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Clifton Country Club Net Sunday 20th May 2018

It was so nice to hear Brian after several months' absence; he was sporting his special event call as GR3OYU to mark the recent royal wedding. Peter (G3PJB) called in seconds later. Peter (G3RQZ) and I had already set camp on 3.688 MHz a few minutes earlier as 3.690 had been occupied.

All signals here were 59+ with very little detectable background noise; although Peter (G3PJB) was still victim of local QRM he found everyone was 59 through Hack Green remote SDR. Peter went on to tell the group that he had received a telephone call from Denis (G3OKY) who was still on the cusp of purchasing a new HF rig. Denis said he was undecided and was considering either an IC7300 or the new FT991A.

Peter (G3RQZ) said that Peter (G3PJB) had a thumping strong audio from his IC7300. Peter (G3PJB) went on to say that if Denis (G3OKY) required any assistance with deploying an antenna he would be more than willing to drive over to drive over to Beckenham and help.

Brian (GR3OYU) said that over recent weeks he had noticed that his antennas were becoming snagged in the trees along his boundary. These trees had grown alarmingly over the past year, and were the responsibility of the farmer who owned the adjacent land. Brian went on to say there was also a Silver Birch tree between his property and his next door neighbours, and this tree was now affecting the amount of light. Although he had made his neighbours aware they seemed a little reticent to tackle the problem.

Peter (G3PJB) stated that he currently did not have any tree problems, but did recall a few years ago when a Cyprus Fir that he and Doris had planted attracted the attention of the local water board in the shape of an irate official knocking on their door insisting the tree was removed immediately as the site they chosen for the tree was directly over a water main.

Being an ardent railway user Peter went on to explain how the new modified train timetables for most of the Home Counties, the South and Eastern England. Peter's local station is Swanley where direct services to Blackfriars have been reduced from one every 30mins to only four a day. Other than these four trains to reach Blackfriars requires a change at Bromley South. The theory is allow more trains to run with quicker journey times this requires less stops therefore it has been found necessary to curtail numerous direct service from many stations. From my recollection Swanley was always considered a fairly major junction being on the line from Sevenoaks and the line from Sheerness and the Medway towns. Swanley Junction must have been held in some esteem as it used to sport an excellent buffet.

Now passengers have been transformed into 'clients' their wellbeing seems to count for less. Who said "Just like cattle"? A very unfair comparison as there is strict legislation standards on the movement of livestock!

I went on to tell the group that Suzanne and I had visited Bletchley Park on Friday last, spending all day there. We found it fascinating and visited most of the 'huts' that contain the exhibits. The 'huts' have been carefully restored and contain very clever sound and video animations of the various activities that would have been taking place. A great deal of effort has gone into using the furnishings, telephones and stationery of the era.

The examples of the enigma machines and the cryptographic decoding methods are excellent with numerous interactive displays that allow you to try your skill at decrypting examples of coded messages.

There is also a building dedicated to more complex Lorenz encryption machines that were used on the teleprinter networks that carried traffic from the German's high command (OKW) including Hitler's "Fuhrer directives". Again the excellent audio-visual displays went a long way to explain the intricacies of the Lorenz machines. We would recommend taking the 'included' one hour walking tour of the site in order to get your bearings; this allows you to return to those huts of most interest to you.

The museum gives you a very good insight into the activities and conditions that existing during those desperate years of conflict. However, all the monitoring of radio traffic was carried out elsewhere, often by volunteer interceptors (VIs) who had been licensed radio amateurs before the war (All amateur licences were withdrawn and equipment was impounded at the outbreak of hostilities).

Therefore I feel it is quite fitting for National Radio Museum run by the RSGB to be located at Bletchley Park. It is an excellent museum; the displays take the visitor from crystal sets and spark transmitters through to satellite coms to the latest Wi-Fi gismos. There is also a very comprehensive 'shack' with a wall of flat screen displays that gives the visitor a live visual explanation of what is being heard and the global location of stations received together with the location of the satellites or International space station etc.

