

MERCURY



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ROYAL SIGNALS
AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
JOURNAL

NUMBER 75



JULY 1983

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Issue Number 75

MERCURY

1983

July

EDITORIAL

By the time this is read the AGM will have come and gone, and hopefully the one or two current matters which have been the cause of some vociferous comment from the Membership will have been resolved and all will be well again.

You will notice an almost complete dearth of technical articles in this issue: we seem to have reached the "Silly Season", defined by Collins as "a period, usually during the hot Summer months, when journalists fill space reporting on frivolous events and activities". The content of this issue is not, I hope, frivolous but is certainly non-technical.

With the lighter nights, warmer evenings, holidays, horticultural QRM and the falling off of HF band conditions it is not surprising that we turn our thoughts to other things than contributions of a technical nature as well as those reminiscing and nostalgic ones, so when you are mowing the lawns, weeding the flowerbeds or admiring the view on the topless beaches, do give a thought to MERCURY please, if you can, and send in your contributions. Without them we can only send out so many blank pages!!

RICHARD WINTERS

32 Redwood Avenue, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

OAKHANGER REVISITED

G3CWW/1268

On Wednesday 27th April 1983 what is now the West Site of RAF Oakhanger in Hampshire was revisited by four former wartime operators from No.1 War Office Signals, Graham Thomas and Tony Timme of Royal Signals, and Marian Thomas. (nee Merrill) and Betty Croome (nee Blount) of the ATS, accompanied by Betty's husband, Gordon, who served as an RAF medic in Aden.

Many memories of wartime operations from the station, then one of the main links in the "Imperial Wireless Chain", were recalled - amongst the circuits operated from Oakhanger were those to Cairo, New Delhi, Melbourne, Algiers (later Caserta) and to 21st Army Group during the progress across Europe, all these using highspeed punched tape Morse, and a duplex hand-speed Morse link to Baghdad. It seemed strange to see the station without it's former "farm" of rhombic aerials (amongst which the girls of the Land Army grew prodigious quantities of potatoes) and the huge steel camouflage net which completely enveloped the site. The original buildings have survived in excellent order, the only major change noted being the disappearance of our wartime stores hut.

Wartime equipment of the station consisted of triple-diversity banks of Marconi RC-67 receivers with RB-150 recording bridges and moving-pen undulators which were used by the receiver operators to monitor the quality of received signals; the receivers were gradually replaced from late 1944 onwards by huge R201 triple-diversity receivers, which incorporated their own recording bridges and were also fitted with a motor-tuned AFC facility. These enormous receivers, using a total of 87 valves per set, required fan cooling and generated enough heat to keep the receiver hall comfortably warm! Oakhanger had originally been established as one of the reception stations for the Imperial Wireless Chain, but the commencement of the V1 and V2 missile campaigns saw the de-centralisation of operations from central London and the establishment of circuit operations from Oakhanger and it's sister station at Bampton in Oxfordshire. These circuits were operated using Creed keyboard perforators, reperforators and page printers and GNT transmitting heads for the punched tape, and operating speeds varied between 100 and 140wpm, dependent upon radio conditions. The manual link to Baghdad was operated using National HRO and RCA AR-88 receivers, and the associated Marconi SWB-11E (high-speed) and SWB-8E (hand-speed) transmitters were located at Pirbright in Surrey. All the main-link aerials were terminated rhombics, separate sets of three aerials for each frequency employed - erection and maintenance of these was largely carried out by off-duty operators, as the required physical activity necessary to counter the effects of long watches! For the 21st Army Group communications the aerials were cage dipoles, the orientation of which was varied (by changing the position of one of the masts!) to follow the progress of the Second Front across Europe.

It was interesting to recall that the village of Oakhanger had no mains electricity supply during wartime - the station was fed by a special branch grid line backed up by emergency diesel generators - and the area was thus electrically "quiet". It seems that this quiet condition still persists in this beautiful corner of England and contributes to the present function of the station.

The visitors were also interested to see the remaining evidence of the use of the Oakhanger site at one time for "moonbounce" operation by the U.S. Navy, and to hear a little of the current satellite operations from the station, Oakhanger is in good hands!

The visit ended with refreshment at the other important establishment in Oakhanger, the "Red Lion", and extremely interesting conversation with S/Ldr. Newns, WO Culligan and Chief Tech. Thompson, to whom we are much indebted for their kindness and hospitality. As soon as may be possible, a Royal Signals plaque bearing the inscription "No.1 War Office Signals - Oakhanger" will be presented to S/Ldr. Newns and it is hoped that this will be suitably placed to bear witness to the past association of the station with Royal Signals.

Interest in radio communication has been maintained to this day by both Graham (amateur radio callsign G3SWO) and Tony (amateur radio callsign G3CWW - and formerly VU2CW), and both are members of the Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society. (G3SWO = RSARS 0338. G3CWW = RSARS 1268.)

OUR PAGE THREE LADY
BARBARA ANNE HAMILTON

GM6RQU/1666.

I joined 61 Signal Squadron (TAVR) in Edinburgh during the Summer of 1978 and enjoyed a complete change from working in a Doctors' surgery during the rest of the week. Everything was new except the keys of the teleprinter, but as a data telegraphist I was to become even more familiar with them. Weekly life changed to an Examination Assistant in the world of further qualifications for doctors and a move to a hospital as a relief secretary covering six different departments - sometimes splitting myself between three at the same time. I have now become more settled in one department dealing with infectious diseases in another hospital.

I never knew Amateur Radio existed until I was sent on a Trade Training Course at Catterick Signal Training School and it was there that I met Jim (RSARS 1454). He later paid a visit to "Auld Reekie" from the South Coast carrying a FR50B in his hand luggage. Subsequently he moved up to Edinburgh and erected aerials round the flat to improve his short wave reception. Time was spent listening-in until later it was suggested we became operators ourselves. By this time I was out of the TAVR having spent many hectic weekends out in the field surrounded by paper! Mondays and Thursdays were a frantic dash from work, a quick bite and off to evening classes, returning usually in a state of almost complete bafflement. However, time passed and the May exam came and went. The Summer passed and we were just about thinking of re-registering at College when the results appeared! I had passed! My Morse Code had lapsed during "the holidays" so we both went back. My licence arrived last November (GM6RQU) but at present Amateur Radio is fitted in between painting, decorating and lambing on my father's farm, so I have not been very active radio-wise. A trip to the Birmingham Exhibition in March allowed quite a bit of mobile operation, especially as I had bought a new Yaseu FT480R 2-metre multimode. Jim is now also licensed but was "pipped at the post" although he has now moved into the lead with a pass in the Morse Test and can be found on 20 metres as GM4SKR. The next step is to gain the Morse Certificate for myself before renewing my licence in the Autumn, so I have seriously to get down to that and perhaps you will hear me under a new callsign. Time will tell!!

73 and 88 to you all,
BARBARA.

* * * * *

UNCERTA SITU or 43 years on . . .

A.Underwood/G3ESO/1456.

My introduction to Yorkshire was on a bitterly cold winter's afternoon when dusk seemed to have begun about two p.m. - in those days amateur radio had taught me to say GMT but I hadn't learned 1400 hours yet!

The sky was as near to black in the daytime as it's possible to get whilst still being able to see your hand in front of your face. It rained and rained and rained. The surface of the ground around the old mill to which we reported appeared to be formed by centuries of crushed slag, ground up now to a slurry.

Somewhere between being in civvies and being in battle-dress someone must have said "Welcome to the Royal Corps of Signals" but I don't remember it. All I really remember clearly of that first day in the Signals was the rain, the black sky and the characteristic scent in the air. For just as brewing towns proclaim their basic trade so did this town proclaim theirs. Doubtless our sense of smell, like our hearing, was much keener then, but there was no doubt of where we were.

We'd come to Ossett - one of Yorkshire's shoddy towns. I'm not using the word shoddy to mean that the town was of a quality inferior to what it appeared, but in its real sense - a town where mills turned out cloth manufactured from reclaimed fibres of old material.

The town was certainly not shoddy in the common- use meaning of the word. Friendship was everywhere in the Yorkshire industrial valleys and the country dales where the beer was almost as

dark as the winter day's sky on that Saturday afternoon. What? Joining up on a Saturday afternoon? Well, there was a war on y'know.

As well as in the daytime doing my teaching job that I began on the day after war was declared, by night I had been a rescue team member of the London ARP Corps. The first blitz had just about been at its height when I left for the Army. As I lay in my sleeping bag that night, 2597060 Signalman, on the floor of the disused mill I just listened to the forgotten luxury of a quiet night. No familiar aircraft drone, no ack-ack, incendiary bomb whistles; no HE blasts, first on one side then on the other. The rain had cleared and the sky was a carpet of bright stars on a deep black background. The only sound was the distant hum of a mill working night shift.

So this was life in the Signals! Somehow I felt I was cheating in having left behind the turmoil of those nights in London - but not for long as I was later to discover.

Years afterwards I wondered how many others had the RCOS to thank for a lifetime's enduring love of Yorkshire, of walking the sun and wind-swept moors above Huddersfield, of wonderful weekends in Swaledale and for the warmth of the friendship of the people of Marsden, Slaithwaite ("Sloughwit!"), Kirkburton, Dewsbury and Batley in the industrial valleys and Thwaite, Low Row, Muker and Gunnerside in the dales. These Signals got everywhere!

A quarter of a century afterwards I thought I'd show the XYL and my two daughters where Dad began his six and a half years in the Signals. We turned off the M1 on our way north on holiday and headed for Ossett. Once in the town however, I didn't get far in picking up the old landmarks. The mill should have been just here, I thought, as I stopped, but the houses looked as if they'd been on that spot for at least thirty years. The old chap coming looked as if he was a local. Didn't really know Ossett, he said, only been here last twenty-five years. Wish he'd never seen the blasted place. When d'you say it was? 1940? Long time ago that was mister. Aye, there was an old mill 'bout here Signals were in, pulled down many a year ago that one were.....

I gave up and headed for Huddersfield. I'd heard how Beast Market were all gone, but I wanted to see if Girl Guides' Hall was still there, down by British Dyes - the Girl Guides' Hall which we occupied while training up at mill in No.3 Centre. Again I was too late. An overhead dual-carriageway swept me up and over the old town. I'd try Catterick - so far I'd shown the family nothing. Perhaps it was all a dream.

We came to the camp - or was it? This wasn't the Catterick I knew. Trees along the neatly laid-out roads, well-trimmed grass in the open spaces. Perhaps they'd built a new town and the old camp was still up on the moor. Then just as in a nightmare you suddenly see something familiar - there it was. Unmistakeable. The old School of Signals, scene of many happy hours learning to be a Foreman of Signals. But where was the old road up the hill that was like a dirt track? And where was the old YMCA with, if I remember it aright, its wooden veranda? Now that was a Historic Building if you like.

I gave-up, and we headed north, for Appleby and the border. Once in the Highlands and though Oban, we'd soon be on the Isle of Kerrera where we'd live for the next month. They couldn't change that. But I suppose that one day someone will try.

* * * * *

THE ULTIMATE AWARD

From Tony, G3WRY/0540 comes the suggestion of this new Award. The acronym for which is STAR (Second Time Around) and is open to all Members who have gained the Gold Supreme 500 Award. The eligible Members to date are: GW3ASW, G3YSK, G3UAA, GW3XHJ, G3XSN, G3DPS, G3NOB, G3DBU, G3MKR, G3NVK and G2NT. Quotas will be the same as for the first 500 (10% CW to CW confirmations and 5% Overseas contacts). One Member is already claiming a score of 66 and others scores (details to the Editor) plus comments and ideas would be welcome from any Member please. Only new contacts beyond the original 500 will count of course.

OBITUARIES
REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Sadly we learn of the passing of the following:

G4DJI/1039, Duncan Sutherland died on 12th March 1983. The Cremation Service took place on 23rd March at Medway Crematorium and was well attended by his many amateur friends. RSARS was represented by G4MUD/1569, G3UXH/0172 and G4BNI/0982. Amongst the many floral tributes was a replica of Duncan's call sign in purple blooms. Duncan was a talented man, in addition to his radio expertise being a craftsman in wrought iron and he also had a lovely aviary. There is a possibility of a Fund being started to purchase a guide dog as a memorial.

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G3LZR/0594, Ted Womak passed away on 12th September 1982, he had been ill following several heart attacks. Ted was licensed in 1957 and took a great interest in RSARS affairs. Ted was the step-father of G8EFJ.

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G4KG/0713, G. Spriggs died on 27th November 1982 but at the time of going to press we have no further details

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We also regret to report that Mrs. North, XYL of G4KHR/1657 died in February 1983.

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We are sad to report that Mrs. Grigsby, wife of John Grigsby, G3WNG (ZC4JG, VS6DB)/0470 passed away in April 1983.

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Just as we are going to print we learn of the death of G3XWS/0747 of Luton following an operation. No further details are to hand at this time.

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.

RSARS 1709. Philip Myers, alias G4AHS of 211a Wavertree Road, Anfield, Liverpool, tells us that his Army number was 70669008 and he spent several years with the Royal Signals Army Cadet Force and 3rd Light Infantry Royal Signals TAVR.

RSARS 1710. Sam Waters is VK2SC and hails from Mosman, Sydney. He has been licensed since 1948 and his main interest is DX which includes a contact with VE3QE. He is mainly on 14030, 14140 and 14220 from 1130Z.

RSARS 1711. G4KUA is Matthew Forrester of Little Etchden, Bethersden, Kent. His Army career stemmed from 1933 and his radio career from 1926. Other interests include Vintage cars and he is President of the South East section of Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Club.

RSARS 1712. Francis Beard of 23 Spring Gardens, East Molesey, signs G4IRR. He wants to get cracking on 4-metres. Francis enlisted in September 1939 and was with the Coldstream Guards as a Regimental Signaller.

RSARS 1713. Photography takes up some of John Harrington's time but he is to be heard from 137 James Greenway, Lichfield as G5MUI.

RSARS 1714. The ticket bearing the magic VP9KW call sign only arrived for Edward Hobinson at Mangrove Bay, Sandys, Bermuda in February 1981. Since then Ted has been involved in scuba diving, jogging and parachuting.

RSARS 1715. Another photographing flyer is G4LMM, Peter Stears of 127 Hughenden Avenue, High Wycombe. An ex-RCMP with 194 Provost Company Hamburg.

RSARS 1716. GM3LHV, John Ellerby of Edinburgh has been on the air since October 1956 and has seen service with RASC and REME.

RSARS 1717. CW Contests are the time to look out for G3FTH. John Hale enters from 136 Bush Road, Cuxton, Rochester and uses a Racal Synral to a 133 foot helical. One of our ex Spec. Ops. in places as far apart as Cocos Islands and Harrogate.

RSARS 1718. G6HC, G2YS, G2AJB and W8IKA are all sought by GM4LID, Les Petch of 99 Willow Drive, Johnstone, Renfrewshire, after a long and varied career Army-wise Les still looks for those and anyone who was in contact with him during 1939 to 1946.

RSARS 1719. No callsign yet but Corporal Steve Sherry of Ashley Park Estate, Aldershot is into computers and aircraft.

RSARS 1720. No details from Mark Gummow except that he is at the Army Apprentices College, Harrogate signing as G8UXC.

RSARS 1721. Active since as recently as June 1981 with the callsign of G4LOR is Walter Mooney of 59 Manor Drive, Cleveleys, Lanes. From Junior Leaders Regiment in 1958 via Germany and Borneo and back to home in 1970 are the brief service details.

RSARS 1722. You may think that the call of G8UFZ indicates a teenager, but George Gentle of 273 Long Chaulden, Hemel Hempstead has an interest in radio going back before the last war, and a service history stemming from 35th Signal Training Regiment RA in 1943.

RSARS 1723. Cycling, walking, bird watching and a little photography keeps Alan Sambrook off the air at 351 London Road, Leftwich Green, Northwich but his interest in QRI' working is maintained through his call of G4JJN. Alan first saw service at Catterick Camp in January 1954 and was also stationed in BAOR.

RSARS 1724. Joe Peerless is well known on the 80m and 15m nets as G3JPJ operating from 157 Fairmead Crescent, Edgware. The Royal Engineers called Jo in 1937 and he is still based with the MOD in Whitehall but as a civilian. He enjoys playing the organ and keeping his garden tidy when all other things permit.

RSARS 1725. Another old Catterickonian (in 1944) is G4GJE otherwise Dennis Davis of 6 Regina Drive, Walsall, West Midlands. Dennis is another photography buff specialising in black and white.

RSARS 1726. If you know Capt. (TMO) Arthur Fuller or Signalman (in 1932) Cecil Middleton then let G6VS (once VU2EU) know since this is Bill Metcalfe, now signing from 4 Partridge Avenue, Thornton Cleveleys, Blackpool who joined the Royal Corps of Signals in 1932 at Catterick.

RSARS 1727. Hoping to attend RAE classes and get his ticket is Brian Bailey of 28 Creswick Road, East Herringthorpe, Rotherham. Driving, swimming, gardening and other pursuits may interfere with these hopes but Brian is anxious for news of any other members in his area.

RSARS 1728. Harold Watts' QSL card shows RS44826 but he aspires to a G-call one day. He uses the well known Windom aerial for his listening with his Eddystone 840c and Sanyo 8880 at 8 Leyburn Close, Southdene Kirkby, Liverpool.

