

# Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society

*Affiliated to the RSGB*

*President: Dick Brocks G3WHR*

*Secretary: David Bradley M0BQC*

*Club Call Sign: G0MWT*

*Chairman: John Bowen G8DET*

*Treasurer: Brian Thwaites G3CVI*

**Newsletter No. 410**

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

**March 2000**

## The March Meeting

This month's meeting is going to be somewhat different from anything we've attempted to do before. We are calling it The Chairman's Visual Forum. Don't be alarmed, we shall remain within the strict limits of decency! Our intrepid camera man Fred G6FXM, always busy with his camera recording our events, has prepared a montage of sequences for our delight. These will be interspersed with relevant chat from some of our more eloquent Members, Brian CVI and Carl PEM on their pet amateur topics, to name but two. Our Chairman will also be inviting Members' comments on Club activities. Our professional metal basher Chris IPU will be showing an edited version of his very successful video contribution to our Constructors Evening. And, as if all that were not enough, Colin TRM has a Spy Set for you to see.

Well, if none of that grabs you, you can always retire next door for a quiet double tonic water! **Chairman John G8DET** will, as usual, open the proceedings, brandishing his new gavel, at **7-30pm at the MASC on Tuesday March 7th.**

Don't forget Ela's raffle, which does so much to keep us solvent.

## Silent Key

### Francis Geoffrey Cockerill BSc. CEng. MIEE

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of Geoff G2AMQ. The burial took place in the churchyard of St. John the Baptist at Danbury on the 1st of February, followed by a Service of Thanksgiving conducted by the Rev. Dr. Graham Blyth, with prayers from his son-in-law, the Rev. Mark Godfrey. The church was full, reflecting the many and varied activities and interests of Geoff and his wife Margaret. Two of his friends, Geoff G3EDM and Harry G5HF, have contributed appreciations of Geoff's life and work overleaf.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Margaret and the family..

## Dates for Your Diary

- Mar. 7th. Club Meeting 7-30pm. MASC.
- Mar. 10/11th. LAR & C Show Picketts Lock. 10am.
- Mar. 15th. CARS Committee Mtg. Ela's QTH 7-30pm.
- Apl. 16th. Cams. Rpt. Grp. Rally Bottisham 10-30am.
- Apl. 29th. Inter'l Marconi Day Sandford Mill 10am -5pm.

## Members Miscellany.

A warm welcome to new Members; Anthony Martin and David Janes, both SWL's, Jonathan Spooner G8OPI, Bob Cheverall M1DTA and Peter Geier M1CKA.

Our table at the March Canvey Rally generated a net profit of £129 for Club funds.

'Big' Jim M1GUA has been busy contesting on 70cms and was the leading QRP station in Section S in the October '99 UHF Contest.

Alan G0LSH has a Maplin 30V 6A PSU surplus to requirements. Ring 01245-264045 for details.

The Net controller for March is Ken G3PMW.

## Retirement of Charles G0GJS.

Observant readers will note a new name on our heading. We offer a warm welcome to David M0BQC. He has taken over from Charles G0GJS following his seven very successful years as Club Secretary. To mark his retirement Charles presented the Club with a Chairman's gavel and plate suitably inscribed. These items have been beautifully constructed by Ralph G3NAA, using his favourite medium, and housed in a presentation case which also serves as a lectern.

Members will be pleased to know that we have been fortunate in retaining Charles's guidance, wisdom and expertise as he has accepted the honorary post of Club joint Vice President in company with Harry G5HF.

## Last Month's Meeting.

### The GEC and Marconi Archives

Louise Weymouth the GEC archivist began her presentation with a short history of GEC and its origins way back in the 1880's. An electrical goods wholesaler by the name of Gustav Binswanger established a company with that name and began business in London. Binswanger later changed his name to Bing and in 1886 he was joined by a fellow German immigrant, Hugo Hirst. The Company changed its name to The General Electric Apparatus Company located at Gt.St.Thomas Apostle. 1886 is now regarded as the year GEC was founded. The new company thrived and Hugo Hirst travelled widely across Europe searching for electrical products to widen the range of goods on offer to the quickly growing number of customers. Many letters were exchanged between the two men about suitable products and many arguments resulted. 1887 saw the publication of the first electrical catalogue, and in 1888 the first factory was acquired by GEC in Manchester to manufacture all manner of items, such as bells, telephones etc.

The Company continued to expand opening new branches and factories to trade in 'everything electrical' so it was in 1889 that Queen Victoria Street became the home of new larger premises. Electric lighting help to make GEC's fortune through design and manufacturing. To meet the ever increasing demand, Birmingham was chosen for the site of the so called Witton Engineering Works, GEC's first purpose built factory. Expansion continued in many fields and after he death of Gustav Bing in 1910, Hugo Hirst became Chairman. The famous name Osram became known and agencies were set up world wide. During and following WW1 GEC expanded to become an international corporation involved in heavy electrical engineering. Research Labs. were established in London and Magnet House, the new

headquarters in Kingsway, was built in the 1920's. WW11 saw the cavity magnetron developed by GEC and many electrical and engineering products were supplied to the military. Throughout GEC acquired many other businesses and as a result in 1961 Arnold Weinstock became Managing Director and, amongst the very many changes, moved the headquarters to Stanhope Gate. Acquisitions continued apace and in 1968 the Marconi Company came under GEC's wing as did many other famous brand names. Acquiring Avery in 1979, provided GEC with a link back to 1670. At that time a scale maker called De Grave was established in St. Martin's le Grand near St. Paul's Cathedral and they in turn were purchased by Avery in 1922.

