

ERG AT WORK !

Now here's a picture, thanks to Dave M1DOZ. At work is Clive G1EUC assisting with loading old kit up ready for us to sell at Colchester Rally – with Bob M1DTA offering moral support.



Seriously, we have been totally dependent on equipment sales to fund major expenditure on the repeaters – both new and old. Subs barely cover our running costs, and we have always depended on donations to break even and fund projects. Our previous sources have dried up, so we would greatly appreciate any donations of 'quality' surplus as you clear out your shacks etc.

ERG INFO ON PACKET

Once upon a time ERG was involved with packet, but we withdrew and gradually neglected it, other than for some newscasts. Recognising that not everyone is on the internet, and that new developments have appeared on packet, we are mounting a new effort. The ERG general license G7GAN is being pressed into use and a 'Teletext' version of the ERG website courtesy of Mike M1EMF is going on-line. For mail you can send to G7GAN@GB7COS.#31.GBR.EU. For the text pages and downloadable files, connect to 'ERG' and enter 'tt' for teletext. Initial frequency is 144.950MHz. We would appreciate feedback on how useful this is.

ERG COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Hon. Secretary: Murray Niman G6JYB e-mail: mjniman@iee.org

Internet Website: <http://www.swsystems.co.uk/erg>

Regular news updates appear throughout the year on the ERG website, and on email and packet radio.

For more info on packet, including our new Teletext pages, please contact Clive Ward G1EUC

Frequency Bands:-

GB3DA	145.125 MHz Input, 145.725MHz Output Channel R5 (RV58)
GB3ER	434.675MHz Input, 433.075MHz Output Channel RB3 (RU246)
GB3DB	51.270 MHz Input, 50.770 MHz Output, Channel R50-6
GB3ZP	1291.225 MHz Input, 1297.225 MHz Output, Channel RM9
GB3CMS	Microwave Beacon 10.36896 GHz (keeper - Clive Ward G1EUC)



CATCH'EM YOUNG !

In 1998 ERG introduced a discount for Novices/SWL's as an incentive to encourage new users. During 2000 we established an arrangement which gives all members 10% discount off the normal prices at W&S on production of a valid ERG membership card.

Now to celebrate the start of 2001, and keeping in tune with the latest license changes, we are now extending the discount scheme to anyone who is 16 years or younger.

As you will read on the centre spread, attracting people into amateur radio, as well as members to ERG, is now high on our list of thoughts. Please do all you can to help with this. Constitution changes now allow the Committee to introduce other incentives provided that we gain at the end of the day. If we don't, then inevitably rises will be needed to cover our costs.

Any assistance in recruiting members will always be appreciated.

2000/1 Subscriptions Rates

- 16yrs or under £5
- Novices/SWLs £5
- Ordinary Members £8

All Subs will be gratefully received by the newly elected Honorary Treasurer Clive Ward G1EUC

WOT NO REPEATERS ?

Well no doubt many of you are wondering if the new 6m and 23cms systems will ever arrive.

Fear not !

Considerable effort and expense has now been ploughed into these projects.

Inside is some info on current progress, as we aim to bring both of them on air in the near future.

Hon. Sec Murray G6JYB

SEASONS GREETINGS

The Committee wishes you and your family all the best for 2001

Enjoy ! :-)

BOWLING PRIZES

Annette, Ann and Stephen pictured here got the key positions in the ever popular Essex Bowling competition organised by John G1JIJ - who we thank for the photo and scoresheet.

Further details on this successful evening can be found in the Sports and Leisure section inside.



CHAIRMAN MIKE WHEATON G4ZPE SAYS . . .

Christmas Greetings from Chairman ERG,

May I take this opportunity to say thank you to all my slaves out there and all the members who support the group in many ways, and who are not always mentioned in dispatches. This year has been very hectic for me as I did retire for about 5 years, and this gave me time to take up interest in making antenna's. It also at that time to help build the new ER and DA units whilst we were moving site.

Then the bomb dropped - I had a job offered to me at a well known shop in Hockley called Waters & Stanton. This was a turning point in my life never to be forgotten at the grand old age mm**. Well there I was thinking I was safe; well that's when it all started. Back to full time work and in the thing I love the most "Transmitters and Receivers" - Big Valve Linears of all types to play with in a good workshop, with some very good mates like Bob, Dave, Bernard. Also of course are the three bosses Jeff, Peter, and Mark who have been very good to ERG group by donating the two six metre radios plus many other things over the years.

