

THE VMARS NEWS SHEET

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M0VMW

Affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain

VMARS Committee contact details:

Chairman:

Ian Underwood M0YMK
Roundwyck Farm
Pipers Lane, Balls Cross
Petworth, West Sussex
GU28 9JZ
+44(0)1403 820185
chairman@vmars.org.uk

Secretary:

John Keeley GW6RAV
93 Park Crescent
Abergavenny, Gwent
NP7 5TL
+44(0)7855 566160
honsec@vmars.org.uk

Treasurer & Publications Manager

Bronek Wedzicha M0DAF
22 Farmers Way
Copmanthorpe, York
North Yorkshire YO23 3XX
+44(0)1904 708704
treasurer@vmars.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

Peter Shepherd G7DXV
25 Tomkins Close
Stanford-Le-Hope
Essex SS17 8QU
+44(0)1375 640618
memsec@vmars.org.uk

Ordinary Member:

Peter Jones G8CDC
Tudor House
Stoneleigh Road
Blackdown
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV32 6QR
+44(0)1926 883345
peter@air-commuter.co.uk

Ordinary Member:

Ron Swinburne M0WSN
32 Hollywell Road
Sheldon, Birmingham
B26 3BX
+44(0)1217 421808
m0wsn@aol.com

Co-opted Member:

Philip Staplehurst
2 Sussex Cottages
Bluebell Lane
Sharphorne
West Sussex RH19 4PF
+44(0)1342 810299

Co-opted Member and Public Relations Officer:

Stuart McKinnon G0TBI
145 Enville Road
Kinver, Near Stourbridge
West Midlands DY7 6BN
+44(0)1384 872157
stuartjmckinnon@aol.com



Operating position at the station of Peter Norris G4VUN. Left to right: KW107 ATU, TRIO TS520se (c. 35 years old), KW160 with hombrew top band TX underneath, HRO, TU6B. There is also a 160 m Command TX, BC221, BC348 out of the picture, all used on 160 m. Photo courtesy of Mark Brown, Catterick Garrison. Please see Peter's letter on page 6

VMARS Container Sale

Saturday 7th September 2013
Rosswood Farm, Baginton
10.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

A further container sale from the Estate of the late John Coggins G3TFC will take place on 7th September at Rosswood Farm. Further details will be included in the July Issue of the VMARS News Sheet.

From our Chairman

Recently, the Society was contacted by a family friend of Richard Brett-Knowles G3AAT asking if we would like to acquire his collection of valves and test gear. At the age of 94, Richard

recently moved into care from his home near Portsmouth and had arranged for his house to be cleared for sale. I don't believe that he was ever a member of VMARS, but my curiosity was aroused when I was told that Richard had been part of the wartime airborne radar development establishment, misleadingly named the Telecommunications Research Establishment (T.R.E.) and located at Malvern in Worcestershire. I casually mentioned this to a fellow VMARS Member who took the trouble to look him up on the internet.

What he unearthed was a remarkable life story of a man who, as a young boy, developed a fascination for wireless and electronics and who subsequently graduated in Physics from St Catherine's College, Oxford. The knowledge and skills that he demonstrated at Oxford marked him out as a candidate for the post of Junior Scientific Officer (J.S.O.) on the air interception radar (AI) development team headed by Swansea-born Dr Edward 'Taffy' Bowen under the direction of the prickly T.R.E. Chief Superintendent, Albert Percival Rowe. Amongst the equipment he helped develop was the airborne surface vessel detecting radar ASV-XI which, as well as detecting surface vessels at 60 km with an accuracy of 2 degrees, could detect a U-Boat schnorkel at 8 km in relatively calm waters, making a major contribution to ending the battle of the Atlantic. AP Rowe had previously succeeded Robert Watson-Watt as Superintendent of Bawdsey Research Station and was instrumental in pushing forward the developments of the Chain Home and Chain Low early warning radar used at the beginning of the War before turning his attention to airborne radar. He had a reputation for being difficult, despite which he went on to become the Chief Scientific Officer of the British rocket programme and eventually Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide.

