

## **RAG CHEW**

# **GLOUCESTER AMATEUR RADIO AND ELECTRONICS SOCIETY**

## **SPRING 2016**

### **Brian Millard M6BRI**

All the members were saddened to hear of the death of Brian Millard M6BRI who over the past few years had been a loyal supporter of GARES. Although not an active operator, Brian became a keen attender of our regular meetings and joined in our many activities and will especially be remembered for editing and producing Rag Chew. The Society offers our sincere condolences to Brian's family, and we dedicate this edition of "Rag Chew" to his memory.

### **Pauline Clayton G8MZV**

We are also saddened to hear of the death of Pauline G8MZV a long-time and loyal member of the Cheltenham Amateur Radio Association (CARA). Leta G4RHK has fond memories of regularly working Pauline mobile to mobile on 2 metres FM in the morning in the early 1980s on what became known as the "Hair Net" as they travelled to work. A gig in Pauline's memory and to raise funds for two local charities (the FOCUS Group at the Oncology Unit, Cheltenham General Hospital and the Sue Ryder Hospice, Leckhampton Court) is being held on the evening of Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at the Kings School, Gloucester by the Metz Big Band. The tickets are £10 each and may be obtained from John Clayton, 217 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham GL52 3ES. Please make cheques payable to "Metz Big Band".

## **TUESDAY NIGHT IS UKAC NIGHT ON THE VHF/UHF/SHF BANDS**

So you may not be interested in contests, but you may have put up a new antenna for 6m, 4m, 2m, 70cm or even some of the UHF or SHF bands and need some band activity to see how it performs? Well, then Tuesday evening between 20.00 and 22.30 is the day to switch the rig on. The first Tuesday in the month is 2 metres, the second Tuesday 70cm, the third Tuesday 23cms, the fourth Tuesday 6 metres and SHF, and if there is a fifth Tuesday in the month, 4 metres. Worked a few stations? Then don't be shy – put an entry in, no matter how few stations you have worked – your score will add to the GARES total in the results table. The best way of submitting a log is to go to the VHF contest section of the RSGB web site and look for the "Entering a VHF Contest" tab and either download the MINOS logging software or if you wish you can manually enter each contact on to the web site using the "Enter your paper log" feature. All the scoring is done for you and it really is easy! Even if your activity is a bit spasmodic, your entry will help towards the overall GARES score. So far this year logs have been submitted by Dave G4BCA (2m) and Brian G4CIB (6m and 2m). If you require any further information or help regarding submitting an entry then do speak to Dave G4BCA or Brian G4CIB at a club meeting. In the meantime, view the full VHF Contest Calendar on the appropriate section of the RSGB web site.

## **CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (CC) CONTEST HAPPENINGS**

Many of you may not be aware, but Bob M0NQN has been single-handedly entering, on behalf of GARES, the series of Club Championship contests on 80m. As of the middle of March, GARES is lying 18<sup>th</sup> in the table of Local Clubs with a very respectable score from Bob using Data Mode and CW. Well done Bob, and hopefully more members will be able to contribute to the GARES total. Once again, see the RSGB web site for the full calendar of Club Championship contests. Have a word with Bob at the club if you need more information.

## **COMPUTER LOGGING SOFTWARE**

Dragging myself kicking and screaming into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, towards the middle of last year I finally bit the bullet and took my first tentative steps into the wonderful world of computer logging. It happened on Lundy where I had taken along with my amateur radio gear, my mini iPad, on which I had downloaded Hamlog, a free logging program for iOS devices. I found this to be a very basic but adequate logging program meant for use when operating portable. A few things have baffled me including the CloudSynch v2 facility – and looking at various internet reviews, I'm not the only person who has failed to get this to work!

