

# GBOMWT.....CARS HISTORY

## ABRIDGED APRIL 2021 COLIN GOTRM

Taken from the CARS History web site

(Acknowledgements to Murray, Trevor, Geoff)

1. **The April 1936** issue of the RSGB "T&R Bulletin", as RadCom was known in those days, had this announcement in the District 14 (Eastern) Section:

"With a view to forming a Chelmsford section [of the RSGB], will members living within 10 miles write to G6LB, Mr L Fuller, 85 High Street, Chelmsford promising him their support. If this is obtained, a meeting will be arranged."

It seems the first meeting must have been held towards the end of April although we do not know the exact date and the June 1936 T&R Bulletin carried this short report of the meeting:

"Chelmsford, the first meeting held in this area was organized by G6LB and held at G5RV [Louis Varney's house in Galleywood Road] Chelmsford, when an attendance of 26 was recorded, this included a party of 15 from Southend."

Apart from founding CARS, Laurie Fuller G6LB was also the facilitator for the first RSGB Tie!

James Watt G6ZC recalls that in 1936 he moved to Chelmsford and a few weeks following his arrival he had worn holes in all his socks and so went to purchase some new ones from a local outfitter at 85 High Street. This happened to be the shop run by Laurie Fuller, G6LB and on the counter was a copy of the T&R Bulletin. James expressed some interest, they got talking, and the rest as they say, is history!

One of his earliest involvements with the club was with NFD.

### 2. The War Time Years

During the 1939-45 war, attendance at meetings fell to as low as three due to the number of members serving in the armed forces. During this time Fred E Smith, BR55242, a watchmaker by trade, ended up working in the instruments section of Cromptons. He helped Louis Varney G5RV in running the Chelmsford RSGB group and during the early 1940's they met in Fred's bungalow at 40 Stewart Road. During 1944-5 meetings were also held at the QTH of G6LB, G5RV, G6ZC.

In 1946, Fred E. Smith provided the club with a permanent HQ in a room above his radio shop at 184 Moulsham Street (later known as Moulsham Electronics). The room was fully equipped with a workbench and test equipment. The first recorded meeting at this venue was in December 1946 which was attended by 6 members.

Peter Naish, G3EIX Was a member 1948

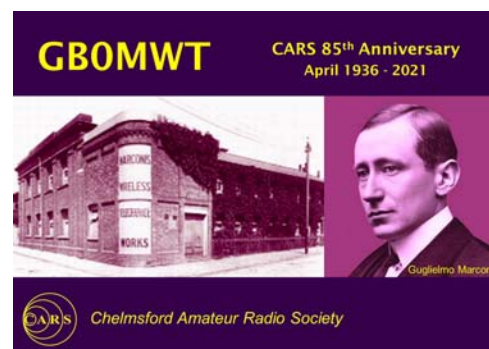
George Cutting, G3GNQ operated his first TX in 1950

### 3. A New Meeting Place and Field Days

The venue for the meetings was changed to Marconi College in Arbour Lane in February 1952, this provided the club with plenty of room for the meetings at no cost.

The Chelmsford RSGB Group's main activity during the 1950's was the annual National Field Day (NFD). This was initially held in Galleywood in the field behind the Running Mare public house that was run by Mrs Warner.

The location close to Louis G5RV's QTH was not purely coincidental! The trees around the field were used as supports for the antennas. One end was put up using a rocket carrying a line that was fired over the tree at the top of the field. (The rocket was provided unofficially by the fire service, to which one of the members belonged). The other trees had to be climbed, mainly by Arthur, G3KPJ. As a keen and determined youngster Arthur believes he was the first SWL to be



allowed to log for a Chelmsford NFD event. His archery skills were to prove of great use in later years for getting a line over the trees.

In the mid 1950's a group of Marconi apprentices formed the Marconi Apprentice Radio Club and they had the use of a house in New Street owned by the Marconi Company called "Basildon Cottage", so called because the Basildon factory was supposedly designed there. A radio shack was established in one of the first floor rooms and the ground floor rooms were used for meetings and Morse practice sessions.

The Marconi Apprentice Club callsign was G3JTW, and they had a G5RV "Elizabethan" Transmitter built (officially) in the Marconi New Street Works! The receiver was a Marconi RG44, which the R.A.F. called an R1475. Alan Davies G3INW was one of the early leading lights of the Marconi Apprentices Radio Club which ran until the early 1970's.

It would seem that the Chelmsford RSGB Group were not keen on letting apprentices operate the NFD station so the apprentices set up the Danbury NFD group which was active during the 50's and early 60's.

