

OLDHAM AMATEUR RADIO CLUB



G10RC

G40RC

OLD HAMS NEWS

**The Journal of the Oldham Amateur Radio Club
October 2007**



RSGB Affiliated Society

SOMETHING FOR THE HOLIDAY PART TWO

Our destination was Boulmer, a small fishing village, on the Northumbrian coast, about 15 miles south of Holy Island.

Curlew Cottage, lived up to expectations, the rear garden was 75 feet long and went right down to the beach. Absolutely perfect for radio and for enjoying walking on the local sections of the coastal foot path.

A W3EDP style long wire fitted in nicely. We set up the station in the conservatory and as the weather was warm and sunny, moved out onto the patio, from where the antenna ran along a dry stone wall. With the L match ATU the long wire loaded well on 40M and 80M.



As a recap the station comprised an SW80, SW40, Bright LED SWR Indicator, L Match ATU, 12V 7Amp Gel battery and straight army key.

We logged seven countries around Europe, plus a few FISTS and QRP club members, with a 9A2 being the best DX.

Four of the QSOs were two way QRP. Signal reports ranged from, to 339 to 569 not bad for 2 watts and a make shift antenna. The radio gear performed better than anticipated.

Would we have done anything different? Yes had two weeks instead of one.

By Alan Burgess G4GLV
& Sue Burgess G0RKE



ANOTHER OCTOGENARIAN

In July another club member joined the growing number of the 80s and over.

To give him his official title Albert Eric Whitcher, G7JUL affectionately known to us as Bertie, was born in Epsom, Surrey on the 8th July 1927. In his own words Bertie 'gladly' left school aged 14 years and went to work as a radio assistant to learn the trade. From 1945 he served in the Royal Engineers for 3 years after which he worked for the British Vacuum Cleaner Company repairing "Goblin" vacuum cleaners.

He then worked nights at Decca Radar, machining Microwave components in their research and development department. After a number of years in engineering of various forms involving the manufacture of such items as Diving and Breathing Equipment, and Jet Engine Parts for Rolls Royce he became 'fed up' with factory work. He sold up and bought a Small Holding in Battle near Hastings which he worked for 17 years. Due to suffering from Farmers Lung, Osteo-Arthritis, high blood pressure and being generally worn out due to "being tied to animal's tails", Bertie moved to Bury and retired.



Bertie remembers seeing the R101 airship as a child of 3 years in Epsom, describing it as a "giant sausage in the sky". He witnessed the burning of Crystal Palace from Epsom Racecourse but rarely saw the Derby or the Oakes and other the races there. He also saw Doodle Bugs flying overhead during the war. Also a gentleman called Mr. Booth, whom he met during his time at Goblin. Mr Booth invented the first vacuum cleaner before Mr. Hoover.

In 1946 his father was building the boathouse at Tilgate Lakes, nr Crawley, Surrey for the Bluebird, when Sir Malcolm Campbell and Mr Villiers his mechanic came over to inspect. Seeing Bertie in uniform Sir M. came over to speak to him. Hearing he was stationed at Tilbury Docks Sir M. said he was stationed at Tilbury Fort in the First World War as a dispatch rider in the Royal West Kent Regiment on a Richardo Triumph.



His hobbies include, Photography, Astronomy, (he built his own telescope), Bee keeping, Local History, and last but not least Amateur Radio a reflection of his first job. He also joined the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows and has been a member for over fifty years becoming a Past Provincial Grand Master and Past Worthy Master of the Order.

Bertie has been a staunch member of Oldham Amateur Radio Club for many years now and can still be found supporting our club at Special Events and Contests and many other of the clubs activities.

Bertie has been awarded the status of Life Member and long may he continue to be so.

AGM 2007

The Annual General Meeting of the Oldham Amateur Radio Club took place at 20:30 on 23rd August 2007.

More than enough members to form a Quorum gathered in the large hall at the ATC to hear the officer's reports and elect a new committee.

The meeting followed the normal Agenda for such occasions. Apologies for absence, approval of the minutes of the 2006 AGM passed through very quickly.

