

# STARLITE

*The Newsletter for Members and Friends of*

**G6OI**  
1938

## **Stourbridge and District Amateur Radio Society**

**G6SRS**  
1938

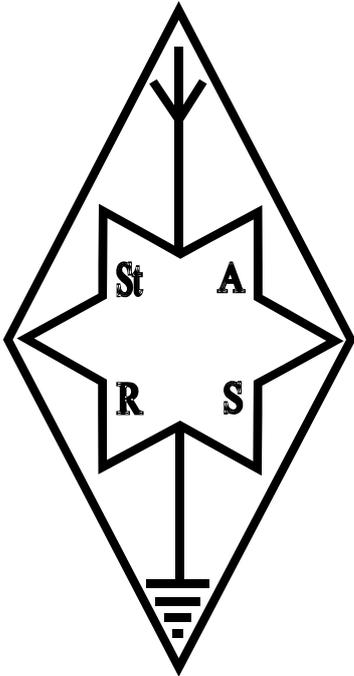
incorporating

**Old Swinford Hospital School Radio Club**

**G4CVK**

1969

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Visitors always welcome

**MEETINGS**

The Society holds its full meetings on the

1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each Month at

**Old Swinford Hospital School**

**Heath Lane**

**Stourbridge**

**(8.00pm – 10.00pm)**

Additionally the shack is open during the same times on the intermediate Monday's

*All correspondence/enquiries should be addressed to the  
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**John Clarke M1EJG**  
**(01562) 700513**

**[honsec@g6oi.org.uk](mailto:honsec@g6oi.org.uk)**

STARS Web Site

WAP enabled ??

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**[www.g6oi.org.uk](http://www.g6oi.org.uk)**

**[www.g6oi.org.uk/wap/index.wml](http://www.g6oi.org.uk/wap/index.wml)**

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# STARLITE

## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Apologies on the late appearance of Starlite this month. I have been away on holiday and have had other commitments which have kept me away from producing Starlite. Due to my holidays I have missed most of the club's activities this month. Fortunately Malcolm Palmer has been able to cover the surplus sale and I appreciate his pictures of the sale he has supplied in his 'From Our Roving Reporter' article.

As always I would be interested to receive contributions and feedback on any of the articles. I aim to make Starlite available for the first day of each month, so please can you submit any articles in time for this deadline.

Regards

Adrian Bryan (G0NLA)

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## UK/CB

### Introduction

Well like it not it is 30 years since legal CB radio was introduced in the UK, and I thought the anniversary should not pass by without a few words on the subject. Quite a few Amateur Radio users, myself included have made the transition from CB to the amateur bands. CB is a good place to learn about using a radio transceiver, aerials, SWR and other topics.

### A Vacuum Waiting to be Filled

In the UK, CB was glamorised and made famous by the film Convoy in which Kris Kristofferson plays a truck driver with the handle of rubber duck. The Dukes of Hazard program similarly popularised CB for UK TV home viewers. At the time there was a sentiment that if the Americans could have CB, the why could we not have CB in the UK? There were no CB sets in the UK, but eventually CB made its way to the UK and a thriving if illegal use of CB developed.

Possibly the fact that CB was illegal made it more attractive, who knows? Added to this there is the excitement that all radio users get in being able to talk to people both locally and in other countries. At the then point in the then sun spot cycle, it was often possible to work the USA and Europe using AM and SSB on illegal transceivers. Early illegal sets imported into the UK were the Ham International Multimode and the Ham International Concorde. These CB sets were more sophisticated than legal UK CB transceivers and were able to tune and transmit on the UK CB legal frequencies if required. Once one had obtained an illegal CB it was often a gamble how the radio performed as the second hand sets had frequently been modified by unskilled operators and performance was often less than optimal. The illegal sets had a standard set of 40 channels and came fitted with high and low blocks which added and additional 40 + 40 channels. Sometimes the additional channels added took the frequency operation into the 10 meter amateur band. Interference by illegal set caused problems with frequencies used for remote control of model aircraft.

### UK/CB 27/81 – MPT1382

The clamour had been building in the years leading up to its introduction, and finally the then Ofcom relented and UK/CB 27/81 defined what UK CB would be permitted. However UK/CB 27/81(27Mhz 1981) specification had a sting in its tail!



Above a typical UK CB 27/81 transceiver and view with the cover removed



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## Were the new UK CB sets compatible with existing US CB Sets?