In the mid 50's due to a shortage of operators only one station was entered. Records show that for 1956 it was G3KPJ/P. By the 1959 NFD, they had many more operators and the Danbury Group entered two stations under the callsigns G3IIS/P and G3VI/P.

The Danbury NFD Group remained active until the mid-1960's when the declining number of operators in both the Chelmsford and Danbury groups led to a combined NFD entry.

## **5. A Change of Name**

Following RSGB changes that came into effect in July-1957 regarding Town Reps and Affiliated Societies, there was a change of name from Chelmsford RSGB Group to Chelmsford Amateur Radio Club that year. The Marconi apprentices, who were led by Mike Barlow, G3CVO packed the AGM and won the vote

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Club. The local RSGB Group has recently been reorganized and now operates under the title of this new club. The Town Representative H Lawe [Harry Lowe] (G2HPF) is Hon Secretary. Meetings are held at Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford on the first Tuesday of each month. In October there will be an illustrated talk on Hi-fi Sound Reproduction.

Short Wave Magazine October 1957 (page 440) indicates the first meeting was in September:

Chelmsford is a newly formed Club, which meets at Marconi College, Arbour Lane, Chelmsford, on the first Tuesday of each month. At the September meeting, there was a display of 160-metre transmitters and a talk by G3GNQ on 160-metre Mobile working. The October meeting will take the form of a talk and possibly a demonstration of Hi-Fi equipment.

At the end of 1960, the club started RAE Training and Morse Classes, a precursor to more recent training courses

In September 1963 the club changed its name yet again to the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society. There are no records detailing why but certainly the abbreviation CARS is easier to say than CARC.

The use of ATV for Club Talks: It is believed that one of the earliest uses of Amateur Television for a club talk was that by Jeremy Royle G3NOX/T to the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society on 7th December 1965.

Jeremy G3NOX/T (he later held the call signs G6NOX/T and G8ACN) used 70cm ATV with 2 metre talk-back for the transmission from his QTH in Saffron Waldon, Essex to the Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society (CARS) meeting at the Marconi College in Arbour Lane, Chelmsford.

The ATV session that evening also involved ATV transmissions from Ralph Royle G2WT/T.

Over a decade later on 5th April 1977 Jeremy gave another talk to CARS also using 70cm ATV.

January 1966 saw the introduction of the regular monthly newsletters which was to quote from the first issue "For an experimental period of 3 months". The experiment clearly worked!

During the 1960's and 70's Direction Finding Hunts were very popular. Homebrew receivers were usually used and a design by Roy Martyr, G3PMX incorporating the Mullard modules was widely used. This design was later written up by Geoff Mills G3EDM and published in RadCom.

A Constructors Competition was initiated at the July 3rd 1973 meeting and has been a regular feature in the clubs programme ever since.

On the 10th January 1975 CARS club members met in the Chelmsford library to form the Essex Repeater Group. Their first repeater was GB3ER followed later by GB3EL East London and GB3DA at Danbury.

A significant event occurred at the 1977 AGM the clubs President for the past 25 years Ron Ferguson G4VF announced that he wished to retire. Roy Martyr, G3PMX who had served for many years as Vice President was elected President by the committee.

The Danbury 23cm Group has formed around about 1977, they met at the "General's Arms" in Danbury. As well as encouraging 23cm operation in the area one of their aims was to get a 23cm input channel on the Danbury 70cm repeater GB3ER. The restrictive licence regime of the day meant that this was never achieved.

### **The 1980s**

On 15th January 1982 a club buffet was held at the Oaklands Hotel. The event was declared a great success and was the forerunner of subsequent Christmas Dinner events.

In 1986 club member and a GEC Chief Engineer Willie McClintock G3VPK became RSGB President. Past and present CARS members attended his installation at a social function at Furze Hill in Margareting on 18th January attended by 170 people. CARS President Roy Martyr G3PMX presented Willie with a honorary life membership scroll to mark the occasion.

### **The 1990s**

**On the 24th January 1990** the club callsign G0MWT was issued (nowadays often operated as GX0MWT)

In 1995 at the invitation of Dr. Geoff Bowles of the Chelmsford Museum Service the Club was invited to participate in International Marconi Day. This has become a regular event in the Club calendar when members set up a station G0MWT in the Writtle Hut located in the Chelmsford Industrial Museum site at Sandford Mill. The Club also set up a station GBOCMS at the same site during the Museum 'Open Day' in July the same year.

