

The Lost Cutting

THE LOST CUTTING (See "Gordon's Turn" January StARLITE)

I refer of course to the report in the County Express of a meeting of our Society in September 1939. I hope this report will be found because it was the only one published before WWII. I found the cutting in my personal memorabilia some years ago and pasted it to a white card and sent it to??? at StARS.

Two things are certain,

- (a) it was in 1939, most likely summer time and it was the, last meeting before WW II and
- (b) It was published by The County Express.

In case the cutting is not found, these are my firm memories of the occasion: - The meeting was held in the Toc-H. Clubroom in Duke Street off Lower High Street and was the first meeting with a properly constituted committee with **G6OI** as President, **G8GF** Chairman, **G8PR** Hon. Secretary and **G3UK** as Hon. Treasurer.

The meeting was well attended by local amateurs and aspirants and, after some rather untidy procedural discussion, the meeting proceeded to the main topic –Duplex operation. I would explain at this point many of us operated Xtal control and usually there was much activity on Sunday mornings.

G2NV, who had held a licence longer than anyone else in the locality, operated at the LF end of the band, with due recognition, he had that end to himself. **G8FU** appeared in 1936 and soon began regular QSOs with **G2NV**. I think his frequency was around 1780 kHz where quite a few of us had Xtals

G8FU lived at Quinton and was never a member of the Society. In short, **G2NV** and **G8FU** found that they could operate duplex to transmit simultaneously (as is done on one frequency these days). To say the least, this caused some annoyance to many members, particularly those with unselective Receivers.

Well, **G8FU** got wind of the discussion and turned up at the meeting. The reporter had used term "Lively" to describe the meeting. What an understatement!

The meeting got a little chaotic and the Chairman, being very inexperienced, could do nothing to stop the "free for all". However, all eventually calmed down and **G4MJ** made a plea for the spirit of Amateur Radio. My spirit was rather diluted as I sensed that this was the end of my dream for a Stourbridge Society.

Sometime later, **G8Fu** contacted me (Vaguely, I recall on the telephone, at the office where I worked). The content of our conversation I cannot recall but it was reasonable. He made it quite clear that he would not join our Society. It then seemed a very short time to my being called up for the RAF.

The question of Duplex didn't arise again as we all had VFO after 1946 and I had many friendly QSOs with **G8FU**. Also **G2NV** became a prominent member of the Society.

I hope you will find this of interest. Perhaps, in the event of the cutting being lost forever – as something of a substitute. 73 Alec **G8GF** (Jan 2000)

Ten Green Bott

T.Lyell Herdman G6HD

In the spring issue of O.T. News (the journal of the radio amateurs old timers association) it was reported that Lyell had died. Lyell was a former pupil at K.E. VI school and went on to Cambridge. I think his licence would date from 1934 as I remember his CW signals when joining G6OI Sunday top band sessions in 1934/5. I met and contacted him after WW II and learned that he was a member of the British Atomic testing team in Australia in the late 1904's. When I first knew him he lived at Moss Grove, Kingswinford and for many years until his death lived at Bexley Nr Kent. He was a member of the RSGB for 69 years and an early member of RAOTA. He was never a member of StARS being before our time but always took an interest in the activities, particularly contests.

Alec G8GF

How time passes since Jan 1st and we are already into the 4th month and the AGM is over and the new committee elected, to which I welcome Tom 2E1HLT. I for one am looking forward to the coming 12 months and to all the events planned. However I may not be able to take part in them all because of other commitments. It seems only like yesterday we had the last AGM. At least spring is now here and the first major rally of the year will be Drayton Manor. I decided not to go to Wythall rally, its all part of the cut backs I am making in running the car, with the cost of motoring getting more expensive and looks like my current position is not going to change.

On the 26th Feb I decided to visit the National Motorbike Museum for the computer fair taking place there. Its at least four years since I was last there attending rally rallies that used to be held there. The venue was still just as packed such is the interest in computers. I came into contact with Keith G4WBM who sells software and lives in Stourbridge who was a former StARS member.

On a day trip out I visited a museum with a Wurlitzer that belonged to the late American organist Buddy Cole, one of George Formbys Ukes and one of his bikes. I had a good trip as I bought a £2.50 away day ticket and also visited Stourbridge and Halesowen to deliver posters for the Shropshire Organ Trust to the libraries. I noticed from the bus that Moor Street Station has been demolished, no doubt the older members will have many fond memories!

