Bottles

Computers are still a major factor in my life at the moment. I am always amazed at the uses, I am finding out about them, from solving crosswords to reproducing old photos (which I will be able to enhance more when I get a paint brush programme loaded on to the computer). There seems to be no limit to what they can do. Perhaps one day I may be able get round to starting and finishing some of the jobs I had started on before I became hooked on computers, like house wiring, decorating, etc. I shall get round to them some day, in the mean time looking on ahead, to September, there are 3 of my interests all happening on the same day, 17th Sept. the vintage communications fair which should have been on the 12th November has been moved forward to 17th.It is also the weekend meeting and A G M of the GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY and the ORGAN CONCERT at SHREWSBURY, it is a problem at times having so many interests. But one event which was clear, was the ELVASTON CASTLE RALLY on JUNE 11th. For which the weather remained dry, the layout was changed to what it has been in previous years and its always great looking round the many stalls for what few bargains I had decided to purchase on the day. I did not see too many S T A R S members in the large numbers which always get along to this popular rally. I found some had travelled some distance, from Ireland, Lincoln, London & the South Coast. I was beginning to think that AMATEUR Radio was in decline, but not with the numbers at ELVASTON, never the less LEN & MYSELF along with OUR XYL's had a good day out. Which was like the previous day when GLENYS & MYSELF had a look round DUDLEY COUNCIL HOUSE it was a open weekend 10th 11th JUNE.

Now on to the JUNE meeting of S T A R S where I learned some more about COMPUTERS which I never knew before and another mode of communication with AMATEUR RADIO {DIGIPAN} which I had read about in RADCOM but never given too much thought to, which like PACKET & SSTV its the MODERN approach to AMATEUR COMMUNICATIONS using COMMPUTERS. Very many thanks to WAYNE, GORDON & JAMES, also BOB G4EEM with whom they were in contact with to help with the DEMONSTRATION which was put together at short notice because STUART G0TBI was unable to give his talk on EX M O D sets. So I have other ideas to add on to the computer. I often wonder how I ever found time to go out to work with all the interests and jobs I have planned.

JUNE 24th was another day when I should have been in at least two places weekend meeting at BLACKPOOL of The GEORGE FORMBY SOCIETY & OPEN DAY at THE ROBIN WOODS CENTRE. I was able be there on VIDEO which I taken over the past 7 months at the monthly meetings of the STOURBRIDGE BRANCH of the G F S, on that weekend GLENYS, ANDREW & MYSELF were 217 miles away in SUNDERLAND for our NEPHEWS WEDDING travelling on FRI 23THD & returning SUN 25th. It was a great weekend meeting different people and even had chance to go on AIR and to join the local 2M net. G0BNQ, G7KPC & G6BIA [wk all GEORDIE net] 145.375 they also have net on 40 metres, It was a advantage being on the top floor of a three floor guest house on the sea front with a full panoramic view of SUNDERLAND BA. It was a great weekend. Finally my thanks to ALEC G8GF for HIS letter about KEN BASTERFIELD well that's all this side of the summer break see you all in SEPT with some more reports.

BEST 73s

MALCOLM G8BOP Roving Reporter.

G3ORI GOES BACK TO HIS ROOTS

Quite obviously, any callsign in the G3... series goes back quite a way. But although established in Stourbridge for over 20 years, the original G3ORI station was set up in another area, in 1960, and in a particularly unusual location which hardly warranted the description of “shack”.....

As the youthful recipient of the callsign G3ORI (who then even had hair worth the mention), I was a founder member of the Stratford-upon-Avon Radio Club - and for that matter am still an Honorary Life Member. So when I spotted in the Club pages of “Radcom” that the Stratford Club were putting on a Special Event Station at “Charlecote”, my attention was immediately grabbed, and I had to find out more. Let me explain.....

My dad worked for the National Trust at a place called Charlecote Park, about 5 miles from Stratford. This is a pretty impressive Elizabethan stately home, set in an attractive deer park - where tradition has it that some local rascal called William Shakespeare had been caught poaching the deer. My dad’s job was looking after the park and its livestock (though the W.S. poaching incident was a bit before his time). This meant, however, that we lived in a flat in the property, above the coach house actually, and you can now appreciate that this placed certain unusual restrictions on the sort of aerial farm which could be installed in such an impressive location! In fact, all the usual requirements for aerials were quite unattainable, since the number one consideration was that they should not be seen. The members of the public paying their half crowns (!) for admission would not expect to see a 3-element beam sprouting over the 16th century roofs!