RSARS 1729. VK2APM was once VK9GM, is George Meaton and is to be heard from 165 Bayview Avenue, Earlwood, NSW. George saw service in the Western Desert and runs a TS520S and is keen on lawn bowls and enjoys caravanning.

RSARS 1730. VK5NLC's address is 12 Park Avenue, Rosslyn Park, South Australia and listed among his attributes is Life Associate Membership of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Australia for 34 years service. His radio history commenced in 1935 and his Army service in 1939 which included Palestine, Egypt, Syria etc.

RSARS 1731. Still serving is Geoff Buxton of 52 Coronatian Road, Laftus, Saltburn, Cleveland and that's all he tells us.

RSARS 1732. Wishes to remain anonymous.

RSARS 1733. John McAleer signs GI4JCB and must be a powerful signal from 101 Benview Park, Ballysillan, Belfast. He is a fine sportsman and an ex Royal Engineer.

RSARS 1734. A chance reading of Short Wave Magazine introduced Robert Smith of 122a Poolstock, Wigan to amateur radio and he now sports a Yaesu FRG7700 with home brew ATU and was starting the RAE Course when he joined us. Robert is interested in hearing from any Royal Signals member who served on the North-west Frontier between 1937 and 1939.

RSARS 1735. Anyone with a sense of humour? If so please contact Allan Woffenden at 89 Beechen Drive, Fishponds, Bristol - easier if you call him on the air as G3UGB. Allan is an ex-RA man but he enjoys making (and drinking) home brewed bitter, cycling, swimming, snooker and darts but not necessarily in that order.

RSARS 1736. G3TPN spends 99% of his on air time with the key, mainly looking for Canada or Australia although he spent time in India after joining Royal Signals in 1934. Walter Knox, 7 Lindisfarne Avenue, Chester-le-Street is the info needed for any envelope to him.

RSARS 1737. Ex-Royal Signals, Italy and Greece but now at 5 Daventry Ave. Hessle, E. Yorks moorland tramping and mainly CW operating as G4JIO is Ken Mason.

RSARS 1738. The Club ZC4SS had Ted Goodman operating at one time but now he signs G4LEM from Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering and is another one from Woodhouse Eaves, Leics. (1957). Angling, snooker and swimming are listed as other interests.

RSARS 1739. Another member who prefers the cloak of anonymity.

RSARS 1740. Raising beef cattle as a spare time hobby keeps VE3JLP from appearing in our worked Overseas members lists but RR 2 Metcalfe, Ontario, is where you will find Paul Cooper who wasn't raising beef cattle when he was training as a Radio. Mechanic at 1 TR now was he?

RSARS 1741. 23499030 L/Cpl Lowe, Michael step forward and join us as G4KHB of 14 St.Michael's Road, Cheltenham. The 23499030 bit is now dropped following service with the Hong Kong Signals Regiment 1957/59.

RSARS 1742. Not yet licensed but at Vimy Barracks Catterick Stephen Fretwell must have plenty of opportunity of tuition at G4RS along with Jimmy Slangis - when he is not on motorcycle trials, swimming, sailing or messing around with stationary steam engines.

RSARS 1743. A home built seagoing catamaran, an FT101, 4-400 linear and 3 band cubical quad having gained him WBE, WAC, WAS and DXCC sounds nice going for Geoff Goddard, otherwise G3KZQ of 29 Woodbank Avenue, Bredbury, Stockport.

RSARS 1744. Victor Raymond Francis of Naracoorte, South Australia will be retired by the time he reads this and thus able to fire up VK5AVR and join in the Overseas Nets.

RSARS 1745. A Petty Officer Telegraphist, R.A.N. was VK1NDO so look for a nice turn of speed on that key if you work Barry Bennetts of 48 Chuculba Crescent, Giralang, Australia. Barry is also keen on stamp collecting and militaria.

RSARS 1746. O.K. old man, we will preserve your secrecy.

RSARS 1747. Electronic organs and golf take up Anthony Williams' time but perhaps by now he has set up that long-awaited station from 57 Park Street, Pembroke Dock if the RAE was taken successfully.

RSARS 1748. Another member intending to take the RAE as soon as possible is Bert Furze of Palmerhayes, Wick, Honiton, Devon, then he will find a few old friends from his HQ Burma Army and 26th Indian Div. Signals to talk with.

RSARS 1749. If we published all Neville Wicks' callsigns we'd look like a callbook - suffice to mention G3IJO, JY1PB, VQ4FI, VP9DU, VS6NW, 5A5TZ, VP5NV etc. Now retired from Cable & Wireless Limited I am sure we will hear more of Neville from 3 Chyngton Gardens, Seaford, E. Sussex.

RSARS 1750. All we can tell you of Harold Skippon is that his QTH is a Snack Bar at Leyburn and he is an SWL and a local Catterick Garrison member.

RSARS 1751. Is a neighbour of the above by name of Lincoln

RSARS 1752. And yet another, this time Ian Irving, also of Leyburn.

RSARS 1753. A Life Member of the Royal Signals Association and pulling them in as G6FHK from 262a Maidstone Road, Rochester, Kent that's if he is not motoring, caravanning or on foreign travel. That's our Charles Leonard.

RSARS 1754. At RMAS reading B.Sc(Eng) Telecommunications is G6FPC of York House, Ullesthorpe, Lutterworth, Leicestershire. James Body is his College Captain at Shooting and enjoys music too.

RSARS 1755. Another Catterick Garrison Club member is G6DPV of Abbey Mill, Easby Abbey, Richmond, N. Yorks. Service with the RAF in Cyprus long behind him Jeffrey Nicholson is more at home at G4RS.

RSARS 1756. G6ASF signs from 17 Westover Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol. Richard Williams is into Radio Control model gliders, steam railway preservation and looking for a University friend G3XGQ.

RSARS 1757. The entirety of this application form reads: Stephen Edward Watson, 12 Whitcliffe Grange, Richmond, North Yorkshire. Nowt else!!

RSARS 1758. Exactly one year behind the Editor through 7 T.R. then 1 T.R. at Catterick June 1949 that's G4IGY of Mill House, Atwick Road, Hornsea,

RSARS 1759. David Dunn likes classical music, chess and tropical fish at Welland Rise, Sibbertoft, Market Harborough, Leics. He somehow finds time to operate as G3LSL and remembers his days (1958-1960) at 1 T.R.

RSARS 1760. Port Moresby, New Guinea saw Bob Hodgkison but he is now to be found some 40 years later at 10 Palm Tree Avenue, Scarborough, Queensland, Australia under the call of VK4VLA.

RSARS 1761. ZS5FT - nice to find another on the African continent for us to chase in the form of Godfrey Kennell of Hibberdene, Natal, R.S.A. Catterick new him in 1945 as did other places but now computers are here and Godfrey must be finding our Computer Section of interest.

RSARS 1762. Blames G3RWF for whetting his appetite for amateur radio. And so we welcome BRS 45499, Gerard Valley of Stanley Farm, Treales, Kirkham, Preston, Lanes.

RSARS 1763. Catterick in 1938 and now a short wave listener at 52 Borkwood Way, Orpington, Kent is Tom English.

RSARS 1764. Over to - Canada now for VE3ANL, otherwise Walter (Bud) Willing of 5 Parthia Avenue, Nepean, Ontario. June 1938 saw Bud in Vimy Barracks but not the well-known ones around here but those in Kingston, Ontario. that started off a long career with Signals. Now amateur photography, playing jazz piano and being a sports car buff take up Bud's time.

RSARS 1765. Canada again, this time for VE3BX, Cameron Burrows of 4200 Mount Carmel Drive, Windsor, Ontario, who obtained his licence in 1935. Another photographer and golfer.

RSARS 1766. G4BPC is a musician with the Royal Horse Guards but is now Antony Askew of 26 Waterloo Road, Highgate, London N19.

RSARS 1767. A chartered physiotherapist in private practice and an ex Royal Marine is Bill Shea, G4AUJ of 32 High Street, Brampton, Huntingdon.

RSARS 1768. Licensed in December 1967 Henry Ellis still signs G3XCI from Hough Fold, Hough Fold Way, Harwood, Bolton, Lanes, and is a keen fly fisherman.

RSARS 1769. Anyone serving with BETFOR (British Element TRIESTE Force) in 1948 – 52 would find G4MSW, Lionel (Len) Morgan of 22 Stonelea Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts agog with interest to talk to you.

RSARS 1770. 100% CW man is G4KIE of Yew Tree Cottage, 7 Yew Tree, Slaithwaite, Huddersfield. Got any British coins around 1600 A.D.? Then Dennis Hawley will be interested.

RSARS 1771. Back to Canada and this time VE6IH, Brendan Veilleux of 8220 Churchill Drive SW Calgary, Alberta. Commissioned in 1939, first ticket in June 1957 and also held the calls VE6EX, VE5MU and now with the main interest in building aerials and receivers. Until 1978 the station was totally home-brew.

RSARS 1772. Catterick and Italy and now 1 Carters Hill Lane, Culverstone, Meopham, Kent as G4NBF is Walter Bird. He is also keen on shooting, and some fishing.

RSARS 1773. Another Catterick man since 1981 is Peter Harvey who is now a keen SWL from Vimy Barracks, HQ. Canoeing takes up his time - guess he is in G3TAN's team but the interest continues in electronics.

RSARS 1774. With HQ 4 Signal Group, HQ BAOR is Duncan Foulds, G4GFE.

RSARS 1775. Egypt and Korea now 68 Copes Shroves, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Bucks., Peter March, G6EIQ.

RSARS 1776. Also in Korea in 1952 was G3OZC, John Holstead of 72 Woodlands Avenue, Blackburn, Lancs. a G QRP Club member and photographer.

RSARS 1777. Basil Dean is G4KCD of 11 Newfield Gardens, Narlow, Bucks. who served in Kenya, Malaya, Germany and Northern Ireland, now he plays darts and enjoys swimming.

RSARS 1778. A long history here including Foreman of Signals course at Catterick 1941, India and Burma following. Licensed in 1981 at the age of 68 some 6 years after retiring from the Post Office Engineering Dept. That's Frank Broadbent G6CDY of 9 Douglas Avenue, Tarleton, Preston.

RSARS 1779. St. Andrews and golfing, caravanning, gardening and Charity Work must stop GM4JHG getting onto the air too often from 27 Smith Road, Balmullo, St. Andrews. Welcome to Ronald Smith.

RSARS 1780. Chris Cummings is G4BOH from Castle View, Childs Lane, Brownlow, Congleton, Cheshire. A rural location means that he has plans for a 160m dipole and delta loop for 80m. Chris was commissioned in 33 Signal Regiment TA in 1979.

RSARS 1781. Take your mind back to November 1914 and the Kent Cyclist Battn, followed by India in 1916. Still keen to take the RAE is Eric Bradley of 199 The Gateway, Dover, Kent now aged 85. Good luck Eric and we hope you can join us on the Nets ere long.

RSARS 1782. Poor health has dogged Charles Bavington lately at 2 Hayes Farm Road, Macclesfield but G4LOQ appears quite regularly in the nets. Called up in 1940 Charles has among his 4 sons and 3 daughters, two sons currently serving with Royal Signals.

RSARS 1783. VE3NZ, Elvin Veale, of 39 Henry Crescent, Ammerstview, Ont. started in ham radio in 1934, WW2 interrupted all that but he got his ticket soon after. XYL is ex-DJ3YL.

RSARS 1784. Kelvin McWha is G8YFZ of 5 Argameols Close, Southport, Merseyside and when last heard of was practising Morse for his G4 ticket. Kelvin was in 55 Signal Sqn. (V) Liverpool from January 1975.

RSARS 1785. Wishes to remain with details undisclosed.

RSARS 1786. Elmer Heib is W9RRT of 3527 No. 53d Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin and wishes to contact any British amateurs who were in Italy during WW2. Elmer has been licensed since 1934 and most of his operations are CW.

RSARS 1787. KA3CSR is Robert Crynack of 226 Tartline Drive, Glenshaw, PA, USA. He would like to contact the British Officer in Charge of Communications aboard H.M.S. Largs. Licensed since 1939 Bob was placed on D.S. to work with British Army and Navy personnel on HMS Largs in Liverpool in 1942.

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MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS

The Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society has 2040 membership numbers in issue, including Complimentary numbers, as at 10th June 1983. In working on these figures very great difficulty was met with the NOT KNOWN catalogue on the computer. NOT KNOWN is the description against the membership detail as it was put on the computer in the first place back in 1976. NOT KNOWN accounts for 697 members, or 34.16% of the entire membership. Obviously if we could know this detail then it would make the rest of the figures look more pleasing than they are. Some of them are terrible to say the least.

A look at some of the figures shows that not many members heed the call to recruit SERVING ROYAL SIGNALS people - we only have 118 serving members in the Society. This from the third largest body in the British Army and the third largest radio club in the country. With all the Royal Signals figures put together, then the Royal Signals accounts for very slightly over ONE THIRD of the membership. According to the 7th June printout 648 members had not paid their 1983 subscription yet. (I was still getting annual subs in October for last year, so it doesn't surprise me) Technically gentlemen, if you don't pay your subs, you are no longer a member. Non members cannot vote, do not receive Mercury and so on and so on. Here is a breakdown. I hope you hoist in some of the significance of the figures:

| | | % of membership | |
|--|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ROYAL SIGNALS SERVING | 118 | 5.78 | |
| ROYAL SIGNALS RETIRED | 606 | 29.70 | |
| ROYAL SIGNALS TA | 16 | 0.78 | |
| BACKGROUND NOT KNOWN AND NOT CHECKABLE | 697 | 34.16 | |
| MOD RETIRED (NON ROYAL SIGNALS) | 237 | 11.61 | |
| AFFILIATED CLUBS | 35 | 1.71 | |
| COMPLIMENTARY MEMBERS | 31 | 1.51 | |
| COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS | 47 | 2.3 | |
| MOD SERVING (NON ROYAL SIGNALS) | 69 | 3.3 | |
| DECEASED MEMBERS NUMBERS NOT REALLOCATED | 150 | 7.35 | |
| ACF/CCF | 13 | 0.63 | |
| BLIND/DISABLED | 7 | 0.34 | |
| HON LIFE FOR SERVICES RENDERED | 7 | 0.34 | |
| CATTERICK GARRISON CIVILIAN MEMBERS | 7 | 0.34 | |
| MEMBERS CURRENTLY IN ARCHIVES | 648 | 31.76 | |
| | <u>2040</u> | <u>99.85</u> | (0.15 in remainders) |

Obviously that NOT KNOWN category is a real gremlin. But, even if we allocated the whole 697 to Royal Signals we would still finish up with only TWO THIRDS of the Society forming the base for the title Royal Signals Amateur Radio Society.

There are about five people out there who are interested in YOUTH. I have already warned you several times that if you do not recruit young people then RSARS will rust, crumble and stop by the end of the 1980's. It's up to you.

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"QUICKSILVER" TEAM

From Dave G4ETG/0963, the leader of this group, and operator of its callsign G3SIG/P (AFF.5) we learn that their Summer plans are as follows:

- 29/30 May Victoria Park, Warrington
- 5/8 August Burnley Tattoo
- 15/19 August Cromer Carnival
- 19/22 August Horse of the Year Show, Doncaster
- 28/30 August Swansea Fete and Gala
- 1/4 September Newport Show
- 9/11 September RAF St. Athan Open Days.

Dave is posted w.e.f. 28th September to Maastricht and has already been granted a PAØ callsign (suffix not known at the time of going to press). Maastricht is near enough to the German Border that Dave will re-activate DA1OZ as well. Initially he will be on 2-metres running 400 watts to 9-element crossed Tonnas and hopes to be on the HF bands within a month of taking up residence. His tour of duty will last for probably 2½ years.

THE WINTER'S SUMMER WALK - the step-by-step story.

G3NVK/0138

Today (23rd April 1983) has been the best training walk day so far. Already the practice walking has covered some 300 miles, mainly in frost, snow, hail, rain, gale-force winds and all that the worst of British weather can inflict upon us between Christmas and Easter. But today was grand: the sun can at last be felt on one's face, the sky is blue, the hedges thickening and turning green at last, the early crops in the fields are flourishing and there's a true sense of Spring in the air. Seven weeks to go and we shall be on the long hike.

Sitting one cold November morning last year sipping my NAAFI-type hot, thick and very sweet tea which comprises my only intake for breakfast my thoughts idly went to those halcyon days of Summers past, tramping on Dartmoor, perambulating the High Peak of Derbyshire, climbing Scafell Pike and Helvellyn and country walks with the xyl, Jo, most weekends. Suddenly for no apparent reason, the computer between my ears signalled: Why not walk up to Catterick for the AGM next year?

Then all the thoughts began. Voicing my idea to Jo as she came down for her better-than-mine breakfast I think she laughed at first but then realised I was serious. And she immediately volunteered to help me as she does in all that I set out to do. My thoughts were those of a youthful soldier of some 35 years ago, covering 5 miles in less than an hour with full pack at basic training, being posted from Catterick to Belsen and cavorting around Luneburg Heath in a Willy's Jeep searching for Centurion tanks of the 5th Royal Tanks (to whom I was attached from Royal Signals) with their radio communications defunct, and mending their wretched 19-sets, high nights spent in Celle etc. etc. The body was 53 years old, non-sportif and desk-bound. Jo easily made me see that training was essential if we were to be successful. The idea mulled around in the brain for a week or two and by Christmas was a determination.

