



STARLITE

The Newsletter for Members and Friends of

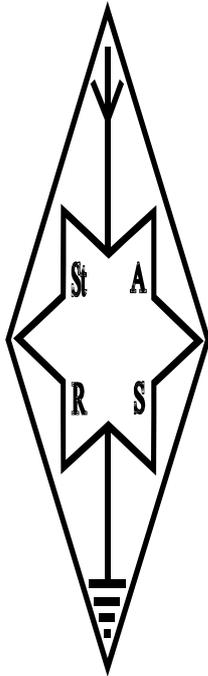
Stourbridge and District Amateur Radio Society

incorporating

Old Swinford Hospital School Radio Club

G6OI
1938

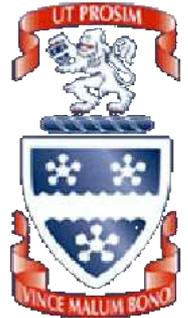
G6SRS
1938



G4CVK

1969

ISSUE 02/13



Old Swinford
Hospital

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MEETINGS

Visitors always welcome

The Society holds its full meetings on the
1st and 3rd 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 Mondays

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Or by e-mail to :-
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www.g6oi.org.uk



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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first Starlite of 2013.

The Starlite newsletter is sent to a list of members at the end of each month. You can catch-up on previous Starlite Newsletters by going to the club website URL <http://www.g6oi.org.uk/starlitewin.htm>

If anyone would like to submit an article it will be gratefully received at editor@g6oi.org.uk. The article need not be long. There are no strict rules on what can be submitted but I try and steer clear of pictures or articles lifted from the internet so that we do not attract copyright problems. The subjects are not exclusively radio related and sometimes touch on technology, computing, electronic construction or your views on a recent purchase. Sometimes articles can centre around a photograph(s) such as "Up on the roof" which deals with one of the days set aside for maintaining the club aerials. You may like to submit a URL for an item you saw on the internet that you thought may interest other members. For example club member Jim (James Kimpton) passed the following URL http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=e2a_1356109898 Persevere with video and watch it in full, despite the picture quality, the video is interesting from a radio viewpoint.

Best Wishes for the New Year

Adrian Bryan (G0NLA)

Starlite Editor - editor@g6oi.org.uk

STARS 75th ANNIVERSARY

2013 marks the 75th anniversary for STARS. To save you doing the arithmetic, STARS was started in 1938. Do you have any suggestions how we can mark the anniversary. It does not need to be a single large event. We could have some small event such a club meal. Other suggestions are trying to get a mention on BBC Midlands Today or on Stourbridge 'Bridge Radio. If you have any ideas or suggestions of your own, or are willing to help, please get it touch with any member of the committee.



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HAVE YOU FOUND A MUNZEE?

You guys know all about geocaching, because we have had a Starlite article about it. Some of you also know about Orienteering, because I gave a talk about it to the Club years ago, and have also bored others to death wittering on about it more recently.

BUT -

Have you heard about MUNZEE hunting?

Back to my intro: what you probably don't know is that I maintain a permanent orienteering course on the Clent Hill, with 17 wooden posts whose locations are marked on a special map. (Sales pitch: the maps cost a mere £1.00 and you can get them from the café in the Nimmings car park, or if you ask nicely and pay the postage, from me).

Any of you with timber fence posts know that they eventually rot through, just below ground level, and so it is with the course posts on Clent. That is why I need to check them periodically, which also helps to detect any which have been defaced, uprooted or ignited by the fun-seeking local youth.

Hence I was up on Clent the other day, to check out the permanent course. Curses - one of the posts had rotted through and was lying on the ground. So I decided to prop it up temporarily in some branches...but then I spotted that somebody had attached a QR code (you know, one of those funny square bar code things that you scan with your smartphone. It had on it a website address <http://www.munzee.com/> and the suggestion that by finding it you could earn points. Seemed to be some sort of Treasure Hunt - maybe the latest adaptation of geocaching.

Of course, I checked out the website (as you will) to find out more. It seems there are loads of them around, worldwide, and several on Clent. So far, it seems that nobody has "captured" any of those on Clent - not surprising, considering the lack of detail on the Google map used to display their locations. The local munzee-man has also stuck some in Mary Stevens Park, and there is even one in the Stourbridge Aldi car park. I can confirm that one, because I checked it myself out of curiosity.

Munzee seems to be American in origin, and there are commercial aspects to the "scavenging game". But if you are looking for a new "geeky" game to play...

From Robert G3ORI



Above photo courtesy of Wikipedia.