I soon moved on to downloading software on to my Toshiba laptop running Windows 8, the first one being Winlog32. This is a well tried and tested piece of software and it offers the user lots of features including the ability to create a Cabrillo file, the preferred format for many contest entries. If you wish to have your cake and eat it, or shall I say, have a computer log and a printed log, then it does offer this option but the software does not enable you to rearrange the columns so that it resembles a conventional log book page i.e. date, start time, end time, call sign etc. The print out order is call sign, date, start time, end time, band, mode, power, rst in, rst out, remarks

Following on from this I downloaded Log4OM, which, I understand was the subject of a lecture at the 2015 RSGB Convention. I was able to import the log files from Winlog32 using the Winlog32 export ADIF (Amateur Data Interchange Format) feature and for a while ran the two logging systems side-by-side. One feature of Log4OM is that you can configure the columns to replicate a conventional log book if you want to print your log. Of course you can import and export ADIF files so in fact now I keep both Winlog32 and Log4OM in sync with each other as well as backing up the logs on external hard drives as well as printing a hard copy. Well, you never know!!!!

For VHF/UHF Contests, I am using the MINOS software, which is specifically designed for this purpose, and N1MM+ for HF contests. I've now used the MINOS software for three UKAC contests and found it easy to use during the contest and afterwards to submit the entry to the contest adjudicators. I have yet to use the N1MM+ program under contest conditions, and will report on this in due course.

This evening while writing this I've just discovered another logging program for iOS devices called Ham Radio Log, which cost all of £0.79 to download – initial impressions are that it is extremely easy to use but I will try it out on my next /P foray to see how I get on. It has the ability to create an ADIF file to export so it will certainly be useful for logging whilst out /P and then uploading the data into the main station log when back at home.

I know some other GARES members are using Computer Logging so I would welcome any articles featuring other Amateur Radio Logging Software. And I nearly forgot – quite a few years ago, Steve G4HFT developed a contest logging program “Conlog” which we used extensively on National Field Day. I must ask Steve if he still has this available!