As the end of the War approached, Brett-Knowles was part of a team sent by the Air Ministry into unsecured and enemy-occupied zones of Europe in order to recover German radar equipment before it could be destroyed by the retreating forces. This was quite a dangerous operation, necessitating incursions into enemy-held territory and, during these activities, he held a temporary commission as both British Army and the Royal Air Force officer ranks to provide him with the necessary authority to overcome allied military bureaucracy and to offer some protection in the event of capture. Following these operations, he was debriefed by the now famous Assistant Director of Intelligence (Science), Dr RV Jones, and by Dr Robert Cockburn (later Sir Robert), a specialist in airborne electronic countermeasures. Intriguingly, during the VMARS clearance of equipment from his house, an old envelope addressed to Wing-Commander Richard Brett-Knowles at the British Embassy in Washington and another to Lieutenant-Commander Brett Knowles at the ASWE Portsmouth were unearthed. All of these temporary military appointments related to his work and in-depth knowledge of radar, although it was as a post-War Royal Naval officer that he eventually reached his substantive rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

After the War and still in his twenties, Richard Brett-Knowles left T.R.E. Malvern and joined the Royal Navy as an instructor at the Admiralty Surface Weapons Establishment in Portsmouth, from where many former Royal Navy specialists will no doubt remember him. Between 1952 and 1954 he was posted as a member of the British North Greenland Expedition, this time as a RN Lieutenant acting as assistant seismologist. After his retirement, his friend, James Bryant G4CLF, acted as his agent for speaking engagements and briefly summarised his Greenland expedition exploits as follows:

"The first Polar Medal was awarded to South Pole expeditionary Robert Scott. Richard Brett-Knowles was awarded the same honour for his involvement in the two year-long British North Greenland expedition. Using traditional forms of transport, like the dogsled and 'weasel' vehicle, the expedition was carried out under extreme conditions which claimed the life of one of the team members. Richard performed a number of seismic surveys, some of the less explosive ones of which he will demonstrate on the night of his talk."

During his busy life, Brett-Knowles was taught to fly by the Royal Air Force at RAF Warmwell near Dorchester, Dorset and he found time to sail across the Atlantic to St Lucia in the Caribbean. He was an active member of the Royal Naval Sailing Association in his retirement. He gave several presentations on radar techniques to the Pentagon, on one occasion being heckled by a scientific dissenter, and he concluded his working life as a consultant involved in development work with Vickers Systems on the Airbus A320. Richard is a licenced amateur as G3AAT and is a member of the Horndean & District Amateur Radio Club. He has also been active within the RSGB and has served on the Technical Forum for many years.

Richard Brett-Knowles' life has been interesting enough for the British Library to commission, in 2012, a series of fifteen one hour recorded interviews for their Oral History of British Science project. These recordings provide a fascinating insight into many aspects of wartime radar development and daily life. The recordings are full of anecdotes, including one of how the Admiralty Signals Establishment came within a whisker of being re-named the Admiralty Radar and Signals Establishment and another describing how, on returning from a foray into Europe, he managed to smuggle Dutch gin into England by disguising it as samples of V2 rocket fuel.

The British Library recordings can be accessed via the VMARS website under the heading of "WWII Electronic & Countermeasures Warfare" on the following page link: http://www.vmars.org.uk/Film_Recordings.

Ian Underwood M0YMK

VMARS Autumn Event

November 2013

The Committee is planning a VMARS Social to take place at a venue in the Midlands during November. Whilst principally intended as a social event, there will be an auction of Members' equipment as part of the programme for the day.

BA4IU in Jinan PRC

I attach a photo of myself G0SFJ with BA4IU in Jinan, PRC, in 2007. I met him when I had a day off work and went to a building which had been listed as an education centre for young people with a club radio station attached, but sadly had no such station any longer. However, I gave the administration my QSL card with the name of my hotel written on it in Chinese, and he turned up later.