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THE AUSTRALIAN HAM RADIO FOUNDATION LICENCE

Introduction

Before diving into the detail, I thought it might be interesting to set the scene in the UK. During the mid 1990's there was a decline in radio amateur licences issued. It was thought that the process for obtaining a licence was too onerous. From my own viewpoint, I spent around 3 months of self-study which entailed at least an hour of reading per day or taking test exam papers and I spent more time at the weekend. This enabled me to obtain my class B licence which allowed access to frequencies above 30MHz.

I then went to Dudley College for 6 months for a one night a week Morse code class. At home I practised receiving Morse on most evenings for around 10/15 minutes with the aid of a Datong Morse tutor. As regards sending Morse one bought a straight key and made a buzzer and got a friendly amateur to listen to you and offer advice. On passing the Morse examination at 12 words per minute one was allowed access to all ham radio bands.

So looking back it was quite a lengthy and difficult process and the Morse code requirement was a hurdle too far for many. I don't believe the Morse code requirement was the only cause of the decrease in new amateurs joining the hobby. At the start of 1985 Vodaphone and Cellnet introduced the first mobile phones. A 1987 price was around £400 to rent the phone and around £30 per month line rental. To get an idea at today's prices you could probably double these prices and it would give you some idea of the cost. Home computers may also have proved an attraction for potential radio amateurs. I don't believe there was one single factor that caused the decrease in interest in amateur radio, but more of a combination. Other factors were repeater abuse, the 2 meter band was overcrowded and hams just drifted away some never to return. The amateur who built his (female hams were a rarity and those that existed often had a ham as a husband) own transmitter and receiver to get on the air was becoming less common. To try and address some of the causes for the decline in amateur radio, consultation took place and in January 2002 in the UK the licence was split into the three classes that exist today. This may have been influenced by the American system which has several levels of licence.

What was the situation in Australia?

Australia was experiencing a similar decrease in licence registrations. The ham radio licensing arrangement in Australia in around 2000 was more complex than the UK. There were four classes of licence. In order of scope to access the amateur bands the licences were: Unlimited, Limited, Novice and Novice Limited. All had access to the VHF and UHF (in part) amateur radio bands and varying degrees of access to HF frequencies from no access, access to 10 metres FM only, limited HF access and full HF access. The depth of electronics knowledge also varied as did Morse speed requirements. As an aside, a ham radio licence was and is, unusual in that one could build and transmit with equipment one had built oneself. This was encouraged and one of the stated purposes of a licence is that it is for self-training and instruction. In my experience it is rare to talk to other amateurs who have built or operate equipment they have made.

In October 2005, the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) introduced three types of Ham radio licence. These are Foundation Licence, and the Standard Licence and Advanced Licence and were combinations of previous licences. The new licences used the UK system as a starting point, but



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with modifications. The fact that the International Radio Amateur Union no longer required radio hams to have competence in Morse code was an additional factor.

Enter The Australian Foundation Licence

Like the UK, the Australian Foundation Licence set a new entry level access to amateur radio. The publication for those wishing to study for the Australian Foundation Licence is entitled “Your Entry Into Amateur Radio” and is a 108 page manual compared to the UK “RSGB Foundation Licence Now!” which is a modest 35 pages.

“Your Entry into Amateur Radio”, quote, contains all the relevant information you will need to know to successfully complete a training course to obtain a foundation licence. It also contains a wealth of information a Foundation Licence operator will need. Items like Band Plans, Electrical Safety information, operating procedures such as the Q code, how to contact you local radio club, the WIA and much more, unquote.

The UK Foundation Licence requires that part of the training must be hands on and requires classroom attendance. As such it is not possible to acquire a UK Foundation Licence by self study only. I understand that this situation is equally applicable in Australia, although some internet based training is available.

The examination for each country has 25 questions with multiple choice answers. Having obtained one’s call sign the Australian Ham has a more restricted range of operating frequencies. The Australian Foundation Licence allows restricted operation on 3.5Mhz, 7Mhz, 21Mhz, 28Mhz, 144Mhz and 430 Mhz. Restricted means not the entire part of some bands and a PEP of 10 Watts. The UK Foundation licence is less restrictive and allows operation on all HF, and VHF bands at similar power levels to the Australian Foundation Licence.

For those interested the Australian Syllabus can be found at :-
<http://www.amateurradio.com.au/sites/default/files/basicpage/aocpf-syllabus.pdf>

And the UK Syllabus can be found at :-
<http://www.commsfoundation.org/rce/pdf/foundationssyllabus.pdf>

After a brief look, I think the Australian syllabus may be more extensive than the UK syllabus and although both cover roughly similar subjects, the Australian syllabus tends to cover to a greater depth.