**In 1996** the museum site was used for NFD.

December 1997 saw the last meeting at the Marconi College Arbour Lane as the site was being sold for housing development. It also marked the end of the tea and biscuits which during most of the 90's were provided by Jean Pring and her daughter Lorna who later became 2E1IDQ (Jean's other daughter Rhona was licensed as 2E1GQL).

## **7. The Beehive Lane Years 1998 - Oct-2012**

In January 1998 the club met for the first time in its new venue at the Marconi Sports and Social Club in Beehive Lane. Initially a small room with a capacity of about 40 was used although the club soon outgrew it and meetings moved to a large hall in the social club that could hold up to 90 people.

CARS entered the Internet Age in July 1999 when John Bowen, G8DET created the club's website with a URL of [www.g0mwt.free-online.co.uk](http://www.g0mwt.free-online.co.uk). A later change to [www.g0mwt.org.uk](http://www.g0mwt.org.uk) took place in May 2002. The web site has done much to raise awareness of the club both in the UK and abroad. Enquiries have come in from people in Italy, USA, Australia and New Zealand who have seen the site and it has provided an ideal mechanism for members who have moved overseas to keep in touch with happenings in Chelmsford.

In early 2000 the club experimented with e-mailing the newsletters. This proved very popular and before long the majority of members had the newsletter delivered this way greatly reducing the clubs postage costs.

April 1st 2000 saw the formation of Chelmsford Scouts Amateur Radio Fellowship (Chelmsford-Scarf). This resulted from the work of CARS committee member Chris Chapman G0IPU who started running Novice training classes for the Scouts at the end of the 1990's.

The CARS Logo was developed by Murray G6JYB in September 2001 and made its first appearance in the Oct-2001 newsletter (No.429)

December 12th, 2001 saw the 100th anniversary of the first reception of a transatlantic transmission by Marconi. The club ran three stations to celebrate the event. See the Marconi Page on this Web Site.

**On Saturday 8th, 2001** GX0MWT was run operated from Chelmsford High Street. The station was visited by Marconi's daughter Princess Elettra who sent a greetings message to VO1S in Newfoundland.

On Wednesday 12th, 2001 the club operated two stations GX0MWT and 2MT. GX0MWT was operated from the Sandford Mill Museum. A replica of the kite antenna used by Marconi was flown and it put a strong signal into Newfoundland. Trevor, M5AKA got approval to use the special callsign, 2MT to commemorate the event (3 character callsigns are not normally issued). This callsign had been used originally by Marconi's broadcast station at Writtle in the 1920's. A station, using all Marconi equipment, was set up just a few yards from the original office of Guglielmo Marconi in the Marconi Company building facing onto New Street.

The first CARS CD-ROM compiled by Trevor, M5AKA was given out to members at the PSK-31 meeting on 5th February 2002. That first issue had just a few megabytes of Amateur Radio programs including of course PSK-31. Since then it grew to fill a complete 700 megabyte CD and includes clubs newsletters and extensive photo collection.

**On January 17th, 2002** the Club started running Foundation courses on Thursday evenings at Danbury Village Hall. A rapid succession of courses at both Danbury and St. Mary's Church Centre Great Baddow had to be run to keep up with the heavy demand for places. These were followed on May 15th 2003 by the first of the Intermediate courses, and September 2nd 2004 for Advanced. Towards the end of the period, CARS President since 2010 Harry Heap, G5HF passed away on 27th August 2012, aged 95.

## **8. Nov-2012+ - New Venues**

The redevelopment of the MASC site at Beehive Lane led to a move to Great Baddow Parish Hall Maldon Road in November 2012 The available bookings unfortunately led to a change from the usual first Tuesday to a Friday evening. Eventually CARS settled on a comfortable and new venue at Oaklands Museum in Moulsham Street and was able to return to its traditional meeting night in time for its AGM on Tuesday 1st October-2013.

## **January 2014 Added Event**

In January 2014 a new regular event was added in the shape of Skills Workshops on the third Monday of a month at Danbury Village Hall, courtesy of Peter Sipple M0PSX. Attendance at this 'hands-on' practical/social event proved popular and were repeated on a monthly basis.

In May 2014 CARS joined social media using Twitter for @TrainWithCARS, followed later by @ChelmsfordARS in March 2015 and You tube in May 2015.

First published 2003: Thanks to Geoff Lovegrove G7KLV for providing the basis for the above History and to Trevor, M5AKA for compiling it in this form.

Revised Jan-2015: Murray G6JYB, added Section-7

**Apologies for any errors Colin TRM April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021**