Chairman Mike Crossley M1CVL then gave his report beginning with his thanks to his fellow officers and committee members for their support and hard work on behalf of the club over the past year. He highlighted the successful special events carried out and contests where the contest team had achieved 1st place in various 2m, 6m, & 70cm contests.

He touched on the much needed maintenance that had been carried out on our cabin by members led by Stuart Wilson and Steve Crane for which Stuart was later awarded the Fred Lees Memorial Trophy. This annual event was done slightly differently this time with the usual presentation & quiz being enhanced by a potato pie supper and music quiz.

Winter storms caused damage to our antennae leading to replacement of the 2 metre beam and repair of the HF beam.

Phil Ellis had led a team of members in the construction of six 80metre transmitters for ARDF use. Phil was now in the process of organising a national ARDF event in Lever Park, Bolton after an introductory event at Tandle Hill Park, Royton. This had been inspired by an idea of Bertie Whitcher's.

There had been a number of interesting talks and video shows throughout the year but sadly the year was marred by the deaths of George Stead G0GSQ and Brian Collinge G7NYD.

The secretary's report had been combined with the Chairman's report this year.

Peter Rushton G7PMZ gave the Treasurer's Report. Peter was embarrassed due to a computer failure he was unable to present a complete report to the meeting and promised to submit this as soon as possible at a later date.

Our President, Geoff Oliver G0BJR then took control of the meeting and thanked Mike, his fellow officers and committee members for their work for the club. He was especially praiseworthy of Mike as he was not only retiring from the position of Chairman but also retiring as a club member. Mike had given sterling service to the club not only as a member, but also a committee member, Secretary and finally Chairman.

Geoff then read out the only nomination for the Chairman's position, that of Ian Moth G8ZHC. Ian's nomination was accepted and unanimously voted for. Ian then took control and guided the proceedings through the election of Secretary, Treasurer and committee members.

The result of the election is shown below.

Chairman – Ian Moth G0ZHC
Secretary – Chris Cunliffe G7OOD, Treasurer – Peter Rushton G7PMZ

Ordinary Committee Members
Sue Burgess G0RKE, Alan Burgess G4GLV, Philip Ellis M0GIE
Stuart Wilson G7MFK, Ian Firby G7VCG

There were no items for any other business so the meeting was closed.

The full minutes of the AGM will be published in the July 2008 edition of Old Hams News but if you can't wait that long then please contact the Club Secretary who will be happy to supply you with a copy.

SILENT KEY

It is with regret that I report the death of former club member Brian Collinge G7NYD.

Brian was a club member for several years before leaving the area some time ago to set up home in Hambleton on the Fylde Coast. Soon after arriving there he made contact with the local club and became a member not only of that but also the local RAYNET group. Several members of both organisations attended Brian's funeral alongside some of our members at Middleton Crematorium in August.

In his younger days Brian was a Glider Pilot Instructor and a racing car driver – not to Formula 1 standard but in one of the other classes. He spent many years in Africa installing telecommunication equipment. He always said he would be happy to go back there. He leaves behind his sons and grandchildren.

MORSE CLASSES

After a talk given by Alan Burgess G4GLV entitled “The How and Why of Morse”, interest in this mode of communication has been rekindled amongst members. So much so that Alan has started running Morse Classes. He runs one for absolute beginners and another for those members who know the code but need some refreshment.

The classes for each level are about 30 minutes in length and are done on Club Nights. If you are interested in joining in just bring a pen and paper and your brain. You never know you might enjoy it.

GB4RL SPECIAL EVENT

Members of the Royton Local History Society in conjunction with the Manchester University Archaeological Field Unit are excavating the site of the former Royton Hall once again. This year will be the third time they have opened up the site. On each occasion they have unearthed a different area of the Hall and some of the artefacts discovered have been very interesting and informative. Not only that the structural remains have been quite spectacular.



At the end of each dig the Society have held a public open weekend, and on both past occasions have invited us to attend and put on a special event station. This year is no exception. However due to many members being committed to other things this year we can only attend on the second day ie Sunday October 7th.

All members are invited to attend this event which indeed could be the last at this location. We will be setting up at the former Royton Hall

site on Hall Street, Royton from 09:00 and operating until mid afternoon.

The event has the same name as previous years – “Royton Lives Through the Ages” and our special event callsign GB4RL reflects this meaning “Royton Lives”.