I have now acquired a modem and in keeping up with most of the rest of StARS members have got onto the internet, my email address is Malcolmpalmer@been.net The computer was originally for SSTV and packet, I seem to of lost my direction at the moment.

Malcolm G8BOP



THE LAST POST!

Hi All, for the last time, (on a regular basis anyway).

Those of you who attended the AGM will know that young **Tom Edwards 2E1HLT** (Soon to be M0xxx, when he gets round to renewing his licence), has taken over the reins as Hon. Sec. However, don't expect him to stay in the post for more than a couple of years as he is in the same situation as was James when he had the job. Tom is taking his "A" levels in a year or so and no doubt will be going on to university, so I don't think he will be able to cope with his studies and the job of Hon. Sec.

May I suggest that all members who have identity badges wear them at meetings so that Tom can get to know you all. If you haven't yet been issued with a badge then I suggest you badge[r] Wayne ... hi.

FROM THE AGM - ANNUAL AWARDS 2000

Senior trophy Eric G3IVQ

Junior Trophy Tom 2E1HLT

National Field Day Trophy Tony M1CZH

Bristol Trophy Wayne G7LLT

Presentation of the G8GF Rose Bowl was held over to a future meeting.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2000: -

PRESIDENT G7JWJ Eric Hickman

(eric_hickman@birmingham.gov.uk)

VICE PRESIDENT G7LLT Wayne Mcroft

(wayne@stars60.swinternet.co.uk)

TREASURER G8UAE JOHN SCOTT

SECRETARY 2E1HLT TOM EDWARDS

(tomedwards@iname.com)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: -

EDITOR James French G7HEZ

(french2@iname.com)

Brian Hinton M1BKX

(brian@hint.demon.co.uk)

Richard Carol M1DBC

(Carrolls@sheraton30.freemove.co.uk)

Tony Price M1CZH

John Clarke M1EJG

john.clarke@iclway.co.uk

It was all over within the hour, thank goodness!

Brian M0BKX tells me he has just built a 16 by 8ft. Shack in his back garden ... snag is that his Dad has commandeered half of it. How about buying Stuart KKC's Strumech Brian? I hear it may be up for grabs soon but dunno if the house is included ... hi.

Went to the Wythall Rally and actually bought something! First person I met was **Frank G0VBP** in the "Park and Ride" Carpark. They sure have got things organised since my last visit. Next was **Richard DBC** waiting for Wayne, then **Stuart TBI** then and finally a lad (now retired...hi) whom I had as an apprentice back in 1950. I remember him turning up for work with a "DA" haircut and wearing Jeans. I promptly sent him home to get changed into something more respectable. Things sure ain't what they used to be ...hi! A first class rally I thought. Must go again sometime.

During a regular CW sked with G4EEM, he sent "FB Code. Gord," something I thought I would never hear from Bob. Of course I went back to him and immediately my sending went all to pot ... Its always the way ain't it?? ... Hi.

Latest gimmick I have tried is PSK (phase shift keying ??). It works fb on Rx but yet to try Xmitting. Refined sort of RTTY working several QSOs simultaneously on one base frequency (14.070Mhz)

Had a call from **Geoff G0KNM** of "Air Ambulance" fame (and former Sheriff of Sandwell County). Seems he is sending out a posse to round up errant Hams who failed to support the last SES he ran. Next year (2001) is the 10th. Anniversary of the County Air Ambulance in the Midlands and he plans to run another SES for them one weekend in May. If you have a guilty conscience then I suggest you lie doggo **ON MONDAY 17th. APRIL** when he plans a raid on OSH ... hi. Be nice to see you again Geoff.

James has just flogged me a "new" PC with Windows 98 and, after a lotta hassle managed to get most of my old programmes working. However, can't get GP to work so looks like will have consult Richard EWH re WinPak unless someone knows an easier way of running Packet in Windows.

That's it then folks, no more prattle from me.

73 de Gord.

The tale of a dinosaur part

I had one major triumph when the dumbest of our United Nations deck hands by the name of Omari, was scrubbing the wheelhouse deck but had failed to tether his bucket which moved from side to side in rhythm with the ship. Eventually the inevitable happened when it smashed against the side of the radar display unit; hot soapy water cascaded into the air and landed on the top of it. It was running at the time. The Captain, who had had one accident at Panama, told me that he required it to work before we got there.