Some extra walking was taken up, some simple exercises commenced and the normal 11 stones 7 pounds were soon down to a level 11 stones, and holding.

I have always received a well balanced nourishing, wholesome and varied diet but decided to cut down slightly on the sugar intake. Apart from that little else except walking seemed to be necessary.

The clothing was already in hand: string vest, wool shirt, ex-RN Submarine pullover, wool trousers, good boots (which had been found to be excellent on Dartmoor and at other places) size 9½ by VANGO of Italy (Cortina style), a cagoule with a certification "as used on the British Everest Expedition", matching over-trousers and a light back pack also by Vango. All of which would render me impervious to the Winter wind and rain.

By early March the walking was in earnest and the first hurdle (could I or could I not now manage to walk 15 - 20 miles in a day and still survive?) was overcome and the question answered. I could! Problems by now had arisen, nothing serious though. Condensation inside the cagoule etc. was quite severe but I preferred to retain this particular garment as it had no vents, no button-holes, no zips and nothing to let in the cold blasts: I could put up with the condensation and sodden inner clothing provided I kept smartly on the move, showered and changed as soon as I got home. In spite of lots of commiserations from sponsors about blistered feet I have never yet had this problem - the boots are well-fitting and I wear nylon inner socks plus terry-towelling oversocks and apart from a bruised toe or two on one particular 2½ mile steep downhill quick march I have had no problems. Dehydration however was a problem the seriousness of which I didn't appreciate until Nurse Helton (xyl of G3WKM/0261) advised me to beware. I weighed myself prior to my long marches and on my return and found I was 3½ pounds lighter!! I was quite thirsty for a full day thereafter and my urine had the appearance of Tate & Lyles famous treacle. A higher liquid intake whilst on these long treks was the answer which overcame the problem. An IKD (internal knee disorder) of long-standing was a minor problem too. Knee bent and leg angled slightly outwards, the knee would often "go". Locked then and only a painful heave followed by an ominous crack would straighten the offending limb and it would remain painful and stiff for two or three days afterwards. The knee has "gone" twice since Christmas and is due to a runny semi-lunar cartilage.

If I watch what I am doing and continue to ease off on the many "knees bend" exercises I was originally doing daily then with any luck I should be ship-shape for the long journey ahead.

The internal mileometer ticking up steadily I began to think of the actual journey and route. We purchased the necessary five Ordnance Survey Sheets (Landranger Series, 1:50 000) (Sheets 129, 120, 111, 104 and 99) which cover the journey from near home up to Catterick Garrison. We spread them out, drew a straight line from Garrats Hay, Loughborough to Melton Mowbray, then from there to Catterick. Measured it was 150½ miles. Just right. So the straight line is the ideal route and for the large part of course does not coincide with roads, but goes through reservoirs, gas

works, coal mines, factories, in one place a nudist colony (a lorry made a hole in the wall of the one locally - the Police are looking into it) etc. We shall keep as near as possible to the straight line when on the trip but will undoubtedly cover more than 150 miles.

At the time of writing I have not sought permission from the CO at Garrats Hay to leave his Guardroom to commence the walk but anticipate no problems in that respect. G3WKM/0261 will transport me on start day over to Garrats Hay and see me off. A couple of Members quite touchingly offered to walk with me on the first stint but unfortunately their free time does not coincide with my leaving so the whole trip will be the solo affair I planned, solo that is apart from Jo who will be in the vicinity every day to transport me to the nearest decent hotel each night and put me on the start line again each morning.

LOWE ELECTRONICS LTD. of Matlock have very kindly and generously through their link-man G4KFN/1548 offered to loan me a TRIO 2300 plus necessary extras for the journey. This way, through repeaters en route or from the hotel bedroom at night, I shall be able to keep in touch with some Members and report progress as I proceed northwards. I am of course most grateful to Messrs. LOWE for this facility and suspect that Dave will talk me in to buying the rig when I return to "up" my VHF score beyond the present 40 confirmed.

Two dummy runs from Garrats Hay to Melton Mowbray have been done as part of the training walks but most of the other walking has been nearer to home passing through or near the large country estates of His Grace the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle and Lord Gretton at Stapleford Park. On both of these estates the pheasant abound and have been good company on many trips, as have the leaping hare, the new-born lambs, the nesting rooks and all the fauna of the unspoiled countryside of Leicestershire.

Sponsorship is coming along very nicely thank you. £375 as at the end of April. We have had the first Overseas sponsorships too: US\$50 from N2DAN and AUS\$20 from VK2NLE. The rest has come from members, work colleagues, clients of our Solicitors firm and relatives. I acknowledge all with many thanks and will print a full list in the next issue. One Member kindly added to his £5 sponsorship - "a further £10 if you walk back home!!"

The training must of course continue and indeed increase now that the warmer weather is here and the nights are lighter. You will learn of my success or failure possibly in the AGM notes to this issue, via the Nets or in the next issue, in which I hope to publish the story of the actual walk.

The main thing is that I am jolly well enjoying it!!

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HAPPY FAMILIES LEAGUE again – this time G3YIP/0914 – brother to G4DXM/0967

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NEXT MERCURY

The next issue (No.76) of MERCURY will be published during the first week of NOVEMBER 1983. All copy to the Editor by 1st October please.

POINTS FROM THE POST

One of our members who prefers to remain anonymous tells the tale of having exchanged his rig for an FT7, the person with whom he exchanged (another amateur) after working on the rig's innards asked for the FT7 back. Our correspondent refused (having heard on the air the audio of his original rig) result - the other fellow pulled out an axe from his bag and threatened our Member with it. A quick telephone call (999) resulted in a long wait followed by the local Police Officers arriving. Meanwhile the offender had absconded, complete with our Member's rig!! Police declared that it was a civil matter but Solicitor says it's theft. Only a Court action will prove. Unfortunately our Member cannot afford another rig and is consequently off the air.

G3UAA/0454 reports good sales of his book "Groby and its Railways" and suggests bringing a few to the AGM

G3GRX/1214 apologises for being late with his subs: Eric has just returned after a 10-week trip around the world. The whole idea was to visit amateurs he had had skeds with for years. 5 days in Singapore proved that activity there is almost nil. New Zealand was better for Eric was able to visit ZL4IJ/1018 who, with his XYL showed Eric the sights. The co-ax on Tom's beam was broken so our intrepid Eric climbed the tower and made repairs. Tom is now on the air and keeping a weather eye out on the Nets. Eric had 22 contacts on the HF bands and eighty contacts on 2-metres with a hand-held FT208 including working "Train Mobile" near Dunedin.

W5LYM/1827 writes to say: "I am enclosing my dues. Sorry they are late but I live about 40 miles from Fort Worth, that is the closest Bank where a Draft in pounds can be purchased. The hours I work make it impossible to get it quicker. I am now a member of the elite group of the retired and as soon as I get caught up with some of my chores I will be on the air more often. I have looked for RSARS Members on 20m CW from time to time with little luck. My count stands at the big total of 4 (W9RRT, KA3CSR, W2AG and VE3AX). My station consists of a TS830, TS430, Ventron Amp (2500B), 5 element monobander for 20m at 20 metres high and a five element 15m monobander that will soon be at 23 metres. I hope to work other RSARS Members but I want to warn all that my CW is awful - after all I have not worked CW for 35 years until recently.

G4ICC/1415 regrets that he is unable to attend the AGM but puts forward several comments for hearing on the subject of British Army ARS.

G4MUC/1853 has had bad luck with his Spectrum purchases, always seemingly ending up with a bad un so he has cancelled out and is investigating other things on the market. Ben and Frank, G3DVL/1628 feel after discussions between themselves that there could be a demand for a 40m CW net after the Monday lunchtime SSB net - other Members may care to comment please. Ben suggests 7015 kHz and promises the attendance of G5GH and others.

W.F.Coyne/1927 writes: Ref. your walk from Garrats Hay to Catterick I am Treasurer of the Newark Branch of the Royal Signals Association and we will be attending Catterick as usual this year. I will not be able to attend the AGM as we stop at Colburn Lodge for dinner and liquid refreshment, we have been calling there for 25 years now and still have trouble in getting the lads out on time. I was at Garrats Hay 1950/51 and well remember walking up Beacon Hill and dashing to catch the train at Quorn. At the moment I have no radio equipment but hoping for a receiver as soon as possible and am also trying to study for the RAE but time seems to rush by. I have managed to get the Branch to pledge you £7.50 this was passed at our meeting last night and all members send you best regards for the walk.

G4MQN/1431, having sent in a duff voting paper for BEST MERCURY ARTICLE writes: My apologies for wrongly voting and I correct this in the text of this letter. I am not surprised that so few members return votes for articles in MERCURY since there are so many items of comparative excellence - ranging over widely different topics and subjects. I find it very difficult to cast the votes when there are just six votes, when to do so would require giving the majority of votes for a

single article. Less for others and none at all for articles which are of equal merit but on other subjects than those one is particularly interested in. For example I am especially interested in members' war-time experiences especially those of members who were engaged in the outfits connected with secret activities. Yet the technical articles are of equal interest and merit since they expand our radio craft knowledge. How therefore can a few votes be used to express thanks to members who make contributions? In common with the majority I puzzle over the problem, put the matter aside for further contemplation and end up not bothering to send in votes. I have a feeling that this time-honoured method of voting might be open to modification: for example, why not voting for articles in particular categories? If one could divide up the contributions into the categories of - Articles of experience in Royal Signals activities (6 votes), articles on technical matters (6 votes) and articles of an informatory nature on general matters (6 votes). As an alternative allow more votes so that one could apportion votes over a wider range of topics so as not to exclude appreciation for most articles which interested and informed, but were not of especial interest to the particular member. As it is what the blazes use is it to get but 21 members voting out of 2000 odd? That only leads to the despair of those stalwarts doing the publishing. As MERCURY is always widely discussed on the Nets, including the Overseas ones, I refuse to believe that members are not interested in expressing their appreciation. They express their appreciation over the air: is it then the method of expressing their appreciation by posted votes: that is the problem?

(See elsewhere in this issue for the full BEST MERCURY ARTICLE voting results, p 23 - Ed.).

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From Cyril, GW3ASW/0559 we learn that he is surrendering the licence of GW4CCF/AFF 054 with regret as since May 1977 he has had much enjoyment operating the station though has been able to do little these last few months. The Licence expires on 6th May 1983 so Cyril hopes alternative arrangements can be made.

Cyril continues "There are no log books, as the last one is nearly full and I will retain it in case of QSL requests. It may be interesting to note that during the period I have had the call that I have issued over 600 QSL cards, the larger portion of which have been sent through our own bureau and since 1977 I have made in excess of 6,000 contacts."

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Cyril is certainly to be highly praised for all his efforts both as Senior Net Controller over a very long period of time and for his activities using the GW4CCF callsign - efforts which certainly rewarded many members on their way through the Awards and Contests.

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THAT MAN THERE!!



With his recent spell of trouble now forgotten, Jimmy Slangis is alive and well and very active at Catterick. He has been helping to install the TS530S which now stands proud on the operating desk at G4RS. Separate beams for 20m and 15m have now been erected, together with dipoles for the other bands. With the introduction of the new high speed keyboard and iambic keyer, Jimmy doesn't know whether to start learning to type or to learn Morse first!! RTTY has been generated from the Apple Computer and this intrigues Jimmy too. He is studying hard under the watchful eyes of Paul G4DBY and Dave G3TAN and hopes to be taking his RAE just before this item comes into print. NFD preparations are also taking up some of his time. We certainly wish him well in his endeavours and look forward to the exam results. There is, however, some talk of a possible posting for Signalman Slangis down to Blandford where G3VXX/AFF 44 is refurbished and back on the air again.

GENERAL R.Z. KABRAJI, VU2BK/0981

G3TG/1798

As a result of a pretty poor CW QSO with VU2BK I have received a long letter from him telling me all that has happened to him since we parted in 1942.

VU2BK and I were on the same Cadet course, first at Bangalore and then at the Signal Training Centre at Mhow from February to October 1941. We then both went to Western Force Signals and finally to HQ Close Support Bomber Control where, under the beady eye of G2BPC/0118, we formed up Nos. 1 and 2 Air Support Controls. He went east to Burma and I to Iraq and then Mideast so our ways parted.

There were few hams on our Course but the only ones I remember were VU2DC, later G5DC, who was our Chief Instructor and XU8HM, a chap called Hodgson from Shanghai, but I know that there were one or two G's as we had a mini Hamfest one night in Mhow.

VU2BK would like to hear from anybody with a call either pre-war or post-war who met him along the line. Desmond GI3ZX remembers him.

VU2BK's career was:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Cadet Course, Bangalore & Mhow | 1941 |
| Westforce Signals | 1941 |
| 2 Air Support Control (HQ 4 Corps) | 1941/2 |
| "Chindits" | 1943 |
| HQ SEAC | 1943 onwards |
| Staff College, Quetta | 1945 |
| AHQ India (CSO's Staff) | 1946 |
| Viceroy/Governor General's Staff | 1947/48 |

He eventually ended up as GOC in C Southern Command.

He is pretty active on 20m CW only using a 5-element beam and would be very pleased to work or have a note from anyone who had met him personally.

Address: 55 Anand Park, Aundh, Poona 411007, India.

The current Membership listing shows VU2BK as "archived" but I gather that he has difficulty in getting funds out of India due to their Exchange Controls but a request has been received at HQ for a further application form. (I understand several Members have volunteered to club together to pay the Membership fee locally, Ed.).

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STOP LAUGHING IN THE RANKS

G3CWW suggests a new column on the lines of the Readers Digest "Humour in Uniform". Perhaps readers would submit items for publication please.

The first one comes from G3BGM/1539 :

In 1941 when I was in Cairo before being returned to the desert I bought my then current YL a bottle of "Secret du Desert" - a powerful scent purveyed in the Mena House Hotel near the Pyramids. Object was to indicate through the censorship as to where we had arrived in the Middle East. Whilst buying the stuff I inadvertently allowed a dash of the liquid to be put on my wrist by the salesgirl. Two days later, in spite of frequent bathes, the blokes in the Mess up at Bagush were still following me around like dogs. Last Easter, a Canadian colleague teacher on an exchange visit went to Cairo, and I thought it would be a good idea to get a little bottle of the stuff for the XYL. Sure enough the greenish liquid arrived last week, in time for our wedding anniversary and is really rather nice. A change from the old Chanel No.5 etc. What was interesting was that Steve, who spent some time chasing girls in Egypt, knew of it, and stranger still old Walter did also, though he called it "Panther Juicc". The name has now been Anglicised into "Secret of the Desert". Speculation went on during my QSO with Steve (N2DAN) and Walter (VE3AX) as to whether the substance is based on camel or cat products.

Anyone knowing the ingredients of this magic brew please inform us.

OF MORSE AND MEN - (CONTINUED)

G4BUS/0276

Sitreps told us that the main body of 77 Bde was locked in fierce battle at the 'White City' stronghold. At 'Blackpool' our close friends 111 Bde had been overwhelmed. Our reserve, 23 Bde, had been thrown in on the Imphal front, in a short-range penetration role. The U.S. Rangers, operating like ourselves, were moving down from the north against Myitkyina. (After the war there was a great British furore about Errol Flynn's heroics with this force in the film, "Objective Burma". This was the fault of Hollywood. Because of it the Rangers never received their just due from the British-at-large. We hailed them as blood-brothers, passing through the same mill as ourselves).

Our type of warfare had an extra dimension. The front-line always extended 360 degrees about us - every minute of the day, for months on end. This was true of most jungle operations during the war. But our line of retreat extended 150 miles or more - straight through the enemy's lines.

And what an enemy we had to face! All armies speak vaingloriously of fighting to the last man. Only the Japanese said it, meant it and did it.

For over-strong nerves we had the salve of humour. Most often it was of a shrill kind, but the comedy remains deeper-etched than anything else in my memory of those times.

Sometimes I feel that the whole of the Second World War was one vast dress-rehearsal for the splendid Goon Show that was to follow a decade later.

Where have they gone, all those bright, hilarious youngsters of the long-ago? I don't see their likes in their descendants of today, no uniform in their extremes of fashion, and with their jargon that won't support an individual wit. My old friends stand out with Dickensian clarity, each of them a unique character. And hardly one was far past his twentieth birthday.

On the other hand, it could well have been the drab foreground set against the fiery backcloth of war-time that causes my contemporaries to cast such long shadows. Dragooned, conscribed and institutionalised as we were, something had to lighten our darkness.

The best radio operator within our force was Bill. He existed on two levels. One was as a disembodied flow of immaculate Morse into the ear-phones, down one's arm and onto the message-pad in a faultless rhythm that made it all child's play. The other, earthly, level was as a cursing, hairy, wild-eyed anarchist of a thousand-and-one talents, enormously human and vulnerable. He was a joy and a trial to be with.

Bill had come to us in India from 6th Airborne Div., Bulford. In Salisbury Market on a Saturday night, some-one had knocked out all his front teeth, top and bottom. An Army dentist had restored this deficiency but Bill lost his dentures somewhere between Allahabad and Nagpur, out of the troop-train window as we made our way to Assam. This did little to impede his flow of obscenities, but his cusses had a decided lisp to them, and all in the accents of broad West Riding.