Fortuitously, over our flat was a vast, empty room which extended into the roof space, and already contained our TV aerials. This was exactly 66 feet long, so obviously it cried out for a 40m dipole, and that was what went in. One band sorted. The other bands had to make do with a long wire of indeterminate length, which made its way through the draughty gap in the ill-fitting frame of my bedroom’s ancient leaded light window, up to an anchor point at a window of the vast room above, and then diagonally across the timber yard outside to terminate on an ornamental carved stone pillar next to the Tudor gatehouse. This used thin wire of multi-stranded steel construction (for strength), with a single copper conductor to improve its electrical properties; practically invisible unless you knew what you were looking for. A counterpoise earth wire descended through another gap in the window frame, and was buried in the yard beneath - and G3ORI was in business.

Ah - but that is all history. So, following up the bit in Radcom, I discovered that the Special Event Station was on Bank Holiday Monday, May 29th. Apparently, this was the National Trust “Family Day”, and the Radio Display was just one of the attractions alongside a rally of classic Humber cars, medieval knights and wenches in costume, etc. Nothing like that in my dad’s day. I found the station established in a horse box alongside the gatehouse, in the shadow of the same ancient pillar which had supported my venerable long wire all those years ago. There were even a couple of my fellow Club members from those founding days: G3OOQ and G8UKT, as well as some newcomers in attendance. They had strung a 140 foot dipole between the roof of the gatehouse, and one of the trees and were busy working around the UK and into Europe, mostly on 40m.

Evidently, the antenna was allowed to be visible on this occasion! The callsign for the station was GB0NTC (National Trust Charlecote). Did any STARS members manage a QSO with them?

I found it a somewhat weird experience being immersed in amateur radio again at the very spot where my early contacts had been made, but it brought back the memories of my Heathkit DX100 firing its 150 watts (well 150 watts of input, any-way) into the invisible wire which launched my signals around the globe from my historic and stately QTH!

Robert G3ORI

YOUR NEW SECRETARY TO WHOM ALL FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IS: -

2E1HLT Tom Edwards,

9 Heath Farm Road,

Norton,

Stourbridge,

West Midlands,

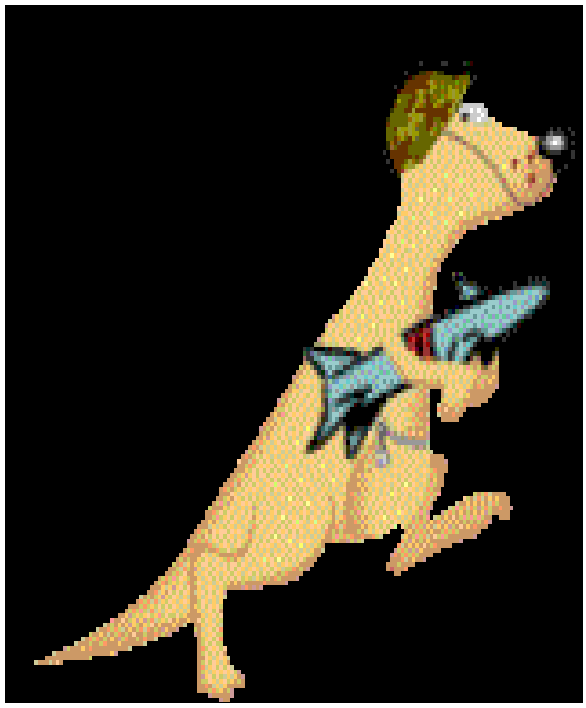
DY8 8AX.

01384 374902

Email tomedwards@iname.com

- This is employee has reached rock bottom and started to dig.
- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiousity.
- Works well when under constant supervision and conrnered like a rat in a trap.
- When she opens her mouth, it is only to change feet.
- He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
- This employee should go far, the sooner she starts, the better.
- He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier.
- He has a a knack for making strangers immediately.
- Donated her brain to science before she had finished using it.
- Has two brains: one is lost and the other is out looking for it.
- If you gave him a penny for his thoughts you would get change.
- Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he gargled.

reality simulators



The reuse of some object-oriented code has caused tactical headaches for Australia's armed forces. As virtual reality simulators assume a larger role in helicopter combat training, programmers have gone to great lengths to increase the realism of their scenarios, including detailed landscapes and - in the case of the Northern Territory's Operation Phoenix - herds of Kangaroos (since disturbed animals might well give away a helicopter’s position).

The head of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation's Land Operations/Simulation division reportedly instructed developers the local marsupials' movements and reactions to helicopters.
Being efficient programmers, they just reappropriated some code originally used to model infantry detachment reactions under the same stimuli, changed the mapped icon from a soldier to a Kangaroo, and increased the figures' speed of movement

Eager to demonstrate their flying skills for some visiting American pilots, the hotshot Aussies "buzzed" the virtual kangaroos in low flight during simulation.

