

Rallies and Hills

October has been a quiet month for radio rallies, but on Sun. 1st Oct. Glenys and myself had a 270 mile trip round trip to Digswell near Welwyn Garden City to attend the Uke Society of Great Britain, meeting. I came into contact with Geoff Osborne G6KPA who is a fellow Society member. He was telling me that 2m & 70cm there is very little activity in that area, that's not far from Hatfield House, and the recent rail disaster. It was a good day out.

At least in Nov. there are two events on the same weekend Computer & Electronics, Radio rally at Bingley Hall Stafford 11th & Sun. 12th Stockland Green Mars Radio Rally, & not forgetting our surplus sale.

I am still having problems with installing certain type of hardware onto the computer, like a Creative sound card which I managed after fitting it into another slot away from the video card which was preventing it from working. After a load and reload problem which I had a complete day I managed to install a 100mb external zip drive. At the moment I am still having problems with the Wingman joystick which I hope to have solved by the time this report is read, despite problems & time computers are great fun there seems to be no limit for their uses. I have found over the 12 months or more I have been involved with them. I may be on pkt & sstv by 2001.

I read in the Oct RadCom that former R.S.G.B president Clive Trotman GW4YKL became a silent key on 6th September. I first came into contact with him in Sept 1989 when I attended a meeting of the Bridgend Amateur Radio Club. This was during my three weeks working at Tuscon Motors prior to their move to Narrow Boat Way, Dudley where I had eight & half years employment. The last time I was with Clive was during his term of office as president in 1995 at the Pickett Lock Radio Rally. I found from him

that he also worked at Tuscon Motors in the early days. 73s

Our governing body the R A C A, are holding a series of talks around the country on the future & changes taking place within radio, the Birmingham one being 16th Nov at N.E.C details can be found at www.radio.gov.uk or 020 7720 4411. I found the Oct talk of interest I never thought that changes happened so quickly with mobile phones which seem to be getting smaller & lighter.

As I write this report not being committed to the organ concert at Shrewsbury because it was the one on 15th Oct. I was able to take part in J.O.T.A. on 21st & on 22nd / p from the Clee hills while on route to Overton Grange near Ludlow for Sunday lunch. It was a raffle prize which I won in May at a Phil Kelsall organ concert at the Grange, which was organised by the Ludlow Electronic Organ Society. where they hold their monthly meetings. Unfortunately I was not able to have a QSO with the GBONSS. I could hear them I guess it was expecting too much for the 26 THE hand held 2.5 w even though I was on a high point of the Clee and having QRM problems. At that level I phoned Eric prior to going on air but selected freq. which I thought was clear became used. I did however have a QSO with a close neighbour Roy G0LQF but that was only brief due to QRM. It was a change to operate / p.

Finally International Organist Russell Holmes (who attended Old Swinford. in the early 1990s) will be playing the Wurlitzer at Shrewsbury's Buttermarket on Sun 19th Nov. from 3pm.

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MALOLM G8BOP

"NOW THERE'S A FUNNY THING"

I have borrowed Max Miller's famous music hall saying to relate some memorable occurrences of the past. Outdoor activities were always likely to provide situations of drama and humour but I can recall some "indoor ones too.

Let us look first at NFD and other portable activities. It just goes to show that even the "Clever Dicks" of 40 – 50 years ago did make mistakes and did suffer the odd disaster.

We decided to enter NFD in 1947. Ill equipped and not organised, we entered two stations, (which was a cardinal error). Anyway, **Station "A"**, of which I was in charge, using King Edward's School Bell Tent and masts, set up on **Clent Hill**. The transmitter and receiver were both "home brew" and battery powered and the antenna was an indeterminate length of aluminium wire provided by the late **Harry 3BQB**. **Station "B"**, under the command of **Den 8PR** was set up at **Hoo Farm** near Kidderminster.

Station "A" made a few contacts (using 6OI) before heavy drizzle and a rapidly expanding length of the soft aluminium wire evoked **3BQB** to say "Let's b****r off", which we did. **Station "B"** never started. Apparently, **Jake 3AAQ** was responsible for providing the antenna but was busy on the piano in a Bewdley Pub and turned up on site very late! - More on 3BQB and 3AAQ later. It was decided to run just one station in future until we felt we were getting somewhere.