Bill was an artist. On the outer fly-sheet of his tent back at Bde. H.Q., Jhansi, he had drawn, with gigantic strokes, a sea-side picture postcard cartoon, set inland. It was of professional excellence. It depicted a closing-time scene outside a Bradford pub, circa 1938. A toff in top-hat and tails hung draped round a lamp-post in explicit nausea. A huge-bottomed lady crouched nearby making other uses of the gutter. The cartoon gave Brigade Signals lines a distinctly festive air, and it quite caught the eye of visiting brasshats.

At the outset of the campaign Bill looked like an emaciated Wallace Beery, but much hairier. The farther east we marched, the wilder his eyes became, and he grew daily more emaciated and hairier. Our jungle-training had taught us to move in silence. Bill hadn't learned that lesson. At moments of greatest danger, his maniacal laugh would ring out and freeze the blood of everyone of us. And he cursed loudly in almost non-stop commentary all the way from "Broadway" to the Irrawaddy and beyond.

Bill, in his rare quiet moments, could be a marching encyclopaedia, informed well beyond his twenty years. He it was who first told me about amateur radio. Grand opera was a passion with him, and he could quote from Shakespeare for miles on end. A fairly typical war-time Signaller, then! From memory he could sketch a pound note, exact in every last detail. This penmanship had

earned him 28 days in the Glasshouse at one time, - something to do with forged works-tickets when he was a driver-op, at Bulford. His dearest wish was to become a schoolmaster in civilian life. (One could hear the voices of future Yorkshire infants piping in the inner-ear as they recited their four-times tables, each of their tiny calculations interspersed with Bill's lisping, copulative adjectives).

Bill's sense of humour was macabre in the extreme. At one of our hide-outs he discovered all that remained of a recent war fatality - Shan, Kachin or Japanese, there was no way of telling. The skull had been neatly drilled by a bullet. This Bill mounted on a stick inside our bamboo lean-to. It was the perfect teeth of the grin that attracted him:

"Bah 'eck!" he lisped, "Ah could do wi' a set like them mah-sen. Molars like yon are wasted on that booger."

In the same lean-to, Geordie was still crunching away on his dextrose-tablets. While this irritated most of us, it drove Bill frantic. His North-country oaths would shriek out in the jungle night and have us donning our equipment for a quick get-away.

And Bill was granted his pedant's wish. Up there in the hills of the Kachina, he taught them English nursery rhymes.

The Kachins were amazingly quick on the uptake and, moreover, every one of them was a born mimic. As every English village used to have its village idiot, so every least Kachin hamlet had its resident bright boy.

At the time, Bill was elsewhere on a sortie against the road, but we knew he had passed through the village by its egg-famine and the rather niggardly draught of rice-beer we got as we paused before the head-man's hut. The local bright boy approached us for the customary five Philip Morris cigarettes we would dispense when supply-drops prospered. We were in funds. He lit up, inhaled deeply, and with his first exhalation we were startled to hear Bill's lisping tones falling from the bright boy's lips. It was uncanny. Every last West Riding nuance was there, and even the spittle.

"Mary had a little pig". he informed us.

"She couldn't stop it groontin'.

"She tied it to a table leg and.....!"

Just what Mary did to that poor little porker would have had the RSPCA in an uproar. It wouldn't have pleased Mrs. Whitehouse much, either.

I like to think that in that corner of Burma, because of politics now as remote as Lhasa, the Pax Britannica is still regularly commemorated with recitations about Mary and her little pig, and that Bill's broad dialect has been recorded there for all time.

Those big Argentine mules who had remained loyal to us on the trek from "Broadway" were about spent. Originally devocalised, they would gasp complainingly in a kind of whoop as their chords recovered. Poor hemaphrodite beasts-of-burden, they had much to complain of. To replace them we now had the services of Chinese pack-ponies. These sweet-tempered, willing creatures would bob their winsome heads beneath upheld loads of radio gear lashed to wooden frames. Patiently they would wait while the loads were settled and fastened to their harnesses. Two Chinese pony-trekkers could handle fourteen or more ponies at a time. With mules it would take five sweating, cursing B.O.R.s to load a single one of them. And then, more often than not, batteries and charging engines and wireless-sets would go flying in all directions as yet another Keystone Cops reel was enacted.

Alongside the ponies, George, one of our two Signals sergeants, was the most peripatetic of us all. He constantly travelled hither and thither with the ponies on extra, secret errands, appearing on the air from time to time with his plain, unhurried 'fist'. He had taken all the forced marches in his stride, immensely strong as he was.

George looked like a cross between Stanley Holloway and Bulldog Drummond. Before the war he had been a trader in West Africa. In Burma he behaved as if he hadn't swapped continents. He persisted in his use of West African pidgin, convinced that Kachins, Chinese and Gurkha riflemen understood every word he uttered. To express his pleasure with the pony-trekker, he would

thunder:

"You be fine past all. Fine past Takoradi Harbour. Fine past all conbif inspector!"

The pony-men would nod their heads delightedly and wring him by the hand.

Such was George's force of character that he could get me to oil and pull-through my detested Lee Enfield with Wellington Barracks regularity.

About that time, on one of those nameless, bloody Burma hills, one of our Gurkha columns was taking heavy punishment in their dug-in positions. Suddenly, out of the Signals fox-hole two battling Scots came tumbling. The gung-ho Johnnie Gurkhas were astonished by their naked aggression as there, with Jap mortar-bombs falling all around, they went for each other hammer and tongs.

No moot point of a clan feud was being settled. One was not a MacDonald, nor the other a Campbell. I got it later from the third member of the detachment, a Welshman.

They had been in QSO with Brigade on a 200-grouper, OP message. One of the Scots had remarked to the other, who was busily clagging away on the key:

"Hey, Jummie! Yon's a muckle load o' rubbish ye're sendin' the noo!"

That had been it. Without benefit of a skirl on the pipes, the duty operator had placed a prompt 'heid' on his critic. Greater office giveth no man than to pour scorn on another's Morse.

The old malaria-bug was bothering me again as the campaign passed its half-way mark. Daily Mepacrin held it in check. I zombied my way through many a mile and a strange pall of fevered unreality dims memory's eye for weeks on end. Two of the South Staffords died as their malaria took a cerebral turn. And still the Japs came plaguing us. My good pals looked after me well. I began to recover.

Around this time we were daily expecting to hear of the launching of the Second Front in Europe. Fire-eating Geordie was scathing about its tardiness.

"Why-aye!" he growled through teeth clenched on Dextrose-tablets.

"I canna mak oot what's holdin' 'em. First we've to kick the Japs oota Burma, and then it'll be flamin' Jerry, nae doot!"

This was said as we scuttled away from a Japanese mortar-team who had been most unpleasant around our previous hide-out. Geordie's pack was yet further down on his backside and he was dropping his rifle every hundred yards or so. His pork-pie bush-hat had a pathetic civilian look to it, one size too large as it was.

Geordie was an uncoordinated youth who consistently fell down khud-sides, with barely the strength to extricate himself. He was in a bad way. Only his great heart kept him going.

Yet, in moments of greatest alarm, it was Geordie who went forward while the rest of us backed-off into the shadows. His rifle with its bayonet fixed would be held at the correct 'on guard' position he'd been taught at the Morpeth basic-training depot, and his Army-issue specs would gleam viciously. (Although he was incapable of performing a simple forward-roll, Geordie later made all his jumps without hesitation at Rawalpindi, when we became 77 Para Bde).

As an instrument-mechanic he wasn't the greatest of craftsmen as he tried to warm his soldering-iron at a brew-up fire. He had all the friendly cheer of the typical Tynesider. Only those D-Day laggards really made him angry.

Our other instrument-mechanic, Geoff, was a gentle soul. To split a K-ration packet with him on the banks of a chaung was to take tea on the lawn with the vicar. He stood tall and forever bewildered. Dear Geoff, one felt that in his company the worst could not happen - not the very worst, anyway. And somehow it never did.

While the rest of us divested ourselves of all extraneous items to lighten our packs, Geoff retained a full quartermaster's inventory in his. Additionally he carried a thickish text-book, published for the guidance of British subalterns arriving in India. A paragraph in it contained useful hints for the accident of snake-bite. For that alone Geoff humped that volume every mile of our travels. He couldn't bring himself to vandalise a book by tearing out the appropriate page.

Excess to Q.M.'s requirements, Geoff carried an enamel plate, a pint-mug and knife, fork and spoon in his pack. The rest of us ate from half-mess-tins with improvised bamboo utensils. It was his way of dressing for dinner in the jungle.

Geoff had that quiet toughness found in so many gently-nurtured Englishmen. My brash ex-bandboy's habits of low cunning must often have tried him sorely. Yet he never remonstrated with me in the slightest. Indeed, through all our travails not once did an obscenity escape from his lips. In all our six brigades, for this he must have been supremely unique.

Throughout North Burma everything was in a state of flux. Northbound Japanese traffic had increased on the road as reinforcements were rushed to Myitkyina. Try as we might, our little force could not check the flow. By W/T we learned that two columns of Gurkhas were en route to reinforce us. The news lifted our spirits. Meanwhile we persevered with our ambush tactics.

On radio watch in yet another hide-out one day, I was joined by a sparse-whiskered old Kachin warrior. He was renowned for his love of a scrap and his blood-lust. He produced souvenirs from his latest sortie. These were family photographs removed from the pockets of dead Japanese.

The portraits were much like those we carried in our own pockets, except that the standard of camera-work was much higher. Each one showed a studio picture of a Japanese soldier with his family grouped about him, all very formal. Most of the women-folk were in kimonos, but some were in Western dress, and these amazed me by their utterly 'European' demeanour. Some of them were plain, most were pretty, and all the children were beautiful. The soldier menfolk looked studiously stern, but entirely eligible for the brotherhood of Man. This perplexed me.

Our own propaganda at that time had reduced the Japanese to a status of brute sub-species. This had been over-done to the extent that our own troops entered the field with an almost superstitious awe of the enemy. Certainly the ferocity of the attacks made upon us had not dispelled this notion for me.

The menfolk of these photographs were now dead, and soon the women and children, so fetchingly portrayed, would be mourning them. A great sadness swept over me.

The old Kachin warrior enacted his ritual pantomime. He gave me all the battle sounds, from the first agonised screams to the final, gasping death-rattles. I hid my nausea as he slapped his thighs in high glee and took back his souvenirs.

Passing him a Philip Morris, I tuned the R.109 All-India Radio, New Delhi, in return for his grisly cabaret. The old boy evinced not the slightest interest in my white man's magic, but he was vastly diverted by the red glow from the pilot-lamp. I can't say I blamed him. From New Delhi it was a military male-voice choir with, I think, "It Was Roses, Roses, Roses All The Way!" - but I could be wrong.

It was with profound relief and pure joy that we watched the advance scouts of the Gurkha columns wind over the brow of the hill. We knew just how those sahibs at Lucknow, some ninety-odd years earlier, had felt as the Jocks came a ' piping to their relief.

There was a great deal of "Thik-hai"-ing as they swaggered up to us, and a bit more "Doctor Livingstone, I presume-ing as their Royal Signals detachment halted their mule in our village. Doubtless their arrival would soon stir up some Jap hornets' nests, but for the time being it was brew-cans to the fore and an excited exchange of news.

It has always been a matter of regret to me that Johnnie Gurkhas and British troops did not share a common language. There was a bond amounting almost to love between them. The Gurkhas, boyish little men, or manly little boys, whichever way one viewed them, had all the attributes we most admired. They were brave, cheerful, professional and quite uncomplicated as soldiers. What's more, like most of the British Army, they loved strong drink, a good gamble - and women. Their Hinduism was fairly eclectic so there wasn't the danger of unwittingly offending religious susceptibilities as there was with other troops of the Indian Army.

Neither B.O.R. nor Gurkha was much of a linguist, so cantonment Urdu had to serve as a lingua franca. One could only say "Thora cheeni, Thora char, Bombay bibi bahut achha" so many times before the topic began to pall - even when the rhyme was accompanied by knowing winks, a raising

and bending of one arm at the elbow, fist clenched, while the free hand was slapped vigorously on the inside of the raised fore-arm.

We tried to convey to our Gurkha guests that there wasn't much of that around these hills, but they had already guessed as much. In lieu we passed a surreptitious rum-bottle around as far as it would go.

The monsoon was about to break as our Gurkhas went down to blockade the road for once and for all. Bill, his eyes at their wildest ever, went down with them to supply communication back to our own force.

There was indeed a great swarming of hornets soon after our columns dug themselves in astride the road. Poor old Bill's fist wasn't quite so impeccable from down there. But nothing moved northwards.

Bill made quite an impression, we heard later, when we tagged on to the Gurkhas for the march north. "I say." protested their brigadier (a dead-ringer for C. Aubrey Smith) to our own colonel. "That damned signallah-fellah you lent me. Nevah heard such a flow of foul language. Demned chep even bawled me out. For falling ovah his trip-wire, what!"

This was quite true. Bill had rigged his aerial in a sort of horizontal quad all around himself, about one foot above the ground. To it he had attached a host of K-ration tins. The brigadier had set them all a'jangle as he approached Bill's slit-trench with a message for us. Bill had told him his fortune, but then - he always was an anarchist. Military rank meant nowt to him. Anyway, he was 'through' for every moment of the attacks they sustained down there. And that's what really mattered.

In the overture-rains of the deepening monsoon our much-depleted force came down from the hills. With us, in a long baggage-train, came Kachin families whose villages had been totally compromised by our presence. A ruthless purge by Japanese from the Salween front was on. The splendidly-muscled legs of mini-skirted Kachin maidens made a nicer point of focus than the sweaty back of Georgie's neck. We noticed with approval that on their backs they carried long bamboo flasks of rice-beer.

We felt sadness on leaving our old haunts. There forever rested some of our comrades. Others had been captured by those Salween Japs and we feared the worst for them.

Heading north, we were to join up with American-led Kachins from Sumprabum, and to assist in the assault on Jap bunkers on the east bank of the Irrawaddy facing besieged Myitkyina. The mists of malaria descended upon me again. My surroundings became surrealistic. My chronology went to pieces.

TO BE CONTINUED...

* * * * *

EQUIPMENT: SALES & WANTS

G2UZ/0464 is keen to get hold of an old valve-type Signal Generator with and without modulation for alignment of broadcast sets. Any Member with, say, the old type AVO model please contact G2UZ.

G3ONU/0076 is reverting to valve equipment (he says the Black Box is something he can do without in old age!). Des has a little-used ICOM 701, matching PSU/LS and all supplied accessories plus HB5 Vertical and unused GP kit available for £450. Contact Des on GARSTON (09273) 76344.

G4HLC/1184 has for sale a 3-element Monobander (15m.) by Cushcraft. Contact Jack on MELTON MOWBRAY (0664) 822752.

WANTED by DJØSS for the CELLE & DISTRICT A.R.S. for the benefit of the expected newly licensed members a suitable, cheap rotator to turn their 2m beam. Anyone having something in the junk box which will turn their 6-element Quad please contact DJØSS, E.King, 23 Hauptstrasse, 3107 Oldau, West Germany. Stating QRK.

A SIMPLE ELECTRONIC KEYS

DJØSS/1620

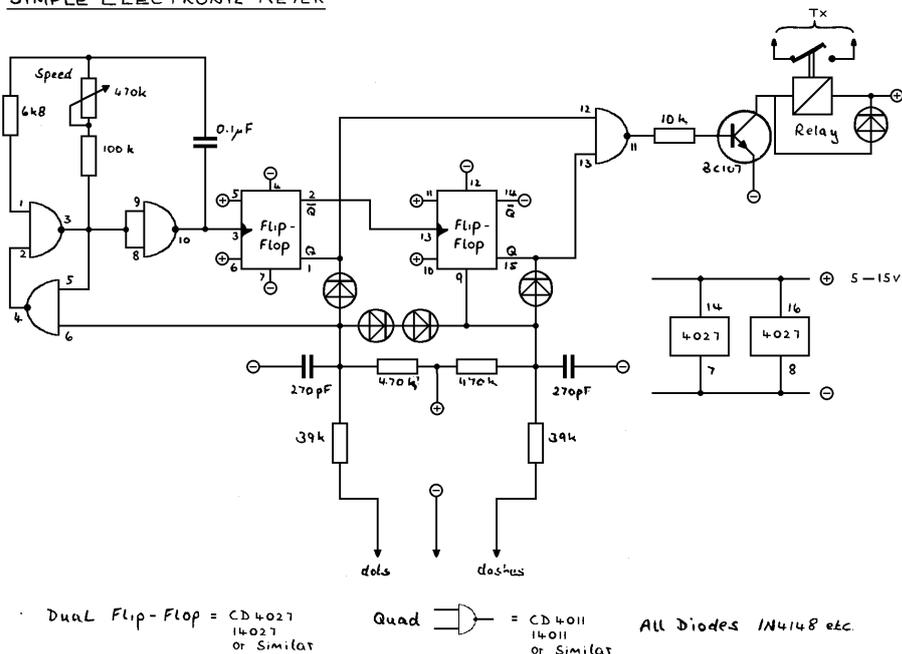
This circuit certainly does not claim to be original. It was passed on to me by Stu, DA1CY/1605 but it is simplicity itself, can be made on a rainy afternoon and works very well.

The components should only cost a few pence. The circuit is self-explanatory so I will not go into any great detail. Any sort of paddle, commercial or home-built can be used. I must, however, point out that this circuit is not meant for the CW purist, the dot/dash ratio being 2:1, nevertheless the keyer does work and even yours truly has been practising to get his CW speed up, which must mean something.