## QRP OPERATING

by G4CIB

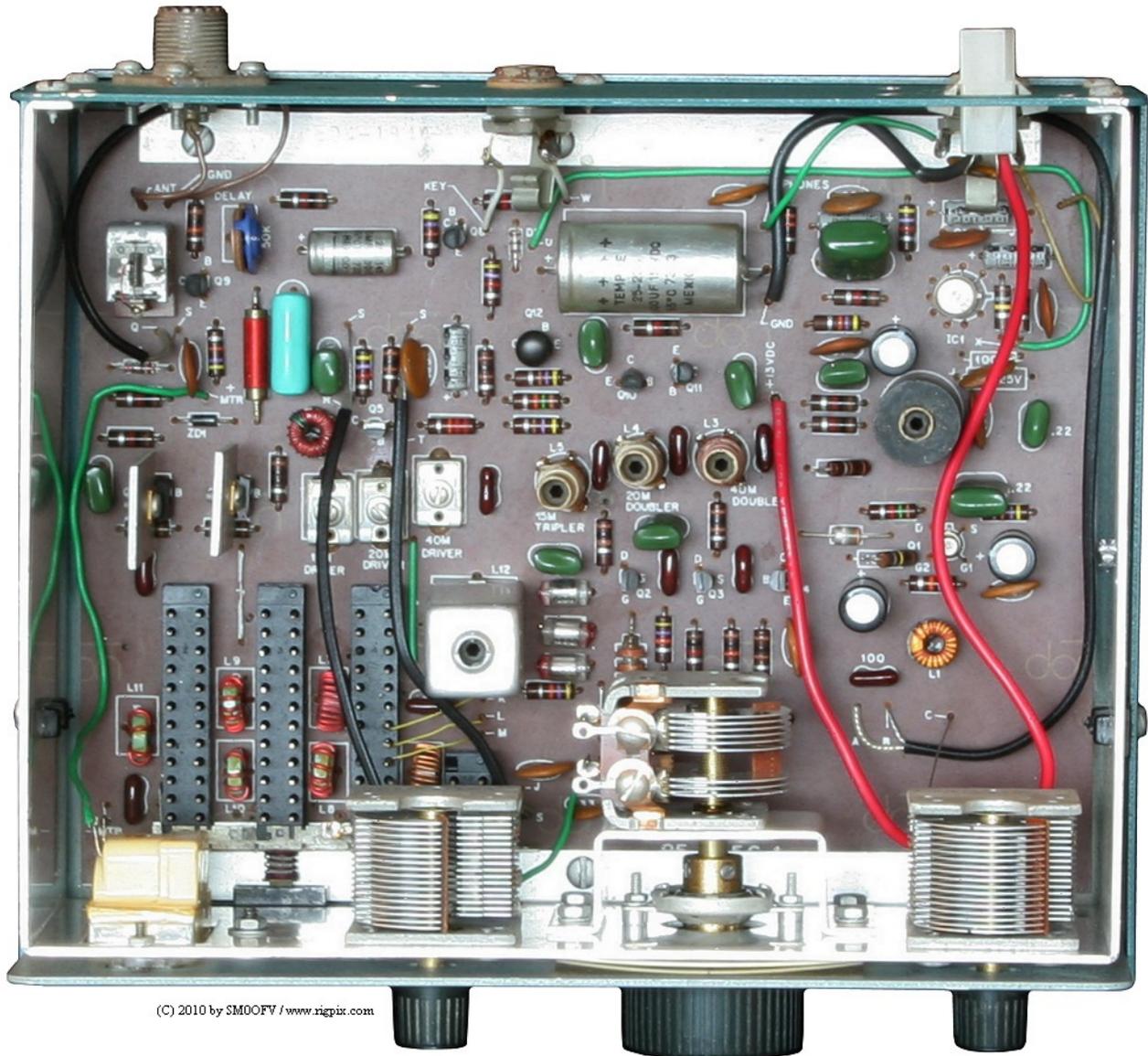
### Part 1

The recent GARES challenge – 80m and 40m with a maximum of 10 watts - has reminded me very much of my first venture on to the HF bands. My early amateur radio activity had been confined to 2 metres with the call sign G8CIB, and I realised in early 1973 that with G4Cxx call signs being issued, if I could get the 12 wpm morse test under my belt, I would be able to acquire the call sign G4CIB. The GPO would not issue call signs out of sequence, but you could reserve one with the proviso that you had to have the necessary qualifications in place at the time of licence issue. I was advised of the likely time scale to issue so I had to have passed the morse test well in time so I duly reserved G4CIB. Morse transmissions were broadcast every evening on 2 metres from RAF Locking in Somerset - G3RAF - 10 minutes each of 5 wpm, 10 wpm and 15 wpm and very soon I was making some progress towards the requirement for the 12 wpm test. Anticipating that I would pass the test, I purchased a Heathkit HW7 QRP transceiver kit from their Gloucester showroom at the bottom of Cole Avenue. With about 3 months in hand, I applied to take my test at the Ship Surveyors Office, Bute Street, Cardiff, which was an alternative to taking the test at a GPO establishment. This area of Cardiff was known as Tiger Bay and in those days it had a certain reputation – Google “Tiger Bay” and all will be revealed!! On the day of my test I made my way to Cardiff and down Bute Street – for some reason I no longer have the paperwork in my Amateur Radio archive file and have no recollection of the actual address of the Ships Surveyors Office. I can remember that the whole area was very run-down, the docks were in decline and all around reeked of decay. All went well at the test with 3 minutes of receiving and sending at 12 wpm and although the tester, not being a Post Office employee, was unable to say whether I had passed or failed, he asked me what I was planning to use on the HF bands!!



In the meantime I had built my HW7 which was a compact 2 watt CW direct conversion transceiver covering 80m, 40m, 20m and 15m. I eagerly awaited the issue of my call sign which duly arrived on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1973. Now, here's a strange thing – the first entry in my log for an HF qso using G4CIB is

for a Top Band CW QSO operating at G4CIB/A with G3NQF, Clive, located near Stroud on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1973. I have no entry in my log book as to the alternative address where I was operating from or whose transmitter I was using as I had no 160m equipment. It may well have been at G4CMY's QTH – he lived just down the road. Tony, G4CMY has recently re-joined GARES – I must jog his memory on this!! My home antenna was very basic – an end fed wire about 30 foot long so I resigned myself to operating on 40m or 20m to start with, which in hindsight was good as even then 20m qsos tended to be “rubber stamp” - just signal report, operator name and qth. No long-winded chatty cw qsos which was great for a newly licenced Class A. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1973 I logged a QSO with F6BSQ on 40m who gave me 569. Over the next few weeks I logged QSOs with HA, DL, UA1, YU1, SP, OZ, ON, YO etc, mainly on 20m.



