

# Rallies and more

Well I've been to two rallies within two weeks, the first at Perdiswell on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Although this is not as big as Elveston or Drayton I found plenty of interesting items for sale and people to talk to. This included former StARS member Bill Wells G3HVX from near Leominster. Bill moved to Herefordshire over forty years ago at the same time I did. Not purchased too much apart from a clock and altimeter. It was nice to switch from cinema organs now that the partnership of the Christie organ has been dissolved.

Now I have time on my hands I have turned again to computers. Len and myself attended a computer rally at Dunstall Race course (no bets please) and although we only spent an hour there it was interesting to see all offers and bits and pieces for sale. Remembering that my budget is not great I am looking for a 486 with Windows 95 with at least 16Mb of RAM and 500Mb plus of hard drive space. I did see one package for £99 including the monitor, but have decided to make one myself which should be a lot cheaper. Also there will be the fun of fitting it all together and getting it working.

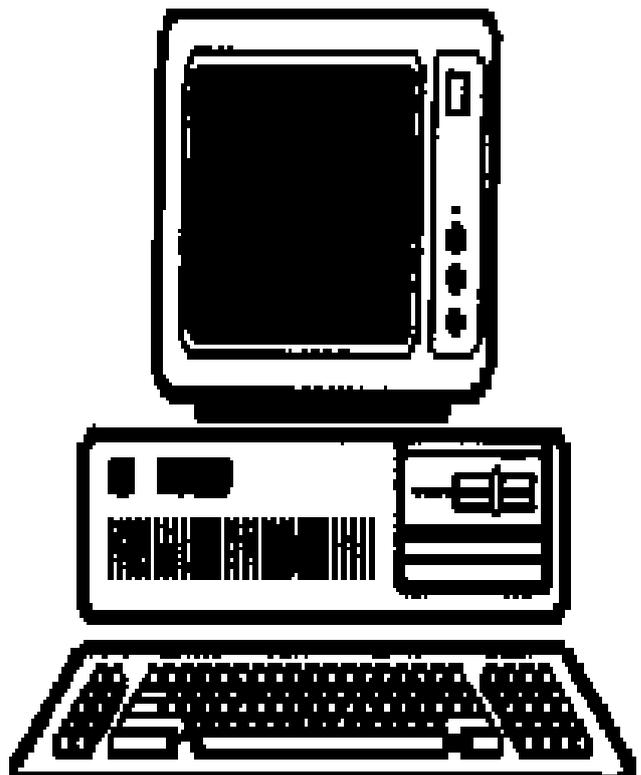
The following Saturday I found myself behind the lens of a camcorder recording for the Black Country Town Criers while he was reading the Queens Proclamation in Queen Square. Its nothing new being the camera operator for Percy, I used to do the same twelve years ago when I was unemployed.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June saw Len and myself attending the Elveston Castle radio rally. Len, XYL and myself attended the first rally at this location 30 years ago, and have made it to all but a few since. We have seen the change from the small rally to the size it is today. With the change in the weather the sun was out with the odd cloud in the sky. I had a good look around the flee market and purchased a few items for my computer. I am still after some memory a serial mouse and a

hard drive but by the time you read this I may well of soured them! I met a few old faces including some StARS' members and had a most interesting conversation with our regional RSGB rep and news reader John Layton. He was telling me about the latest communications method which involves sending the signal down the mains. He and others are very worried by its affects. Lord Brian Rix has already been approached to raise the issue in parliament. The Bromsgrove rep of the DTI is going to talk to club members about the issues of this communication method.

Following on from Richard's excellent demonstration of packet, it has certainly got me more interested in building my computer and trying out this area of amateur radio. The following evening I attended my first meeting of the West Midlands Amateur Computing Club, held at our old home of Robin Woods.

