



May 2017

**RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN**  
**CITY of BRISTOL GROUP**  
**NEWSLETTER**

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

**NEXT MEETING MONDAY 22 MAY 7.30pm**

**PRACTICAL RADIO ASTRONOMY FOR AMATEURS**  
**Paul Hyde G4CSD**



If the subject of radio astronomy is mentioned to most people in this country, the image of the world famous radio telescope at Jodrell Bank is likely to come into their mind, so you will forgive me for putting an image of it on this page. But the whole idea of this months talk is to debunk the idea that you need something like Jodrell Bank, as our speaker says in his own words;

“Most people think radio astronomy needs

large parabolic dish antennas and complex electronic equipment, making it unsuitable for amateurs. However there are applications that require relatively modest amounts of hardware and are suitable for domestic environments. The talk will describe how amateur radio astronomy can provide observations on solar activity, Jupiter emissions and meteor showers, whilst more ambitious systems can reveal the structure of the Milky

Way or detect radio galaxies many millions of light years away.”

This promises to be a fascinating talk which might inspire you to have a go at something new this year. Paul is travelling down from Basingstoke to give this talk to us, so please make an effort to come along on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, which is a week earlier than usual due to the bank holiday. As always, guests are welcome and we were pleased to welcome two guests and one new member at the last meeting.



# THE WESTON CLEVEDON & PORTISHEAD RAILWAY

**Paul Gregory**

Last month we assembled to hear an interesting local history talk about the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway. Paul Gregory has lived in Portishead since 1987 and became interested in the history of this long closed local line. He started a research group and with the aid of his website,



this has a worldwide membership of 130.

The WC&PR was a privately owned line that opened in 1887 and closed in 1940. It was thus never a part of British Railways, nor the GWR. It was a standard gauge light railway. Light Railways were governed by an Act of Parliament which was intended to encourage local railways in sparsely

populated areas where a normal railway would be uneconomic. They were built to lower standards with lighter rails, simplified lineside fencing and signalling and were limited to a maximum speed of 25mph.

The WC&PR was 14 miles in length and originally opened from Weston-super-Mare to Clevedon. In 1907 an extension to Portishead was built.

Because the area around the Clevedon terminus was so built up, this had to run through the streets of the town like a tram line.

The railway was always run on a shoestring and seldom made a profit. It eventually fell into receivership, but the major creditor, an insurance company, had an indulgent director who was a railway enthusiast and allowed it to survive for 31 years running under the receiver.

The rolling stock was a ramshackle collection of mostly secondhand items.

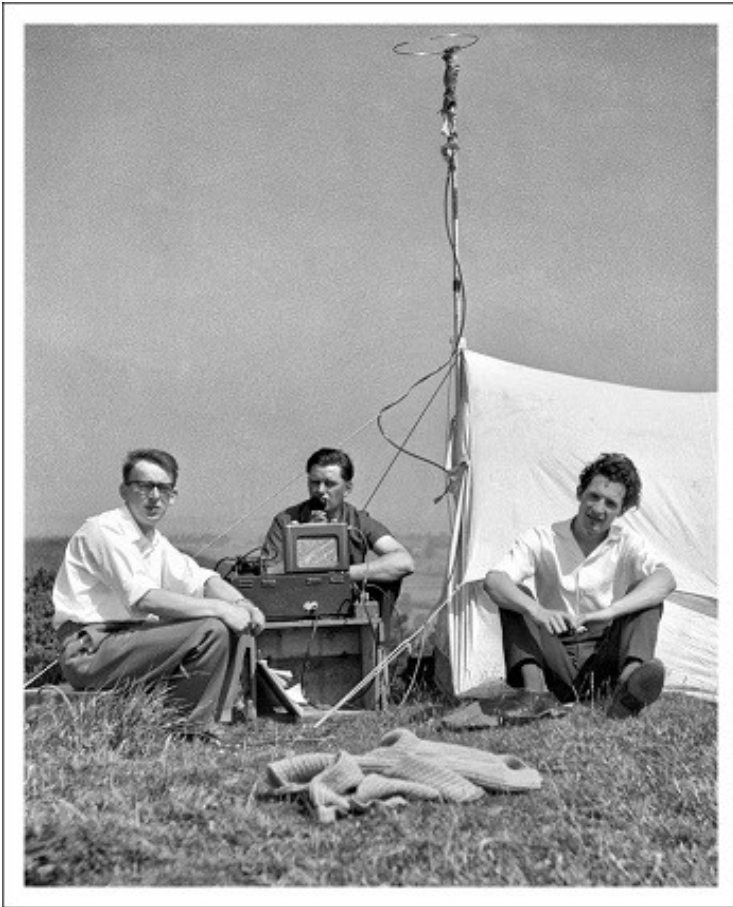
The passenger carriages had a very exotic, non-British appearance because they were a failed export order intended for Argentina. Many trains were mixed passenger and freight ones, with delays caused when goods wagons had to be shunted on or off the train. However, the income from freight was very important to the line. There were a number of quarries along the line and the railway also built a wharf on the River Yeo to import coal from South Wales.

