



Radio Society of Great Britain



City of Bristol RSGB Group - G6YB

At the Bristol Lawn Tennis & Squash Club, Redland Green, Redland, Bristol BS6 7HF

June 30th 1900 for 1930hrs “Christmas Get-Together”



Our annual summer 'Christmas Party' is moving to a new venue this year. On Monday 30 June (at 7.00 for 7.30) we are going to :

The Windmill Inn at Portishead (Nore Road BS20 6JZ).

The pub is on high ground overlooking the Severn Estuary with spectacular views across the water. The usual arrangement will operate for paid-up members i.e. you buy your own food and the Group will buy you a drink. They have a slick catering operation so we do not have to pre-order our food. Just turn up between 7.00 - 7.30. The food is good, and similar in range and price to what we have had in recent years at Tockington. The link below may be of interest. In addition to the fixed menu on the website there are always numerous daily 'specials'.

No booking required just turn up at 1900hrs

<http://thewindmillinn.org/>

Martyn Phillips G3RFX

Many of you will doubtless have heard the very sad news that Martyn passed away on Friday 20th June. When Robin & I visited him in hospital just a week before, it was obvious that Martyn was seriously ill, but neither of us thought he would go so quickly.



In amateur radio circles Martyn will be remembered for many things, but locally certainly the following: the reading of the RSGB news, his long chairmanship of the RSGB City of Bristol group and his love of going to Gibraltar to play radio.

His reading of the news livened up a very often turgid news script and who can forget his voices from downtown Bombay, or his Herr Flick voice from Berlin; unfortunately his sense of the absurd didn't meet with universal approval.

The fact that we still have a Bristol group of the RSGB is entirely down to Martyn. In the bad old days when membership was falling and we were lucky to get a dozen people to attend the meetings, Martyn kept going when the rest of us, including yours truly, were ready to call it a day. Martyn kept the faith and hung on in there, till slowly but surely things started to improve.

As for his love of going to Gibraltar to play radio, well I never really understood that, but if he enjoyed going there to work thousands of Italians, well, that was Martyn.

He was one of a long line of eccentric Englishmen who had a highly developed sense of the ridiculous & absurd, no pun was too terrible, no old joke too awful to be told... that was Martyn.

He will be greatly missed by us all.

Dave Bailey G4NKT (Ex Chairman)

I hope you will enjoy reading again on the next pages Martyn's story "The CW Bird", first appearing in the *CDXC Digest in 2007* which Martyn edited until quite recently.

The CW Bird

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

I can't quite remember where I picked up the amateur radio bug but, like Adrian Mole in one of his Secret Diaries, I must have succumbed to it at around the age of 13¾. It had been passed on to me unwittingly by my father, a highly talented practical man who'd turned his hand to most things technical including, for a time, listening to shortwave broadcast stations on a large and shiny Grundig Satellite receiver.

My mother, on the other hand, wanted nothing to do with any of it, especially amateur radio – even less so after I became the proud holder of the callsign G3RFX in August 1962. A much-feared leading light at the local Women's Institute, she swore blind that for one thing my amateur radio transmissions were always coming through on her beloved television set downstairs. Perhaps more importantly my only antenna, a 132 ft long wire at 25 ft down the back garden, posed a serious hazard to the birds.

Which is why she soon insisted that I string a highly visible series of corks along it at regular intervals as an early warning system for these poor creatures who, she insisted, were always crashing into it and breaking their necks, although there was never any forensic evidence of this on the neatly manicured lawn below.

But at least one of the birds was still very much alive and flying.

“Yes, an extremely rare species and one I've never heard before,” exclaimed veteran birdwatcher Mr Wilson, who lived in the next road beyond the fence at the bottom of our garden. He told my mother that recently he'd heard this most unusual bird call several nights running – and it always seemed to be coming from the direction of our house.

“Which rare species could it be?” asked an increasingly agitated Mr Wilson.

My mother didn't have a clue, but I knew exactly which rare species it was. It was none other than the CW Bird, which regularly flew off into the immediate neighbourhood whenever I was listening to Morse code in the middle of the night with the loudspeaker on and my bedroom window open.

