



## Radio Society of Great Britain CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL GROUP

Hon. Secretary:  
B. J. Croker G3ULJ  
36 Portland Street  
Staple Hill  
Bristol BS16 4PT

July 16th 1973.

The Bristol Group of the Radio Society of Great Britain are proud to be associated in this years calender with two great celebrations, the 600th Anniversary of the Royal Charter of the City and County of Bristol and the Diamond Jubilee of the Radio Society of Great Britain, a unique opportunity for Bristol to tell the world about itself.

On August 8th 1373, Edward the Third granted Bristol its highest honour, a Royal Charter which conferred the full jurisdiction and status of a Corporate County, the first among provincial boroughs.

It was the monarch's handsome tribute to a great seaport for the way Bristol had rallied to the King's cause at the Seige of Calais by supplying 23 ships and 608 men. Bristol treasures her most famous Charter with its great seal in the civic archives.

The Radio Society of Great Britain is the National Society of radio amateurs in the United Kingdom. More than 9,000 of its 17,000 members hold amateur transmitting licences with the others either hoping to do so later or being interested primarily in the receiving side of Amateur Radio. More then 1,500 members live overseas.

H.R.H. The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, KG. is the Society's Patron.

The Society acts as the spokesman for the radio amateur and Amateur Radio in the U.K. and is one of the Founder Members of the International Amateur Radio Union, the worldwide association of the various National Societies. It was founded as the London Wireless Club in 1913, hence its Diamond Jubilee which is being celebrated this year. The name of Radio Society of Great Britain was formally adopted in 1922. Its activities have been devoted almost entirely to the many aspects of Amateur Radio, that is, the transmission and reception of short wave and ultra-short wave radio signals as a hobby pursued for the pleasure to be derived from an interest in radio techniques and construction and for the ensuing friendship with like-minded persons throughout the world.

The RSGB is administered by a Council elected by the Corporate membership. A full time staffed Headquarters is maintained in London. There are 17 elected Regional Representatives who with the help of Area Representatives arrange local meetings and other activities. More than 250 clubs and societies are affiliated to the RSGB. The Society is proud of its 60 years role in the development of Amateur Radio and of the many eminent scientists who have been connected with it, including Marconi, Lodge and Fleming. It was the organised radio amateur who originally demonstrated that wavelengths below 100 metres could provide world-wide communication on low power. The Society now looks to the future and concentrates its effort on the effective organisation of amateur activity in order to provide the greatest opportunities for useful experimental work, and to encourage general interest in and enjoyment of the hobby of Amateur Radio.

It is recognised as the representative of the Amateur Radio movement in all negotiations with the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications on matters affecting the issue of amateur transmitting licences. Local meetings are held throughout the British Isles by RSGB Groups and by affiliated radio societies, mobile rallies and specialised conventions are also held regularly and every Sunday morning special news bulletins for radio amateurs are transmitted under the call-sign GB2RS from stations throughout the British Isles in the 3.6 and 144 MHz bands.

Radio experiments or amateur radio as we know it today started in 1905, when the first licence in the West Country was issued to H. Tilsley of Bristol. Using a 4inch spark coil and a Branley-type coherer, he successfully transmitted signals a distance of more than a mile across Bristol. Another amateur Gilbert Tonkin G5RQ began his wireless experiments in Bristol in 1909 using a 4inch spark coil and a Branley-type coherer. Although experiments had been carried out for a number of years, July 1913 saw the formation of the Bristol Wireless Association. Regular meetings were held in Redland Road, Redland which was the private residence of one of the members.

On February 25th 1921, it was decided to strengthen this activity by inviting people interested in radio from the surrounding districts to join, the name being changed to The Bristol and District Wireless Association, and that they be affiliated to the Wireless Society of London (now the RSGB). Meetings being held at the Bristol University.

1922 saw a further change under the guidance of Bill Andrews G5FS who was a lecturer of Radio and Science at the University of Bristol. The name of the association being changed to the Bristol Radio Society. Meetings were held at the Merchant Venturer's College in Unity Street Bristol.1. where members could receive technical instruction to enable them to obtain their transmitting licence.