73 Malcolm.



# TV problems

The first meeting of the month (June 7th) coincided with the return of the Old Swinford Hospital lads from their Whitsun break and with the NREA exam. Bit of a shock for them, I guess, after a week's holiday. The previous week I had been a little concerned that the exam papers might not turn up in time because C&G had been sending correspondence to the wrong person at the wrong address (Postcode), resulting in delays in my getting the necessary paper work. However, these problems were finally ironed out and all appears to be running smoothly ... at last. They sure cut things fine. The return address label for the answer papers looked like it had been done with a John Bull printing outfit! The day after I had posted off the exam papers I received more correspondence, including a new address label to a different department! On querying this, I was told that this had been posted to the School the previous Wednesday but that they would keep an eye out for the papers I had returned. Fingers crossed, 'cos if they don't receive them in time the lads will miss the chance to re-sit the exam in September should they fail at this attempt (Lord forbid). The lads said that they thought that the exam was easier than some of the mock papers that they had been doing so here's hoping. **Eric IVQ** and **Tony CZH** did a sterling job as Invigilators and all had finished half an hour before time. Only hope they checked the answers before handing in their papers. Whilst on the subject of exams, heard that all **Frank RXO**'s pupils passed the RAE. Congrats Frank, we could do with a good instructor for the full RAE at Old Swinford Hospital nudge – nudge, wink - wink. (I did send you 3 chappies that I thought were too good for the NRAE Frank). It seems that the May RAE was quite difficult and one of the questions had 4 correct answers! Dunno how they'll sort that one out. Congratulations to John who has been coming to the club for several months who was among the ten who

passed.

Saturday June 12th. was Old Swinford Hospital Induction Day. The day for the lads who are starting at Old Swinford Hospital next September to come along with their parents to have a look around. We set up shop in the 6<sup>th</sup> form day room and Tony brought along his HF rig for baptism. Not many visitors but Tony seemed quite pleased with his rig

The main meeting in June was a talk and demo on **Packet** by **Richard GOEWH**. **Eric JWJ** (Hon Pres.) had managed to borrow a digital projector, which plugged into the PC and **Dr Bob VPE** had brought along a screen so we were able to watch the proceedings in comfort without crowding around the monitor. The meeting was held in the Eric Moody room, which is on the opposite side of the quadrangle from the shack, so Richard had to erect a temporary aerial. At first he couldn't log on to the Kidderminster node direct and tried to connect via Hagley. However, after turning the aerial a bit he managed to connect OK and then got on to Birmingham also.

Richard gave a brief demonstration of "Graphic Packet" and then went on to his favourite programme Win Pak which has many of the features that you will find on E Mail including working off line, an Outbox and an Address book. There is an auto-log and add-ons which include a capture file and a programme to compress files for sending which saves on-air time. It will also automatically decode 7 plus files. Richard said that the system is rather hard to set up but quite user friendly. If you need more information, I'm sure that he will be only too glad to oblige. Many thanks for a very informative evening Richard. Excellent presentation.

Nice to see Doug FYQ back again sporting a

suntan after a month in Tenerife He said it was a bit too hot, around the 90's but looked well on it.

Seem to remember **Dr Alan AWX** asking about talks at the AGM. I think he was referring to the subjects covered. Well looking at the diary, since the AGM we've had a talk on "Filters" by Mike Street G3JKX, one on "Packet" by Richard. The next one is about Beacons and, in September, Wayne will be giving a talk and demo on SSTV. If you hear of any other talks on radio related subjects, please let me know. We need a Speaker for the main meeting in October.

We could also do with a few volunteers for a working party to take down the Aerials at The Robin Woods Centre.

Had been looking forward for some time to listening to a programme advertised on Radio 4, "The Morse Story". What a load of tripe it was, completely spoiled by "special effects" in the background. What little Morse there was was repeated over and over accompanied by idiots saying Dah, Dit, Dah de Dah etc. Made me cringe, and, no doubt, the Radio Amateurs who contributed to the making of the programme.

Dunno if I've mentioned it before, but I sent for some Morse tapes. They were made by the ARRL. However, as you might expect they are US oriented, the character speed is 18wpm, and all the callsigns used are US, so no good to a learner here. The recording quality was also poor. The method of teaching the alphabet seemed quite good so I have kept that one and sent the rest back. There is a little booklet with the tapes and I noticed that the ARRL do produce a version on CD. However, it seems its not available over here. Would be much better to be able to pick out individual lessons instead of trawling through the tape.

That's the lot for this month, folks. The next issue will be in September. The Ed and myself together with all the long-suffering NRAE instructors are looking forward to a brief but well-earned respite.

## CAR COMPUTERS

WHEN YOU next see a Jaguar S-type sports car go past, look to see if the driver is talking to his or her computer. (*look to to if it is Bob VPE as he has been for a test drive in one!*) Seriously. This sort of conversation has been going on since the early spring: "Phone... Dial Fred Armitage. Set temperature 72°. CD, play disk 3, track 7, I feel like a bit of Rachmaninov."

