**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE BRAINTREE AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY**

*A Collection of Fascinating Facts, compiled by Richard De La Rue, G4FJC*

**1. HOW IT ALL STARTED**

The following is an extract from “B&D ARS a short history of personalities and events” by Fred, G6HWA in the May 1985 BARSCOM magazine:

*“Before 1975 a small group of Radio Amateurs and SWL’s used to meet at each other’s homes on a Sunday morning. The idea of a Club was born when it was realised that one particular shack and hospitality was being overworked. A check in the Call Book revealed a number of potential members, and with the opportunity of a room at the Community Centre, a letter was sent to everyone who may have been interested.*

*It was thus, the founder members Roy White BRS 34436, Dave Penny G3PEN, and Nick Shepherd G8ADZ were at the first meeting of the Braintree and Bocking Amateur Radio Club on 19th May 1975 to greet some thirteen enthusiasts who had come to see what it was all about. With the founder members as a caretaker committee of Secretary, Treasurer, and Chairman respectively, various activities were organised over the next few months including RAE and Morse Classes. At the 2nd June 1975 meeting it was decided to call the Club the Braintree and District Amateur Radio Club.”*

The invitation to the inaugural meeting of the club is shown below:

A paper with text on it

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Attendees at this meeting were:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Roy White | BRS 34436 |  | Ron Webb |  |
| Nick Shepherd | G8ADZ |  | Xim King-Cook | BRS 34643 |
| Dave Penny | G3PEN |  | Brian Ely | G3TGB |
| Roy Tingay | G3OPG |  | Rob Gill | G8DSU |
| Jim Frost | G8HCF |  | Peter Nicholls | |
| Chris Snell |  |  | Geoff Nicholls | |
| Trevor Turner | BRS 34595 |  | J Faulkner |  |
| Peter West | G4ADG |  | Peter Palmer | G3XTB |

As reported by the local Braintree and Witham Times newspaper, the first ‘club talk’ was held at the Community Centre in June 1975 and was given by Nyall Davies, G8IBR) on the design and construction of his 2m receiver. Apparently, the talk included a demo using an indoor aerial which received signals from Kent – an impressive achievement even by today’s standards!

At the September 1977 AGM the name of the club was changed to “Braintree and District Amateur Radio Society (BARS)”.

In 1976 Harold King, G8YCG began distributing a ‘News Sheet’ to all members, which were produced using coloured ink pens and no photocopiers – that really is dedication! In November 1980 following a competition to design a new cover, these were replaced by ‘BARSCOM’, a new, printed club magazine.

In March 1980 there was an EGM to amend the club constitution. There was also a proposal to wind up the club as it was becoming difficult to find members willing to help run it, but this was held over to the next AGM. Happily, the club fortunes improved and it wasn’t carried forward.

**2. CHANGES OVER THE YEARS**

The following has been compiled from information mainly obtained from the club BARSCOM magazine and AGM minutes. Additional reference was made to the club scrapbook that was kept since the start of the club and summarised in the last version that was put together by Keith, 2E0ARS in May 1998.

The membership of the club as reported to the AGM has varied from a maximum of 76 in 1982, down to a minimum of 23 in 2000. It has been relatively stable at around 30 members on average over the last 20 years. Jim Frost, G0DCR was at the first inaugural meeting and is the only one who is still a member today.

The club meetings were held on Mondays at the Braintree Community Centre until September 5th 1984. It then moved to St Peters Church Hall in Braintree, then moved back to the Braintree community centre in September 1985. In August 1993 a move to Braintree Hockey Club was approved at an EGM and the venue moved in October 1993. It was moved to Tuesdays at St Peters Church Hall in April 2017 and club 2m nets were also changed to Tuesdays to align with that.

