



April 2017

RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN
CITY of BRISTOL GROUP
NEWSLETTER

Monthly meetings at the BAWA, 589 Southmead Road, BS34 7RF

NEXT MEETING MONDAY 24 APRIL 7.30pm

THE WESTON, CLEVEDON & PORTISHEAD RAILWAY
Paul Gregory

This month we have something of a change from radio. I know a surprising number of radio amateurs also have an interest in railways, even if in secret! The Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway has become something of a legend amongst railway enthusiasts, together with its eccentric owner, Col. Stephens. Paul describes his talk as follows;



“The Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway was an unusual independent standard gauge light railway linking three North Somerset coastal towns. The talk looks at the reasons for building the line, and the trials and tribulations that occurred. The line first opened in 1897 and

many historic photos are used to explore some of the stations, the motley collection of locomotives and rolling stock and the main features of the line. The reasons for the closure in 1940 are considered and the talk concludes with a look at what can be seen today, and the work of the WC&P Railway Group”.

There will also be an opportunity to buy some of the merchandise that the WC&P Railway Group sell to support their work; DVD's, books, postcards etc. As always, guests are welcome, with no pressure to join formally until you have been to three meetings, so please come along and enjoy what promises to be a fascinating talk with great local interest.

TALKING WIRES TO THE SKY

Paul Heiney M0HWV



A large group of members assembled for the March meeting to hear a very interesting and entertaining talk from well known broadcaster Paul Heiney. Paul related how his interest in radio had started as a young boy in his native Sheffield. He remembered the start of TV broadcasting and neighbours erecting

large Band I aerial arrays on their chimneys – even if they couldn't afford a TV set but because it was a status symbol! He was given a spare length of TV co-ax, which he treasured. He remembered the start of commercial TV broadcasts and the collapse of the local Emley Moor broadcasting tower, an event that upset him as a young child.

His Uncle Jack showed him how to build a crystal set and the radio bug then bit. He spent his pocket money in the local radio shops every Saturday and progressed through the various radio kits which were advertised in "Practical Wireless" during the 1960's, culminating in the Codar CR45, which enabled him to listen to shortwave broadcasters world wide.

After completing his A levels, he was inspired by the sight of the BBC outside broadcast units televising the 1966 world cup matches from the local football ground to apply for a technicians post with the BBC. He fell at the last fence when they discovered that he was slightly colour blind.

Disappointed, he obtained a post as a theatre electrician and ended up controlling the stage lighting at the Mermaid Theatre in London. Here he reflected on his earlier failure to obtain a television technicians post with the BBC and thought that colour blindness would be no barrier to becoming a sound technician. Thus started his next career as a BBC sound technician.

After five years, he applied for a post at BBC Radio Humberside and began broadcasting his own programmes. This in turn led to a post as a Radio 1 Newsbeat reporter and the Radio 4 Today programme.

He next applied for one of two vacancies on the BBC television programme "That's Life" and was successful, thus becoming a well known national figure.

He took up ocean yachting as a hobby and in 2005 sailed the Atlantic solo.

He had to obtain marine radio operators certificates for this. His next voyage took him to Cape Horn, during which he met another solo sailor Jan Socrates.

She explained that she was never lonely or bored during long ocean passages because she operated her amateur radio station on the boat. This

decided him to resurrect his interest in radio and with the help of Steve Hartley's distant learning classes, he obtained his callsign M0HWV two years ago.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am very happy to publish your letters, comments etc. Peter M0HWQ has kicked things off, so if you would like to add your comments on this or another subject, please get in touch – g8vpg@aol.com

Hi Shaun,

This is just some feedback from someone tottering on the brink of whether or not to pay for membership of Bristol RSGB. I am an elderly, recently licensed amateur with no history (professional or hobby) of radio or electronics.. I am rather struggling to understand the purpose of Bristol RSGB, apart from being a more regional meeting place for old-time hams than they find in local clubs. Being a regional forum is a perfectly reasonable *raison d'être* in itself but nationally rather unusual, as I understand, and based more on history than on the need to have a group that can do things regionally (especially promoting the hobby to others) that can't be achieved by local clubs. I suppose the contest group has been an example of meeting a regional need and maybe Bristol used to organise rallies which might be too much for a local club. But these things seem to be slipping away into the past.

Do we need to be re-appraising Bristol RSGB's role, in the hope of exciting people like me about its future possibilities? Or is it best to stay as we are and risk letting it die slowly and gracefully? Do we believe the hobby has a long-term future that needs a regional organisation?

I'm thinking aloud here and not criticising anything that Bristol RSGB is doing at the moment.

Warm good wishes

Peter M0HWQ

PS By the way, you seem to be doing a grand job as Robin's must be a hard act to follow.

Thank you for your email. We would welcome you as a guest at any of our meetings and we don't expect anyone to join and pay their subscription until they have attended three meetings. So come along and see if you enjoy our meetings before making the decision to join. The Bristol RSGB Group has a long history going back to the roots of amateur radio and existed before any of the other local clubs that are around today. Over that time it has evolved and changed. At present, the main constraint, as with many voluntary organisations, is finding people to organise things. There are many things we could do if we had the people who are prepared to put in the effort. With your permission, I would like to publish your letter in the next newsletter, in the hope of stimulating some more feedback and discussion.

73 Shaun G8VPG, Secretary.

ATV on TV – THE DAY TX FACTOR CAME TO VISIT Ian Parker G8XZD



By the time you read this you should have all seen the latest edition of TX Factor which featured an introduction to ATV, the BATC Portsdown transmitter, and the workings of Bristol's own GB3ZZ. The 15 minute segment took most of a day to record so here's a glance behind the scenes of the day.