It is a bit one-sided at the moment. The nearest the computer gets to chit-chat is when it reads back the telephone number it is about to dial and asks for confirmation that the call should go ahead.

Computers are getting into every nook and body-panel of our cars. There are computer-operated satellite navigation systems, computer tracking devices, which can trace your car to the street where a thief has hidden it, computer locks operated by "intelligent" card keys. computer-controlled seats, sunroofs and, coming soon, built-in PCs with email and internet access for the chauffeur-driven set.

The AA is using computers to warn drivers of traffic hazards ahead. A small device attached to the dashboard picks up signals from Trafficmaster beacons on all 'A' roads and motorways in the UK. These relay information about delays within a 15 mile radius. For more information, drivers can use a Vodafone mobile phone to dial a computer which explains the delay.

BMW is using computers to bypass the mechanical operations of cars — so-called 'drive-by-wire' technology. Put your foot down on the accelerator and you send a signal to a computer that makes the car go faster.

'We build in fail-safe systems.' says BMW spokesman, Alan Parry. 'If the computer sees a problem, it puts the car it into 'emergency run' and you can drive the car at

60mph. It is 100 per cent safe' BMW also uses computers to stop thieves stealing cars. Since January 1995, the company claims that no thief has managed to drive away a BMW fitted with its EWS immobiliser chip — unless they have **the** keys.

Tracker gives *off* a silent signal, which can be picked up by the police once you have reported the theft. It costs about £245 including an annual subscription of £75.

Ironically, the 4,000th vehicle to be recovered by Tracker, Britain's best-known computerised stolen vehicle tracking and recovery system, was a £50,000 BMW 840Ci, stolen from its owner's driveway in April after thieves took the spare keys from his house. It was found within the hour, undamaged, 14 miles away.

In future, tracking devices will move towards global positioning satellites, similar to the ones already used by car navigation systems, which are now being factory-fitted to some luxury cars such as Mercedes and BMW.

Tony Schuip, the managing director of Haymarket Publications, had an Alpine navigation computer fitted in his jeep Grand Cherokee for about £2,000.

"I tried several systems before choosing," he said. "This seemed to be the best. It has made a huge difference to driving in London because it really works. I tap an address into the machine, it shows you a map and it talks to you, telling you to turn left, right and warning you of things a mile ahead. If you go the wrong way, it finds another route and tells you to go back. It is so much safer than struggling with an A to Z map."

Mercedes is using computers to force drivers of its S-class limousines into driving safely. The car's cruise control switch is linked to radar devices in the radiator grille. If it gets too close to the vehicle in front, the computer works out the safe distance and slows the car down.

"Electronics never replaces the driver," says Mercedes. "The driver must constantly watch the traffic situation and react to any danger. However, autonomous intelligent cruise control does make driving more comfortable and stress free.

The future will see controversial use of computers in cars. Tracker, the vehicle recovery firm, has just launched Communicator — a way of monitoring fleet cars in a similar way to trucks' "spy in the cab" devices. Managers will be able to tell where their cars are, within 100m, what speed each is doing, even the temperature in the back of a van. "We can see companies using the device to ensure that their staff work more efficiently," says Michelle McLaughlin, marketing executive of Tracker.

*reprinted from Computer Direct*

# Speedway

What has this to do with amateur radio, well I know that several members have interest in speedway, former member Phil G0PPJ and Son have set up a complete web site for the Heathens. The address is Web Site is

<http://come.to/cradley>

hope you find this interesting:- If not then please write me an article for the next edition out in September!

James

Welcome to The World Wide Web Site of...  
**Cradley Heath Speedway**  
 The full Dudley Wood Story!

This three-part article is the story of what has happened over the years since Cradley Speedway club was informed at the

end of the 1994 season that there was no longer a place for them at their home of 50 years, Dudley Wood stadium. Despite the fact that this is the full story, I have tried to keep it relatively brief - a task which was harder than I had anticipated! All the facts are correct to the best of my knowledge and I stress that any opinions expressed are solely mine and do not necessarily represent the views of anyone else connected with the club. With so many twists and turns, there may well be parts of the saga which even the most devoted of fans didn't know or have since forgotten. Refresh your memory, if you will...