Note that the RSGB and the WIA Wireless Institute of Australia perform similar roles as regards obtaining Radio Licences.

For interest, I have included the operation allowed with a Standard Australian Ham Radio Licence. This is the same as the Foundation Licence with the addition of 14Mhz, 52Mhz, 23cms, 13 cms and 6 cms and 50 Watts ERP.



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Above (courtesy of Jim), students receiving Foundation Course training at VK2MB

Any errors in the above article as usual are all mine
Adrian Bryan (G0NLA)



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ROVING REPORTER

Covering Dec 2012 - Jan 2-13

Twelve of the Stars members enjoyed a carvery Christmas Dinner at The White Horse (Crown Inn) Old Swinford Monday 10th Dec 2012 (see below)



It was a follow on for myself from Friday 7th Dec, when Dudley Councillors were invited to take a look at the interior of Dudley Hippodrome. I invited BBC Midlands Today to attend and their report almost featured on the programme on Monday 10th December. I was interviewed but due to a tight time slot it was not shown, but it was good publicity for The Friends of The Hippodrome and generated more interest to see the building opened as a theatre once more during 2013. After the Midlands Today team had left, there was some time to spare so I did a solo performance (see above) where the stage used to be. A video recording can be seen on the Hippodrome Facebook page. Starlite readers will have to be content with a photograph. I will be trying to get BBC Midlands Today to attend STARS as part of our 75th Anniversary year. The last time that STARS were on Midlands Today was in the late 1950s/early 60s when John Bills was featured from the Central News Studio Birmingham. It was about National Field Day (NFD).

A former early member of STARS and visitor assistant to both NFD and Radio Rallies; Arthur Davies G3IIV from Sedgley. Arthur became a silent key 6th August 2012. Arthur was about 80 years old. The last time I was in contact with him and his XYL was at Elvaston Castle Radio Rally. As mentioned he was always to be seen at radio rallies. Arthur was a pharmacist and worked for Timothy Whites & Taylors which had shops in most high streets. The last time Arthur was at a STARS meeting was in the 1960's. I read in the January Edition of RadCom that Ron Turner G3IMG from the High Street in Pensnett also became a silent key 9th Nov.2012. I had one or two contacts with him on 2m in the early days of my transmitting licence. There was a good write-up about Peter Burden G3UBX in the Express & Star (Wednesday 21st November 2012) entitled "Re-Boot For Worlds Oldest Computer", about the WITCH computer about which he gave a talk to STARS at the October 2012 meeting. For readers of the Boxing Day edition of the Express & Star, some of the old pictures featured Donald Pratt G3MHS who used to attend STARS meeting before he became a monk! When I first knew him in the 1950s he lived in what was Upper Gornal old police station and where the Spills Meadow Pub now stands. Don called his QTH 'The Black Château'. He was 24 stone in weight. I once gave him a lift in my father's Ford Popular. It almost tipped up on one side! He will always be remembered. It's been about 20 years since he became a silent key.

Before Xmas I was in contact with Doug G3ZLJ (Wolverhampton). He had been asking about The Organ Concerts at The Buttermarket, which he and his XYL Jean used to attend. I could not find his



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telephone number so I contacted John G3XEV (Upper Gornal) who also attends the Organ Concerts. He did not know, so put me in contact with Gordon G3DGM (Wolverhampton). Gordon is confined to a wheelchair now. He is in his early 80s and very active on all bands. He attends the Wolverhampton Amateur Radio Society who hold their meetings in the former MEB club. They have been going much longer than STARS.

I trust that you have all had a nice Christmas. So far 2013 has not got off to a good start weather wise. Cold and snow both seem to get to me now and this was one of the reasons I could not attend the first Committee meeting of year. The Buttermarket events are a step closer to being held. The Shropshire Theatre Organ Trust have received a quote from the electrical contractor for a new starter for the blower motor, which sends air into the organ chests. As soon as that has been fitted, tests can be made on the organ and if satisfactory, concerts can re-start. I will be busy when that takes place and if Dudley Council allow us to take over The Hippodrome for four years instead of demolition So there is a lot going on and so far this year I have not been to work on SVR due to the weather.

Finally I was reading an article in December RadCom page 37 about a Yaesu all band antenna; the YA-30. it is 80 feet 5 inches in length and is rated at 150 watts. The price includes guy ropes and the antenna covers 1.9Mz to 30Mz. The list price is £300 and is offered to RSGB members at £199.95

Because this is my first report of 2013 I will wish you all a Very Happy New Year—although it will be February by the time you read it.

Best 73s From Your Roving Reporter Malcolm Palmer G8BOP