Any relay may be used, although a low current reed relay should be used with an operating voltage of around 8 to 10 volts in order to keep current consumption down. A small 9-volt battery would then suffice, the standing current being so low that an on/off switch is not necessary.

Hopefully this small project might persuade one or two of the Members to get the soldering iron out of the cupboard.

SIMPLE ELECTRONIC KEYS



RTTY IN G4RS

GORDON PARKIN G3UVY/1410

The club station now includes a "Terminal" interface for the Apple computer. This is an American equipment, which provides RTTY TX/RX and morse TX/RX, using an Apple as the keyboard and display. The program is held on a floppy disc, necessitating the initial use of a disc drive.

In use, one connector is taken to a user port of the Apple, and 3 more to the mic., 'phone and morse key sockets of the station transceiver. A fifth connector goes to AC mains supply. Loading the program from disc takes a few seconds, then the station callsign and G.M.T. is keyed in. Besides providing an on-screen clock, this information can be automatically added to message texts by the computer.

A "menu" of facilities is presented, the choice being made by commands from the keyboard, after pressing the "ESC" key. When in QSO, all terminal control is via the keyboard - for example, pressing "(ESC) Q" will toggle between receive and transmit.

Any operator using the equipment should first read the manual - it's quite well written, and describes some very clever features. These features - too many to describe here -are what we computer buffs use to justify using high technology to do what a Creed 7B used to do (and that dates me!).

The following observations follow a brief "off air" trial. A better appraisal would come after use in actual QSO.

RTTY Receive

Received audio is converted by the hardware and software into characters displayed on the screen. Text is also stored in a "circular" buffer. Imagine this like one of those "roller blackboards". As the loop turns, old text is erased and new text written in. At any time, any message in the buffer may be recalled. Most standard shifts and speeds are catered for, though, confusingly, speeds are expressed in wpm, not Baud. There is a meter to assist in tuning to the centre of an RTTY signal - some practice, and a stable receiver are needed here. A facility exists to recognise a sequence of characters (one's callsign?), and to respond by, for example, transmitting a prepared text at the end of an over. (Two of these things could chat to each other all day - who needs operators?).

In general, reception is impressive (and, of course) silent).

RTTY Transmit

AFSK is produced, which is fed to the mic input, with the rig switched to SSB. Messages are typed into the buffer, and appear on the screen. Buffer contents can be sent either during, or after, typing a message. Incoming messages can be answered as they appear on the screen so that switching to transmit at the end of the other man's over will impress him with your apparent typing speed!

There's much, much more but it's in the manual.

Morse Receive

This takes the AF 'phone output of the receiver, assesses the morse speed, decodes it and displays text on the screen (together with the speed). In operation, it is disappointing – it works but only on good morse.

Morse Transmit

DC keying of the transmitter is employed. Messages are prepared and sent as for RTTY. Machine generated morse should be perfect - but G3IBB's finely tuned ear detected some inaccuracy in spacing, and a "PARIS" test seemed to indicate a speed error. These effects were manifest at low speeds. Further investigation is needed, but the fault could lie in the Terminall equipment, the software, or the Apple, or in some incompatibility between them.

The Hardware and Technical Information

The case contains one large PCB, carrying 27 ICS and various discrete components, for which a full circuit diagram and a brief technical description is provided.

To suit UK mains supplies, changes must be made, involving cutting PCB tracks and changing one chip (not supplied). Details given in the manual of the chip type and circuit reference were wrong. Following these instructions put the equipment out of operation until the problem was sorted out. One could have expected such essential mods to be carried out on export models or by the distributor. A further criticism is the lack of a shroud or cable clamp on the rear connector plug - wires are bound to break off here.

Other than the problem mentioned, connecting up and operating were straightforward, though anyone trying to operate without having read the literature will have problems.

There are better ways of achieving morse communication (like a morse key and 'phones) but for what is surely the main use of the device - RTTY - performance is very satisfactory and satisfying.

* * * * *

BEST MERCURY AWARD 1982/1983.

But 46 Members bothered to vote. This means, allowing for the archived and silent key members (the most recent Membership number issued at the close of the poll was 1990) that something in excess of 1200 (yes ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED members) including the WHOLE of the Overseas membership bar one couldn't be interested enough to lift a pen, the microphone, the key or a telephone and exercise their votes for this Award notwithstanding my cri de coeur in the last Editorial. Fortunately I remain speechless (otherwise this would never pass the Censor), save to comment that it is a poor reward for those who do take the time, trouble and effort in writing articles for this journal.

Here, for the first time, is the complete breakdown, vote by vote, in this annual event.

| <u>ARTICLE</u> | <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>VOTES</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------|---|----------------|
| OF MORSE AND MEN | G4BUS3 | 4 2 3 6 2 5 4 6 4
6 2 1 2 1 6 3 6 2 2
4 2 2 3 2 1 4 4 1 3 | 96 |
| MULTI TRAP DIPOLE | G3PGM | 3 2 2 2 2 1 1 2 1 2
2 1 2 4 3 3 1 3 1 4
3 3 2 2 | 52 |
| NOISE BRIDGE | G4CGT | 2 2 1 2 1 3 3 3 2 2
2 2 2 2 1 2 2 | 34 |
| CLANDESTINE RADIO | G3VA | 3 2 3 4 1 3 3 2 | 21 |
| CQ BAOR | DJØSS2 | 6 6 3 | 17 |
| MOBILE SAFETY | G3WKM | 1 3 4 1 3 2 | 14 |
| JACK & THE BEANSTALK | G3WKM | | 1 3 1 2 3 2 12 |
| MARJORIE'S STORY | G6HAK6 | 6 2 | 8 |
| 1st APRIL NEW AWARD | G3NVK | 2 2 1 | 5 |
| AUDIO MONITOR AMPLIFIER | G8ODE2 | | 2 3 5 |
| SOMEWHERE IN G-LAND | G4ETG | | 3 1 1 5 |
| CELLE & DISTRICT ARS | DA2WN | 2 | 2 |
| COMPUTER SECTION | G3TAN | 2 | 2 |
| THAT MAN THERE | G3NVK | 2 | 2 |
| THE GRAPEVINE | G3NVK | 1 | 1 |

WELL DONE INDEED, REG - Alf, the Awards and Contests Manager has a fine Trophy for you - to be presented if you attend the AGM or forwarded to you afterward..

* * * * *

JUNIOR JIMMY NOTE

Those of you who know Cyril Mountjoy GW3ASW, will know of his long service not only to RSARS(of which Cyril is an Hon Life Vice President) but also to the younger side of the communications fraternity = the cadet force operators. For some years the cadets in his area were well served by GW4CCF. Sadly our Cyril has had to give up the cadet side of his activities due to poor health.

On your behalf I have written to him thanking him most warmly for his hard work and assuring him that the CCF callsign is going to continue to be heard albeit from an English location! Sam Kennard, G4OHX, has kindly volunteered to take on the role of cadet man supreme on air. Mike Buckley of course is our focal point on cadet matters, and Sam and Mike look like putting the cadets back into the limelight. Sam, who works with the St Dunstons College, tells me that some

sneaky so and so STOLE the College FT1 and other equipment right out of the operating room the other week. The depths to which some people will sink is astonishing. If you find the culprits Sam then ship em up here to our Catterick Rest Centre for wayward soldiers (our lovely new Nick) and perhaps they may learn the error of their ways! But quite how they would eat breakfast with no fingers puzzles me!

I remind all members to look out for our young members - they are the RSARS of the future and look to you for guidance and advice.

* * * * *

CROSSWORD

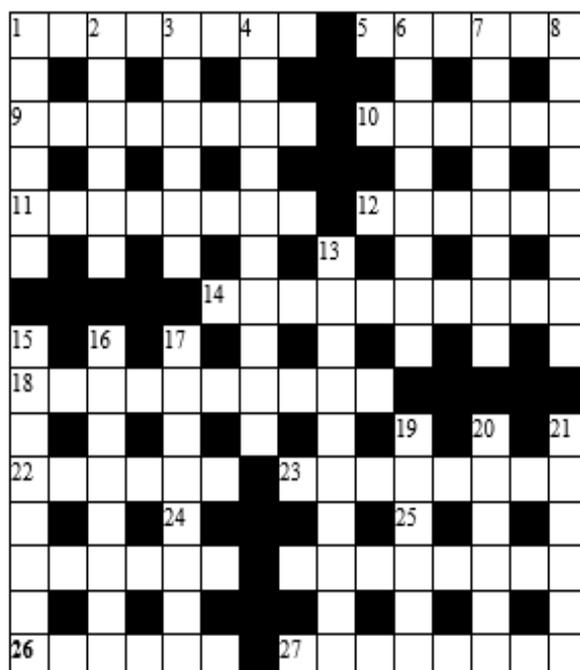
G3NVK/0138

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Large kitties (8)
- 5. It's tar, narrow and strict (6)
- 9. Wheeled eastern transport (8)
- 10. A woven gauzy fabric (6)
- 11. Trample down by cavalry (8)
- 12. A reflecting surface (6)
- 14. The front of military attacks, even with modern weapons (10)
- 18. and 23. VK2DGS is one, so is VK3NTC but not G3XSN or 9V1VF (10,5, 3).
- 22. Press persistently (6)
- 23. See 18 across
- 24. Between head and abdomen (6)
- 25. Judges (8)
- 26. Dee end necessitated (6)
- 27. England v. Australia or India records dissent (8)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. 7th Armoured Div. Flash (6)
- 2. Two-wheeled sunspot periods (6)
- 3. Pray to the short saint for pie crust.....(6)
- 4.to make part old pie a radiator (4,6)
- 6. Illumination before Reveille or after Last Post (8)
- 7. AL leaves 18 across to make an OE (8)
- 8. Speculator in the riots (8)
- 13. Leader of a desert group (10)
- 15. No malt, hi, at VE3QE's (8)
- 16. Cannot empty the heart by toys sale (S)
- 17. Initially British Rail's beans I cook for VK4XY's place. (8)
- 19. Turn aside TV ride (6)
- 20. Three in the wind makes the sailor drunk (6)
- 21. Emu in the SAS entertains (6)



The G3UAA report on the Five Fifty Nine Contest 1982/83

Well the dust has settled and the scores are known. At the top only four points decided the major trophy and as the winner I should add that luck, rather than operating still, played a key role. Possibly what was not apparent to all in the chase was that Dick,G3NVK and myself were tied on 111 points at the end of the third stage.

I gave much thought to just staying close to a score likely to be around 50 points in the last stage, if the December 40 mtr SSB activity level was to prove a guide. In the end nothing came readily to mind so I just hoisted my dipoles to 30' and hoped for the best. In previous years at least part of my contest operating has been carried out on indoor dipoles.

Fortunately luck did play a part and my final score was within one of G3NVK.The rest of the field was by now spread but it was of great interest to listen at the end of part four and note that scores in the high thirties were now becoming the norm in a single stage of the 559.

In terms of contacts made,G3NVK with 157 over the four stages, beat my 156 after that it was a question of who could squeeze the most bonus points out of their logs. The outcome of this exercise is as shown in the table.

To all who participated may I say, thank you. The turn out was up once again on the year before and the number of stations logged shows that most of our contest minded members have an eye on the calendar. January's CW section on 40 mtrs (with the second Sunday falling on the 9th) caught out one or two faithful operators. No callsigns or names but they were blushing once word got around that stage three had been reached--and passed!

Domestic noise levels on Sunday mornings caused problems and some of the other limiting factors mentioned are perhaps worth listing: Trying to cook dinner with XYL and one of the children ill in bed rather restricted operating time..... Mother in Law came and I tried hard to be sociable..... Am I the only station called by RNARS and RAFARS stations during a RSARS contest?..... Is high power the only way to hang onto a frequency on 40 mtrs?..... Ever tried being sociable with contest time running out and receiving a request to give reports on several long wires?..... Who are these guys with linears? (Declared station equipment this issue might help those compiling a hit list!!!!) And finally: I really enjoyed the, "After you Claude" "No after you Clarence" style of operating.

(559 results see page 41)

| <u>AWARDS CLAIMED -</u> | | <u>JANUARY - APRIL 1983</u> | | |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| VHF BASIC No. 38 | G4PFI | CW BASIC No. 46 | G4MUC | |
| VHF BASIC No. 39 | GM4ELV | CW BASIC No. 47 | G30YS | |
| | | CW BASIC No. 48 | G3VSD | |
| QRP 100 AWARD No.4 | | GM4ELV | CW BASIC No. 49 | G3UDX |
| | | CW BASIC No. 50 | G4OJQ | |
| AM BASIC No. 100 | G4LOR | CW 50 | G3ZFZ | |
| AN BASIC No. 101 | G4MUC | | | |
| AM BASIC No. 102 | G4NJV | CW 75 | G2BQ | |
| AM BASIC No. 103 | G3VSD | | | |
| AM BASIC No. 104 | G3OYS | CW 100 | VK4XY | |
| AM BASIC No. 105 | G3TPN | | | |
| AM BASIC No. 106 | G3YSZ | CW 150 | G3RFI | |
| AM 200 | G2BQ | SPECIAL AWARD 200 | VK3QE | |
| AM 300 | G2BQ | SPECIAL AWARD 200 | G2BQ | |
| AM 300 | G3ZFZ | | | |
| AM 450 | G3NT | SPECIAL AWARD 300 | G2BQ | |

AWARDS CLAIMED

- JANUARY - APRIL 1983(Continued)

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|------------------|-------|--|
| AM 125 & 150 | VK4XY | | | |
| AM BASIC 12 | VK4NEL | WAC RSARS No. 26 | G3UDX | |
| | | WAC RSARS No. 27 | G2ETM | |
| | | WAC RSARS No. 28 | G3YSZ | |
| | | WAC R5ARS No. 29 | G3ZFZ | |
| | | WAC RSARS No. 30 | G3XSN | |
| AM 500 SUPREME No. 11 | G3NT | CW 100 | W2AG | |
| | CW 100 | G5GH | | |
| | CW 130 | N2DAN | | |
| GW2OP TROPHY 1983 | G3DBU | | | |
| 559 CONTEST TROPHY 1982/83 | G3UAA | | | |
| LE TOUQUET TROPHY 1982/83 | G3UAA | | | |
| 559 BEST PHONE 1982/83 | G3NVK | | | |
| BEST MERCURY ARTICLE | G4BUS | | | |

Our congratulations to the above Award claimants and Contest Winners.

Postal Applications for May 1983 Anniversary Contest Rosettes will be dealt with after the AGM. Alf would like postal claimants for the Rosette to send him S.A.E.'s 7½ x 5" stamped at 16p please

RSARS VK XMAS DX CONTEST 1982VK4XY/1546

Our Xmas Contest came and went rather quietly, I feel, this time. The number of participating stations was down a little, but the activity, due to the lack of propagation was down considerably. Many commented on the poor conditions we had. I hope everyone got something out of the activity. I know I did. I worked a new one. Roger, VK4CD up in the North of our Continent has the honour of having the only VK/VE QSO's with our beacons in Canada - yes, you've guessed it - VE3QE and VE3AX.

The Contest showed Steve, N2DAN that there are other signals around. He bought a microphone and had 14 contacts on SSB but if you want to log him on this mode you will have to be lucky because the phonetic alphabet drives him nuts. No one uses the same format he said. (How true - we should correct this).

Other comments received after this QSO I decided there was a Contest on and I read the rules in Mercury so I'm virtually booby at the bottom! Still to keep in touch is what matters after all.... the bands were never alive with activity the usual drop of whistles, squeals and noises of unknown origin that we suffer but very few contacts.... two weekends enough one for phone and one for CW too much competition with the Xmas period....

I have received a few comments about the timing of the Contest, and I note the pre-Xmas activities that we all have with families, work, holidays, etc. Perhaps the week after Xmas would be better. Another suggestion has been to run the Contest over 4 weekends in December. I expect conditions will be worse next Xmas but we may get some good openings on 40 and 80m. What do you think?

The overall winner was Les, VE3QE who also won last year. His impeccable log shows once again he worked 18 stations that do not appear in any other log. The results are as follows:-

| <u>DIVISION 1</u> | | | <u>DIVISION 2</u> | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| <u>SECT. A</u> | <u>QSO</u> | <u>PTS</u> | <u>SECT. A</u> | <u>QSO</u> | <u>PTS</u> |
| G3BGM | 30 | 57 | VE3QE | 104 | 192 |
| G3UAA | 28 | 51 | N2DAN | 81 | 148 |
| G2WQ | 27 | 48 | VK4XY | 46 | 72 |
| G3DVL | 5 | 6 | VK2AV | 8 | 11 |
| | | | VK4CD | 7 | 9 |

DIVISION 1

| <u>SECT. B.</u> | <u>QSO</u> | <u>PTS</u> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| G3JPJ | 5 | 5 |
| G4EEC | 4 | 4 |

DIVISION 2

| <u>SECT. B.</u> | <u>QSO</u> | <u>PTS</u> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| VK2NLE | 38 | 38 |
| VS6KH | 6 | 6 |

PARTICIPATING STATIONS BY CALL AREAS

| G | DL | W/VE | VK | VS | 1 each from |
|----|----|------|----|----|----------------------|
| 47 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 9H C6 ZS KA3 ZC4 5B4 |

Congratulations to the Winner in each section and Don, G3BGM also takes out the encouragement Award by a very narrow margin!