Overseas companies joined the group and heavy power engineering, shipbuilding etc. as well as domestic goods were all part of the group. The advance of technology caused a change of direction and changes continue to this day. When Lord Weinstock retired in 1996 George Simpson took over and the shape and direction changed yet again and continues to do so even to today, when the name of the Company has changed. The name GEC has been dropped and the name Marconi has been revived, much to the pleasure of many passed and present employees.

Louise then went on to tell us about Guglielmo Marconi, of his birth in Italy in 1874, his experiments and the lack of recognition there. She spoke of his journey to England in 1896 and the help he received here; his early experiments and vision and the opening of the world's first radio factory in Chelmsford in 1899. We heard of the ventures Marconi pioneered and his failures and successes, the records of which are many and detailed, from the first tentative transmissions, to spanning the Atlantic, of world wide communications and of early broadcasts. Many of these achievements are brought to life by a fine collection of archived artefacts and documents now held at Baddow. Louise brought along a few fine examples for us to see but not to touch. These included very early radio equipment and a GEC shocking coil. Plans are in hand for a Club visit to Baddow to see the archives; details will be announced at the next meeting.

Our grateful thanks to Louise for a most interesting and illuminating address.

*Report by Colin G0TRM.*

## **Geoff G2AMQ by Harry G5HF.**

My first meeting with Geoff was when I joined CARS about twelve years ago and he offered to crew for me when I went sailing. He soon became a regular member of our cruising gang and we had many fine cruises, mainly to the Continent. Close company on a small yacht is a great test of friendship and we never had a cross word from Geoff, even under the most difficult conditions and after long hours at sea with very little sleep. He was always ready for any chores and he would turn his hand to any jobs that had to be done, even to scraping the bottom of the hull in winter.

Many a time Geoff would come and help me when I had problems with computer or radio and his calm, patient and calculating approach got me out of trouble. Perhaps the most memorable moments were our pub lunches with Margaret and my late wife Pippa, and more recently my very good friend Ethel.

Geoff's charity work was legendary and it takes a very dedicated person to put in the time and effort that he did. He also supported Margaret with her charities and many people have been grateful for the kindness and support that Geoff and Margaret have given to them in times of trouble or difficulty.

I am very sad to have lost a special friend and I know that the many members Geoff has helped in the past will join me in sending our sincere sympathy to Margaret and her Family.

## **Geoff G2AMQ by Geoff G3EDM.**

Geoff and I first met through our common interest in Institution of Electrical Engineers activities in the early 1980's. We both served on the IEE area and national committees together. Additionally, Geoff served the Benevolent Fund of the IEE which included the residential home in West London. Because of his computer hardware and software skills he was able to give specialist advice to holders of computers provided by the BF. At his death he was still active with the IEE Essex Centre as their Chairman. In the previous seven years he had been Treasurer. During the 80s he studied with the Open University to acquire a degree biased towards computing and technology. Geoff was of a quiet demeanour and very loyal by nature. He was always willing to help others.

At the Memorial Service we learned a lot about his life. By birth he was a Yorkshire man and his interest in radio started in the 30's and his G2 call sign prefix indicates he had an artificial aerial licence in those days. His father was a builder and at sixteen Geoff started at work. His radio interest led to him starting work with Standard Telephone and Cables at New Southgate as an apprentice around the outbreak of World War II; he eventually joined the Advanced Development Department working on ground-based radio direction finding (RDF) equipment. This involved developing automatic, instantaneous, direct-reading VHF Adcock systems; these systems were the first of their kind and were intended largely for air-traffic control in civil and military applications at home and abroad. He was also involved with an experimental position finding system. He continued his work with RDF into the 50's which by then was leading to automatic RDF sets in the UHF spectrum. Geoff was later involved with a mobile radio communication set, the SEM 25, for the West German Defence Ministry which was sold in great numbers. His engineering and production expertise was well employed in that project. Some time afterwards the Radio Division was disbanded and Geoff moved on to the STC research wing in Harlow, living at that time in Potters Bar but later moving to Danbury, to head up a similar operation as Quality Control Manager until he retired in 1984.

His retirement time was taken up with consultation work, sailing, amateur radio (including slow-scan television on 10 metres), computing, voluntary IEE work, auditing accounts, church activities, walking, maintaining an allotment and doing charity work with his wife Margaret. Together they visited friends and their two daughters now living in Yorkshire. As we heard at the service he travelled across the world for STC and in his retirement continued to travel; to Uganda where his youngest daughter was working at the time. He was soon volunteering, whilst on holiday there, to help with the radios and hydroelectric equipment used by church missionaries there to support their charity work. He was instrumental in holiday exchanges with Americans in Danbury Massachusetts. He joined in the amateur radio weekly schedules with Chelmsford's twinned town of Backnang and the CARS nets. From time to time he used his modest amateur station to speak with Australia on 20 metres single-sideband. He also served on the CARS Committee. Geoff will be missed by his many friends.

I acknowledge help from his ex-colleagues regarding his work at STC.

### **Joint Editors**

Colin G0TRM 01245-223835 colin@the pages.globalnet.co.uk  
Geoff G7KLV 01245-473822 geoff@g7klv.free-online.co.uk  
64, Vicarage Lane, Gt. Baddow, CHELMSFORD CM2 8HY  
**Deadline for the next N/L is Wednesday 15th. March.**