaving a mortar bridge that allowed the damp to migrate up through the brickwork. The NHBC then ordered the builders to put it right.

Finally, last September, we had the entire course of brick at DPC level removed and a new DPC inserted. Now, of course, we have a row of bricks all-round the house that don't match, so they will send a company who specialise in brick tinting to match the brickwork in to the rest of the house. The process is remarkable effective. After the initial investigations had removed about fourteen bricks, they were replaced with new ones that did not match. Damage Doctor then tinted them and you really can't tell where the work was carried out now. It's quite a good process. They use some kind of dye that gets into the brick, rather than sits on top like paint, so should be reasonable long lasting (fingers crossed!) The developer eventually refunded the £965 surveyor's fees as well, so that can't be too bad.

Anyway. Back to radio. I still have the 2m hand held and sometimes the local repeater has someone on it to chat to (but not often). NARC is a very good active club with weekly meetings and a very strong contest contingent. Some of the talks are excellent with frequent live Skype hook-ups with big names in the radio world. Mostly in the USA, it has to be said, although we had a very interesting talk by Hans Sommers about his new SSB transceiver.

Actually, I still have the 20m QCX. It has never been used on air and has a part-built case with control knob extensions so if you know of anyone who would like it, make me a reasonable offer and I'll stick it in the post (along with the antenna and feeder!).

Right. That's enough from me, or you'll all be yawning!

73, Steve.

Marconi Special Events

The Italian society, ARI Fidenza, will use a series of special calls during 2020 to commemorate 12 major events and achievements in Guglielmo Marconi's life:-

- **January: II4BRN** - Marconi's birth (1874)
- **February: II4MLB** - First radio broadcast of a musical performance: Dame Nellie Melba's song recital (1920)
- **March: II4MCY** - Foundation of the first "Marconi Company" (1897)
- **April: II4FTX** - First transatlantic radio signals transmission (1901)
- **May: II4TEA** - First radio message between the United States and the United Kingdom (1903)
- **June: II4REP** - Rescue of the ocean liner "Republic" (1909)
- **July: II4NBL** - Marconi is awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics (1909)
- **August: II4CLT** - Inauguration of the radio station at Coltano (1911)
- **September: II4PTN** - Marconi applies for his first patent (1896)
- **October: II4LGH** - Marconi switches on the lights at Sydney Town Hall from Genoa via wireless transmission (1930)
- **November: II4RVT** - Inauguration of Vatican Radio (1931)
- **December: II4MDY** - Marconi Day at Chicago World's Fair (1933)

QSL via IQ4FE, bureau or direct. See <http://arifidenza.hamlogs.net/> for the award and more info.

Info from DX World - <https://dx-world.net/>

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