Anyone who works in the TV business knows planning is the key

to a successful production and we thought we'd nailed it ahead of the big day. Little did we know the local council were planning to dig up the A4 on that Saturday right in the middle of the village where we were recording. The plan was to meet at Shaun, G8VPG's QTH in Saltford, located between Bristol and Bath, for a 10am call, but myself, Bob, and Mike got stuck in the traffic which felt like it stretched between the two cities. When I arrived Shaun was busy making the tea and Noel and Dave were nervously unpacking all the goodies they were going to show including the Portsdown transmitter, which was carefully packed in a padded bag. We've all seen the pictures of it but seeing it in the flesh really showed what a masterpiece of engineering the Portsdown crew had come up in a relatively short period of time. Other than a couple of small ICs the board looked quite achievable even for a relatively ancient G8, with the help of a magnifying glass and a bright light. Once Bob and Nick, the cameraman, arrived they wasted no time in getting set up in our impromptu studio in the conservatory. As the two cameras were set up checks were done on the microphones and the lighting ahead of the recording. As someone who is normally on the other side of the camera, asking the questions, we sometime forget how daunting it can be being on the receiving end but Bob had that knack of being able to put Noel and Dave completely at ease. While this was under way Mike was upstairs in Shaun's shack rehearsing the next segment of the show where he'd explain what ATV involved including demonstrations QSOs with Viv and Ivor, and Brian through ZZ. Once the first interview was over Noel, Dave and myself made a



beeline for a local supermarket to buy some sandwiches before heading up to the /P location as planned. So what could possibly go wrong? Well the narrow little country lanes were all extremely busy with locals trying to avoid the roadworks. Luckily Noel's Land Rover was big enough it always seemed to get the right of way through the narrow lanes. A few moments later we got to the location by the side of a normally quiet road. But someone had beaten us to the spot. Undeterred we pulled in and ate our sandwiches while waiting for the family in the car ahead to finish their picnic. Eventually they moved on and we got to park up on level ground and away from the thick mud. It didn't take long to set up the /P station. The plan was to transmit back to Shaun's house on 70cm using the Portsdown. We knew it was working because we managed to wake the 437MHz receiver at ZZ, which we were receiving full strength on Minitioune connected to a yagi aerial on the ground and vertically polarised. The plan was that Bob and Nick were going to come out and film this end of the contact while a locked-off camera recorded the proceedings at Shaun's end. Because they were in bigger vehicles the route they took was slightly more round about rather than risking scratching them on the narrow lanes we came along. We waited for the others to arrive while reflecting on the merits of how to construct a multi-band Minitioune and how to box it up for portable operation.



Meanwhile there appeared to be a bit of a misunderstanding over the scale of the hand-drawn map, how far along the road, and through how many mini roundabouts they had to travel. But with the help of 2 metres and some local knowledge we talked them in without further ado, even recording the shot of Bob driving past on minitioune as a .ts file. With everything set up, Noel explained the

workings of the station to Bob, stopping every few moments while the camera repositioned to get the best shots. Finally the Portsdown was switched on and up popped Shaun on the 2m talkback saying he was receiving very good pictures from the raspberry pi camera. Bob seemed genuinely impressed and the next day he emailed saying he was going to have a go at ATV himself. So one new covert already! Once everything was "in the can" Bob, Mike and Nick headed back to Cornwall while we packed up the Land Rover and returned back to base for tea & cake and to reflect at the end of a very enjoyable day.

I am grateful to the British Amateur Television Club for kind permission to reproduce this article which appeared originally in their journal "CQ-TV". If you didn't understand some of the jargon, then you will have to watch the programme!

RALLIES & EVENTS

A selection of radio rallies & events within reasonable travelling distance of Bristol.

23 April	Yeovil QRP Convention Sherborne
23 April	Wildhern Radio & Computer Boot Sale Andover
30 April	West London Radio & Electronics Show Kempton Park Racecourse
Monday 1 May	Dartmoor Radio Rally Tavistock
18 June	Newbury Radio Rally
25 June	West of England Radio Rally Frome
16 July	McMichael Rally Reading
30 July	Chippenham & DARC Rally Kington Langley
13 August	Flight Refuelling ARC Rally Wimborne
18-20 August	Bristol Model Engineering Exhibition Thornbury Leisure Centre
20 August	Rugby ATS Rally Princethorpe
2-3 September	Telford Hamfest & QRP Convention
10 September	Blackwood ARC Rally Newport
10 September	Wildhern Radio & Computer Boot Sale Andover
17 September	Weston-super-Mare RS Radio & Electronics Rally Worle
29-30 September	National Hamfest Newark
13-16 October	RSGB Convention Milton Keynes
15 October	Holsworthy ARC Rally
5 November	West London Radio & Electronics Show Kempton Park Racecourse

AROUND THE LOCAL CLUBS

Bath & DARC <http://badarc.webs.com>

Chepstow & DARC www.gw4lwz.co.uk

Chippenham & DARC www.g3vre.org.uk

Mid-Somerset ARC www.midsarc.org.uk

North Bristol ARC <http://nbarc.weebly.com>

Shirehampton ARC www.shirehampton-arc.org.uk

South Bristol ARC www.sbarc.co.uk

Thornbury & South Glos.ARC www.tsgarc.uk

Trowbridge & DARC www.radioclubs.net/trowbridgedarc

Weston-super-Mare RS www.g4wsm.club

If your club has a major event or talk by a “star” speaker, send details to the secretary – g8vpg@aol.com – and I will be pleased to include it here. Also, please send reports & photographs of your recent activities and any news.

That’s it for another month! As I write this, the weather is almost like summer and some of you may be thinking about portable activity or the summer contests. Please let me know about your plans and send me reports and photographs of your activities.

73 Shaun G8VPG, Secretary.