Well since starting back to work this has put more pressure on me due to the fact that I had taken on things to keep my mind going while retired. So now I have projects going on all over the place, plus an 8 hour day to work as well and this year was no exception. I've been very busy building the two new logic's up into case's, as well as the six metre tx/rx unit. In between that, I've been building the 23cms units into their cabinet, the antenna is installed ready to go. and I have been doing tx/rx test's when time permits.

I think this year 2001 will be a turning point in communications for everybody. When you think you can now go and buy for about £30.00 a portable phone and talk to your mate with no licence, why have radio ? Its the black box error as we say.

Perhaps the new idea for the Morse to be dropped will lead us on another course, I'm not sure. With these multi-mode radio's now about its going that way for the Amateur not to try and find out what radio is all about - it's all done for him or her in that little black box with holes in the back to plug in a thing called an antenna ???

Not sure what frequency it should be but never mind its making a noise and I can hear my mate up the road. Oh look, what's that smoke doing coming out the back. Ah well, send it back as its in warranty.

That's what they think mate! This is a thing we must get over to the amateur that you do need the correct antenna for the band. I overheard a couple on the air and one said I've just been up on 20mtr and 40mtrs worked a couple of stations in Germany. "Oh yeah, what antenna have you got ?" The reply was "Just using my CB antenna I've had for ages. It seems to work okay". And at that point no more said from me !

I would like to wish all you budding Amateurs a Very Merry Christmas and please treat yourself to a new antenna for the new year on the right band

Best 73's fer nw de Zipy.

Footnote: Mike's comment about spare time is true of all of us. We are only human and all have lots of other committments. With some skills in short supply, please be patient if we are not as quick as you would like.

TEN PIN BOWLING AND OTHER SOCIALISING

A good turnout led to a very enjoyable Ten Pin Bowling event at the Chelmsford Megabowl on Sat Nov-18. See elsewhere for the photo - this column is rather too narrow for it !

Both this and a not-so-secret Xmas dinner were expertly organised by John G1JJJ

This is very much a personal effort - its not an 'ERG event', John puts a lot of hard work into this and it is appreciated.

- Photo on the front page

Pos'n	Player	1st	2nd	Total
1	Stephen with GNZ	187	192	379
2	Nick with ENN	180	193	373
3	Dodgy Dave G6HNI	204	147	351
4	Nigel G6ZVV	146	162	308
5	Allan G0TTM	157	139	296
6	Douglas with ENN	164	129	293
7	Andy Bowden with ENN	159	118	277
8	Geoff G8GNZ	126	137	263
9	Bob G0RSW	125	131	256
10	Anne with RSW	115	152	267
11	Mark Adrian G0KOM	115	129	244
12	John Lacey with ENN	99	138	237
13	Don with RSW	138	97	235
14	Roy the Boy M1RKB	120	112	232
15	Ally with ENN	109	121	230
16	Emma with GNZ	118	108	226
17	Dave M1DOZ	122	103	225
18	Chris S with RSW	110	111	221
19	Frank G1HQQ	126	88	214
20	Liz with JJJ	104	109	213
21	Tony G0JYI	115	98	213
22	Den Mrs JYI	112	101	213
23	Hannah, Daughter of RGG	109	93	202
24	Beccy, with GNZ	98	101	199
25	Graham, with RSW	93	99	192
26	Dave, G7GVK	88	103	191
27	Heather with RSW	95	94	189
28	Lynne with SQL	86	102	188
29	Ian with JYI	99	88	187
30	Dick G0ULU	89	94	183
31	Chris with RSW	107	73	180
32	John G1JJJ	106	73	179
33	Sandra with GNZ	79	99	178
34	Chris with GVK	73	96	169
35	Laurrie G0JAO	76	92	168
36	Anne M with RSW	82	84	166
37	June Mrs JJJ	74	90	164
38	Keith Debbie DOZ	86	78	164
39	Steve G7RGG	93	70	163
40	Dick G4GUJ	90	71	161
41	Kirsty with GNZ	86	72	158
42	Kevin with GNZ	67	85	152
43	Martin G7SQL	82	66	148
44	Maureen with RSW	83	60	143
45	Jean with GNZ	58	81	139
46	Bernie G0ENN	64	67	131
47	Joy with G0ENN	59	71	130
48	Chrisy G8OIV	78	48	126
49	Harold Nat	72	50	122
50	Trevor with GNZ	43	79	122
51	Gerry with JJJ	42	78	120
52	Jannette M1CKG	59	58	117
53	Clair with RSW	61	50	111
54	Carol with HQQ	45	65	110
55	Garreth with HQQ	33	44	77
56	Hazel with RSW	34	42	76
57	Annette Mrs TTM	44	23	67

Members News

ERG 2000 AGM

The ERG AGM was held on Thu 19th October 2000 at the traditional Danbury Village Hall venue, helped along by free refreshments courtesy of Bob and Murray.

