



RAGCHEW

NOVEMBER 2016

From the Editor

The recent death of Jean Alexander who played the part of Hilda Ogden, the formidable wife of Stan Ogden played by Bernard Youens in the ITV soap opera "Coronation Street" reminded me of the time many years ago when the Gloucester Amateur Radio Society (as it then was) had it's own Stan and Hilda, in this case Stan Cook G3RNU and his wife Hilda. In those days we met in a room above the RAFA Club in Spa Road which for a time was also the venue for our occasional Skittles Social evenings. Now Stan was one of nature's gentlemen who wouldn't say "boo" to a goose and Hilda could be a bit domineering. At busy times Hilda could often be found serving behind the bar at the RAFA club and so it was on one occasion when we were having one of our Skittles bashes. The evening was in full flow and with a few drinks inside him, dear old Stan could be quite loquacious. And so it was that a group of us were around the bar with Stan in full flow when all of a sudden Hilda exploded "Yak, bloody yak that's all you do with this lot and when you're at home not a peep from you". I can't recall who was more embarrassed – us or Stan!!!! I think that was probably the evening too when we almost blotted our copy book with the RAFA Club because of our raucous singing and chanting which took the form of a lusty rendition of "Why Was He Born So Beautiful" to anyone who scored a duck with all three balls. The first ball down not to score would get a hint of tuning up (Me, me, me), the second ball down to miss, a much stronger tune-up - "Meeeee, meeeee, meeee", and if the third ball missed – the full works – naughty words and all!!!!



**Leta G4RHK operating and Stan G3RNU logging
at the Gordon League Summer Fete 1983**

(In the background in the blue shirt Walter G8WCP and
in the far background it looks like Steve G4HFT and Pat G3MA)

Many thanks to those who have submitted articles to "Ragchew" - please keep them coming!

CONTEST GOSSIP

It was great to hear the club call sign G2HX – Aaron, M0XAC Gary and G4BCA Dave activated G2HX/P for the Practical Wireless 70MHz contest on Sunday 25th September, operating from Crickley Hill.

GARES members continue to support the VHF UKAC Contests – they are very enjoyable events – as a group of us found out on 6m recently – the culprits being G4MGW, G0ULH, M0XAC, G1NVS and G4CIB.

Operating QRP from IM97kp **by Andy Eustace M0RON**

This piece should really be entitled “How to travel with batteries.”. At this point I feel that I must mention that it was never my intention to take a radio with me and that David must put his hands up and take some of the blame for what happened.

A little background information firstly before I begin. David Newman, 2E0HBE, has a very nice villa in southern Spain, in the Murcia region. We became friends during our intermediate training which is another story as Les, G0ULH, will testify. He asked if I would like to go out and visit, bringing my partner with me, OK I said, then I received a text telling me that his partner had found flights out and back from Bristol on the 8th October returning on 15th October and that there were only three seats left and that I should ask Kate’s advice. The fares were really really cheap so I went ahead and booked them there and then, and once the flights with Easy Jet had been confirmed I thought that it would be wise to inform my partner what I had done, I have only been with Kate for a short while. “We’re off to Spain” I told her, “When?” she asked, “In a couple of weeks.”, she is very understanding.

So, shortly before departure the four of us met in a pub to firm up plans and allow Kate to see the two nutters she was going to spend the week with. It was at this meeting that David asked me if I was going to bring a radio out to his place whereupon I said that I wasn’t intending to but he pointed out that as I am now a M0 I could. I said that I thought that 5 watts would get us back to the UK but he wasn’t so sure. So I said that I’d think about it, he can be quite insistent. Then after a bit of thought a plan was hatched.

I decided to take my Yaesu FT-817ND, two 12v 7ah sealed lead acid batteries and the following kit all from Sota Beams. A 10m travel mast, a guying kit, 40-20m linked dipole, three End-Fed Half-Wave (HWEF) aerials for 80, 40 and 20m, two end-fed tuners, also Velcro straps. As well as this I also took a battery charger. I also took my licence, both parts and a copy of the Spanish regs, I didn’t know what to expect but thought that I would cover all bases.