Once the stadium owners (Derek Pugh and the Bridgewater family) made that initial announcement, the battle began: The story immediately received the first of many future front page headlines in the local *Express and Star* newspaper. Support poured in, including many financial pledges and donations. The public campaign started to roll with the first public meeting attracting hundreds, many of whom had to be turned away. I'll never forget arriving for that meeting to see a long queue of fans stretching all the way around the car park and up Quarry Bank High Street as far as you could see. The response was simply overwhelming. Talks were subsequently held between the club and the stadium owners, and eventually a deal was struck for a stay of execution for the 1995 season, but the long-term future was never secure...

Supporters' worst fears were confirmed just prior to the end of the '95 season with the announcement that the stadium was to be sold to a residential development company for over one million ukp. A solicitors press release at the time prompted the headlines "Heathens' Fight Looks Doomed". It was later revealed that, during the season, informal talks had taken place for the Speedway club to purchase the stadium and the directors told supporters that they had offered a serious bid of 750,000 ukp for the stadium, which was refused. Astutely, they then offered 500,000 ukp to part-owner, Derek Pugh just for his share of the land (believed

to be a one-third share). This bid was also turned down.

Several new sites were examined by the club as potential new homes, whether permanent or temporary. Of a long list, these included moves of varying degrees of feasibility: a track-share with local rivals Wolves or a switch to Perry Barr Greyhound stadium - across the road from the former home of the Birmingham Brummies; closer to home: mergers with Halesowen Harriers Football club, use of existing stadiums at Norton Canes (Greyhounds), Dunstall Park (Racing) or Oldbury Stadium; the club exhausted every possible option before eventually deciding on a temporary move to Loomer Road, Stoke; previous and now current home of the 'Potters'. The stadium was in use for Stock Car Racing and had been used for Speedway in recent years but needed some work to bring it up to the standard of top-league racing.

While the club management and directors set about building a team, beginning with the appointment of Jan O.Pedersen as promoter following the resignation of long-serving Colin Pratt, the supporters had formed an action committee. Signatures were collected on a petition and a case was put together ready to oppose any planning application that may be lodged for the site. As all the pre-season activity raged on, it emerged that housing giants Barratts were the company looking to build on the site. To be precise, they had hopes to squeeze 121 homes onto the 8-acre piece of land.

Eventually, the inevitable application was due to come under the consideration of Dudley council. The names on the petition topped 30,000; the plan by Barratts was found to be crucially flawed on numerous counts and the support flowed in favour of the Speedway from many sources. Armed with the backing of the education authority, the sports council, local transport executives, a neighbouring council, the National Rivers authority and thousands of Speedway fans all around the world, the Heathens bombarded the local

council house on the evening of the decision. So much was the support, that the council meeting was moved to another room which had a larger public gallery to accommodate the fans! And cheers rang out that night when the refusal was unanimously confirmed. Speedway had won the first battle but the owners pledged there would still be no more racing at Dudley Wood. Committee vice-chairman, councillor Joe Plant remarked during a statement, "The developers made a big mistake. They have upset Black Country people". More specifically though, they had also upset Speedway people...

*Words by Steve Johnson; sources include various press cuttings ranging from 1994 to 1998*



**75**  
FROM

*Gordon and James for the Summer*

# Worms

## Destructive bug worms its way over the Internet

ExploreZip is a crippling new bug.

A DESTRUCTIVE email infection is sweeping the business world. The new bug, known as the Worm ExploreZip — the Data Destroyer, has led to the shutdown of some corporate email systems as it crippled thousands of computers.

ExploreZip, believed to have originated in Israel, is known as a worm, not a virus, because it cannot replicate itself. However, it does have the power to cause thousands of pounds worth of damage by eating through computer files. American corporations including Microsoft, NBC and General Electric have been infiltrated, while BT in Britain said technical staff took swift action to avoid infection.

The worm's capability to erase data makes it more dangerous than the Melissa virus, which spread quickly but posed no threat to computer files. It is also more destructive than the "Chernobyl" or "CIR" virus which caused severe damage in April, but only invaded a few computers. The bug is disguised as an email response to a message sent earlier. The Explore.Zip message reads: "I received your e-mail, and I shall reply ASAP. Till then, take a look at the zipped docs". Its attached files, or 'zipped docs', will launch the virus if the user responds by clicking on them.

Computer experts warn users to simply delete the message as the infection can destroy Microsoft Outlook, Express and Exchange, and possibly other email related documents. When activated, the infection also worms its way into the user's email program and sends a copy of itself to the address of any incoming emails.