Remember that printed circuits and servomotors were very new in those days and soapy water does not do them much good; each one was carefully cleaned and metered out. It took much time and the problem was that spares were limited and too much trial and error would have been a disaster. Twelve hours from Panama and we had an operational radar, however the servo motor which matched the scanner to the display was beyond repair and there was no spare available as I had already used the spare supplied. So I rigged an oscilloscope and the 17 year old apprentice had to match the dot on the 'scope with a handle I had supplied to keep the display head up. He did this whenever the radar was operating on the way to New York. That poor lad spent many hours turning a little handle - it must have affected him for life.

The Marconi representative in New York came on board, condemned the display unit and arranged for a replacement to be flown out. He said and Marconi's confirmed that it was a miracle that it had been made to work.

In New York I was to purchase a Vibroplex bug key. The use of such keys was strictly forbidden on board ship (and also at Portishead Radio) but this rule was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. However, one could not use the key in bad weather or when the engines were vibrating as, in both cases, you would send too many dots! The Vibroplex was a fine key but unfortunately was no help at all when I tried to use electronic keying and paddles thirty years later. My interest in meteorology started at this time. We obtained pacific charts and I used to receive weather maps sent by the US Coast Guard in the form of mixed code groups. This would entail some 20 ins receiving

Morse at 25 words per minute (and you had to be accurate). It was then decoded and transposed to the chart and we would have bets on what time it would rain based on the chart and speed of the ship.

There were a number of codes that were used in cases of emergency. We all know of SOS but XXX is the urgency signal and TTT the safety signal. I had reason to send an XXX when a single seater Japanese military training aircraft crashed into the sea when we were 18 hours out of Tokyo. Unfortunately we did not find the pilot.

We carried a Dutch super cargo (a person who is on board to supervise the cargo) for a while. He was a real pain in the backside for every time we saw another Dutch ship, he would demand access to the VHF. We, the deck officers and I, were very fed up with him and I arranged for a Chinese fire cracker to be put (safely) in the switch unit on the bridge. The next time he was using the VHF the fuse was lit from the chart room. I was close to him at the time and recall saying " You stupid bastard look what you have done now" he said, " I know vot stupid means" David's reply " Yes but do you know what bastard means?" He later looked it up in his dictionary.

There was very little language problem when using a morse key as most operators could send in English or get by with Q codes or abbreviations. However, in an article like this, one must be allowed a sailor's yarn. It is another super cargo story, about a Japanese we carried on a Pacific crossing. As a matter of interest, there are no swear words in Japanese, but the supercargo learned the lot though he did not realise what he was saying. When we arrived in San Francisco the First Officer's wife joined the ship. We carefully explained to Mr. Kushida that he must not use certain words in front of a lady, so imagine the reaction when we were all in the saloon for our evening meal and he said to our new lady passenger "pass the effing salt please!"

We had one Pacific crossing to deliver cargo to South America visiting such countries as Columbia, Equador, Peru and Chile. We were anchored off the port of Tocopilla - a good three miles off and there was 4000


 The call sign M1EJG is displayed in a large, bold, black, stylized font within a blue double-lined rectangular border. The letters are thick and blocky, with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance.

miles of Pacific Ocean on the other side. At about 0530 hrs local time a Liberian ship crossed our bows and continued in a full circle, its steering gear apparently jammed. It hit our bows causing a gash fifteen foot across at the top and down to within an inch of the water. The safety loop in the aerial broke. We stayed afloat but this led to my confinement to the radio room for 48 hours non stop. All the equipment worked perfectly.

We eventually sailed very slowly to Antofagasta where we dry docked and temporary repairs were made, big plates were welded over the hole. The insurance claim was quite fantastic I did not know that it was possible to store so much in the bow section of a ship - how my spare aerial got up there I will never know - but I did get a replacement for it! We had the full repairs done in San Diego, California. R/Os are often asked how, on an 8-hour watch ship, can a distress signal be picked up when the R/O is off watch. The answer to this is the Auto Alarm (we carried the Marconi Vigilant). This was a piece of apparatus that will receive the Alarm Signal, which was a series of twelve dashes sent in one minute (four second dashes with one second spaces). This alarm signal was sent preceding the SOS call. However it was a very important piece of equipment, which was tested regularly once a week. I had four genuine triggers of the Auto Alarm when I was at sea - all demonstrated the sensitivity of the equipment, as the distress was always many miles away and was already being handled by other ships or a coast station. It never failed to surprise me how often the alarm was triggered by static and one was out of ones bunk at the most inconvenient times with alarm bells ringing.

