

CONTACTS, MEETINGS and CALENDAR

All correspondence/enquiries should be addressed to the

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Affiliated Society

CLUB NETS

2m Monday, Wednesday and Friday
7pm on 145.375 MHz

10m Monday (Tuesday on club weeks)
and Friday 8pm; Wednesday 9pm
on 28.050 MHz (CW)

70cms 433.525 MHz

MEETINGS

The club holds its full meeting normally on the 1st & 3rd Monday of the Month at:-
The Radio Shack, Old Swinford Hospital, Heath Lane, Stourbridge. (8.00pm)
The Shack is also open on the remaining Mondays

CALENDAR

1998, 60th Anniversary Year.

Dec. 7th	Informal On Air and Natter Night
Dec. 21st	Christmas Gathering

1999, 61st Year of StARS

Jan. 4th	Informal On Air and Natter Night
Jan. 18th	Main Meeting "PICS" by Andy Ross G7OFC
Feb. 1st	Informal On Air and Natter Night
Feb. 15th	Main Meeting, Annual Constructors Competition.
Mar. 1st	Informal On Air and Natter Night
Mar. 15th	Annual General Meeting

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Gordon has been on his hols

Congratulations to **George** now **M0CBJ** (Chatter Box Joe) He is now looking for the smallest all band HF aerial going, any suggestions? Not much to report this month as have been on holiday for a couple of weeks and missed the first two meetings. Heard that the surplus sale went off OK but not as profitable as in previous years. Seems everyone has got rid of most of their "junk". Heard that Stuart TBI was there and seems James managed to extract a few bob from him even if it was in 50p increments... hi. In the absence of Hon. Treas., Wayne LLT took charge of the pennies. I had arranged for the use of the Feoffees parlour or the sixth form day room but the message couldn't have got through and I believe it was held in the library in the end, Well you wouldn't find a much more luxurious venue. I guess.

Eleven members managed to find their way to the Motorway Control Group HQ on the M6 and were treated to a most interesting and informative talk on the workings of the system by PC Mick Short. Wayne LLT was taking photos so hope we shall see some in Starlite?? I was surprised how few people were required to staff the place. In the main control room, as I recall, there was one officer in charge of lane closures and all those various signs that light up on the Motorway and arranging diversions when necessary, and just one other who controlled the Motorway patrols.

In a separate room three very attractive WPCs were answering the calls from the emergency telephones. As each call is answered a cursor automatically moves across a screen in front of the operator to identify the exact location from where a call is being made. The operator then connects the caller to whichever service, is required, including the various breakdown organisations, or passes on the information to the control room. These operators will also pass on messages to relatives in the case of emergencies. After the talk, Mick persuaded one of the Motorway patrol crews to show us some of the vehicles and the equipment that they use. As we all know, the Range Rover

used to be the standard vehicle for this work but it is being replaced, gradually, by other makes including Vauxhall and a Japanese make (which I cannot recall) and even a Volvo!!!. It is a common misconception that the engines are super tuned, but they are not. At the time of our visit, the Group controlled only the West Mids and West Mercia sections of the Motorway but this was due to be extended south as far as London the following Wednesday for the purpose of signalling and organising diversions. ... some task!

If any you missed the chance this time, I've no doubt another visit can be arranged if we can make up a group of about twelve.

Main meeting for December will be On air and natter, enough celebrations (and headaches) for one year, gonna have the Annual Dinner in March either at the school or the Hagley Country Club if we can get as good a deal as last year. However, **Richard M1DBC** did suggest a meal out before Xmas **SO, OVER TO YOU RICHARD, YOU CAN COUNT ME IN.**

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EACH AND EVERYONE

73 DE GORDON

Firstly I hope that everyone had a fantastic time last Friday - also that my old friend Rob Mannion remembered to deliver my apologies. Hope that Alec and Daisey had a wonderful time.

Please find attached two press releases concerning the events I am running next year. I hope they help you with the copy for Starlite.

I enjoy my copy of Starlite and being associated with STARS from a distance. I will send you another article wot I am riting about the Bass Point station - unless you say that you do not need it.

