

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society.

NEWSLETTER No. 315

Callsign G0MWT

April 1992

NEXT MEETING - RTTY/Amtor Systems



When tuning your receiver through the middle sections of the HF or VHF Amateur bands you can hear mysterious bursts of sound which are neither Morse or voice communication.

The origin and use of these "packets" of information will be revealed by Geoff Mills, G3EDM in his talk on Tuesday 7th April.

Geoff is an experienced and very active operator, he has now combined his home computer with his HF station to exchange error-free text messages around the world with a high degree of reliability.

We can look forward to an interesting and informative evening.

The meeting will begin at 7.30pm in the Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford.

Please note that the second annual JackPot Raffle will be drawn during the meeting.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 7 Apr. CLUB MEETING - RTTY/Amtor Systems - G3EDM.
- 12 Apr. CAMBRIDGE AR RALLY - Chesterton, Cambs.
- 12 Apr. VHF(MARTLESHAM) ROUND TABLE - tickets, G6GAU.
- 25 Apr. MARCONI DAY - Round the world on HF.
- 5 May CLUB MEETING - Test Equipment - G3PMX.
- 24 May EAST SUFFOLK WIRELESS REVIVAL - Ipswich.
- 30/31 May RSGB NATIONAL CONVENTION - Birmingham.

CONSTRUCTORS' COMPETITION

Tuesday 2nd June is now only nine weeks away, so the level of workshop activity is now concentrating on the finishing touches. How is your entry coming along?

COMMITTEE MEETING

The April Committee meeting will be held in the Telford Lodge at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th April, you are welcome to join us.

THE CLUB LIBRARY SERVICE

Our club librarian Brian, G3CVI has made a request for a "strong and young" volunteer to take over the responsibility for the administration of the library service. Brian has found the suitcase that contains the books, rather heavy to convey to the meetings and with other commitments cannot always attend.

While on the subject; as an affiliated Society of the RSGB we now receive a free monthly copy of Radio Communication. This journal will be included in the club library service for members use.

MEMBERS NEWS

The Society extends a welcome to Pat O'Riordan, a SWL who joined at the last meeting; together with a late renewal we now have 74 paid up members.

WHAT NEXT?

The success of the Equipment Fund is evident by the items now available to members. In committee the discussion has begun on what should be the next priority and the suggestion has been proposed that an R.F. Test Load capable of dissipating 100 watts in the frequency range 0 to 1000MHz should be considered.

This item would be compatible with the present kit as well as enabling members to test and compare their own load facilities.

Can we have some members reaction PLEASE.

INTERNATIONAL REPLY COUPONS

Do you use IRC's, if you do, did you know that these have at long last been revised. The new IRC states "This coupon is exchangeable in any country of the Universal Postal Union for one or more postage stamps representing the minimum postage for a priority item or an unregistered letter sent by Air to a foreign country". The word worth noting is AIR, this makes direct QSL'ing much cheaper, so providing you have the new issue of IRC's, which have a pale yellow design on the front, only ONE need be sent. It's not all bad news these days!

LAST MONTHS MEETING MARINE ELECTRONICS - Harry, G5HF

At last month's meeting, regular attenders crowding in with guests and less regular attenders filled our meeting room to hear Eric Lawley G8ADX talk about marine electronics. Eric, still recovering from falling off a ladder, sat at his Panasonic console and gave us not so much a lecture, more a performance, by illustrating his talk with videos and stills accompanied by music and chatter - including extracts from Tony Hancock's famous Radio Amateur sketch and a shot of Eric skiing to the 'Ski Sunday' theme.

With sailing, safety is first priority and electronics can play a big part in keeping the grotty yottie out of trouble, or in saving him if all else fails. Radio communication with rescue services, port authorities, friends on nearby yachts and with the office is now commonplace. Ocean crossing yachts use the HF amateur bands, but most yachts now have marine VHF (156 to 162 MHz) with maximum power of 25 watts using type approved equipment.

No technical exam is required for a marine VHF licence, but the yacht must have an equipment licence which allocates a call-sign (e.g. MCDT6) and the operator must pass a simple operating exam. Non-qualified crew may use marine VHF under the supervision of a licensed operator. Eric showed a video of a typical distress call on channel 16 and how the coast-guard would reply.