Thanks to all who took part, the number of logs received was disappointing but I hope you all enjoyed the activity as much as I did.

* * * * *

CQ BAOR CQ BAOR CQ BAOR

DJØSS/1620

Many of our members back home will no doubt have been to this year's AGM/Annual Reunion at Catterick by the time this is printed. Hopefully a good time was had by all; I certainly enjoyed myself. Unfortunately other duties prevented some of our DA's from attending, however our "DA-delegation" was present and will try and keep our BAOR membership informed on what is happening in our Society.

I have been asked on many occasions what has happened to the 20 metre Net on Sundays. Well, conditions on 20m have not been very good for the last few months, with little or no propagation into G, but we are still trying as this Net seems to be very popular. We have arranged to put out a call from here at 1030 GMT as well as the normal time of 1130 GMT to find out if the time and/or conditions are better an hour earlier. The frequency of course is 14174MHz plus or minus the QRM which invariably comes from the many Contests which are to be found nowadays and are, quite frankly, a pain in the proverbial! I have also spoken to our ZC4's: hopefully we will hear from that neck of the woods before long.

Apart from the 22nd Anniversary Award activity period in May, activity over here has been at an ebb, the only stations I have heard recently being DA1FR, DA1SI, DA1NW and DL6AA. Where are the others hiding? Welcome to the Society to Vernon, DA2CW/1925. Hope to hear you on the HF bands before long Vernon. Another callsign to look out for is G4IYK/1605, perhaps better known as DA1CY. Stu is now back in the green and pleasant land, so watch out you 2m enthusiasts in the Greater Manchester Area. Best of luck to you and the family Stu.

I would be very pleased to hear from Members over here, after all this is your column. I can be contacted by letter via: Celle and District ARS, C/o Cpl. S.Hughes, Radio Troop, 3 Squadron, 14 Signal Regiment (EW) BFPO 23 or direct by phone on 05143-1673 after 1800 hours. So let's hear from you!

Now a few items of news from the Celle & DARC; due to service commitments things have been fairly quiet recently, however the RAE Course is plodding along and making good progress. One member has sat the RAE in May, the others will be sitting it in December so I hope there will be more activity before long.

The Club plans an informal Field Day at the end of July and anyone wishing to come will be made most welcome. It would be nice to see some of you for a chin-wag or what-have-you and after all, Celle is not that far away from you is it? Bratties and beer will, of course, be available. Further info can be obtained from your scribe.

Finally: I hope to be equipped for receiving 50 MHz by the time this is printed. I hope to hear our 3 G-Members who are lucky enough to hold one of the special permits.

That's all for now folks, best 73, bcnu

Eddi.

THE GRAPEVINE

A series of disconnected jottings and gleanings from letters and listening on the Nets.

We are pleased to learn that G3NEE/1286 is progressing well after an operation and is back on the air and with his famous pen again.

The new bathroom suite of G3XSN was duly delivered but with the toilet missing: remonstrations to the supplier after weeks of waiting resulted in the comment "Well, Sir, there's a run on them you know!"

We congratulate Roger, G8LNM/1208 on receiving his Class A licence and the new callsign G4SXF. G4BNI/0982 is intending to attend the AGM and will be staying with G4ETG/0963.

G6HNL/1876 reports a change of address to "Stonefall", Pound Green, Buxted, East Sussex. He bemoans the fact that hitherto he has been unable to find an RSARS 2-metre Net and "even the HF Net frequencies are not now included in MERCURY". (They were all listed, O.M., in the hand-out sheets with the last issue of MERCURY, thus saving valuable space).

G3XUG/1488 was delighted with the response to his "HELP" Notice in the last Issue - G8BRU/301 came up with the full information that Ron was after.

We congratulate Pat, XYL of G3RKN/588 on passing the R.A.E.

Did you know that in New Hampshire it is a traffic offence for either of two motor vehicles to proceed until the other has gone if two vehicles meet at an intersection?

It is prohibited in Louisville, Kentucky to shoot fish with a bow and arrow.

In Monrie, Utah it is illegal to dance with a girl unless daylight can be seen between you.

The answer to last time's puzzle concerning the secret agent's box is that Agent A puts a padlock on the box which he locks with his own key. He then sends it to Agent B who puts on a second padlock, locking it in turn with his own key and sends the box back to Agent A, who receives the box locked with two padlocks. He (Agent A) simply removes his own padlock and returns the box to Agent B who unlocks it with his own key.

PUZZLE: The sign on one of two boxes is true and the sign on one box is false. Box 1 reads "In one of these boxes there is an FT1 transceiver, in the other there is a brick". Box 2 reads "In the other box there is a FT1 transceiver. The brick is in this box". Which box would you open to claim your FT1?

One Member was heard on the Net to state that his was a 50/50 marriage Yes, he told his Bride that for the first 50 years he'd do as he liked and she could do as she liked for the next 50 years!! HAPPY FAMILIES LEAGUE - further entries:-

G3CWW/1260 - Son G8YRJ.

G6UXX - wife of G3RKN/0588

G4LIL - wife of G4KFN/1548

G3CWW was surprised to work G4KIE/1770 on 28 MHz and discovered him to be less than 3 miles distant and of whose existence Tony was previously unaware.

G4IYQ/1639 asks us to point out that his service with RTR was not as a Tankie but "attached to them from Royal Signals", having been with the Corps from boy service transferring at 17½ to Catterick. Page 8 of the last MERCURY might not mean this to any former colleagues, whom he is hoping might pick up the details and whom possibly he might meet.

G3YSZ/0179 complains that SWL members are sending QSL cards but not filling in their name and address but merely showing their RSARS number. Cyril is now handicapped on two sticks and will be unable to attend the AGM

VK2DGS currently in England learned that he is a grandfather again via VK2NLE to G4HLG on 21 MHz, G4HLC to G3NVK on 80m and by G3NVK on landline. Congratulations Gordon.

G3KBQ/0481 is hoping to build a QRP rig for 7 and 14 MHz CW as soon as time permits, but due to RFI at the chap's next door has been unable to appear on 80m for some time.

Bob Smith previously listed as NL 1734 is delighted to report that he can now be listed as G4SMR/1734 and is glad to be working all the stations hitherto he could only listen to.

Congratulations are in order too for Wolf, who was G5MZI, but is now G3SSX/1855.

Anyone lurking in graveyards for any purpose could please examine the tombstones: Alf, G3UAA/0454 is trying to extend his knowledge of Groby slate and some Headstones in churchyards are usually well marked "Groby Quarry" but he is after obscure names like Rudkin, Moore, Parsons, Gill and Sutton who were also sculptors or who employed men to engrave their names at the base of the stones.

We learn that VE3QE is about to set up a QRP Group in Ontario. He will have VE3QRP callsign transferred to his name shortly.

8th May 1983 saw the Lincoln Hamfest and apart from the Royal Signals Display Team with the mini White Helmets being on parade we learn that G6HAK, G3WKM, G3WRY, G3NVK, G3BPB and G4RUG were there. Guess who won the Big Raffle of the day - prize an FT290R multi mode 2m transceiver, yes, the XYL of G3BPB.

ZL3AGB/1451 (and holding the call G4IGE) will be visiting England this year with plans much the same as before - pedal pushing. It's much cheaper he says than petrol and he hopes to visit his birthplace in Yorkshire. The trip is scheduled for 5th June to 28th August so maybe we shall see Tom at the AGM ?

G4OJQ/0951 gladly reports the acquisition of his ticket after about 15 years of putting it off.

We must quote the Yorkshire Evening Post (30 April 1983) here: "Bomb disposal men "exploded" a suspicious package at Catterick Garrison and discovered it was a left-over chicken supper!" Evidently the alarm was raised when the parcel was spotted under a car in the car park at Vimy Barracks and the police and Bomb Disposal experts were called out. Using remote control equipment and guided by a camera they fired low velocity shots into the package to detonate it. Closer examination revealed what it was. We are grateful to G3XUG/1488 for that info. (actually his accompanying note asks "Has EKL done it again?").

G4JHF/1680 recently had a spell in a Nursing Home near Leamington Spa. The local amateur group supplied 2m gear for his sojourn there and for which he is most grateful.

G6HGC/1803 now becomes G4SVQ/1803. Well done.

ZS2RJ/287 (formerly ZS6XC) our friend Rex of 66 Frere Crescent, Uitenhage 6230, Cape Province, Republic of South Africa reports reaching 70 years and would like to hear from any Members who may have been with 156 Mobile Operations Room - Anti Aircraft. Rex said they were attached to the Canadian Army and most of their time was spent in defending Nijmegen from aerial attack until they moved into Arnhem in March 1945.

Another for the Happy Families League (or as G3WRY calls it, the Radio Active Families) is G3AEF/0904 whose son Andrew (taking the RAE in May) is Member 1890 and, according to the General Secretary is still the youngest Member of the Society at 16.

VK2NLE has had problems with his new TS930. It was returned to the shop for a replacement of the VFO, then he had audio problems and eventually the rig was replaced for an entirely new one. Les says he is on good terms with the Shop Manager. Les has recently met G3TMN/1822 and his wife Joyce.

WB6BPA may be coming to the UK later this year to visit his daughter and grandchildren. Bill's QSL reveals "G8KL since 1937". The only nets that Bill finds active are at 1800 on 21260 (Net Controller W2AG), daily on 28450 at 2300Z. He has listened many times for our usual Nets but has never heard anyone. Bill has had many contacts with the VK boys but asks "where on earth (figuratively) are the ZL members?".

M.G.Hayman, who gives no Membership Number reports a change of address to 12 Danson Mead Danson Park, Welling, Kent and a promotion to L/Cpl in 71 Signal Regiment (V). MGH works for the Met. Police Telecomms Branch.

Gordon, VK2DGS/G4LCW/148J unfortunately will not be attending the AGM in spite of having travelled some 12,000 miles to be in the UK at the appropriate time. Gordon blames transport difficulties and says he is off to Ireland followed by a trip to Russia on 24th June and then is to return to Sydney via Tokyo on 19th July.

Keep an ear open for a new station in the Falklands - VP8AST is expected to open up in September. G4KEM/1482 is wondering who it was that wished to borrow a copy of "Through to 1970" the Jubilee history of the Corps. Anyone either at home or overseas wishing to see a copy of this publication please contact the Editor who will pass your letter to Russell.

Rex, ZS2RJ/287 announces that he is on 21168 to 21188 from 1600 GMT every evening and looks forward to UK members calling him.

* * * * *

MY VISIT TO VK6-land.

G3UDX/0217.

I visited my family in Perth, Western Australia, from the 14th to 28th December 1982 and during this time took the opportunity to visit my good friend VK6CI, Trevor and VK6PG, Alan who was in the process of moving into his new home on Crimea Road. Alan mentioned he was not happy with the times and frequencies for the RSARS Nets. In VK6 it was almost impossible to get through to the UK at these times. The only time I seem to get through to this part of Australia is about 0800 hours on 14 mHz. I listened for the net on 21 mHz from the QTH of VK6CI but heard nothing.

On 21st December I attended the West Australia ARS Meeting held at the Herdsman pub. The Meeting commenced 1930 hours and was presided over by VK6OO, Bruce Hedland, who opened the proceedings and then introduced me, Z21EJ and two members of the Heard Island DXpedition. The entry fee was 3 Dollars and for this we had an excellent buffet of prawns, pizza, meat balls, sea food, sausage rolls etc. and as much as one could eat. Beer cost 4 Dollars a jug - about £1.17p a pint!

There are some 1,200 amateurs in WA and 750 belong to the Society the Meeting was attended by some 120 of these members. I asked the President to call for any RSARS members and only one - VK6WT/1793 was present. Jim teaches the RAE at Mount Lawley Technical College and takes a year to do it.

During the Meeting I bought a Heard Island car sticker for the sum of 50c - I only hope that I can work them. To date I have not heard (!!?) them. Also at the Meeting I met VK6NE who handled cards for VK9NYG. I delivered my QSL to him personally and two days later Neil came to the house with a card verifying my contact with VK9NYG. He could not stop as his car was loaded with gear for the Heard Island expedition and they were about to set sail.

I was presented with a book mark published by JVC, one side shows a cricket bat and inscribed "England vs Australia for the Ashes 1982-1983". On the other side the words 'In affectionate remembrance of English cricket which died at the Oval 20th August 1882. Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances. R.I.P. N.B. The body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia!'

I wanted to purchase some filters for my TS530 and hoped to get them cheaper in Australia. Amateur radio shops are few and far between in WA and the one I visited - Dick Smith's on William Street had a small selection of Yaesu equipment tucked away in one corner of the shop. If one needs equipment or repairs to be done one has to write away to the 'East' and be prepared to wait a long time. Typical prices - FT101ZFM 825 Dollars (at £1.72 to the £1) about £480. I did not get the filters I wanted as no Trio equipment was stocked.

Look out for the Heard Island expedition and the VK6 boys - they are a great lot.

RADIOPRINTER SYSTEMS FOR AMATEUR HF OPERATION.

G3RFI/0133

(or "Thoughts of a dissenting observer".)

A number of comments have appeared in the Amateur Press during the last year or so extolling the virtues of " RTTY " for amateur use, and most recently in " Radio Teleprinter with Home Microcomputers" (Mercury No. 74, page 36) home computer owners are encouraged to join "the move to RTTY". Whilst not wishing to discourage computer owners from experimenting with anything on their machines, I have great reservations about the recommendation of " RTTY " as a modern transmission system which the "progressive" amateur should implement with the latest microelectronic technology.

I am assuming (safely I think), that references to "RTTY" in this context mean unprotected 5-unit ITA2 stop-start radioprinter. This I believe to be a singularly unsuitable system for the amateur service; no doubt its adherents have hours of fun with surplus mechanical printers etc; but to apply digital electronic techniques to the generation and decoding of such a system strikes me as somewhat ill-advised. The inherent deficiency of conventional" RTTY" lies in its lack of protection against corruption; there is no redundancy in the five element coding, corruption of anyone information element gives an incorrect character (or even worse an unwanted figure or letter shift), whilst corruption of the start or stop element will give temporary loss of synchronisation.

"But", you may reply, "if RTTY is such a poor system, what about all the non-amateur activity to be heard on H.F.?" To that it may be said that in the first place the majority of HF FSK signals commonly described as "RTTY" are not in fact using 5-unit stop-start keying, but one of the systems providing some measure of error protection. Secondly, those that are using 5-unit RTTY, (mainly Press Agencies and the Meteorological Services), operate in rather different circumstances to those of the radio amateur. The severe restrictions on power and aerial gain which apply to most amateurs, combined with the required ability to operate long-haul circuits in congested parts of the spectrum, produce a situation in which it is most unlikely that a professional user would employ 5-unit RTTY.

So, what might be a better choice?

There are in widespread use on the HF bands a variety of radioprinter systems providing "error detection an correction" facilities; based on the use of expanded coding employing parity elements, in which received characters are checked for mark-space relationships (e.g. 4 marks/3 spaces, odd total marks/even total spaces, etc. depending upon the particular system). If an "invalid" (corrupt) character is detected an automatic repeat request (ARQ) signal is sent back from the recipient to the traffic sender who then sends the appropriate character (or block of characters) again. This implies the need for a return path to form a loop for the ARQ function, and in most systems this involves two-frequency duplex working, which would be inconvenient in amateur operations. An exception to the latter requirement is the system described in CCIR Recommendation 1176 *(1)*, which can be used in a single frequency simplex ARQ mode (Mode A). The commercial implementations of Rec.476 go under a variety of manufacturers' names such as SITOR, SPECTOR, MARITEX, etc; and is referred to in amateur publications as "AMTOR". *(2)*, *(3).

It is not proposed to reproduce full details here, but this would appear to be the most suitable and effective radioprinter system presently available for amateur use. A synchronous seven element code is employed (with 4-3 radio); since only 35 out of the 128 possible combinations are valid the chances of element corruption producing false characters are minimised. Single frequency operation is possible, since the information sending station sends blocks of three characters interspersed with breaks in transmission during which the recipient replies with a single character to acknowledge reception of valid characters, or with a block of "RQ" characters to request repetition if errors have been detected. This provides a bonus for the amateur with an SSB transmitter which has a limited duty cycle; - the send time in each period of 450 ms. does not exceed 210 ms. in Mode A, so full power operation without time limitation should present no

problem, although send/receive switching times should be pretty short. The effect of QRM or a poor circuit generally, upon the passage of traffic in this mode will be to slow it down rather than to produce a greatly increased level of received errors; in other words, instead of The Quick Brown Fox jumping all over the page in a mess of %&@) etc., as on 5-unit RTTY, he keeps right on jumping over the Lazy Dog but just takes a little longer doing so.

Selective calling facilities are a feature of the above system and are used in the amateur version; this, combined with computer controlled date storage, could permit unmanned operation, and perhaps automatic traffic relaying. A second mode of operation (Mode B) is also available, this is the "Forward Error Correcting" (FEC) mode, in which the transmission is continuous and each seven element character is sent twice, with four other characters sent in the intervening period. This gives a measure of time diversity protection in addition to the 7 element parity protection, but no ARQ loop exists, so no repetition can be requested in this mode; but it is useful when more than one recipient is anticipated. The CCIR REC.476 system is admittedly relatively complex, but the resultant improvement in performance over 5-unit RTTY is so impressive that extra effort would seem well invested. Also it is a system that is in widespread use outside the amateur bands, and is currently being adopted by a growing number of users.