Raffles have been held at club meetings since December 1979. The club’s first JOTA station was in 1979. A construction competition has been held and the associated trophy has been awarded in memory of club member Rob Taylor, G8ZHF since 1980. Club records are incomplete regarding winners but Howard, G6LXK has won the competition a record 6 times. The following are the winners from 1993 onwards:

**BADARS CONSTRUCTION COMPETITION WINNERS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1993 | David G3PEN | 2009 | Stephen G8YVR |
| 1994 | Harry G0GWN | 2010 | Howard G6LXK |
| 1995 | Colin G3UGG | 2011 | Howard G6LXK |
| 1996 | Colin G3UGG | 2012 | Edwin G0LPO |
| 1997 | Melvin G0EMK | 2013 | Howard G6LXK |
| 1998 | Keith 2E0ARS | 2014 | Edwin G0LPO |
| 1999 | Melvin G0EMK | 2015 | Howard G6LXK |
| 2000 | Derek G0IZW | 2016 | Derek G3MMA |
| 2001 | Melvin G0EMK | 2017 | Mike G8DJO |
| 2002 | Colin G3UGG | 2018 | John G6LJF |
| 2003 | Colin G3UGG | 2019 | John G6LJF |
| 2004 | Ben M3EUO | 2021 | (Not held) |
| 2005 | Derek G3MMA | 2022 | Mike G8DJO |
| 2006 | Keith G4MIU | 2023 | (Not held) |
| 2007 | Geoff G0BYH | 2024 | Howard G6LXK |
| 2008 | Howard G6LXK |  |  |

A Founders Trophy has been awarded since the early days although club records are from 1986 only, with Melvin, G0EMK being awarded this 5 times. The Harold King award, nominated by the editor of Barscom, has been made since 1997 and a trophy to replace the original certificate was donated by Tony, G0IAG (Harold’s Son) in 2016. David, G3PEN and Geoff, G1WRH have both been a recipient of this award four times. Howard, G6LXK won all three awards in 2011 for the only time in the clubs history!

**BADARS FOUNDERS TROPHY HOLDERS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1986 | Bob Willicombe | 2005 | Melvin G0EMK |
| 1987 | Nick G4UTO | 2006 | Geoff G0BYH |
| 1988 | Bill G3GRT | 2007 | Melvin G0EMK |
| 1989 | ? | 2008 | Melvin G0EMK |
| 1990 | David Clark G0KQV | 2009 | Martin M3MAO |
| 1991 | Margaret Andrews | 2010 | Keith 2E0ARS |
| 1992 | John G0EOE | 2011 | Howard G6LXK |
| 1993 | Melvin G0EMK | 2012 | Colin G3UGG |
| 1994 | John G0EOE | 2013 | Dave G0DEC |
| 1995 | Norma G0FPW | 2014 | Tony G0IAG |
| 1996 | Melvin G0EMK | 2015 | Dave G0DEC |
| 1997 | Colin G3UGG | 2016 | Edwin G0LPO |
| 1998 | David G3PEN | 2017 | Dave G0DEC |
| 1999 | Dave G0DEC | 2018 | Edwin G0LPO |
| 2000 | Colin G3UGG | 2019 | Geoff G1WRH |
| 2001 | John M5AJB | 2021 | Brian G3TGB |
| 2002 | M0UTH | 2022 | Richard G4FJC |
| 2003 | G8NPF | 2023 | Mike G8DJO |
| 2004 | Keith G4MIU | 2024 | Len G4LBJ |

**BADARS HAROLD KING AWARD HOLDERS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1997 | Danny G3YXJ | 2011 | Howard G6LXK |
| 1998 | Keith 2E0ARS | 2012 | Derek G3MMA |
| 1999 | Danny GM3YXJ | 2013 | Geoff G1WRH |
| 2000 | David G3PEN | 2014 | Tony G0IAG |
| 2001 | Brian G3TGB | 2015 | Edwin G0LPO |
| 2002 | Colin G3UGG | 2016 | Geoff G1WRH |
| 2003 | Danny GM3YXJ | 2017 | Geoff G1WRH |
| 2004 | David G3PEN | 2018 | Geoff G1WRH |
| 2005 | Stephen G8YVR | 2019 | Brian G3TGB |
| 2006 | Geoff G0BYH | 2021 | Richard G4FJC |
| 2007 | Colin G3UGG | 2022 | David G8LHD |
| 2008 | David G3PEN | 2023 | Gary M7PTV |
| 2009 | David G3PEN | 2024 | Howard G6LXK |
| 2010 | Derek G3MMA |  |  |