CONTEST SUCCESSES

Our contesting team has been very active over the past few months and their efforts have been rewarded with success in various contests.

In the RSGB 6 metre Backpackers Championship 2007 the club was placed a respectable 4th out of the 12 stations that had entered this series of contests.

In the 5th and final RSGB 2 metre Backpackers Contest the club came 1st in the 3 watt Multi Operator section, and came 2nd out of the 52 stations entered in the overall 2007 2 metre Backpacker Championship.

Congratulations to everyone who took part.

ARDF EVENT

On Saturday 27th October our club is hosting an introductory Amateur Radio Direction Finding event in Tandle Hill Park Royton. The event will be held in conjunction with SELOC the South East Lancashire Orienteering Club. The event organiser Phil Ellis M0GIE would like at least 5 club members to help out on the day to help administer and oversee the event. How it is all supposed to work is outlined below.

Several Low Power 80 metre transmitters will be secreted in the Park and the idea is to locate each one using a receiver with a directional antenna. The receiver/antenna can be supplied along with a map, and you can work alone or in a group.

Registration opens at 09.30hrs local and following a short demo, entries of 60 to 90 minutes will be available up to 14.00hrs. subject to receivers being available.

Within the Park several checkpoints consisting of a 30cm square flag and a pin punch will have been set out so as to be visible when you are within 5 metres of a hidden transmitter. The task, is to collect a map, a control card, and if required, a directional receiver. Entrants will need good walking boots or shoes, (most of the course will be on marked footpaths), weatherproof clothing, a watch, a whistle, a compass and a soft (2b) pencil. Proceeding from the start you will attempt to visit a specified number of checkpoints in any order and return to the finish within the hour.

Standing at a known location, you must use the receiver, as demonstrated at the start, to obtain a bearing of a Transmitter. With the aid of your compass & a soft pencil, mark the bearing onto the map, proceed to another known location of your choice and take a second bearing. Where the two lines cross on the map should be the approx. location of the checkpoint. Head for it.

On finding the flag, use the pin punch to mark your control card as proof of your visit, then find another checkpoint. When all checkpoints have been found, return to the finish which must be reached within the hour for your efforts to be registered.

There will be an entry fee of £2. And a deposit of £20 will be required for the loan of a radio receiver. This will be refunded in full when the receiver is returned in the same condition in which it was supplied.

Tandle Hill Country Park is approximately 600 sq metres and according to International ARDF Rules is too small to hold a formal contesting event but is ideal for gaining knowledge and experience. The full course is approx 2 km. mainly on tarmac or stone paths. Most entrants will only need to find 2 or 3 Transmitters. Anyone with their own receiver may attempt the full Course

The Technical Bit.

A normal event has 5 check points plus the finish beacon. Which ones you hunt in this event is up to you.

Five hidden transmitters working on the same frequency are timed to work in sequence.

No 1. transmits for 1 minute and then stops. As it stops, No. 2 starts, runs for 1 minute then stops etc. As No. 5 stops, No. 1 starts again and so it goes round. At anyone time, one and only one Transmitter can be heard but which one?

All Transmitters send out the letters M and O in very slow morse code, which sounds like Dah dah, dah dah dah followed by 1 2 3 4 or 5 dots which identify the Transmitter working at that time. So Transmitter No 3 would send dah dah, dah dah dah, dit dit dit. (3 dots).

Using the Receiver to find a Transmitter.

Each receiver is fitted with a ferrite rod antenna. This is most sensitive when the Transmitter signal is 'broadside on' and least sensitive when the signal is 'end on'. Having heard a Transmitter, to locate it, first look for the minimum signal or null (this is accurate to 5 degrees). You then know that the Transmitter is in a certain direction but is it in front or behind you? By switching in a second antenna and a bit of electronic technology the main antenna pattern is altered to be more sensitive in one direction than the other to eliminate the 180 degree discrepancy.

A plan of action: Standing at the start, you have one minute to find a bearing for a Transmitter. You can find them one at a time or spend 5 minutes getting a rough bearing for all 5. Then decide in what order to hunt them. But move, so as to be less visible to the next competitor who starts 5 mins after you.