Another system which I would suggest has considerable advantages over 5-unit RTTY in the amateur context is Hellschreiber *(4)*, and this might be simpler to implement with home computer techniques. This system is now obsolete in the Western World as far as professional users are concerned, but not for reasons which render it unsuitable for amateur use. Perhaps it should be considered strictly as a facsimile rather than a radioprinter system, but such a distinction seems more theoretical than practical. Again this system scores over 5-unit RTTY on its inherently reduced vulnerability to corruption by short term interference. The characters are formed as a "mosaic" of mark and space elements on the paper strip (or VDE) of the recipient; corruption of individual elements produces not an incorrect character but a mutilated version of the correct character, and the human eye and brain have a remarkable ability to perform their own error detection and correction in such cases.

In conclusion, may I repeat that the above comments are not intended to discourage home computer owners from finding radio communication applications for their machines, but rather to encourage them to look beyond the limitations of an inferior mode which currently appears to be receiving more publicity than its performance merits. Before assuming that 5-unit RTTY is the only sensible radioprinter mode available to the amateur I would suggest that those interested investigate other possibilities, perhaps beginning with the references below.

References:

- * (1) * CCIR Recommendation 476. (CCIR XIIth Plenary Assembly New Delhi, 1970) Volume VI and Amendments.
- * (2) * "AMTOR". An improved radioteletypewriter system, using a microprocessor". G3PLX. RSGB RadCom. August 1979
- * (3) * "AMTOR, the easy way". G3PLX. RSGB RADCOM June/July 1980
- * (4) * "HELLSCHREIBER, what it is and how it works" G5XB RSGB RadCom. April 1981.

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NEXT MERCURY: To be published first week of NOVEMBER 1983. Copy to the Editor by 1st October please.

YOU ONLY DIE TWICE

G4MQN/1431

Whaddon Hall, May 1944 was a hive of activity. Base of Special Communication Units, commanded by Brigadier Gambier-Parry (G2DV), the Hall had seen long years of scheduled contacts with Resistance Groups, 24-hour contact with "Hydra" the station at Bill Stephenson's Camp X HQ and training site on the shores of Lake Ontario - but above all, the radio links with the SCU/SLU in the Western Desert and many other far off places.

From "Windy Ridge", Whaddon Hall's extensive radio station on the hill at the top of Whaddon village street, Ultra information from the German radio signals, decoded by Enigma at nearby Bletchley Park (Station X), had gone over the years in a constant stream of five letter codes to Allied Commanders. Thus, up to the minute details of every thought and plan of the enemy Commanders had been placed into the eager hands of allied Commanders. Enemy Generals - even the wily Desert Fox had been nonplussed by the extraordinary ability of Allied Commanders to frustrate, counter and defeat their every move.

In the SCU trucks, parked unobtrusively near each Allied HQ, the Royal Signals operators keyed the Mark 3 transmitters - a simple 6v6 driving an 807 PA with just 40 watts output - made in countless hundreds in the Whaddon Hall workshops. The code signals were picked up by the aerials of Windy Ridge. In turn the signals from Windy were received by the HRO receivers in the trucks. The five letter code copy carrying "Ultra" was collected by the Cipher Officer, decoded by the Cipher Clerks, carried securely to those on the list to handle Ultra, studied eagerly, then carefully retrieved and even more carefully, destroyed.

Yet rarely, if ever, - despite the continuous countering of the best laid plans - had the security of the Enigma coding system been questioned. It was the best communication coding system that brains could devise. It was unthinkable that the Allies had broken it - and if they had? Who would dare to tell the High Command - let alone (the Gods forbid!) the Fuhrer?

So the Ultra secret remained inviolate. The Allied Commanders continued to read and study the content of every German signal concerning their battle areas - sometimes before the signals reached their intended destination.

Now, for the Allies, with the early campaigns largely over and largely won, the day approached for the final onslaught on Hitler's Fortress Europe. "Overlord" would require the same SLU/SCU links with every Commander whose men and armour would land on the shores across the Channel - and with the Commanders who would direct the air fleets and drop men into Europe. The "Old Brig" had the task to provide these vital links from his stretched resources.

So in May 1944 the courtyards of Whaddon Hall were crammed with trucks being fitted out for the radio links with "Windy" and each Commander.

Into the trucks went the Mk.3 transmitter with its power pack and alongside, the HRO receiver. Elsewhere the new teams of Signal operators and the teams of cipher clerks were being trained.

The trucks had their reserve power supply, but generally power would be supplied from a heavy petrol-driven generator in a separate truck. This would power not only the radio equipment but lighting for the caravan in which the RAF cipher clerks would decode the "Ultra".

But here arose a problem: as a pre-war electrician I was horrified to find that the power cable from the generator ended in an open plug to be inserted into a socket on the truck. I raised the question with the Officer I/C fitting out the trucks. For history's sake let us call him "Capt. Mugg". "Sir", I said, "this arrangement is dangerous and a breach of I.E.E. regs. If the cable is tripped over the plug will be pulled out of the socket. Some unlucky beggar will pick up the plug to put it back and get the full belt from the genny!"

"Corporal", snarled Capt. Mugg, "do as you're b..... well told - and don't dare question my orders again or I'll have you on a 252!"

"OK", I said, sotto voce to his departing back, "have it your own daft way - but it won't be your b..... funeral will it?" With those prophetic words I duly aroused Dr. Edsel Murphy from his age-old slumber and caused him to reiterate 1003 of his eternal Law!

And so came the day when the convoy of trucks drove out through the tessellated gateway of the Hall, down the village street and dispersed on various routes on the way to war.

Our destination was 21st Army Group HQ at Southwick House, Portsmouth. As ours would be the largest group, my maintenance truck, with Ben driving, went with the 21st AG section. As we drove ultimately through the streets of Pompey the quiet residential areas were crammed with armour and men. It seemed that the south of England must surely tilt under the weight of war hardware. We drove into the Park unobtrusively, waved on by the MPs who noted the signs on the trucks.

Under a clump of trees, not far from the House, we set up camp. Masts were hauled up, aerials rigged, the HRO tuned up, the appropriate crystal plugged into the Mark 3 Tx, and the Tx tuned up. In a few moments we were in contact with "Windy" and the test code groups started coming through. SCU/SLU 21st Army Group was operational!

Next morning an MP arrived and we were escorted along the sandy paths to the forest. From outside the forest seemed deserted, serene and quiet. But on close approach we saw that the tree tops were covered by an intricate mesh of camouflage as were the lower branches of the outside trees. Entering through a gap in the netting our eyes opened wide. In the forest was a city of steel - trucks, armour, battlewagons of strange shapes, caravans, marquees and a vast host of men bustling around. We fed in a huge crammed mess tent then wended our way back to our trucks.

The station was QRT - for the Ultra feed to the HQ was via teleprinter so all we had to do was wait - as millions of others waited for orders. Tommy Hitt, I/C Signal Section, was busy on his rosters, the ops were in the tent playing cards, the cipher bods were in their caravan. I had nothing to do until the evening check on equipment so I decided to go back to the forest - it was rumoured that the Yanks had a worthwhile PX store tucked away somewhere.

I didn't feel like traipsing along the paths so I thought I'd make a short cut across the grass - and dropped my first resounding clanger. There was a group of caravans parked together under a clump of trees. As I tramped past blithely there came a sharp high-pitched bellow "Corporal! Get off that grass!" I turned in the door of a caravan, a sharp featured hatless man, in baggy grey cords and a sweater stood glaring fiercely. My first reaction was to answer "Cobblers!" Then I choked and muttered "Oh gawd blimey!" My heart rammed up into my throat then slammed down into my boots, then my hand raised in a shakey salute. I'd nearly said "Cobblers" to Him! And one doesn't say "Cobblers" to the Commanding General - Monty!! I swear my feet didn't touch the grass as I ran like mad back to the path. The Voice followed me "And do up the top button of your tunic, Corporal!" "I won't have men improperly dressed!"

Back at the trucks I sat down in a cold sweat. Next morning after breakfast our whole group was paraded in a marquee for a lecture. The Intelligence bod exhibited large photos of the area taken by a spotter plane. They showed not a sign of any activity. Then he pointed out another photo showing light yellow tracks entering the forest, and stated that a Luftwaffe spotter plane made an unimpeded run over the House and forest every day, kept well up by Pompey Ack Ack specially laid on. The lesson was made clear "Keep off the b..... grass!". If anyone made tracks across the grass then a group of men had to go out with soft brooms sweeping the grass into an upright position as they retreated to the forest. Lesson learned - no wonder Monty did his nut!

It was a week later that Murphy's Law operated and I got my come-uppance. It had rained all the week, a drenching downpour. In the afternoon Tommy Hitt and the ops were in the tent playing cards. I thought I might as well make the equipment tests and at the same time have a tune around on the HRO.

I got the genny running and stood by the truck watching a couple of buzz bombs chugging and flaring their way Londonwards, ringed by Ack Ack bursts. When they had gone I went to the radio truck and found someone had disconnected the power plug. "Damn" I said, and with one eye on another buzz bomb this time coming our way, I felt in the lush grass for the cable and plug.

I found it! The plug lodged between the third and fourth fingers of my left hand and the current surged through me, my body writhing and vibrating, making me feel like a huge dancing bear. My eyes were riveted on my fingers whence a column of smoke arose from the flesh being burned away. I couldn't let go of the plug as the current had paralysed the muscles. I must have let out a strangled cry as I teetered on my feet then I went flat on my back in the grass and everything went black: I could not move, see or hear.

Then, to my surprise, I found myself floating above my prone body, tethered to it by a tenuous shimmering cord. But even more strange, I could think clearly and "saw" my body in the grass, smoke still pluming from my fingers. I "saw" Tommy Hitt emerge from the tent, his mouth opening soundlessly then run over and yank the plug from my fingers. Others spilled out of the tent, one spread a blanket over me, another climbed into the truck and cranked the telephone frantically.

Above the group I floated serenely: my thoughts crystal clear. Oh God, I thought, I'm dead! - and I've done nothing, sweet nothing and I'm dead! - Then, with wry amusement, I wonder what Mum will say? Wonder what sort of funeral I'll get? Will I get laid under a nice oblong stone?

Then the red-crossed "blood wagon" arrived on the nearby path. Two men ran with a stretcher. An M.O. followed, carrying his bag. He bent over me, ripped my battle blouse and shirt open and applied a stethoscope. Looking down on him I noticed he was bald on top. He began to thump my chest then filled a syringe and plunged it into my chest. Floating above I winced instinctively then gave a silent giggle - of course, I couldn't feel it! Then the M.O. got up, tucked the blanket around me and I was lifted on to the stretcher.

Oh well! I thought - that's it - time to go! The tenuous cord linking me to my body stretched and thinned and I felt a gentle force drawing me upwards. Then, just as I thought the cord would break, it recoiled, pulled and thickened and I plummeted down into my body and blackness again.

It was whilst I was being carried across the grass to the ambulance that I heard a faint twittering far off. It grew louder rapidly until I could hear the birds singing in the trees above. Then in the enveloping blackness a faint glimmer of light appeared like the light at the end of a long tunnel. The light widened, expanded, and I could see the sky. I tried frantically to move but failed - then there came a tingling in the tips of my fingers; the feeling spread slowly up my arms and I found I could move my fingers then my arms. I sat up on the stretcher waving my arms wildly and shouting joyfully. The M.O. turned a startled face towards me, pressed me back on the stretcher, applied the stethoscope whilst grabbing my wrist and checking the pulse. Then he scratched his head unbelievably and said "Keep quite still - we'll have you in hospital in a few moments!

At Pompey Hospital I was placed on the casualty table. The Doctor tut-tutted over my charred fingers, made a swift examination, whilst the nurse cleaned the burned fingers, applied sphagnum moss and a tulle dressing. The Casualty Officer filled a syringe selected a vein and drove the needle in. "This", he said, "is new, very new, we call it an antibiotic. Knocks infection right on the head".

He made a note on the pad "Now upstairs to the ward, lad!" I was wheeled into the lift. In the ward a Sister with the aspect of a Guards Sergeant Major whipped off my clothes and put me to bed. "Sister" I said "I feel perfectly alright. Do I have to stay in bed?" "Laddie," she barked, "That's where you'll stay until the shock comes out. Anytime in the next 48 hours you'll start shaking, your legs will be like jelly and you'll vomit. So stay in bed you will!" She was right: when the reaction came I shook and trembled and sweated like an old sweat in a malaria bout. But it gradually wore off and I was up and about in a funny blue suit and red tie. But my fingers throbbed like hell.

What worried me was whether the landings had taken place. A few days later I clamoured to see the Consultant; he gave me a full examination, studied the file and inspected my burned fingers. "Look, Sir," I pleaded, "I've got to get back to my Unit before they go! I must!"

He looked at me and grinned, "You lads are determined to get your heads blown off, aren't you? OK son, you can go back to your Unit. Your M.O. can dress the wounds and keep an eye on you". He looked at me over his half specs "Don't worry son - they haven't gone yet. We'll get an alert when it starts. Good luck Corporal, and keep your head well down!"

As I thanked him and turned to go he looked up from the file. "You might like to know, Corporal, that you were dead. The M.O. who examined you found no heartbeat, no pulse and no reflexes and pronounced you dead. It's a puzzle that you recovered". He smiled "You know - you're only supposed to die once. So you'll probably come through OK and die again from ripe old age!"

I thumbed a lift back to camp. I wondered if I ought to have told him about floating above my body. Best not - he wouldn't have believed me anyway!

When I got back Tommy Hitt and the others crowded round "You're a miracle, Bill" they said, "we were sure you'd had your chips!" Tommy said "You'd better report to the Captain - he signalled Windy for a replacement mech.". I duly reported in.

A few days later the Captain told us to pack up; we would move that night. We drove out and joined a mass of vehicles and armour moving slowly toward Pompey Harbour. We drove without lights, following a dim light on the tail of the truck in front. It was past midnight when we slowly moved up to the long line of LCTs - their doors gaping wide, rumbled up a ramp into the dim blue glow, were shunted onto the lift and up to top deck. When we were properly anchored down I wandered to the rail and looked down on the never ending line of trucks and armour moving slowly to the LCTs. I'd made it!

Unknown to us then, there lay ahead a long gruelling bloody haul - the battle for Caen, the liberation of Paris and Brussels, the struggle to close the Falaise gap, the floundering desperate battle in the snow of the Battle of the Bulge, then the crossing of the Rhine and the drive into the devastated Reich. All the way the SCU trucks passed and received Ultra, then at last went QRT on VE day - and we returned across Europe to SCU HQ at Versailles.

But as I leaned over the rail on D minus 2 there was one puzzle in my mind. I knew that when one died one's thoughts remained crystal clear as long as there was that shimmering link with one's body. But - did one's thoughts cease when the tenuous link parted and one drifted away to the unknown? I, like every other human being, would know - some day!

* * * * *

JUST IN PASSING

GI2DZG/0005

Attending as the Northern Ireland representative at the recent London meeting of branch representatives of the Royal Signals Association yours truly, wearing his RSARS Honorary Life Members badge, hoped that among those present would be a fellow member of the Society. Alas, there did not appear to be one, so, in the event of the 1984 meeting and possible attendance again, would any RSARS member likely to be there take one pace forward and identify himself.

During a recent QSO on the Monday RSARS lunchtime net with Ben, G3MUC, Chas. G5GH and Frank, G3DVL, the writer mentioned that he was looking for pins having 6BA threads. These were used in the early thirties to enable home-brew coils to be plugged into 4 or 6 pin valve bases. Response from the above members was negative - they simply did not have them. Therefore to the author's surprise by first post next morning a supply of suitable pins arrived from Ron, G3XUG who happened to overhear the QSO. Just goes to show the kind and helpful spirit of members of the Society besides the obvious fact that you never know who might be listening. Thanks again Ron.

Been using .1" matrix stripboard for the first time recently (where have you been O.M. - Ed.). A lot of time was spent in clearing the solder which had in some instances run over to an adjacent copper track. Admittedly, now using solder of a lesser gauge which is helpful. However, the thought occurred: would it not have been better if the manufacturer of the stripboard had made the base with raised ridges dividing the tracks and lessened the possibility of solder blobs running on to adjacent tracks?

Whilst in London, mentioned earlier, a visit was made to the Edgware Road. Quite a lot of new buildings have sprung up since my last visit. Some of the same traders are still there, notably H.L. Smith where one can still rummage among the various stocks of components in boxes. It has not altered over the years and before it may do so may I suggest that the RSGB historian arranges for a photograph of its interior to be taken - the old style trader is fast disappearing which is a pity.

Over the past few years home construction has received a boost, mainly through the articles by G3RJV which have appeared in various magazines. Confined to QRP projects, as they are, and a laudable objection though QRP is, as Pat Hawker, G3VA, pointed out in his Technical Topics column in RadCom, the newly-licensed G4 who may not be able to afford a 'black box', could be turned off by building a rig and not achieving many contacts, if at all, due to the power input. After all, QRP working does require patience and the need to ensure that all the RF is getting where it should into the antenna which, in itself, should be efficient. Next step, as an alternative should be the construction of a more powerful transmitter with an input between 10 and 25 Watts. Whilst there are designs for the construction of such a transmitter in various handbooks and in articles of older issues of radio magazines where does one find the transformers of the 350 or 500 volt type to power same and having a heater winding nowadays? A glance at advertisements in both radio magazines and catalogues shows that transformers of this type are no longer available. Sources of supply may be a local amateur or a junk sale either at a radio club or rally. What then, of the amateur who lives in the sticks? He may be miles away from a radio club or rally venue. Obtaining through the post catalogues from well-known suppliers will, as stated, not meet his need. If any newly licensed member of RSARS is in this situation perhaps a letter to HQ stating requirements may point to a source of supply - long established traders cannot, surely, have disposed of ALL their stocks of the high voltage type transformers?