The first club callsign was G4JXG in 1980, followed by G6BRH in 1981 which was licenced to Melvin, G0EMK and used for VHF. In 2000 club member Alan Robinson who had lost his sight and moved to a care home, offered his callsign G3XG to the club. It was agreed at an EGM to give up the G4JXG club call and use G3XG, which was licenced to Melvin, G0EMK in November 2000. Due to licencing changes, the club needed a callsign in its own name and in 2020 obtained the M0XG callsign.

The club set up its own website and a Webmaster (Ted Harrison G8NPF) was first appointed at the 2006 AGM. Whilst not a formal position in the constitution, this was clearly an important role for the club and Ted was succeeded by Martin M3MAO in 2008, Geoff G0BYH in 2010, Colin M6NCU in 2015, Edwin in 2020 and Richard G4FJC in 2021.

Like all clubs the Covid pandemic had a major impact on the club and all club church hall meetings were cancelled between April 2020 and September 2021, although some outdoors events were held from June 2021 onwards. The following notice from the Committee in the April 2020 Barscom set out the actions taken by the club:

*“As all our club meetings and activities are now cancelled until better times we are going to hold an informal net on 145.375 on the Tuesdays where we would have a club meeting. These will commence at 20:00 local time, in addition to this we also hold an informal net/call in each weekday morning on 145.375 at 10:00 local time. This Welfare Net is just for a quick check that all is OK and a natter if the fancy takes you and is already proving to be very popular with members. BADARS Club Net will also continue to operate at normal scheduled times”*

The Welfare Net was held daily at 10am from March 2020 and after about two months became the Welfare Club with nets Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. They were very popular and beneficial for club members and when they formally ended in March 2022, it was decided to continue to have an informal club net on Saturday mornings and they are still going!

Barscom of course continued to be published and the club held its first Zoom videoconferencing meeting in January 2021 and our first online club meeting presentation was held in February 2021. Zoom was used again in May 2021 and has since become a regular feature in the club.

**3. CLUB COMMITTEE**

The club has had three officers undertaking the roles of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer for every year since its formation. There have been a number of additional roles and non-post committee members over the years and these have not always been filled. The role of Barscom Editor is technically not a committee role but it is explicitly referenced in the club’s constitution.

Longest serving Officers of the club are:

* Dave, G0DEC who was Chairman for 21 years, including 12 consecutive years from 2000.
* John, M5AJB who was Secretary for 20 years, including 15 consecutive years from 2001.
* Fred, G1CCW Treasurer for 8 years (Edwin, G0LPO had 7 consecutive years from 2008).

Regarding serving on the committee in any capacity, between 1983 and 2018 Melvin, G0EMK spent 34 years almost continuously between 1983 and 2018, apart from 2000 and 2014. John, M5AJB spent the most consecutive years at 27 (1992 – 2018).

The club AGM was originally held in September but moved to May in 1983 and has been ever since, apart from a cancelled AGM in 2020 and the 2021 AGM moved to October, due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The club held an EGM in May 1991 after being unable to fill all the required committee posts at the normal AGM. The club was at risk of being dissolved and three volunteers (Tony King, Roy White and Ann King) saved the club from folding by undertaking the key roles until other volunteers could be found.

The name of the club was formally changed to “Braintree Amateur Radio and Computer Communications Club (BAR&CCC) at an EGM on 7th August 2000, following a proposal at the AGM earlier in the year. This was short lived however, as it was changed back to BADARS at an EGM on 5th November 2001 – and the whole country celebrated by letting off fireworks!