During our visit Mervyn (G4KLE) an RSGB volunteer was not only operating but more importantly explaining what was happening and why. He and the rest of the team were true ambassadors for the hobby.

All RSGB members are eligible for free entry to Bletchley Park by logging into the RSGB member's web-site to obtaining a token.

Unfortunately Suzanne and I were not aware of this facility and purchased two concession tickets at £16.25p ea.....We consider this very good value , more so when we found out the tickets are valid for a year. We will be making a return visit.

Please note that the re-constructed Colossus computer and a working version of a 'Bombe', its mechanical predecessor is displayed at the British Museum of Computing in 'block H'. This is a separate building from Bletchley Park about 100mtrs away. A further small entrance fee is charged.....We did not have time to visit this museum.

Peter (G3PJB) said although he was aware there was an excellent rail connection to Bletchley Park; due to Doris' health he could not consider travelling that distance.

Brian (GR3OYU) stated he found travelling by train very expensive; the only concessionary travel available to him was on the local buses. Therefore it was highly unlikely he would be making the trip to Bletchley

Peter (G3RQZ) told the group that due problems with his internet he had changed provider from BT to Vodaphone. He now realises that the service faults were likely to be the responsibility of "Openreach" which provides the lines for both companies. However, at least his monthly charges have fallen by 50% with Vodaphone.

Peter went on to say that there was a proposal to build a "Garden Village" of 9000 houses on a 'Greenfield site' in his vicinity. Peter's hope was that as the 'direct railway services' to London had been severely curtailed by the new timetable the Garden Village may not go ahead.

Commiserations Peter, 9000 houses is not a village, it's a small town which will doubtless detract from the rural solitude you have enjoyed..... A development of 9000 houses could lead to an increase in local population of 20,000 +. Presumably the developers will include 'planning gains' such as new schools, medical facilities, improved transport structure as well as increased capacity of electrical supply, water and sewerage systems. The cynic in me has to be convinced as developments of this magnitude are occurring in rural areas throughout the UK with little heed to improving the infrastructure....Hey Ho!

After this 'bombshell' Peter (G3RQZ) signed out to take advantage of the reasonable weather to pursue some gardening activities.

If you recall last month I mentioned that I was preparing to upgrade in my CCTV system to full HD. It is now installed and working. Pleasingly the system is electrically quiet, even with all the IR illuminators on and the DVR running. I secured this by using professional quality screened cabling and DC feeds with Norwegian built Mascot PSU's.

My low noise floor now appears even lower since the upgrade, enabling me to work very weak signals on 80m and 40m that others are unable to hear.

The result, excellently sharp CCTV images and no QRM.

Brian (GR3OYU) said that he had resolved a problem with his CCTV by replacing the DC feed on the camera attached to his workshop which was some 70 to 80ft away, thereby reducing the voltage drop. This produced an improved image and also meant the infra-red leds worked at spec during darkness. However there was one side effect in that spiders attracted by both the IR light and warmth tend to spin large webs over the cameras, which in turn are strongly illuminated by the infra-red leds. Very soon the observer is treated to the most stunning images of cobwebs and 'glowing arachnids' in lieu of the desired view of the drive, shed or garden etc.

In reply, I told Brian that the solution was to use separate IR illuminators which attract the web-weaving spiders with little effect on the IR output. Then by turning the IR leds off on the camera the few casual incursions by spiders are not seen as there is no intense close illumination. Problem solved!

With Peter (G3RQZ) having already signed and as the clock approached 15:50 GMT we closed the net.

Before the net I had received apologies from Lawrie (G4FAA) who was taking a vacation in Tenerife.

The next Clifton CC Net will be held on **Sunday 17th June at 1500hrs GMT** on or around **3.690MHz**.

Hopefully catch you on the wireless, may be giving a few points away in the RSGB National Field Day (2nd – 3rd June)?

73 es 88s from Tony es Suzanne.

(Also circulated via the G3GHN reflector)