BA4IU, who told me he was a former police officer and gave me permission to photograph and publish his collection,

invited me to his home to view his collection of transceivers, and I went with the assistance of the local radio club, to whom I had written previously.



Andy Thomas G0SFJ with BA4IU

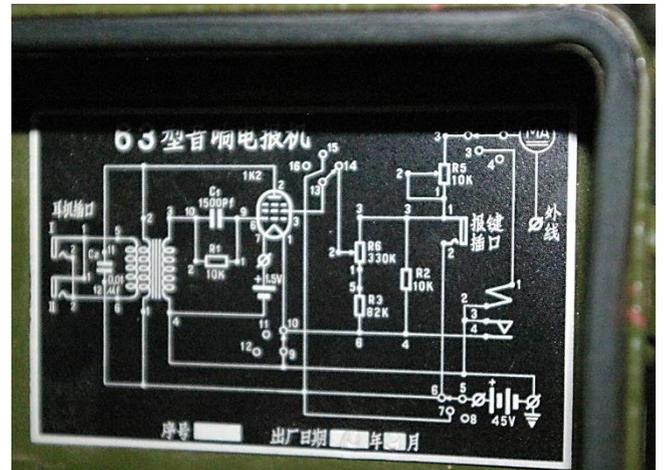
The following is a set of photographs of various pieces of equipment seen in BA4IU's storehouse, beginning with a general view of some of his impressive collection.



Some of BA4IU's storehouse



A heavy manpack from 1950, which was packed with a Morse key and a microphone



A valve-based piece of Chinese 'green kit' with the circuit on the side



One of the sets on the storehouse floor



This set looks similar, in Andy's eyes, to the Russian R-108 series

BA4IU also had collected a number of muddy-green kit military radios of manpack size, a Russian emergency set with crank handles, a field telephone, a teleprinter, radios for trains, a TV downconverter from Russian Molniya satellites, and a domestic radio receiver brand named 'Orion' in English.

I cannot find BA4IU any more on QRZ.com and wonder if he is now a SK. Also, there seems to be a similar collection opened up nearby in the mountains of Shandong province.

Andy Thomas G0SFJ

[With thanks to Stuart McKinnon G0TBI for this contribution from G0SFJ – Ed]

Meter repairs

By chance I met a gentleman who is an instrument engineer repairing and manufacturing bespoke moving coil meters. As this topic has arisen in the News Sheet in the past, when Members have reported o/c movements, I thought it may be of interest to know all is probably not lost when this firm can possibly repair defective movements. The company is Benchmark Instruments Ltd. of Ludlow, details of which can be found on the net: www.benchmarkinstruments.com.

Stuart Atkinson G3YPS

Wartime in the Vale

The following photographs have been chosen to give a feel of the event whilst not including all the different types of activity which took place.



Stuart McKinnon G0TBI

**Are you listening?
Bletchley Park 5th–6th October 2013**

This year, the ‘radio’ event at Bletchley Park is called “Are you listening?” and will celebrate communication through Bletchley Park’s history – from the Post Office and pigeon carriers to radio waves and the first televisions, right up to the age of computers and the internet. VMARS is being invited to put on a working display of classical transmitting and receiving equipment. Any Member who would like to contribute should contact either Stuart McKinnon G0TBI or any Committee Member with their offer of equipment so that we may have some idea regarding the structure of our display which will be housed in the marquee on the lawn. Further details will be published in the July and August News Sheets.

Bronek Wedzicha M0DAF

Sending in articles, news items, letters and advertisements for VMARS Publications

Please send copy to Colin Guy, G4DDI, by post or e-mail,

7 Herrick Court,
Clinton Park,
Tattershall, Lincs. LN4 4QU
Tel 01526 344715 g4ddi@vmars.org.uk

The copy deadline for the next issue of the News Sheet is **15th July**. For articles for the next issue of Signal the deadline is **9th August**, but copy would be appreciated as far in advance as possible.