The following tables show the holders of the three officer roles since the formation of the club:

**BADARS CLUB CHAIRMAN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1975 | Nyall Davies G8IBR |
| 1976 | Ron Webb |
| 1977 | Nick Shepherd G8ADZ |
| 1978 | John Hollis G8ION |
| 1979 | Stan Pateman G8WPO |
| 1980 | Stan Pateman G8WPO |
| 1981 | Bill Taylor G3GRT |
| 1982 | Geoff Nicholls |
| 1983 | Cyril Weller G4ONH |
| 1984 | John Saunders G3OLU |
| 1985-1987 | Melvin Kendall G6THE |
| 1988 | Pat Penny G6TAF |
| 1989 | Mark Clarke G3CQL |
| 1990 | Derek Brades G0IZW |
| 1991 | Tony King G0IAG |
| 1992-1994 | Dave Penny G3PEN |
| 1995-1997 | Dave Willicombe G0DEC |
| 1998-1999 | Melvin Kendall G0EMK |
| 2000-2011 | Dave Willicombe G0DEC |
| 2012-2013 | Howard Davis G6LXK |
| 2014-2015 | Tony King G0IAG |
| 2016-2018 | John Button M5AJB |
| 2019-2024 | Dave Willicombe G0DEC |

**BADARS CLUB SECRETARY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1975 | Dave Penny G3PEN |
| 1976 | Harold King |
| 1977 | Stan Pateman G8WPO |
| 1978 | Andrew Meade G8KQE |
| 1979 | Dave Boniface G3ZXX |
| 1980 | Alan Heritage G4EOG |
| 1981 | Alan Williams G6CIV |
| 1982 | Mike Jones G6DFZ |
| 1983 | Pat Penny G6TAF |
| 1984 | Leslie Whitehead G6XJC |
| 1985 | (Vacant) |
| 1986-1989 | Derek Brades G1NBV/G0IZW |
| 1990-1991 | Ann King |
| 1992 | Eddy Scherer |
| 1993-1997 | John Button G1WQQ |
| 1998-2001 | Keith Farthing 2E0ARS/M0CLO |
| 2001-2015 | John Button M5AJB |
| 2016-2020 | Edwin Hume G0LPO |
| 2021-2024 | Geoff Nurse G1GNQ |

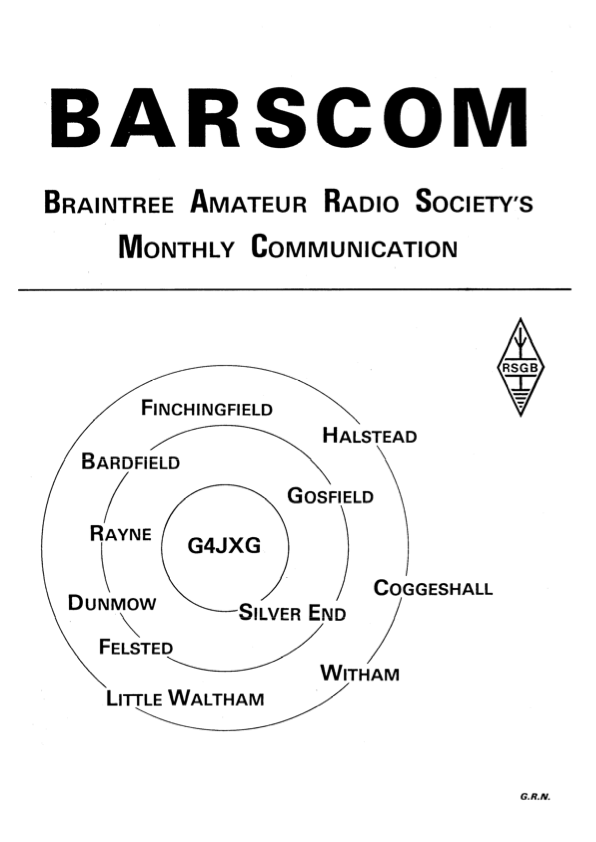
**BADARS CLUB TREASURER**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1975 | Peter West G4ADG |
| 1976 | Dave Baldwin |
| 1977 | Andrew Meade G8KQE |
| 1978 | Nick Shepherd G8ADZ |
| 1979 | Andrew Meade G8KQE |
| 1980 | Bill Hayward G8WNN |
| 1981 | Harold King G8YCG |
| 1982 | Cyril Weller G8ZQD |
| 1983 | Vi Weller |
| 1984 | Jeff Roberts G6OIX |
| 1985 | Richard Bullimore G4VOT |
| 1986-1987 | Mark Clarke G1HIU |
| 1988 | Tony King G0IAG |
| 1988 | Mark Clarke G1HIU |
| 1989 | Ann King |
| 1990-1991 | Fred Hazelden G1CCW |
| 1992-1994 | David Clarke G0KQV |
| 1995-2000 | Fred Hazelden G1CCW |
| 2001-2003 | Colin Greenaway G3UGG |
| 2004-2007 | Dave Penny G3PEN |
| 2008-2014 | Edwin Hume G0LPO |
| 2015-2020 | Neville Broadbent G8CDG |
| 2021-2024 | Colin Johnson M6NCU |