Dick G4GUJ, Chrissy G1EOV and Brian G1EOV all stood down due to other commitments, and were thanked for their efforts over the years. We welcome Alan, Keith and Dave. RMC local rep Tony Horsman G0MBA contributed to the discussion later on, which ranged from the successful resolution of our repeater abuse problem, to current progress on the forthcoming new systems. Free food will be at the next AGM too!

ERG 2000/1 COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mike Wheaton G4ZPE
Hon. Secretary: Murray Niman G6JYB
Hon. Treasurer: Clive Ward G1EUC

Ordinary Committee Members

Bob Cheverall M1DTA
Alan Radley G0TTM
Keith Wainwright G1NHW
Simon Wilton G7HCD
David Wright M1ECC

ERG PUBLICITY/MEMBERSHIP

There is no doubt that rallies and radio clubs are under pressure, partly due to the rise of mobile telephony. Over time we have witnessed the demise of Harlow, Southend and Vange rallies. This year the only formal rallies left are Canvey and Colchester (and even these are expected to be smaller). However we are trying to exploit alternatives, so we have already attended the Microwave forum at Martlesham, and will again have a presence at W&S Open Day. Talks have also been arranged for Vange, Chelmsford and Dengie Clubs, as part of our effort to spread the word.

Many people have also suggested that the Internet has been a threat, but I don't fully share this opinion as it has enabled us to use email and the web to keep our costs down and assist with raising revenue. Elsewhere, Internet linking is appearing, adding interest to new systems such as UIVIEW (so you can contact Australia on 2m!). We have a well established website courtesy of Simon G7HCD which we regularly update, and are introducing a new packet/teletext node courtesy of Clive G1EUC and Mike M1EMF. The new repeaters and committee changes give us a great opportunity for attracting recruits. We need help from you all, otherwise if the membership base shrinks further and revenues decline everything will be at risk. In any case we cannot survive on subs alone - donations and surplus equipment for resale are most welcome!

We are keen to get new people into the hobby and arrest our own decline in membership. This is reflected in our latest member incentive to youngsters, regardless of their license status. Whilst the 'engineers' (both committee members and others) are concentrating on the new repeaters, we should all be tasked with fresh thinking on the thorny subject of increasing interest in radio and ERG membership.

Murray G6JYB

MEMBERS LETTERS . . .

Got an opinion or a question ? - We want to hear about it!

Send them in and we'll print them (and answers) in future editions. Opposite are some thoughts and greetings from committee members, but we cannot do this easily without contributions from yourselves. We are often short of material. If you contribute more, we can raise the frequency of the newsletters!

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU !!!

Members News

KEITH WAINWRIGHT G1NHW . . .

Hi all. First licensed 1985, I used 2mtrs for three years, but with family commitments eleven years passed without using a radio. Restarting in 1997 I now work 2m, 4m, 6m, 70cms ssb and fm. My other interests are SSTV, W/Sat, packet and UIVIEW. My current project - just installed a pump up mast and now various beams and colinears.

Joining ERG this year at the AGM, I hope some of my ideas can be put to good use, helping this side of the hobby into the future.

With the new 23cms and 6m repeaters just around the corner, new committee members and fresh ideas, 2001 looks to be, with I hope interest and input from all members, a good and exciting year for amateur radio

Best regards and New Year to all - G1NHW

DAVE WRIGHT M1ECC . . .

When I was asked to join the Essex repeater group at the last AGM. I decided why not, and try to get a better understanding what goes on in the running of repeaters. Also with new members come new ideas.

With two repeaters on air, and the two new (23cms and 6m) ones coming on air soon, things are looking good. But as with all things, a good strong membership will keep them on air for years to come.

I enjoy all areas of the hobby. I came interested in radio through CB & Short-wave Listening some 20 years ago. I got my licence in June 1999 and was given the call sign Of M1ECC. I believe this hobby of amateur radio will survive with new ideas and hope the ERG will grow with it.