We had a succession of NFDs on King Edward School playing field, with the use of the parlour for rest periods. Still with the old Bell Tent and conduit tubing for masts, we started to get our act together. In those days each participant chipped in with such items as batteries and receivers, the latter were usually ex-service. I remember when **Arthur 4JY's** receiver wasn't muted by headphones

and, consequently, emitted loud CW during unsociable hours! **4JY** also climbed the adjacent gasholder to fix one end of the antenna! **Jack 2HAS** had an old Ford 8 which he parked near to the boundary of the cricket field where a match was in progress and, inevitably, a ball hit the car breaking the rear window. If Jack had taken any notice of **3BQB's** strongly worded suggestion; he would have departed earlier.

Well, they were happy times and during this period of the 1950's, **Norman 4MI**; **Frank 3CLG** and **Tom 3BMY** arrived on the scene. At a formal meeting where NFD was being discussed, 4MI spoke those immortal words, "It's about time you b*****s took things seriously". **4MI** had built a Transmitter for NFD. **3CLG** then located a new site at Compton Park Farm, Kinver where two stations could be established.

By this time 4MI had had provided, from his firm in West Bromwich, a set of steel interlocking tubes which could be made up for several 30ft. Masts. (I understand that these tubes may have been reject rocket material). We had also acquired a 33ft. Vertical. From this point on, I provided the TX and RX for Station "A" and **3BMY** provided the same for Station "B". Participating "non- operators" were appointed for specific duties. There was **Eric 3IVQ**, I/c Masts and antennas who, being very precise, was a hard taskmaster at times. **Mac 3KKM** took charge of the battery chargers and would spend hours on carburettors, which seemed to have a mind of their own. We now hired the batteries in new and reliable condition. It required an adequate amount of transport to deliver the gear, particularly the 12V batteries, and **Dai 3HGI** provided this as well as a set of steel spikes for guying. I well remember the occasion when we hadn't loaded his van correctly and the front wheels kept lifting from the road. **3HGI** sponsored many things for NFD. One year he brought along a couple of 27 MHz. "Walkie Talkies" for intercom. This was short lived and quickly abandoned when **3BMY** emerged from his tent, arms waving. He was being blotted out on 10Metres!

3HGI introduced bar facilities and that year we had a Beer Tent but operators were only allowed to take modest refreshment in case they fell asleep! Compton Park Farm House was also available to us so we enjoyed facilities we had never experienced before but the farm also had cattle which were not only inquisitive but also left fresh cow pats around. **3CLG**, buzzing around as usual, failed to notice one of these and gave a very good imitation of a ballet dancer, before ending up sitting in it! Fortunately, I had a spare set of trousers and was able to help him become more presentable. The cattle would often rub against the guy wires and the masts would tilt. This didn't please **3IVQ** who had to re-adjust them to maintain his insistence on the masts being absolutely vertical. Now, **3AAQ** was a good CW man on receive but not on sending in those days – always in a hurry – so we persuaded him to man a third receiver in the Farm house to keep each station informed of band conditions. He was connected to each station by field telephone, which I had borrowed from the MEB.

In the early events, each participant took along their own food and drink but our Hon. Sec at the time organised catering with the help of his daughter, a very welcome change when you are “in the field” for up to 30 hours or so. **Ken 8AAK** took on this task later and even provided a printed menu, which gave one an “a la carte” choice! **Jim 3IYK**, a master butcher, delivered the meat – travelling with Jim was an experience to say the least, hair raising at times!

During one year's NFD, the RSGB decreed that the Regional Rep should visit each site in his region to check that all the entrants were keeping to the 10-Watt limit. It was a ridiculous situation and the RR was obviously not keen. When he visited **3BMY**, Tom offered him a screwdriver and gave him carte blanche permission to check for himself – no takers!

We also had dummy runs and /P events and I remember one was at The Sheepwalks (you still go there, don't you?) and **3HGI** brought a

Paxolin mast which unfortunately we damaged whilst beating a hasty retreat in a thunderstorm!

We once put on a station in Mary Stevens Park and **John 2OG** was operating 160 Metres, which was echoed back via a neighbouring public address system. The announcer was quite bewildered but we solved the problem in the LT leads.

Another occasion I recall, which wasn't funny at the time but amusing in retrospect, particularly to those of us not involved. It was at **Tom's 3BMY** NFD Station and it was a rather wet weekend. He was using a “V” beam and decided, at a very unsociable hour to call out his troops to alter the direction of the beam by a few degrees. The gallant crew turned out in appalling weather and Tom's popularity hit zero. Fred Meredith, our secretary at the time, made many unprintable comments and I never found out if moving the antenna made any difference.

I hope that my reflections will be of interest and at least highlight the enjoyment involved.