“What sort of a hobby is this anyway?” my mother would say. “On that bloomin' radio all day and talking absolute drivel to like-minded layabouts across the length and breadth of South West Essex? Not to mention increasing our dear neighbours' blood pressure to danger level in the middle of the night with your stupid Morse code broadcasts. Quite apart from which, you ought to be concentrating on your O Levels!”

Admittedly she had a point here - as my less confrontational father tended to agree.

“Martyn,” he would say, “if you don't stop transmitting like this, 24 hours a day, I'll switch off the electricity to your bedroom. That'll teach you!”

But it never did. Each time I simply pulled up the appropriate floorboard in my bedroom, otherwise known as the Pig Sty, and re-connected my home-brew hotchpotch of a station directly to the bare mains wiring underneath. This way I was back on the air within seconds.

A highly controversial solution, this, and one which came firmly into the 'Don't try this at home' category. But then at home was the very place I needed to try it most. After all, how could things possibly be right with the world if G3RFX wasn't on the air talking absolute drivel on 160m?

I often wondered whether my friend John, G3PQA, down the road in his Elizabethan cottage on Theydon Bois Green, had similar problems with parental power cuts, veteran birdwatchers and allegations of talking absolute drivel. If so, he never mentioned it. Also, he had the considerable advantage that he almost exclusively used CW, where any long-winded controversial content would be less obvious to the casual listener.

For a time I liked to think that John and I were arch-rivals on the 160m scene. If I was honest, though, the main difference between our two stations was that his was excellent and mine was crap. After all, he was always working stations I could barely distinguish from the noise level, let alone work myself. Although I do seem to remember a few very encouraging 559 reports from Czechoslovakia, which were OK in my book. 'OK', of course, in more ways than one.

Yes, it was at around this time that I discovered that there were clearly limits to what you could work in the way of DX on Top Band with only a 132 ft long wire at the dizzy height of 25 ft down the back garden.

Yet what this set-up lacked above ground, it more than made up for below it: a highly intricate earthing system consisting of all manner of copper rods and assorted metallica hammered into a corner of the parental flower bed.

I'm amazed my mother allowed it all in the first place – perilously close, as it was, to her prize-winning collection of roses, ranunculus and runner beans. Indeed to her additional dismay I could often be heard hammering yet more metal into this subterranean 'Woodpecker' array, firmly convinced that it would add at least one S-point to my signal on 160m into down-town Prague.

But then maybe one day there would be a newly licensed Czech operator just as keen as myself - sitting in his bedroom late at night and with the window wide open, listening on 160m to the legendary CW Bird booming in at 599 all the way from Theydon Bois, Essex.

The Clifton Rocks Railway visit



A group of ten intrepid Bristol Group members visited the Clifton Rocks Railway recently.

We were surprised to learn that the BBC used the location for transmitting some of its programmes during WW2 . Under Adrian Bolt the BBC symphony orchestra used the steeply angled Rocks Tunnel for recording. Several of the handbooks used for “driving” the technical equipment from the BBC studio were made available for us to view.

BOAC used the top part of the tunnel in conjunction with the Grand Spa hotel as their HQ after moving from London for the duration of the war .

More details on the website : <http://www.cliftonrocksrailway.org.uk/>

Coming soon to the Bristol Group

July 28th Chat Night - come along for a natter!

August 25th Colin G3YHV: Pic chip programming the easy way!

Sept 29th Reflections on IOTA 2014

Oct 27th Prof Andy Nix: The Future of Wireless Technology 2020 and beyond

At the local clubs :

Bath and District ARC <http://badarc.webs.com/>

Chepstow and District ARC <http://www.gw4lwz.org.uk/>

Chippenham & DARC <http://www.g3vre.org.uk/archive.asp>

MidSARC www.midsarc.org.uk/

North Bristol ARC <http://www.nbarc.org.uk/>

Shirehampton <http://www.shirehampton-arc.org.uk>

South Bristol ARC <http://www.sbarc.co.uk/calendar/>

Thornbury and South Gloucs ARC <http://www.tsgarc.ham-radio-op.net>

Trowbridge and District ARC <http://www.radioclubs.net/trowbridgedarc/events.php>

Weston Super Mare RS www.radioclubs.net/wsmrs/

If you want to buy or sell something, let me know !

I need articles for "How I started in radio" - even if nobody else does, I will find it interesting!

[Robin G3TKF](#)

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<http://www.g6yb.org>