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Saturday AM Net-Controller’s Rota

Date	1 st op	2 nd op	3 rd op
20 th Jul	G8AQN	M0YMK	G3XGW
27 th Jul	M0YMK	G3XGW	M0TCM
3 rd Aug	G3XGW	M0TCM	M0DAF
10 th Aug	M0TCM	M0DAF	G0TBI
17 th Aug	M0DAF	G0TBI	G4GEN
24 th Aug	G0TBI	G4GEN	G4BQF
31 st Aug	G4GEN	G4BQF	GW8TBG

Committee Notices

Applications for Membership

We wish to welcome the following new applicants for VMARS Membership:

Name, Callsign (Region)	Interests
JL Luyckx ON4ALU Erpe-Mere, Belgium	Military wireless equipment. WWII communications equipment.
AK Barron G3YYH Andoversford Gloucestershire	WWII radio.
M Britton Oxfordshire	
K Kearns Essex	Clansman, Racal, Eddystone.
TJT Thomas MW3UJN Newcastle Emlyn Carmarthenshire	Great interest in Clansman radio systems.
N Gilder Hitchin, Hertfordshire	WWII HF systems. Clandestine equipment. Tape recorders.
CA Mullett Welling, Kent	Family Member. Partner of Pete Shepherd. Support to VMARS at events and general interest.
PA Bannon Worcester	Family Member. Wife of Peter Bannon.

[Membership rules require names of applicants for Membership to be published, before they are formally accepted as Members. This allows existing Members to object, if they wish. If you want to object to any of the above, please write to our Hon Sec, John Keeley – Ed.]

Letter to the Editor

From Peter Norris G4VUN

First, I would like to pass on my thanks regarding the AGM. A day in the sun, at last!

A photo of my station is enclosed (see front cover of this News Sheet). The gear left to right is: KW107 ATU that I have modified with an extra coil that works down to 160 m, the ‘modern’ set is a TRIO TS520se about 35 years old now. The set on top is a KW160 top band transmitter with a low power top band AM transmitter underneath, the receiver is an HRO and the silver object on top of the HRO is the TX/RX relay. Also shown on the photo is the TU6B I use as an ATU.

I have a ‘160 m’ Command transmitter plus receiver and a BC348 receiver. All are used on 160 m AM. The aerial is a 160 m half wave doublet, but quite low in height. During the winter nights I have worked OZ1KGV Falster Isle in the Baltic Sea, Gerry LA0HK and all around the British Isles.

I started as a school boy SWL in the 1960s with R109, R107, CR100, etc., all that pocket money could run to. I operated a KW2000 in 1996 on 160 m. My interest in amateur radio had started to wane but now I am mad-keen! Radio is exclusively a hobby for me as I have no technical background; talk about self-training, HI.

I must say that I look forward to the VMARS News Sheet and Signal, and I look out for 160 m AM contacts. I do venture onto other bands, e.g, QRP working on 21 Mc/s when conditions are good. Everybody I have met in VMARS has been very helpful.

Advertisements

FOR SALE: Clansman radio equipment for sale.

A complete package buy; NO SPLITTING of items listed. All must be purchased in one job lot. Ill health and on-going old age has forced to give up my portable amateur radio activities.

1x PRC 320 complete and modified for LSB also including an adaptor for attaching to 'gooseneck' called Coupler Dummy Antenna which enables a co-ax cable to connect to the PRC320. It works very well.

The ancillaries for this set including bag are:

2x headgears (Infantry and vehicle), 1x handset, 1x single transducer, remote handset with pouch and some Don10 cable, presell switch and lead, 1x respirator mike, 1x audio extension lead, 1x free standing loudspeaker with (hard to find) cable, 1x vehicle loudspeaker, 1x hand generator, batteries: 1x 24 V 3.3 AHC and 1x 24 V 1.1 AHC, 1x Bergen carrier bag, 1x carrier frame, 1x whip antenna, 2.4 m rod vehicle antennas with bag, 1x dipole antenna kit with bag (these Kevlars are getting scarce), 1x battery extension lead, 1x battery lead for connecting external battery (vehicle type), 1x counterpoise (the green wire type on a CROSS spool).