Oh ah! I nearly forgot. During our NFD “success” era, the RSGB decided to have each Station checked for power by the Regional Representative. The RSGB often tinkered around with rules etc. and this was the craziest. Anyway the RR duly turned up. He wasn't happy with the plan but dutifully visited each station. In my case, as his predecessor, he just looked in. However, at **3BMY**, as I mentioned previously, Tom was ready and waiting and offered him a screwdriver and told him to help himself. That visit terminated there and then. Since that visit the check has never been implemented again!

I hope that whatever outdoor events you may have, you will get out into the fresh air (if you're lucky) and enjoy them.

Alec G8GF

(Many thanks to Gordon G0TZV for the typing James)

The Aerial

I expect that we have all been along this road. We have the RAE certificate, the Morse test has been taken care of and the next item on the agenda is the aerial. I use the word aerial out of deference to the late Chris **G4HCA** who insisted that antennas are spiky bits that insects wave about in the mating season. Obviously we all want something which will give us world wide capability 24 hours a day on all bands. Surely this is not too much to ask.

Every month I wrench my copy of Radcom from the letter box and skim feverishly through the pages to see if one of those clever men with letters after his name has invented an all-wave rhombic which fits snugly into the shirt pocket. So far I have been disappointed and time is running out.

Most of us have uncooperative gardens I think they do it on purpose this does however raise an interesting point Gardens may be short or narrow but all of them are tall, so obviously a vertical aerial is the answer

But before we get too excited, there is another factor to be considered the neighbours. It is quite in order for them to nail an oversized dustbin lid to their wall because this enables that nice Mr Murdoch to make provision for his old age. but if a radio barn dangles a piece of wire out of his upstairs window it offends the sensibilities of the art world and weedy men in corduroy trousers start to make bleating noises

It should be possible, with care, to position a vertical out of the line of vision of your immediate neighbours, but there is always the lady three streets away who can see it if she stands on her kitchen table and shoves her head out of the fanlight

I started out with a commercial all band vertical but I was disappointed. It never quite hit the spot. I had an interesting talk on the subject with art American, who could not hear me very well. He assured me that a vertical puts out an enormous signal but there is a

fortune awaiting to the person who can find out where it goes.

I suppose the easiest solution is the long wire to the fence at the end of the garden. Use the thinnest wire possible and if you enjoy a challenge. Paint it blue to match the sky. The man next door may snort a little but he shouldn't complain. His runner bean poles probably look like an airship disaster.

Allow things to simmer quietly for a couple of weeks before progressing to what we will call the patriotic stage. For this you will need a 30 foot aluminium pole with a pulley and hal-yard. Every morning at daybreak you will run rip a union jack and every evening at lighting-up time you will perform a little ceremony where you will salute and lower it. If it is raining then you will of course delegate this responsibility to your wife. You could embroider this by using a recording of the band of the Royal Marines playing the national anthem. This could be tricky though if the Noise Abatement Society is active in your area

Then just at the psychological moment when your neighbours are on the point of reporting you to the Commissioners for lunacy, you remove the union jack and up goes the G5RV

You may feel at this stage that you have done more than enough to further this wonderful hobby of ours, but if you want to go for the jackpot order a 60 foot tower to be delivered when your neighbour (who will by this time be your bosom friend) is sunning himself on some Spanish beach. When he comes home with his stomach teeming with foreign bacteria the last thing he will want to do is draw back his curtains and look at your garden.

When you claim final victory and choose your beam just remember one simple rule If it doesn't fall down it isn't big enough.

I have been asked to point out that the neighbour referred to in this article is in no way connected with the rather pleasant gentleman who is at this moment shaking me by the throat.

Stan G4ITM. Hastings.
(sent in by Alec G8GF)

Dilbert's Salary Theorem

Dilbert's "Salary Theorem" states that "Engineers and Scientists can never earn as much as Business Executives and Sales People"

This theorem can now be supported by a mathematical equation based on the following two postulates.

Knowledge is power.
Time is Money

As every engineer knows
 $\text{Power} = \text{Work}/\text{Time}$

Since

$\text{Knowledge} = \text{Power}$
 $\text{Time} = \text{Money}$

It follows that
 $\text{Knowledge} = \text{Work} / \text{Money}$

Solving for Money,
we get:-

$\text{Money} = \text{Work} / \text{Knowledge}$

Note that as Knowledge approaches zero, Money approaches infinity, regardless of the amount of work done

Conclusions

The less you know, the more you make.

Len G4HCZ informed me that He had seen it in Radcom that the M.A.R.S. Stockland Green Radio rally has been cancelled, I have checked Nov. Radcom & it is correct. I don't know what reasons at this stage. I will investigate and find out?

Malcolm G8BOP

If you would like to receive your copy of Starlite via email then please send me an email to

french2@iname.com
thanks, James