David Barlow.

dbarlow@enterprise.net

Radio Officers Association Special event manager

Novices 2E1

Right, got to write something witty, intelligent and funny about the Novice Radio Amateur Course run by the StARS. Think - think - think ... Got It! ... Nope ...s'gone ... maybe... possibly... definitely... not... sorry. Maybe I could write about not having anything to write about, not very original is it? Well it could be, then again it might not, perhaps there has already someone writing about not having anything to write about. Anyway think of something funny, something that'll have 'em roaring in the aisles ('corridors' 'oi shut up you' 'who me' 'yeah you' 'well if that's your attitude') anything funny.

Have you heard the one about Bill Gates and his trip to the afterlife? ('Yes I have', 'well of course you have, you were there when I heard it,' 'Oh yeah 'course I was') Anyway, Bill Gates dies and goes to heaven and is met on the pearly gates of heaven by St. Paul who comes up to him and says 'Well now Mr. Gates we're not sure what to do with you. You should by rights go to Hell for inventing that terrible thing Windows '95 but you have encouraged the growth of computers and put a PC on every desk.' ('No he didn't' 'Yes he did' 'No he didn't' 'Ok maybe he didn't but its serves its purpose for the joke doesn't it' 'No' 'Shut Up!' 'Ok') *He continues* Anyway, Paul says 'Instead of me deciding I'll let you decide, I'll give you two weeks in each.' So Bill goes down to hell and finds that it is all palm trees, exotic beeches, Bacardi Breezers by the executive swimming pool with no nagging problems about which is the next minor software company to be taken over ('What you mean like Netscape?' 'Yes I mean like Netscape!'), so eventually his two weeks are up and he goes up to heaven. There he finds people singing hymns, helping small animals out of tricky situations, re-enacting scenes from the Bible and watering pot plants, et cetera et cetera. So Bill becomes bored ('What not having to write rather menacing memos?') and returns to St. Paul. Bill says 'Well I tried both and heaven's really boring and hell seems much nicer than it was made out to be on earth i.e. No fire, Brimstone,

wailing or gnashing of teeth, I think I'll go there.' So Paul grants him this and he cast down into the pits of hell for all of eternity. ('What ALL of eternity?' 'Yes ALL of eternity')

So after about six months St. Paul thinks about Bill and goes back to see him. He finds him trying to push a boulder up a hill which continually falls back down being poked with burning hot pokers and generally in discomfort. So Bill turns to Paul and says 'Why was Hell so different in the part I saw to the actual reality?' and Paul relies 'Arh that because it was the Demo version!'

('Do you think we got away with it?' 'Probably' 'Ok on three run!' 'Right' '1...2...3...GO!')

Tom (soon to be a 2E1!)

I have been asked to write,
 An article for Starlite,
 What is a Transmitter?
 What is a transceiver?
 All These things I have learnt,
 With a soldering Iron I have burnt,
 Do I broadcast or Transmit,
 Will this aerial fit?

This poem is an introduction as I couldn't think of anything else to write. James asked me to write an article about the novice course for the magazine. First I have to say that I am really enjoying the course, Well I have learnt lots of things about how radios work and how aerials work, I have been on the air once and spoken to somebody from Kidderminster. I have also I heard somebody in Italy talking. I am enjoying the course and I am looking forward to may when I will take the exam.

James Said that if I couldn't think of anything to write then I am to talk about the weather. Well it is raining which is precipitation of liquid drops of water. Raindrops generally have a diameter greater than 0.5 mm (0.02 in). They range in size up to about 3 mm (0.13 in) in diameter, and their rate of fall increases up to 7.6 m (25 ft)

per sec with their size. Larger drops tend to be flattened and broken into smaller drops by rapid fall through the air. The precipitation of smaller drops, called drizzle, often severely restricts visibility but usually does not produce significant accumulations of water.

UK Coast Radio Stations.

Special Event - 10th/11th April 1999

Why we should remember these very special stations.

The 20th century has seen the establishment and decline of many stations involved in maritime radio communications. The Radio Officers' Association is organising two amateur radio special events in April 1999. One of these events is to commemorate the work done at all the UK coast stations, especially in assisting shipping in distress.