The timetabled journey length from end to end was about an hour, with a service every 90 minutes. There were 19 stations, but only the three principal ones had platforms. The remainder were halts, often built where the line crossed a road. A small wooden shelter was usually provided for waiting passengers. It was roads that eventually spelled the end of the line. During the 1930's, passenger numbers fell from 242,000 per annum to 84,000, as bus services improved and more people owned a car. One of the quarries then decided to use road transport. The line closed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1940. Much of the urban parts of the line have now been built over, but in the rural areas, the line of the trackbed can often be discerned. The WC&PR Group have researched the line extensively and have walked and photographed the whole length of the line. They have a detailed 140 page website at <http://www.wcpr.org.uk/>

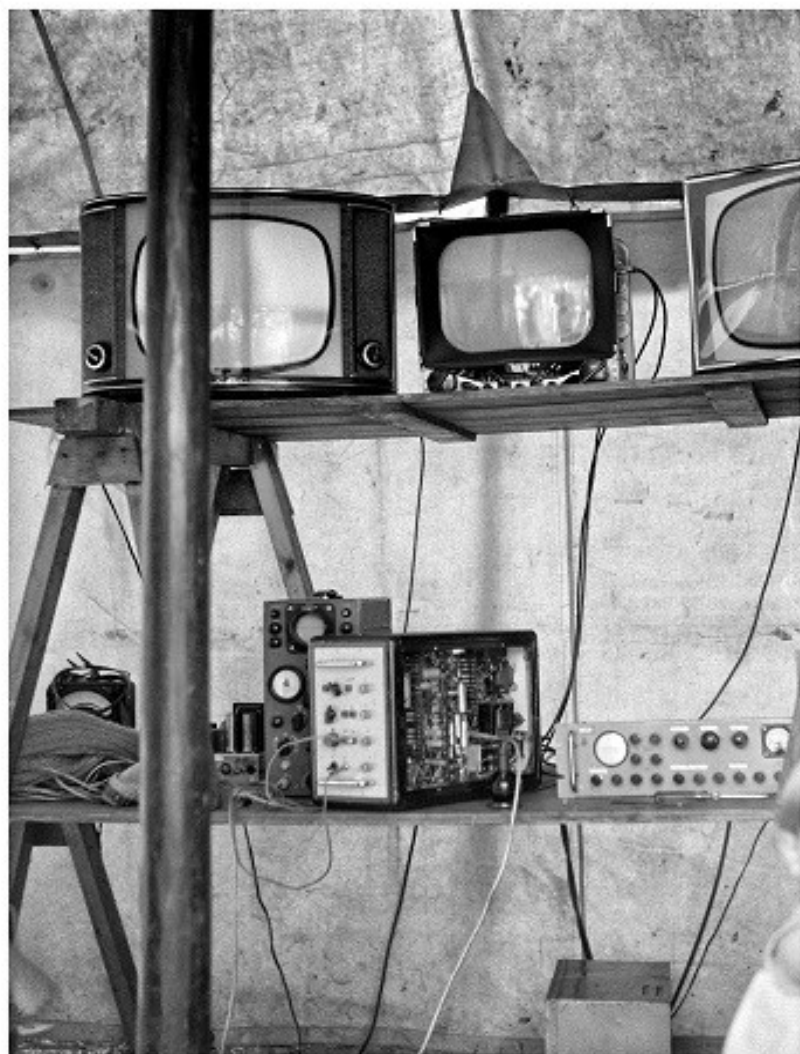
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Robin G3TKF has recently been given a number of old pictures from the estate of Cyril G2HDR and I thought you would like to see them. It is thought they are from the 1950's or early 60's. Some are clearly at Longleat or other portable activity. We can recognise Harry Gratton G6GN, but can you help us to identify more from these pictures?









## RALLIES & EVENTS

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

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	Torbay Rally Newton Abbot Racecourse
10 September	Wildhern Radio & Computer Boot Sale Andover
17 September	Weston-super-Mare RS Radio & Electronics Rally Worle
29-30 September	National Hamfest Newark
13-15 October	RSGB Convention Milton Keynes
15 October	Holsworthy ARC Rally
5 November	West London Radio & Electronics Show Kempton Park Racecourse
19 November	Plymouth Rally Plympton

## AROUND THE LOCAL CLUBS

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

Chepstow & DARC [www.gw4lwz.co.uk](http://www.gw4lwz.co.uk)

Chippenham & DARC [www.g3vre.org.uk](http://www.g3vre.org.uk)

Mid-Somerset ARC [www.midsarc.org.uk](http://www.midsarc.org.uk)

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

Shirehampton ARC [www.shirehampton-arc.org.uk](http://www.shirehampton-arc.org.uk)

South Bristol ARC [www.sbarc.co.uk](http://www.sbarc.co.uk)

Thornbury & South Glos.ARC [www.tsgarc.uk](http://www.tsgarc.uk)

Trowbridge & DARC [www.radioclubs.net/trowbridgedarc](http://www.radioclubs.net/trowbridgedarc)

Weston-super-Mare RS [www.g4wsm.club](http://www.g4wsm.club)

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

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That’s it for this month! Please send me any news of your clubs summer activities, preferably with some photographs.

73 Shaun G8VPG, Secretary.