The Kangaroos scattered, as predicted, and the visiting Americans nodded appreciatively - then did a double take as the Kangaroos reappeared from behind a hill and launched a barrage of Stinger missiles at the hapless helicopter. Apparently the programmers had forgotten to remove that part of infantry coding!

StARS /p on the sheep walks

Virus on your mobile phone?

There's no question of whether a mobile phone virus will appear - the question is when

For any hacker intending to write the first mobile phone virus, there are many obstacles to overcome. The modern GSM cellphone is a smart terminal on a complicated network with lots of security features, but at heart it is a computer that can download and run software -- get viral code in there, and you've cracked it.

The key to GSM viruses is the SMS or Short Message Service. This is the mechanism most users know as text messaging -- a way of passing notes of up to 160 bytes or so to be displayed on a friend's phone -- but is also used by network operators to send applications, security updates and other information to the SIM or Subscriber Identity Module. The SIM holds the phone's number and ancillary information, but it also contains a processor and memory. A standard, called the SIM Toolkit, defines how applications can be written for transferral to the phone and such applications have full access to dialling functions and phone book entries: all you need to write a self-replicating virus.

However, it's not just a matter of writing a virus to the toolkit specifications and sending it to a random phone via SMS. There are various layers of security to prevent this -- your phone will only be able to generate ordinary text SMSs, the network will be set up not to forward other kinds originating from phones, and there are encryption, digital signature and other checks built into the GSM standard that defines how a phone should verify and react to an SMS that comes bearing application data. If all this works perfectly, it will be practically impossible to create and distribute a mobile phone virus.

But the real world is rarely perfect. Many of the security and protection mechanisms depend on the inviolability of the SIM card, and SIM cards can and have been tampered with. The network is also accessible via Internet to SMS gateways: although these are ostensibly set up with the same limitations as phone-originated SMS messages, they are a point of vulnerability. It's not known how secure these systems actually are: although the design as specified in the GSM system specifications looks safe, implementation errors aren't unknown. There is no current approval process for phone security, unlike the various classifications available for servers and other computing devices.

This situation will get worse. As phones get more intelligent and programmable, the potential to write viruses that bypass the SIM security altogether becomes greater. Imagine a phone that happens to run a full-featured Exchange client with scripting facility: that would be just as vulnerable to the Love Bug as were PCs. Phones are acquiring Java, EPOC, Linux and other very flexible and capable operating systems, and complex applications that run alongside. Without any official security testing to ensure the quality of phone software design and implementation, there's no question of whether a mobile phone virus will appear. The question is when.

Perpetual Motion

An American magazine held a competition, inviting its readers to submit new scientific theories on ANY subject.

Below is the winner:

(Subject: Perpetual Motion)

When a cat is dropped, it always lands on its feet, and when toast is dropped, it always lands buttered side down. Therefore, if a slice of toast is strapped to a cat's back, buttered side up, and the animal is then dropped, the two opposing forces will cause it to hover, spinning inches above the ground. If enough toast-laden felines were used, they could form the basis of a high-speed monorail system.

and then this reply from one of the recipients

I've been thinking about this cat/toast business for a while. In the buttered toast case, it's the butter that causes it to land buttered side down - it doesn't have to be toast, the theory works equally well with Jacob's crackers. So to save money you just miss out the toast - and butter the cats. Also, should there be an imbalance between the effects of cat and butter, there are other substances that have a stronger affinity for carpet.

Probability of carpet impact is determined by the following simple formula:

$p = s * t(t)/t(c)$

where p is the probability of carpet impact s is the "stain" value of the toast-covering substance - an indicator of the effectiveness of the toast topping in permanently staining the carpet. Chicken Tikka Masala, for example, has a very high s value, while the s value of water is zero.

t(c) and t(t) indicate the tone of the carpet and topping - the value of p being strongly related to the relationship between the colour of the carpet and topping, as even chicken tikka masala won't cause a permanent and obvious stain if the carpet is the same colour.

So it is obvious that the probability of carpet impact is maximised if you use chicken tikka masala and a white carpet - in fact this combination gives a p value of one, which is the same as the probability of a cat landing n its feet.

Therefore a cat with chicken tikka masala on its back will be certain to hover in mid air, while there could be problems with buttered toast as the toast may fall off the cat, causing a terrible monorail crash resulting in nauseating images of members of the royal family visiting accident victims in hospital, and politicians saying it wouldn't have happened if their party was in power as there would have been more investment in cat-toast glue research.

Therefore it is in the interests not only of public safety but also public sanity if the buttered toast on cats idea is scrapped, to be replaced by a monorail powered by cats smeared with chicken tikka masala floating above a rail made from white shag pile carpet.