At this point I thought that I had better make enquiries about travelling with SLABS and amateur gear so I filled out Easy Jet’s customer enquiry form detailing my proposals and received a response telling me that they would reply in 10 days or less. When the reply came back it was a NO! Not to be deterred and knowing that I could travel carrying them as hand luggage, I have a Mr Always Right mug, I phoned them. After a while and telling them that the radio was only half the size of an A4 sheet of paper they agreed that I could take it as hand luggage but that the batteries were a no. I managed to convince them after talking to a supervisor that I wasn’t taking car batteries and it became a maybe, ask Bristol.

Bristol airport were contacted by email and 30 minutes later I received an email telling me that they had contacted security and absolutely I could take them as carry on. As insurance I printed off the email and the battery data sheet.

The next step wasn't so easy but as I have said, Kate is very understanding. The flight was at 06:20 meaning that we would have to leave my house at 03:00 and that Kate would have to stay at my house the night before. Kate is not a morning person.

Fast forward to Bristol airport at 05:00 and security check. I informed security what I was carrying in my very heavy rucksack, the travel mast was in my case, and would they like to do a manual search, not on me but my bag. I was told to put the radio gear in a separate tray for scanning. On the other side of the scanner one tray came towards me whilst the tray containing my radio gear went another way. "Is this yours?" the officer said, I replied that indeed it was, "The scanner doesn't like it" and I was shown the X-ray image, I didn't think that it looked suspicious at all but they thought differently, especially as the X-ray machine couldn't see inside the case of the batteries. The duty supervisor was called looked at the image and then the tray. He lifted the batteries which had plastic tabs on the terminals, taped securely, and placed inside separate plastic bags. "Heavy aren't they." I agreed that they were, "and what do you intend to power with these?" I indicated the rather small looking FT-817ND. I was then questioned as to who I was flying with, why and where was I going. Then off he went and took my batteries with him, upon returning he informed me that Easy Jet would not allow them on board but that I could take everything else. I protested that I had permission from Bristol security showing him the email, battery data sheet and my licence stating that I was M0RON. He looked at me and went off again carrying my pieces of paper. Upon return he told me that even though I had proof of permission Easy Jet still said NO! and that I would have to surrender them into his care and on return I could have my property back after paying them £6. This had taken 20 minutes with my partner waiting patiently on a nearby comfortable chair, she is very understanding. So that is what happened and I resigned myself to not having use of my batteries.

About 15 minutes later, the same officer sought me out in departures carrying my batteries having placed them inside another polythene bag. He told me that he had done some digging and thought that as I hadn't tried to conceal them, quite hard, and that I had gone to the trouble of contacting the carrier and airport to obtain permission plus printing out the relevant documentation that in his opinion I should be allowed to take them. He then proceeded to phone the captain of my flight but he was not on board so he spoke to senior cabin staff giving them my name and mobile number. He returned my batteries but told me that they may be taken off me as I entered the plane and that if I was lucky the captain may take them onto the flight deck and carry them that way. We were some of the last to board the plane to find 2 cabin crew standing next to my seat, "Are you the one with the batteries?", wearily I acknowledged that I was. "Are they isolated?" "Yes" I replied, "That's ok then" and off they went.

David just thought that it was hilarious when he met us at the airport in Murcia.

So, onto operating. Various aerials were used including a 80m HWEF to see if we could hear the UK but as there are power lines directly over his pool and because the aerial ran parallel to them all we heard was a solid S9 noise, I tried to tune it to 40 and 20 but S9 everywhere. Best aerial was a 20m HWEF used vertically with a 5m counterpoise through a Sota Beams HWEF tuner with no SWR showing on the radio. Tuning with these is incredibly easy, just tune for maximum noise, that's it.



The Station Location



Spot the Mast



The Popcorn is Essential!

First station worked was a Slovenian station with a report of 3 and 5 this was followed by another station who gave us 5 and 9 from Mexico on 5w. Next day we heard a faint MWO station working Sweden so we thought that this was our chance. I called the Welsh station a couple of times but he didn't hear us until the Swedish station went back to him and told him a QRP station was calling him. It turned out that he wasn't in Wales at all but was in a RV motor home on a Normandy beach where Operation Overlord had taken place. But we were getting closer to achieving the objective of contacting the UK on 5w. The Welsh station gave us 4 and 4, the Swedish station had us stronger though. There were lots of German and Italian stations on the band but they just ignored us.