* * * * *

THE NET RESULTS

G3DVL asks us to remind you of the relatively new Net for QRS CW Operators, held at 10.00 clock time on Sunday mornings on 3565 kHz and Masters of Ceremonies being either G3KLX or G3GZG. Several Members have attended this Net and have found considerable benefits to their CW as a result.

Sunday mornings are also a good time to look on 14175 kHz for the BAOR Net - unfortunately the band is usually taken over at 1130Z by the seemingly endless numbers of EA and I stations but on occasions good contacts have been made to England from our lads in Germany.

With HF band conditions falling off and chances of regular Overseas contacts (particularly the VK/ZL Net on 21170 - the most well-established of such Nets) diminishing until the bands open up again in the Autumn it has been suggested by DA1FR that we really should look more to 20m. 14175 or 14065 seem appropriate frequencies and propagation charts indicate 0800Z and 1800Z onwards as being good for working to VK from Europe. Why not give it a try lads? Certainly a good number of contacts were made during May (the Anniversary month) between England and our brethren over in the USA.

The new 10 mHz band is worthy of attention too. G3NVK has already worked 22 Countries (including VK, ZL and JA) in 5 Continents and has had one or two RSARS contacts on that band.

STOP PRESS: VP8AQT, alias G6KFR/1849, Dave commenced operations from West Island, Falklands in mid-May on 21325 and 21215 at 1800Z to 1900Z.

The other day I picked up my copy of an American business magazine to which I subscribe, and was interested to see that the first 53 pages of 110 pages of advertising were for mainframe, mini or micro business and business/hobby computers, or the software associated with them. In no other sphere has there been such growth and each day new packages of new software ideas fall onto the desks of small business outfits, killing paperwork stone dead and increasing profits and efficiency.

In another magazine I saw a classroom in a British school where seven groups of children were busily working away at micros (I could identify five different machines in the photograph). The youngsters were from 9 to 12 years old. It adds up to a significant part of the communications revolution which has taken place in the past few years, and which has caught a lot of people napping. It has moved at such a pace that it has left huge chunks of industry lagging far behind.

Its a bit frustrating therefore to receive letters from members of a 20th century radio club complaining about 'all this computer gobbeldeygook that is now appearing in the Mercury'. One Brontosaurus actually told me that 'computers are what gets my gas bill wrong, so what are you writing all that programming rubbish in Mercury for?' Fortunately the ratio of that kind of letter to those actually thanking us for introducing the 1980s to RSARS is very low. Still, you are all truly entitled to your opinion and I will publish them either way.

NEW CHIPS

Very shortly now the 256K RAM chip will hurtle onto the workshop benches of computer manufacturers in firstly the USA and then secondly (surprisingly) the Japanese firms will build new equipments around it. Millions of equipments with almost historically low RAM are going to side slip into the second hand markets or become simply calculators or introductory machines. In about 12 months then, if you are looking for a home micro to put your log on or to handle RTTY or rapid file search, or to word process, you would be well advised to be careful about paying your money for one of the 'popular' micros for there are going to be some very hefty machines on the market with meaty memories and built in discs etc. The trend is for portable 12BK/256K machines and the trend is down in price. So keep your hand on your wallet for a while.

INPUT

A very interesting letter from TED, GM3LWS, explains some excellent ideas on how to sort the information you have filed. Ted does not have a computer but has worked with the machines for quite some time. I have reproduced his letter in full because it is very helpful indeed. Thanks Ted for your interest.

Lewis Lawton who has recently joined us as a new member tells us that Mercury was handed to him in the Tech Workshop in Germany because his mate knew he was interested in computing (is the Computer Section actually starting to recruit RSARS members????) The grapevine tells me that Lewis is pretty clued up and his twin disc Genie is no mean performer either. Lewis says he may buy a Spectrum for his children to learn on (!) I think we will hear much more from him in these pages.

KEN YOUNG, RSARS 0440, writes saying that he has a BBC micro and is having difficulty running the RSARS log on it. Beeb Basic is a different dialect Ken and you have to check each programme line and translate it where the need arises. Certainly almost every home micro can be programmed to accept the instructions contained in logging programmes and file handling, sorting and display. I suggest you sit down and think out each action which is called out in the programme, and then translate it in terms of what your ACORN machine will accept, and modify the instruction where you have to. One thing that you will find by doing this is that you will learn a great deal about programming!

NORMAN LILLEY, RSARS 1259, is beginning to get the computer bug and owns a PET machine. One good thing about Commodore machines is that all three of the popular editions, PET, VIC 20 and COMMODORE 64, all run the same software, so you don't have to throwaway your

early purchase and buy a whole load of new stuff to run a 64. Incidentally the price of disc drives for these machines is coming down rapidly.

Let us say here that we have had about thirty letters so far on the computer aspects of amateur radio, and many people say 'please don't forget us PET, or VIC 20 or TRS owners.' Gentlemen I say unto you now, that nobody is forgetting you, but this section is! TWO WAY ORIENTED and that means that you just can't sit at home hoping that I will publish a programme or idea for you to beetle off into the shack and try out! That's pie in the sky. YOU have to WRITE TO ME and tell ME what to get into print, what is interesting you, what you want to see. I try to keep the articles of a general interest nature so that as many of you are satisfied as possible. There are more and more of you out there, and a great deal of interest. More of you have written to me than have voted for best Mercury articles, so something is sitting on the table about to stir itself into life!

J. ALLAN SMITH, VE3GI, RSARS 1581. Says that he is looking forward to that first RSARS contact on RTTY. Well, Gordon Parkin has done the initial work on our Apple II RTTY set up and he is quite pleased with it. You can see a note from him in this section. The machine works, the rig works and now all we need is a regular 14090 or thereabouts callband and we will be working RTTY under Apple control. We will be working RTTY on 80M to Blandford during the Royal visit in June. Stay tuned!

JOHN DOUGLAS, ON8GM, RSARS 1022. Is very pleased with his Spectrum 16K and is working towards the day when he can generate an ATV signal with his Spectrum superimposing the Union Flag. John rumour has it that the 'Micro drives' for Sinclair will in fact be endless tape spools in mini-cassette form. They are about a year late at present and could be overtaken by his new office/home micro being launched early in 1984.

SWANSONG. I am off to other places shortly. It is possible that Lewis Lawton will continue this column. It has certainly generated interest and many of you are getting the most out of you home micros. I do wish all of you the best of luck. Keep writing to the editor of Mercury with your information and remember that you make the column interesting. 73 G3TAN

* * * * *

GETTING SORTED OUT PART TWO

FROM TED, GM3LWS

Dear Dave,

Altho' I am not into programming, and have neither a computer, or access to one, I have nevertheless over the years been forced to work with them, and fill up endless forms with data etc. etc., so I am familiar with fielding etc. Your "sorting" on page 38, with respect, assumes that (a) one is interested only in RSARS awards, (whereas, when I do get around to obtaining a beast, I would want one entry to cover a multitude of sins, assuming sufficient ROM/RAM.) (b) Call of station worked has a fixed length of 5 characters, (c) Band worked is between 80 - 10 metres. This is to ensure that in your example RSARS appears "14-17".

Consider the case of a call with either 4 characters or perhaps up to 10.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12345678901234567890123456789012 | | | |
| Ø1Ø183 G4RS ØØØ1 8ØCW Ø1Ø1 Y | | | |
| Ø1Ø183 G3TAN Ø268 16ØCW Ø1Ø1 Y | | | |
| Ø1Ø183 GM3LWS ØØ89 2CW Ø1Ø1 Y | | | |
| Ø1Ø183 GM3LWS/VP8 ØØ89 2ØCW Ø1Ø1 Y | | | |
| Ø1Ø183 GM3LWS/VP8 ØØ89 2ØCW Ø1Ø1y | | | |

In the above, obviously, the NR appears at 13-16, 14-17, 15-18, 19-22. Therefore, one has to think in terms of fixed length fields and a programme to cater for fields of varying length data. You have probably considered this, and what I am about to suggest, if so nothing is lost.

I would like a programme (when I have the magic box) that would sort in various ways, i.e. chronologically, Membership No, Band etc., and to cover membership of both RSARS and FOC. There are several members who belong to FOC also RNARS who might be similarly interested. My suggestion(s) are as follows:

Ø1Ø183 ØØØ1 C16Ø GM3LWS/VP8 ØØ89 YØ1Ø1

This would cater for RSARS data only and does include time. Field 1 is of fixed length - 6 characters DDMMYY, it could be shortened for entry purposes by entering the Julian date, and thereby saving one character (one would probably need to programme so that on LIST or print, the date appeared as DDMMYY 83Ø6Ø = Ø1Ø383. Field 2 is a fixed 4-character field for time (hopefully in GMT HI!). Field 3 Band + Mode or rather Mode + Band. A variable length field maximum of 4 characters. In the programming a space would terminate the field and all subsequent data automatically tabulated. The affixes to denote mode could be as follows C = CW. R = RTTY. A = AMTOR. F = FM. S = SSB. Field 4 - Callsign, variable length up to a maximum of 10 characters. This could be cut down to 9 by adopting the same principle as the newly proposed reciprocal calls thus GM3LWS/VP8 would be entered as VP8GM3LWS. Again a space would terminate the field with automatic tabulation. Field 5 the NR with zero fillers, fixed length of 4 characters. Field 6 QSL, a fixed length 5 character field. This saves one character on yours. Adopting the above would ensure that all data appeared in the same place and one entry would occupy 36 spaces including "spaces" or 32 if you excluded the date.

"My programme" would cater for membership of FOC and RSARS as I mentioned earlier. A typical entry would be as follows, giving a possible maximum number of fields. One assumes of course that one has a box with sufficient memory etc.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| <u>1234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234</u> | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 6 |
| Ø1Ø183 | ØØØ1 | C16Ø | GM3LWS/VP8 | RØØ89 | FØ595 | WNØ2Ø | |
| | YØ1Ø1 | TED | | | | | |

OR

83ØØ1 ØØØ1 C16Ø VP8GM3LWS RØØ89 FØ595 WNØ2Ø YØ1Ø1TED

With the above, one could hopefully sort in any desired order. Fields 5, fixed length of 5 characters up to maximum of whatever and are optional, as is Field 6 which would a variable length field.

In field 5, R = RSARS, F = FOC, A = RAFARS, N = RNARS, W = WAB, AREA Y + QSL date.

There we have it then Dave. As I said, you have probably considered something along these lines, but as your "sorting" did not appear to cater for variations, I thought I would pass on the suggestions just in case. I don't want any credit, just hope that you find them of interest if not help.

You may or may not be aware, that following my taking down my end fed wire before Xmas due to gales, my HF5 was pinched on New Years morn in the wee sma oors, and I am presently confined to an indoor Joystick with varying lengths of wire to the 830S, indoors. I've not long returned from a stint in the West Country and have not had time or inclination to rectify matters (not to mention inclement WX!). This arrangement is not conducive to TVI proof operation when connected to a VCR so I do not get on in the evenings. I hope when the XYL is out on a Wednesday, that we will both join the CW net again.

All for now, must away,

73 CY ANON,

Ted,

GM3LWS. (0089)

559 Contest 1982/83

| <u>CALLSIGN</u> | <u>NOVEMBER</u> | <u>DECEMBER</u> | <u>JANUARY</u> | <u>FEBRUARY</u> | <u>BONUS +5</u> | <u>BONUS +10</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>EQUIPMENT</u> | <u>INPUT</u> | <u>ANTENNA</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| | CW 80m | SSB 40m | CW 40m | SSB 80m | | | | | | |
| G3UAA | 34 | 48 | 29 | 45 | 20 | 130 | 306 | FT101E | 120W | Dipoles |
| G3NVK | 29 | 56 | 26 | 46 | 45 | 100 | 302 | TS430S
KW600 | 150W CW
350W SSB | Dipole
½G5RV |
| G3MKR | 22 | 32 | 22 | 36 | 45 | 70 | 227 | FT101Z | 150W | Trap Dipole |
| G3XTL | 28 | 35 | 25 | 21 | 25 | 80 | 213 | FT902DM | 100W | End Fed 132'
Long Wire |
| G3OYS | 17 | 41 | 18 | 34 | 25 | 60 | 195 | TS530S | 50W | Inverted V |
| G3ADZ | 24 | 22 | 16 | 38 | 25 | 60 | 195 | KW204 Tx
R1000 Rx | 150W | Dipoles |
| G4IVB | 13 | 13 | 13 | 28 | 15 | 40 | 122 | FT1 | 100W | Dipoles |
| G3NOB | 23 | 47 | 4 | QRT | ? | -- | 74 | 180S | 200W | Trap Dipole |
| G3YBT | 13 | 41 | 11 | QRT | ? | -- | 64 | FT277 | 100W CW | Dipoles |
| | | | | | | | | SB200 | 400 SSB | " " |
| G3RFI | 26 | QRT | 24 | QRT | -- | -- | 50 | 32V2Tx
Drake 2B Rx | 150W | G5RV |
| | | | | | | | | | " " | " " |
| G3FSN | QRT | 17 | QRT | 29 | -- | -- | 46 | ? | 100W | ? |

CHECK logs gratefully received from: G3NT, G3BWX, G3DVL, G3EJF, G3PJB, G4DPY, G4GLL, G4JIO, G4HLC, & G4OKP]

G3UAA 559 TROPHY and LE TOUQUET TROPHY for the highest scores in November + January CW Sections.

G3NVK SSB TROPHY for highest scores in December + February SSB Sections.

ACTIVITY: LOGS SUGGEST: NOVEMBER 43 DECEMBER 60 JANUARY 35 FEBRUARY 53

NOTICEBOARD

Being of interest to some....

NB14: STEPHEN J READING, G4LZD, ex Bahrain of mid 1960s vintage, and now a contributor to ISWL 'MONITOR' would like to trace any of the Gulf boys of MP4B, MP4D, MP4T, 9K2, A4, A6, A9 calls. Even any presently licensed ham who resided in the Gulf without a ticket. Object is to try to establish a net and eventually an association of Gulf Operators.

NB15: LEWIS LAWTON, will be taking over the COMPUTER SECTION of MERCURY with effect from the next edition. He needs to know the following from members:

Name and QTH. Make of micro. Languages and programming experience. Real intentions for the future. Other user group membership. Any courses attended. Any work related experience. Lewis will be editing the section on a Word Processor on his Video Genie, so it should be a pretty well organised effort. Details direct to him please at S/SGT. (F. of S.) L S LAWTON, 31 (Greater London) Signal Regiment (V), 190-192 Hammersmith Road, Hammersmith, London W6 7DL AFTER 20th July.

NB16: ALF RAMSEY G3UAA. Requires any information that anyone can forward on ANY aspect of the SLATE INDUSTRY, SLATE MINING, SLATE MINES, PRODUCTS, PEPPLE, EQUIPMENT, OR anything connected with slate in any part of the country. It can be historic, current, photographic, or whatever. Contact Alf direct.

NB17: SAM KENNARD, G3OHX, RSARS 1939, is now running G4CCF the RSARS Cadet Force callsign. Sam is at present moving house, so ask HQ for his new address after about the end of July.

NB18: DELTA ENFIELD COAX CABLE. The firm kindly donated 200 metres of coaxial cable to the Society for sale to members to raise funds for a charity. Our thanks to Graeme Hundsmith, G4LTM, for organising this and to Paul Walker for handling the sales. Those of you who ordered cable will have picked it up at the AGM and you will no doubt have seen that its pretty high quality stuff. We are in contact with the company as to which charity should receive the funds.

NB19: MEMBERS DONATIONS. Every so often members include a little for the kitty with their annual subscriptions. This is a practical and unselfish way of helping the Society and of course most donations go unsung. Although I always write to say a personal thank you to any member who donates cash or equipment, I feel that the rest of you should also know that we do appreciate it very much. The following members have donated cash during the last year: 1415, 0754, 1819, 1548, 1106, 1676, 0302, 0268, 1581, 1873, 0704, 1079, 1691, 1711, 1671, 1045, 1047, 1626, 1609, 1274, 1551, 1676, 1173, 1383, 1684, 1801, 0842, 1091, 1762, 1415, 1876, 0163, 1071, 1214, 1214, 0359, 1779, 1452, 1056, 1851, 0010, 1425, 0247. Thank you all.

NB20: ACCESS TO HQ STATION G4RS: The HQ station is open to any member at very short notice. Its as well to ring before you arrive. Don't go off in a huff if you can't find one of our tour serving members - sometimes we work for the Queen as well as the RSARS. Arrangements can be made to use the station out of hours and for key drawing from the guardroom. It's your HQ Station and you are welcome. Fill yer boots.

ITEMS FOR NOTICEBOARD ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

IF YOU ORDER STORES PLEASE ORDER THEM FROM THE STORES MANAGER (LOGICAL??) Bill Bevan, 10 Hilltop Crescent, Harrogate, N Yorks. Always use your call, name and number on any letter to anyone at HQ. 73.