In 1931 the majority of those interested in amateur radio were welded together under the Radio Society of Great Britain when County and District Representatives were appointed. Under the guidance of Walter Weber G6QW the County Representative (District 5 - Bristol and Gloucestershire) an increase in membership within the district was created by his enthusiasm.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 saw the impounding of amateur radio equipment by the Post Office when all full and artificial aerial transmitting licences were terminated. This had a profound effect on amateur radio and to the future of the Society, but it was decided that the work and comradeship that had been created should continue, members meeting at private addresses. During this period Districts were changed to Regions, Bristol coming under Region 9 which included the whole of the South West.

January 1946 saw the first post-war licences being issued to holders of pre-war radiating and non-radiating licences, who had made application to the G.P.O. Within two months of this date most Bristol amateur licence holders were back on the air.

1950 saw the installation of a Bristol member Bill Scarr G2WS as President of the RSGB, during his year of office he arranged for the Society to participate in the Festival of Britain. Celebrations by the Bristol Group was in the form of an exhibition amateur radio station set up at the Memorial Grounds Horfield using the call-sign G6YA/A. One of the visitors to the station being H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester.

Among the many activities organized by the RSGB, was an annual competition known as National Field Day. This competition is open to all clubs, affiliated societies and RSGB groups, and takes the form of an entry comprising two complete amateur transmitting stations. The winning group being presented with a trophy which is held for the current year. The Bristol group won this event three years in succession 1952, 1953, 1954 and again in 1956. To mark this success, a unique trophy was donated to the Society by the Bristol members. This is known as the Bristol Trophy and is to be awarded annually to the RSGB group which succeeded in obtaining the highest number of points for a single station entry. The trophy being a miniature replica in silver of the famous Clifton

Suspension Bridge, a dominant Bristol landmark.

A request was made in 1969 to the G.P.O. for the call-sign G6YB to be issued to the group, permission being granted. This call-sign has been used for all group contest entries and special events station.

The group has increased in membership which now stands in excess of 200, the larger percentage holding transmitting licences, the remainder being short wave listeners. Activity include contest working on the Very High Frequencies as well as the High Frequency bands, exhibition stations, home construction equipment displays and competitions, mobile rallies, in which our Longleat rally is claimed to be one of the best in the mobile calendar, and visited by amateurs throughout the country.

Meetings are held every month in the Becket Hall St. Thomas Street Bristol.1. where we have the pleasure from time to time of inviting RSGB Officials, experts in the knowledge of radio communications and local members to give talks to a well attended and appreciated audience.

The City and County of Bristol RSGB Group is therefore marking these great events by operating an amateur radio exhibition station on the S.S. "Great Britain" (with the permission of the project committee), now being restored in its original dry dock at Bristol from August 1st to 31st inclusive.

The S.S. "Great Britain" was designed by Isambard Brunel. It was the first iron constructed and screw propulsion ship. The keel of what was then the largest ship in the world was laid on July 19th 1839 in a dock which was specially excavated beside Bristol's Floating Harbour in which she could be floated out rather than launched. This took place on July 19th 1843 when Prince Albert having travelled from London to Bristol on Isambard Brunel's railway performed the ceremony.

Relevant statistics are:- length 322 ft, breadth 51ft, crew 130, passengers 252 with berths, coal bunkers fore and aft 1,000 - 1,200 tons.

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, as the licensing authority has agreed to the special call-sign " GB2GB " for a station to be operated from the vessel and to permit all Class "A" licence holders to operate, without prior notice. Class "B" licence holders can operate under the supervision of the operator in charge, proof of holding a current Amateur licence being required.

The general public will hear contacts being made, both local and long distance, and information will be available from the operators on the hobby of amateur radio and the role it plays in promoting international understanding.

It is anticipated that the station will make contact with stations in other Bristols and the Cities of Hanover and Bordeaux. Contact will also be attempted with amateur radio stations in the Falkland Islands where the vessel lay in Sparrow Cove for many years. Specially designed cards depicting the S.S. "Great Britain" will be sent to amateur radio stations contacting GB2GB and these are being donated by a famous firm of Bristol wine merchants.

Chairman. E. C. Halliday, G3JMY.  
Hon. Secretary. B. J. Croker, G3ULJ.  
'73 Co-ordinator. G. Mather, G3GKA.