In November 1897 Guglielmo Marconi set up a wireless station in front of the Needles Hotel on the Isle of Wight, from which, in January 1898 signals were passed from the Needles Hotel to Bournemouth. The occasion was when the liner *Carisbrook Castle* was passing Needles rocks during her maiden voyage and her position was passed to Bournemouth for onward forwarding by inland telegraph. The first TR (traffic report) by radio

1899 saw the first cross-channel transmission from South Foreland lighthouse to Wimereux near Boulogne - a distance of 85 miles. South Foreland was also the first station to demonstrate the effectiveness of wireless at sea. On April 28th 1899 a schooner, the *R F Mathews*, collided with the East Goodwin Lightship in dense fog. Messages were passed to South Foreland by wireless. At the end of 1889 the first permanent site for a coast station was established at St. Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight, which was later to become known as Niton Radio GNI.

In late 1900 and into 1901 Marconi established coast stations at North Foreland and at Bass Point on the Lizard peninsular. The Lizard facility was set up both as a coast station and experimental station to try to eliminate interference from the nearby establishment at Poldhu. On January 23rd 1901, Lizard received signals from the St. Catherine's station 196 miles away, breaking the distance record for wireless. By the end of June that year stations had been built at Withemsea, Caister, Holyhead, Port Stewart, Rosslare and Crookhaven. There being no trained operators at the time, the first wireless school was opened at Frinton-on-Sea. Also in 1901, Lloyds of London signed an agreement with the Marconi Company to operate the stations using Marconi equipment and staff.

James' masterpiece for Stars Newsletter?

So far I have enjoyed this course very much. I have wanted to start amateur radio for a long time. I started at the beginning of the term with two other boys from Old Swinford. We started off by learning about the basics of propagation and ohm's law. We then build a test rig to demonstrate ohm's law which consisted of soldering and using the test meter to check the resistance and current around the circuit. A couple of weeks ago I worked my first contact, he was in Stourport. After I have finished the course I hope to be able to carry on and do the class A license.

I have found the theory of amateur radio very useful in my physics and maths. I am taking my maths GCSE a year early and hoping to do additional maths next year with my other GCSEs. The instructors have made the course interesting and enjoyable and I hope to pass the exam in March '99.

James (soon to be a 2E1)

WANTED

Basic 2 Metre hand held

No whistles and bells,
reasonable price.

Stuart G7KKC

Tel (01384) 877 336.

Ships were fitted with spark transmitters and the system grew and blossomed. In 1909 the Post Office took over the coast stations. Then in 1910, the Lizard station GLD was the first GPO station to handle a SOS distress call. The ship was the ss *Minnehaha* aground on the Isles of Scilly. In 1913 GLD transferred to Lands End and was to become one of the most famous coast radio stations in the world. It dealt with many distress situations and saved very many lives by its vigilance. To many at sea it was the moment of arriving home after long voyages when the ships "sparks" contacted GLD and received the orders as to which port to head for.

The coast stations continued to develop in line with the progress of telecommunications technology. The 1940's saw the introduction of the microphone and radiotelephony, the 1960's seeing the introduction of VHF. In 1978 the fifteen operators at Land's End were handling 3500 telegrams and 12,000 telephone calls each month.

Today, one hundred years after it all started, technology seems to have overtaken the need for the coast radio station and, of the seventy-five in the UK, there only a few left. Satellite communications have replaced the need for the coastal radio stations. The numbers of old style Radio Officers on board ships has declined to minimal levels. There will continue to be a need for a small safety service for shipping, but the message passing facility is no longer required and it was this aspect which made the coast stations financially viable.

To recognise the work done at and by these stations there will be a special event on 10th and 11th April 1999. The Radio Officers Association is to re-open and resurrect representative stations at many of the original sites or nearby. Some 25 UK stations are to be operated using GB0 followed by the original calls e.g. GB0GLD for Lands End. The event will be mainly on the 80 and 40 meter bands - both SSB and CW. The CW being most fitting as the old 500kc watch is with us no more. We will be joined by our European colleagues, with such well-known call signs as PCH (Scheveningen) & DAN in action as well as stations in Greenland, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland etc.

These stations have been organised by local clubs and former Radio Officers and will be listed in the amateur radio press closer to the time. A special award will be produced with profits going to the RNLI and the Mission to Seamen. The ROA ask all amateurs to support this event

and make it a huge success, so that these charities can benefit and so that those who operated the coast radio stations have their work recognised by all who appreciate the world of radio.