Next day on 20m in the afternoon I heard two M0's talking and shouted break to them, one was a base station the other mobile. Funnily it was the mobile that could hear me and replied but the base station couldn't hear me, I had succeeded. Our signal wasn't great but we had made it. To end the week we contacted a W3 station in Ohio, very pleased. David's villa is in a volcanic bowl, 6 neighbours and miles from anywhere surrounded by extinct volcanoes and very high hills and the local shop is 20 miles away.

This just left the journey home. The other three (David was coming home for a couple of weeks), went through before me leaving me to fend for myself at security. They did promise to write to me in a Spanish cell and even suggested that upon my release I would be bi-lingual and bi-sexual so there were bonuses to be had they said. I decided that as I was going to be stopped anyway I would just chuck my bag through without separating the contents. A female officer with a frightening looking truncheon then held up my bag "Who's?", "Mine" I answered and had to put everything out in separate trays to be scanned. The machine inevitably rejected my gear again and I prepared for the interrogation. She picked up the battery, looked at me and then gave me a 'Crazeeee Eengleesh' look and passed them through, my very understanding partner agreed with her.

As an experiment it worked and exceeded our expectations, the two girls also seemed impressed with the contacts and David's partner asked why some stations could hear us and others not. She told me that David had tried to explain to her about propagation using words like ionosphere and layers but that she had not understood. I clarified it for her by telling her that sometimes the sky was broken and we needed to wait until the Savlon, sticking plasters and sunshine fixed it adding that if the sun burped forget playing radio as it wouldn't work.

As a postscript to all of this, as I laid next to the pool in 30°C sunshine in mid October I thought back to Bristol security and decided to email the Airport. As a result of my email saying thank you to the Duty Officer he has been nominated for a monthly Above and Beyond Award for going the extra mile. I really hope that he wins.

Editors note – many thanks Andy for submitting this article and providing a lot of useful information particularly for anyone considering taking some amateur radio equipment with them on a passenger flight. Keep up the good work!

[More Photographs From The GARES Archive](#)

Dinner Dance at the Fleece Hotel Gloucester, 1984

Live music by the George Howard Trio



G3VZR XYL Edith, G4FSW XYL Mary, G4FSW Frank, G4RHK Leta, Roy G3VZR

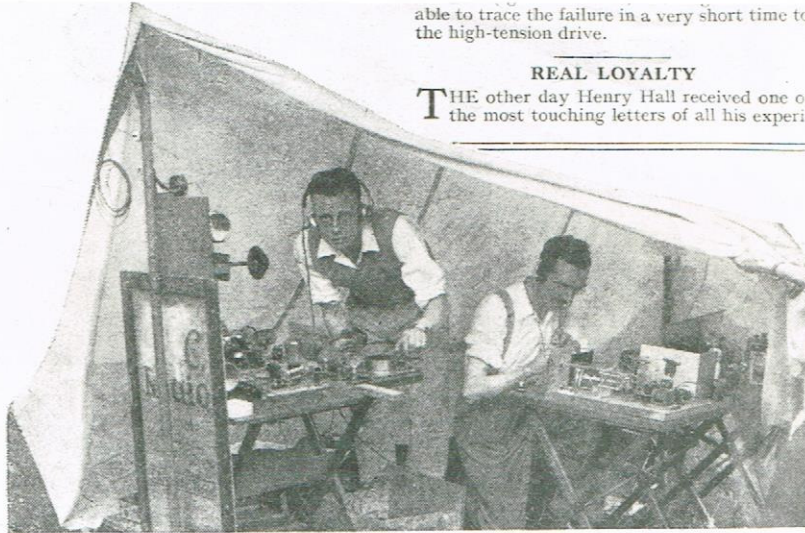


G2AZT XYL, G2AZT Jack Dean, G3MA Pat and G4HFT Steve

able to trace the failure in a very short time to the high-tension drive.

REAL LOYALTY

THE other day Henry Hall received one of the most touching letters of all his experi-



Amateurs had a very active and highly successful field day recently, when they sent and received messages to and from all parts of the world. Here you see a group of enthusiasts managing the transmitter erected at Painswick Beacon, a prominent point in the Cotswold Hills, very suitable for the long-distance work being carried out

1934 NFD at Painswick Beacon G5HC F Hitchcock and G2HX Owen Rogers



1960 NFD at Hartpury

G2RT Cyril, G3DXY D Baldwin, G2HX Owen and SWL Tony Hooper