The other piece of equipment that required regular testing was the lifeboat transceiver. The handles, which cranked the generator, were pretty difficult to turn (another job for that young apprentice). Once again we logged our regular tests of this vital piece of equipment. There were times when we spent days at anchor and would use it to calibrate our direction finding set by lowering the boat and sending it on a circle round the ship while visual and D.F. readings were taken.

If one spends 8 hours a day in the radio room then one does not really want to spend ones leisure time on the amateur bands although some amateur licensed R/Os did carry crystals for the Oceanspan which would let them work /MM with the permission of the Captain.

As the newest member of STARS committee, I was asked (sorry , instructed) to write a brief account of my arrival at this illustrious position. Passing quickly over the usual " I was born at.....on..... ", my first interest in radio (nearly wrote wireless; age creeping in) was at the age of 15 when a neighbour of my Grandparents invited me in to see his rig. I was immediately hooked with the whole set up which was totally "home brewed". He was on leave from the RAF doing his National Service and I set to with a will helping to string a Centre fed aerial over his and neighbours gardens blissfully ignorant that regulations existed controlling that sort of thing. Some excellent QSO's followed until I eventually found out that he was unlicensed and what that word meant.

From then onward, I followed a fairly conventional route of constructing crystal sets and moving on to basic valve sets. However G.S.E. exams were then pressing followed by the novel experience of earning my living while attending Night School three evenings per week and qualifying as an Architect by a final two years full time at Aston University. This did not leave any time for "Ham radio" and on qualifying as an Architect I immediately married, took a job for six years then started my own "Practice" with a partner. Again no time for radio.

However on my retiring four years ago Anne had become so fed up with my saying "I will take the RAE exams one of these days" that she eventually said "do it or else". Meeting up with Eric (G7JWJ) at an OSH Old boys dinner I was directed to StARS and there met Gordon (G0TZV) who thought he could see a faint glimmer of hope for me " despite the age " (yours or mine Gordon) and put me in touch with Frank (G0RXO) at Hillcrest School where I eventually passed the RAE to join the fraternity as M1EJG.

John.

The Final Page Bit!

NEWS LETTER OF THE STOURBRIDGE AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY HELD IN THE LONGLANDS SCHOOL BROOK STREET STOIJRBRTDGE

The October meeting was very well attended to hear the talk on interference by Fred Ward. G2CVV. Fred. is an old hand at talks on interfere2oe his description of some of the interference he had come across was quite mind boggling and some of them had. us rolling in the isles Fred had of course brought a small part of his Museum with him, which in its self must bring back some happy if~ not frustrating memories. I would. like to take this opportunity of thanking Fred again and extending a warm welcome to him any time he is in the S T A R S area.

J 0 T A. With the Hagley Ramblers Scout Group managed to get under way after a late start. Some say we learn by our mistakes, make no mistakes, there were no mistakes here a little more help, a tittle more organising and the opportunity to forward plan I think we could have put on a real good show however it was not to be, just a few days notice is not enough I will at this stage convey our thanks to all who gave us valuable assistance and. the Ladies at the Scout Hut who kept the liquid refreshments coming in an endless streams (shoud that be worded like that?)

73 de John G3SNY

WANTED
for the shack
coat hooks for the back of the shack door

Ideas for talks, on Radio and non-related (mainly technical) subjects.

plesae pass on thoughts to Wayne G7LLT
email wayne:-
wayne@stars60.swinternet.co.uk

YOUR NEW SECRETARY TO WHOM ALL FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IS: -
2E1HLT Tom Edwards,
9 Heath Farm Road,
Norton,
Stourbridge,
West Midlands,
DY8 8AX.
 **01384 374902**
078 999 41150 (Mobile)
Email tomedwards@iname.com
(Evenings and weekends Only)

- A collection of thought provokers and quotations.**
- If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade.
 - The Dilbert Principle: The most ineffective employees are systematically moved to the place they can do the least damage - management.
 - Speeches are like babies; easy to conceive, but difficult to deliver.
 - A bus station is where a bus stops; a train station is where a train stops; on my desk I have a workstation ...
 - A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila.
 - Communication is in the mind of the recipient: you're just making noise if the other person doesn't hear you.
 - realise that what I said is not what I meant.