If your Club wishes to become involved with this event or you wish to find out about the stations on air then please see the web

site :- <http://homepages.enterprise.net/dbarlow> or send a sae to:-

David Barlow G3PLE, "Pine", Churchtown, Cury, Nr. Helston, Cornwall TR12 7BW.

Or Packet G3PLE@GB7TAS.#44.gbr.eu

NO telephone calls please.

Are you a Packet User?

Do you use any of the local Packet Network and have you heard of FOURPAK? If you use GB7PZT, GB7GLO for example, or any of the associated nodes, then this will be of interest to you.

FourPak is the Four Counties Packet Radio User Group and covers the four counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and the Southern part of the West Midlands.

It is a group comprising network node operators, mailbox operators, and packet radio users, which meets monthly to discuss all matters relating to packet radio in the area.

The aims are these:

- a) To finance and maintain the node/bbs network in this area.
- b) To plan, co-ordinate and finance improvements to the local network.
- c) To liase with similar groups in adjacent areas.
- d) To represent local users' interests at national meetings.
- e) To provide a two-way dialogue between Sysops and Users.
- f) To provide a 'pool' of expertise for problem solving, education etc.

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, starting 8pm, at The Anchor (Public House), Upton-on-Severn, Nr. Worcester and visitors are most welcome...

Membership is currently six pounds per annum.

You can help to support and improve the network by joining Fourpak.

A membership Application form can be found on the TextWeb pages of GB7PZT, see page 210 for details of FOURPAK. (Did you know that StARS has a page on the TextWeb also?)

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PACKET USER GROUP whether it is FourPak or MaxPak who operate GB7MAX and its network in the Wolverhampton area.

73 Richard, FourPak Treasurer
G0EWH @ GB7PZT
Email: rjnewton@clara.net

Also further information at
www.gb7lgs.demon.co.uk/fourp/

Malcolm G8BOP

Well the final month of 1998 has arrived and it does not seem twelve months since I was writing a similar report for Starlite, but looking back over the year it has been a good one, apart from loosing my job. The real high light of the year being the 60th Anniversary, it is a big milestone and I feel proud to of been associated with the club for many years although with my other interests I don't have the time that I used to have to activity get involved. The other high light of the year was the move to Old Swinford, although it was sad to leave Robin Woods behind, but I still have my connections with the centre, but I think we must be the envy of many a club with the permanent shack and meeting venue all within the security of the grounds of Old Swinford.

On the 4th and 5th of November it was the Sound exhibition at the NEC, there were several stands with the latest in digital equipment. There were also seminars discussing what's install for the future. Len and myself attended one interesting semianar although it did go a bit over our heads towards the end. Perhaps we could have a talk from one of the exhibitors about digital radio and its

future? I also had quite a conversation with one of the reps from the Radio Communications Agency and discussed about amateur radio with him. It was another good day out with Len at the NEC.

I noticed in November's Radcomm that the RSGB national radio rally was held at Woborn Abbey for the last time after 38 years. It is sad as Len and myself have visited the rally for nearly ten years. The new venue is to be Hatfield House, which will take place on 1st August. There will also be a flee market. Also noticed that John Layton G4AAL who visits Stars from time to time has been elected Zone B officer for RSGB unopposed.

On Sat 14th I visited the Computer and electronics show at the Bingley Hall Stafford. The last time I attended this event was about three years ago. The cost of the computers seemed way above my price range but perhaps there were bargains if you knew what you were looking for! I believe I saw John G3SNY there as well.

I noticed in the Express and Star that Old Swinford was taking part in a school quiz to be hosted by Radio WMs Ed Doolan. (*Tom who is on the Novice Course was in it – Ed*) In the early days of Radio Birmingham when I was involved I arranged several school quizzes for the station, but all the schools were in the Birmingham area.

Although there was not the usual amount of surplus at this years sale at least the clubs funds will be boosted! Items sold included two of my video recorders which went for a pound each (*still not even plugged mine in! – ed*) I had purchased them a few weeks before hand, having paid £8 for three Panasonic videos. When I got home I wondered why I had bought them as I am meant to be clearing out my surplus equipment, not buying more! James did an excellent job as auctioneer for the first time. It was a good evening and nice to see Stuart TBI again.

Well that's all for this year, may Glenys and myself wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Malcolm.