There must have been a deliberate by decision by Ofcom to make UK/CB 27/81 sets as incompatible as possible with any currently in use US CB radios. Conversion of existing sets which had entered the country without paying duty was not legal under any circumstances either for CB or Ham radio users.

The initial frequencies started at the rather odd frequency of 27.60125 and progressed in 10K steps up to and including 27.99125 MHz. Note that most commercial equipment uses 12.5k spacing. Often UK/CB sets were modified to increase the deviation to get a punchier signal, but this often had the effect of causing co-channel interference for other CB users. US CB frequencies started at 26.965 MHz and continued up to 27.405 MHz in 10k steps. The main intention from Ofcom seemed to be mainly as an offering to appease the clamour for CB. Legal UK/CB transceivers suffered when there were any lift conditions from interference from Europe, which was often Italian stations operating illegal CB radios.

UK/CB stipulated that modulation was narrow band FM and output was limited to 4 Watts power output. However if a legal base station aerial was used above 20ft above ground level, one was required to use the low power setting on the CB limiting power to .5 Watts. The legal base station aerial was a poor radiator and had a top loaded capacitance hat and was around 4 feet in height and featured four radial ground planes. In my experience the legal aerial was rarely used as a base station aerial and a quarter or 5/8<sup>th</sup> was more widely used. Enforcement of regulations seemed to be a very low priority for Ofcom. The 27Mhz frequency was not suited to mobile use as aerial sizes would be cumbersome with a half wave being 5.5 meters and a quarter wave being 2.75 metres. Also the whip aerial was likely to be distorted during travel and not suitable for use with a magnetic mount for cars.

There was a convention of using channel 9 for emergencies which was widely flouted and channel 14 was used as a calling frequency for non-mobile users with channel 19 used by lorry drivers as a calling and information frequency. Some lorries came fitted with CB as standard or as an option on other lorries. The licence fee was £15 and lasted for one year. Most early legal 27/81 - MPT 1320 were modifications of American designs for the UK market. Often quality was not a priority and sets were much of a muchness with regard to performance with sensitivity as the main differentiating feature.

The common UK/CB 27/81 CB radios were : Midland 2001, 3001, 4001, Rotel RVC 240, Binatone 5 star, Audioline 340 and 341, with them also sold as Uniace and Uniden 200 and 400. These models were black fronted as opposed to the Audioline models which sported a chrome front surround. The Amstrad 901 had signal meter formed of LED lights as opposed to the regular analogue meter. The LCL Economy was minimally equipped with just volume and squelch controls.

Radios fitted with Cybernet circuit boards enjoyed a good reputation. The Audioline board had good channel rejection, but was less sensitive for DX, but the modulation was more muffled.

## UK/CB on 934 Mhz

Possibly more interesting was the availability of 934 MHz for UK CB. This frequency could have provided a welcome haven from the disorganised chaos that developed on the 27Mhz CB band. However, the 934 Mhz CB offering saw minimal take-up largely due to price of equipment. The main commercially manufactured rigs available were the Cybernet Delta 1 and the Reftec 934 at



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around £400/£500 considerably more than 27 Mhz CB sets. Users who did utilise 934 Mhz often knew each other by name and the frequency created a dedicated group of fans and the available 20 channels was more than adequate. At the time 934 Mhz was not seen as a useful part of the radio spectrum and this was probably why it was offered to the CB fraternity. On 934 Mhz CB one was (to the best of my recollection) allowed 8 Watts output power and aerials were allowed to use a small Yagi. FM was the only allowed mode of operation. CB934/81 was scrapped by 1999. The 934 Mhz band is close to the lowest mobile telephone frequency, but I do not believe that mobile phones utilise the old CB 27/934 frequency.

## Current Status and Beyond

Today CB frequencies have been harmonised with those available in Europe – CEPT frequencies. They are on a different part of the 11 meter band. In Dec 2008 the requirement to buy a CB radio licence was dropped. CB radio is much changed from its peak and today the main users seem to be caravan users, the farming community, off-road users. There is some local chit-chat on CB but this is minimal. I believe it is legal for CB users to operate whilst driving a car and like taxi drivers, ham radio, CB users are exempt from the laws which prohibit cell phone user operating whilst mobile. In June 2011, there were EU proposals to allow CB users to use SSB. I understand that OFCOM is yet to allow UK CB users SSB and AM modes of modulation although this is a distinct possibility in the none too distant future.

As usual any errors in this article are mine.