73s From David Wright M1ECC.

BOB CHEVERALL M1DTA . . .

Hi there,

Well its been a busy year for me and Murray at my QTH - busy most weekends rebuilding a shed ready for the 6m repeater. I think Murray used about 300 screws, and my wife moved her strawberry plants four times.

We did two tests at 10Watts, but lacked stations from the north and northeast. However the tests showed that the prediction map that Murray had obtained was fairly accurate.

We are hoping it will be popular and we're hoping that you lads out there will use the repeaters a bit more. Use them or lose them's the motto - we are all ears!

Merry Xmas

Bob M1DTA, Lyn XYL and Christine 2E0WU

- and thanks for the excellent hospitality – Murray

NEW SYSTEMS INFO !

GB3DB 51.270 MHz Input, 50.770 MHz Output, Channel R50-6, QTH: M1DTA

GB3ZP 1291.225 MHz Input, 1297.225 MHz Output, Channel RM9, QTH: G4ZPE

Planned Coverage: 23cms - probably Central/South Essex, 6m - County wide. But it all depends on power and antennas! Our gain and available power is greater on 23cms, whereas whilst 6m propagates well, many aerials give losses rather than gain ! Some of the repeater units have been shown at rallies etc, but only when we finish will we do all the publicity photos etc.

Progress to date as at Dec-2000:-

23cms

- Application submitted and approved (surprisingly quickly) for a domestic site - a UK first
- Unique frequency channel allocated
- Procom 7dB Colinear Antenna acquired and installed
- Full size 19" Cabinet acquired and in position
- Procom professional 6-cavity set acquired and installed - a UK first!
- PSUs acquired
- G3WDG 23cms module kits acquired and assembly/construction underway - Quite a task!

6m

- Procom style 0dB Colinear acquired and on the tower
- Propagation estimates and tests done
- Unique frequency channel negotiated
- 6m Alinco Radios donated by W&S and repackaged
- Major refurbishment of building carried out inc new woodwork, insulation, floor, drainage, electricity, paint etc.
- Application submitted and recently approved on Nov-14 2000
- Procom professional 6-cavity set (rather tall cylinders!) on order - due end of January 2001
- Cabinet on request, supplied courtesy of Chris G0IPU

Logic

- Two new G8CUL units acquired and assembled (not yet tested or integrated)
- On air remote control modems designed but further work needed

And we have plenty left to do to ! - particularly on Logic testing/integration, 23cms assembly and Alinco Radio interfaces (Black boxes can be trickier than your own easier to access 23cms kits), 6m cabinet and feeders

A number of other conditions are imposed from a license point of view. Remote control is mandatory as of Jan 2001 for all repeaters. This is partly done by us having to integrate secondary radios into the repeaters (just as we have on DA/ER, but not yet started on DB/ZP). The RA won't allow repeater operation until suitable notice has been given and NoVs issued. In the case of the 23cms systems, work may be needed on filtering and sensitivity issues. On 23 we are at risk as we are well beyond the normal RA/RSGB target for going on air. In both cases we are using a professional approach to construction, and if this takes more time (and our spare time is in limited supply) , all we can say is to be patient as we hope it will be worthwhile!

THEY WILL BE READY WHEN THEY ARE READY

- AND WE CERTAINLY INTEND TO BLOW THE TRUMPET WHEN THEY ARE !

CTCSS - BEGINNING OF THE END FOR 1750Hz TONEBURST ?

The new GB3AL 2m repeater in Amersham, Bucks, will be the first unit on the band to use CTCSS access only. This was at request of the local group who also operate the GB3AM and GB3HZ repeaters from the same site. No 1750 Hz tone is required, but the repeater will not remain open with plain carrier. This will help the group as the site has multiple amateur and PMR equipment close by and the potential for intermodulation problems is high. ie access is enabled only by a continuous subaudible CTCSS tone.

The RA in the new guide to Repeater Licensing which will be issued shortly have indicate that by Jan 2004 they will require ALL FM voice repeaters to be CTCSS access only. If you have concerns about this we would like to hear your views.

(item courtesy of RMC Repeater Report)

ERG ON THE WEB

ERG was one of the first repeater groups to have a presence on the Internet, and since then has made extensive use of email etc. Over the past year the website has steadily evolved as we add details of the new repeaters, propagation maps etc. In due course we will be updating the Picture Gallery with the new systems and will be introducing a forsale section. We are always open to suggestions...