(C) 2010 by SM00FV / www.rigpix.com

The direct conversion receiver on the HW7 was fairly basic and suffered from microphony but it worked well and was quite sensitive. I had a lot of fun with that rig, it got me on to the HF bands and I learnt very quickly about the techniques of QRP operating. The trick was usually to “tail-end” a QSO as calling CQ would generally be a waste of time with such low power. Also bear in mind the other station would probably be running more power so strong received signals were the ones to call.

My log book shows that I was quite active through the summer of 1973 mainly on 20m. My first QSO “across the pond” was with WN2HQB on 15m on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1973 – he was QRP too – we exchanged 219 reports – it took 20 minutes to exchange signal reports, names and QTHs!!!! A few

days later I logged W8FTB at 569 both ways on 15m. During November 1973 I was mainly active on 20m working quite a few W/K stations. The log book was filling up quite nicely. From 1975 until 1978 my operating became very spasmodic – Leta had appeared on the scene and amateur radio took a back seat for a few years!!

During the early 1980s I made several business trip to the West Coast of the USA and I took the opportunity while I was there to buy a Heath HW8 which was a development of the HW7 with a much improved receiver and a maximum of 3.5 watts output. I arranged for the kit to be delivered to the company I worked for in California and they shipped it with their monthly consolidated shipment to the UK and my archives show that I received it in late April 1981. I took my time in building it, finally completing it around late July 1981. The first QSO in my log using this rig was on 26<sup>th</sup> July with DL1GBZ on 20m at 00:15 exchanging 559 reports followed at 00:50 with DF6UN also on 20m – he gave me 579. On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1981, Prince Charles married Diana Spencer. Leta was at her mums to watch the ceremony – I had far better things to do – trying out my new rig!! And what made my day was a QSO on 40m with GB2PHQ who gave me 559. The family joke is that my HW8 lasted longer than Charles and Diana's marriage!

In part 2 I will outline some of the QRP forays I have made over the years with my HW8 which is still going strong.



TO: G4CIB  
DATE: 29-7-81  
TIME: 13.11 GMT  
RST: 559 A1  
FREQ: 7.0

Located in Postal Headquarters Building in St. Martins Le Grand, London, by courtesy of the British Post Office. The operators, who are past or serving members of the Post Office, are:-

G31HR	Bob	G4FAG	Gerry
G3YFA	Martin	G8VLI	Tom
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G4CTJ	Stan	G8ZSA	Keith
G4GJH	Vic		
G3FKJ	Bill		

73 FROM

Bob OPER.  
G31HR

PSE QSL VIA RSGB

Card produced by the Post Office Marketing Department

### And Just a Reminder

Don't forget our Club Net hosted by Tony G4HBV on Wednesday evenings at 19.30, starting on 145.500 MHz then QSY usually to 145.550 MHz (if unoccupied). Then we have Club on the Air (COTA) on Thursday evenings hosted by Tom G3XMM, starts at 19.30 on 145.550 MHz (if unoccupied). The group then QSY to another band (very often 80m or 6m) to keep everyone on their toes!! The club does not meet on Bank Holiday Mondays or Mondays during the school holidays – on these occasions Tom G3XMM hosts COTA.

### Rag Chew – the Future

I hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of “Rag Chew” as much as I have enjoyed putting it together. I would welcome any articles on your past, current or future amateur radio activities or projects. Submit copy for publication to [g4cib@outlook.com](mailto:g4cib@outlook.com)

For up-to-date information regarding the Societies meetings and activities see the GARES Web Site [www.g4aym.org.uk](http://www.g4aym.org.uk) also make sure you subscribe to the regular e-mail Programme Update.

Brian G4CIB