Adrian Bryan (G0NLA)

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## FROM OUR ROVING REPORTER

November 2011 Starlite November 2011

Less than a month before Christmas and the New Year whatever it may bring. I am still looking for interesting people to come along and give talks at STARS. I have some in mind, when I can get around to contacting them. As you know I am also involved with other projects that are only loosely connected with amateur radio. I wonder if anyone was watching Country File on BBC 1 a short while ago? Ben Nock who attends our meetings from time to time was on the programme. On Country File they were searching for a house around Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire to find one large enough to house his military collection. I always find the programme interesting when I have time to watch it.

Its not often that STARS have two Stars of BBC TV at their meetings, well that was certainly the case at the surplus sale. But who where they? Ben Nock on the above mentioned programme and myself. I was on Frank Skinner's programme on George Formby initially on BBC4 [27<sup>th</sup> Oct] & the repeat BBC2 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. The programme was recorded in March 2010.

Returning to the subject of the surplus sale on 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. I thought that it was both successful and enjoyable. There were three visitors present, Ben Nock, Stuart Mckinnon, John Tracy and Joe Hawkins (who may be a member). Amongst some of the items were two ships in a bottle, a waterproof camera case. Nick was kept busy as auctioneer and the sale started at 8pm and continued



until 10-15pm. Such was the amount of items for auction, that our president James was also busy taking the items to who ever had purchased them. John our treasurer was similarly kept busy, adding up the total received. I was the last to leave the car park at 10-30pm.



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The next time I will be with STARS members will be at the Christmas Dinner at The White Horse Carvery in Old Swinford. When I am in Blackpool for the George Formby Society Meetings I often visit the Tramstop. The Tramstop is owned by Crown Inns who also own The White Horse in Cleveleys. I have been finding Blackpool increasingly expensive to visit and so having already visited twice this year already, made me decide to attend instead, classical organ concerts at Wordsley Church, St James Pensett, and Walsall and West Bromwich Town Hall. At the town Hall concert, I found out about an organ concert at The Victoria Hall Hanley, Stoke on Trent on Sat 19<sup>th</sup>. The Hanley concert was a lunch time concert from 12-1pm. I arrived at Hanley for 10:30, so there was time to look around. It is 20yrs since I last visited Hanley when I went to see the musical Zip Goes A Million at The Mitchell Memorial Theatre. One of the George Formby members was playing the leading role. The Musical was written for George to appear in, and it is based on Brewsters Millions the premiere of which was held in Coventry and was followed by a long run in London. After six months, George had his first heart attack and was taken out of the show, and Coventry born Reg Dixon was chosen for the replacement part.

I am still collecting signatures to try to have Dudley Hippodrome opened as a theatre and to have volunteers helping to restore it back to how it used to be in the 1940s,50s & 60s, when it was hailed as Britain's leading theatre. I have support from a local MP. I am trying to find a buyer for The Buttermarket Shrewsbury where the STOT Wurlitzer Organ is. It has been over 12 months since it was last used. I may be on BBC TV again this year. It is 20yrs in December since I founded The Stourbridge Branch of The George Formby Society. I have invited BBC Midlands Today to attend on 21<sup>st</sup> Dec.

Returning to Amateur Radio one of my organ colleagues who lives in Hereford always brings copies of The Hereford Times so I can keep up to date of the County I used to live in 50yrs ago and where Glenys and myself used to visit often when our parents were alive. Nowadays we get to Hereford shire three or four times a year as we still have family connections. Reading through one of the editions of the Hereford Times, I came across a photo of Richard Langford G4FAD who is a farmer who lives at Wellington mid way between Leominster & Hereford. I phoned Richard to ask how Hereford Radio Club was going. They meet at Marlbrook near to Leominster where the Cadbury Factory is situated. Richard informed me that the boxer, Bombardier Billy Wells – G3HVX (see next page for his picture), was a member of STARS in 40s & 50s. He has recently become a silent key at the age of 85. He lived near Leominster. I will include information about him in the next edition of Starlite and his connection with STARS.

See You at The Xmas Dinner 5th December 2011 until then Best 73s to every one from  
Your Roving Reporter Malcolm G8BOP

[A date for your diary :-](#)

[Jazz Concert at The Bonded Warehouse Friday 9th Dec 7-30](#)  
[Billy Thompson Gypsy Style Jazz /rock Band](#)

[First Sunday December - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011](#)

[Organ Concert at 3-4pm at Wordsley Church free admission,](#)  
[but retiring collection at the end.](#)



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Below courtesy of Wikipedia -

Bombardier Billy Wells