There is also an automatic emergency beacon called EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) which uses 121.5 MHz, 243 MHz and 406 MHz to alert search aircraft and guide them to the casualty.

Important information can be heard on VHF, BBC and local radio stations, such as weather reports, tide times and navigation hazards such as buoys unlit or out of position.

Navigation aids (where the ellarwy?) include the old RDF system around 300 KHz from marine beacons giving their identity in Morse, but this is rapidly giving way to position finding systems such as Decca, Loran and GP Satellites. Decca is the most commonly used by yachtsmen as it combines low cost with many facilities, such as auto-locate, true speed over ground, true course over ground (remember that wind and tide can push a yacht off course), 99 waypoints or more, ETA, off-course alarm, man overboard alarm (which fixes the position you have to return to), track error and an alarm clock.

At a cost you can have many instruments linked together to control a yacht automatically via an electronic autohelm. The navigator inputs the course to be sailed and the electronics steers the boat, making allowances for wind and tide. Obviously you cannot sail directly into wind, but the computer will give the the optimum tacks (zig-zagging upwind).

Eric showed a video of blind helmsmen taking part in a race (with a sighted lookout!) and the helmsmen are guided by sound signals which tell them which way to push the tiller.

Other electronic aids include echosounder to give a continuous depth reading under the keel or at 45 deg: looking forward, so you can detect a rock before hitting it. Electronic logs (speedometer) are almost universal and they have a paddle wheel which emits pulses clocked up by a counter. Wind speed and direction indicators are also common on small yachts, but for large yachts it is normal to have radar, weather-fax and direct telephone dialling into the British Telecom network via the yacht VHF.

But with all this electronics, the crew still has to observe the maritime rules..... KEEP WATCH at all times, using the Mark I eyeball! Thanks, Eric, for a splendid evening!

RSGB VHF CONVENTION, E1a - G6HKM

Roy and I had a most enjoyable day at the Convention held on the 14th March at the customary venue, Sandown Park, Esher. This provides a very nice setting with good facilities and was well attended, you should try it some time.

Plenty of Trade stands in the main hall; upstairs there were various RSGB stands for VHF Contests, etc, plus 'The Remote Imaging Group', 'British Amateur TV Club', 'Worked All Britain' to name but a few.

I attended the UK 6M Group AGM and we both attended the RSGB President's address and presentation of the VHF Contest Trophies. It's nice to see the groups that I work so often in the Contests.

Throughout the afternoon there was a good selection of lectures, plus the bonus to sit down for a rest!

We arrived early in the morning, so had a good parking spot very close to the main entrance, which was just as well as by the time we left we had a new G-400-RC rotator, a 6M Halo and other bits and pieces.

DF NEWS - Dick, G3WHR

As promised, we reproduce the list of R.S.G.B., HF-DF. Contests for 1992.

Qualifying Rounds:-

- No.1 12th April COVENTRY George Whenham.
- No.2 10th May BANBURY Graham Nicholls.
- No.3 31st May TORBAY Paul Clark.
- No.4 14th June DARTFORD HEATH Alan Burchmore.
- No.5 5th July RIPON DISTRICT John Hall.
- No.6 26th July SLADE John Drakeley.
- No.7 16th August SOUTH MANCHESTER Chris Plummer.
- No.8 6th September MID-THAMES Allan Simmons.

National Final Contest:-

27th September SALISBURY Bert Newman.

THE CLUB 10 METRE NET

The 28.325MHz, SSB net, which is held at 8.30pm on the Tuesday's between club meetings is still available for members to exchange news and views.

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73 from Roy & E1a Martyr, G3PMX & G6HKM

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P.S. Please send more input for our Newsletters!

MEMBERS ADVERTISEMENTS

WANTED

On loan for reading, Short Wave Magazines from 1960 to early 1970's. Richard, GOICP. Tel: (0376)84478.

FOR SALE

- TRIO TS520 Transceiver with VFO 520. £260
- WELZ SP15M SWR & Power Meter. £25
- SEM 'Z' MATCH Antenna Tuner. £40
- Other goodies - please enquire!

Ralph, G3NAA. Tel: (0245)356276.

FOR FREE

NIFE CELLS, 1.2V, 35Ah, (max 8A), there are 20 of these available for collection with approx: 1 gallon of top-up electrolyte. Albert, GOAEH. Tel: (0277)821996.