Example

1st minute. Bearing of Transmitter No. 1.

Options: a). Move towards it taking repeated bearings until direction changes by 180 degs. or the minute runs out. Then find your location and take bearing on Transmitter 2 etc. By running to Transmitter No.1 you have committed yourself to find that one first. You may be moving away from the others.

b). Head off at 45 degrees to bearing to a known landmark and take 2nd bearing. To pinpoint Transmitter No.1, this must be done within the minute or wait 4 mins until it comes on the air again. Use the 4 mins to take bearings on the other 4 Transmitters.

c). From a known location sit tight for 5 mins and take a bearing on all 5 Transmitters. Decide which looks the best one to do first, move to a new location and take 2nd bearings on some or all Transmitters.

Now within 10 minutes, you have located not just the bearings but the approximate sites. Work out your best route. As you close in on a check point, take repeated bearings to improve your accuracy until you see the flag but also note that the volume of the signal increases as you near the Transmitter. Use the pin punch then quickly move away from the checkpoint so as not to give away its location. Visit them in any order and back to the finish in the shortest time.

The Finish Beacon continuously transmits the letters M O in Morse and on a different frequency to the other five. If you get totally lost and are running out of time, tune to the

finish beacon and head for it because your result, even if you have not found all of the Transmitters only counts if you report back to the finish within the time allowed. 2 found in 87 mins beats all 5 found in 91 mins!

This event is designed to give an insight and some experience of ARDF prior to a major national event to be held in Lever Park, Horwich, Bolton in November, again in conjunction with SELOC.

Once again our club is playing the primary role in the organisation and running of this event and assistance from as many club members as possible will be required. More information will be issued nearer the date of this event in our “Club Night Announcements” and on our web site.

Details of the Lever Park event can be found on the national ARDF web site whose link can be found below. More info can be found on our club web site as soon as it can be updated.

More information about Amateur Radio Direction Finding including the Rules, other events, etc. can be found at www.ardf.btinternet.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE

The dreaded day is here again. It seems to come round faster each year. But there's no avoiding it. It's time for our subscriptions to be paid once again. Treasurer Peter Rushton G7PMZ will be looking out for you on Thursday evenings if you have not already paid.

Please note that as per the decision made at the AGM in 2006 that subs are £25 per annum with the OAP rate at £12.50. There is no change to these levels.

Those members under the age of 18 of age still have free membership but you must register as such with ‘The Hand’ to keep your membership current.



Cartoon by Tom Roscoe G1UVR

Don't forget that this article is the only written reminder you will receive and if your subs remain unpaid your membership will cease and this edition of Old Hams News will be the last one you'll receive.

OLD HAMS NEWS

The editor would like to thank all contributors to this edition of Old Hams News. The next edition is due to be issued in January 2008. Any contributions for this edition should be forwarded to the editor, Geoff Oliver G0BJR on or before Thursday 20th December 2007 to ensure inclusion.

Articles will be accepted on many formats, by email to "news@oarc.org.uk", by word of mouth, hand or type written notes, or as a .txt file on a CD ROM or 3½-inch floppy disc. Photographs, drawings, circuit diagrams and other graphics to enhance your article will also be most welcome.

An edited version of Old Hams News is available on the Internet at the following URL
www.oarc.org.uk
then click on the "Club Journal" hyperlink.

If you submit an article for inclusion in Old Hams News and you do not wish it to be included in the Internet edition you must state your wishes at the time of submission. Otherwise the editor reserves the right to include/exclude your article as he sees fit.

For reference the officers and committee members are listed below and will be happy to help with any enquiries you may have.

President – Geoff Oliver G0BJR
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Chairman – Ian Moth G8ZHC
chairman@oarc.org.uk

Secretary – Chris Cunliffe G7OOD
secretary@oarc.org.uk

Treasurer – Peter Rushton G7PMZ
treasurer@oarc.org.uk

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N.B. Old Hams News is the official journal of the Oldham Amateur Radio Club. It is distributed free of charge to all fully paid up members of the club. Articles appearing herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the Officers and Committee, or the membership of Oldham Amateur Radio Club. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of articles included, the editor is not responsible for any inaccuracy that may occur.

Written, edited and produced by Geoff Oliver G0BJR

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