1x PRC344 complete with battery 24 V 3.3 AHC and in good working order including the hard to find 1x handset, 1x BLADE antenna and 1x Bob Marley antenna,

2x PRC349 complete and in working order with 2x antennas, 2x batteries (lithium and pack of Clansman alkaline), 2 x headsets, ancillaries in bag, 2x new spare headsets.

1x PRC352 complete and in good working order, 2 x whip antennas, 1x telescopic antenna, 1x wire antenna, 1x SURF, 2x TURF, handset, light weight carrier frame, 1x Bergen carrier bag.

1 x 5.4 m mast kit complete.

VHF ground spike antenna kit complete with bag.

VHF elevated ground spike antenna kit complete with bag.

Test set condition and accessories complete with manual.

Test set harness complete with connectors and with bag and manual.

2x Earth bond resistance test set complete with bags and 1x rare to find manual

1x Clansman charger, 230 VAC input with switchable 28 VDC or 14 V output complete with leads to 1x 14 V DCCU Charger

1x RAF Charger 28 V output with mains lead.

A few of vehicle harness boxes, plus odd straps for bags and frames. Spare handset and other bits and pieces.

All come, where appropriate, with manuals which have all been downloaded (from VMARS Site), printed off and almost all of them placed in clip files including the Infantry Training Volume VIII Pamphlet No. 4 Part 4 which lists everything to do with Clansman. Also a book on the Clansman originated and published by the MOD prior to the Clansman launch.

All the equipment upon purchase was carefully cleaned particularly the headsets and handsets.

All the gear is at my alternative address in mid-Wales located at Llangyniew, near Welshpool, Powys. A complete package buy NO SPLITTING of items listed. All must be

purchased in one job lot. The sale asking price is £450 OVNO

Brian Podmore G3INQ

I am on QRZ.com and contact details are given in the current List of Members

FOR SALE: R1155A with DF section £75.

Mains power unit for same £45.

Bathtub Morse key £40.

DF meter £35.

Plugs to fit 'J' switch £5 each

Mic/phone drop leads £5 each

Tool kit for Cannon plugs/sockets 21 pieces £40.

Or ONO on any item.

J. Roper

9 St Benets Avenue, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 9HT

Day 01692 402134 Evening 01692 403768

FOR SALE: FLDx 500 SSB transmitter £90.

Marconi signal generators 144H £30 and 1066B (FM) £60.

WWII? VHF wavemeter, Muirhead S/M magic eye indicator mains powered in neat case £25.

RF/IF? unit from Marconi diversity receiver rack include superb S/M dial on 19 rack chassis make HB VFO/TX/ £20 I'm in Newquay but collection Bournemouth area possible if no rush.

Clive Young M0BGA 01637 875848 rcry100@yahoo.com

FOR SALE: TURF 250 W (the aerial tuner that is part of the VRC322 setup) in good working order, usual minor paint chips but looks nice. £125 collection only (very heavy!) Collection can be arranged in Tattershall (Lincs), Nottingham or anywhere in between.

Colin Guy G4DDI 07824 356189 g4ddi@vmars.org.uk

FOR SALE: Original PSU for TCS series TX/RX. No mods. £250.

To be collected from York.

Bronek Wedzicha M0DAF 01904 708704

b.wedzicha@btinternet.com

WANTED: National 1-10 or 1-10A receiver and coils.

Ken G3XSJ 01453 84501

WANTED: Wanted Marconi H16 radio for the restoration of a 1953 Riley 2.5 L police car from the Surrey police force.

Paul G3VPT 01603 898715

paulburgess68@btinternet.com

Another photo from Wartime in the Vale