**4. BARSCOM**

Barscom, and the newsletters that proceeded the magazine, have been an important part of keeping the club together throughout its existence and is a treasure trove of its history and activities. So, the following history of the Barscom cover design is a tribute to the editors and club members that have kept it, and the club, alive over the years.

A competition was held in July 1980 to design the front cover for Barscom. Geoff Nicholls was the winner at the October 1980 club meeting and won a gift voucher, however lasting fame was his real prize! The very first front cover for the November 1980 Barscom is shown below:



The cover design of Barscom had number of changes over the years, starting as soon as April 1982 when it was ‘jazzed up’ to coincide with an updated magazine format by the then Editor Bob Willicombe.

There were quite a few playful and seasonal overlays between 1983 and 1984, under various Editors, but the cover was changed back to the original first edition design in 1985, plus the addition of the club callsigns.

November 1986 saw another change to just use the heading text, not the graphic, but the graphic reappeared in the September 1987 edition! In September 1988 the Editor, Bob Willicombe, introduced a new version of the original design, which fitted into the top of the first page, rather than occupy a full and separate cover page – see below:

A black and white text and words

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

This was simplified by Editor Derek, G3MMA in July 1990 and included a new BADARS logo that was a winning design by Derek Brades, G0IZW – see below on the right:

A black and white logo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

The next revision was in June 1992 under new Editor Norma, G0FPW who produced a significantly updated version in true magazine style, with multiple text columns and everything! Below is a copy of the front page (note the club logo has lost its script font!).

A newspaper with text and images

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

The July 1992 edition added the words “Monthly Communication of the Braintree and District Amateur Radio Society” underneath the graphic. It then stayed the same until sometime between June 2005 and October 2008 (we have very few copies of Barscom in our archive between June 2005 and December 2011). The October 2008 magazine header was now in colour, the BADARS and RSGB logos had been swapped around and some other formatting changes made. Note that the clubs HF callsign was now G3XG (see below).

A close-up of a diagram

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Sometime between February 2011 and January 2012, the header design changed a little in terms of layout:

A close up of a sign

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

In December 2015 under Editor Ian, G8MKN, a new version of the magazine header was introduced as shown below. There was also a significant change to the body of the magazine format, which remains the same today.

A yellow circle with green text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

The round yellow graphic in the centre looks very much like a modified form of a club ‘car sticker’ that was created after a competition in 1980. It was used as the Editorial column heading graphic in the October 2008 to January 2011 magazines but not in the 2005 and 2012 magazines, so not sure of the story behind that!

The magazine header was significantly changed again at the Committee’s request in April 2020, when under Editor Mike, G8DJO. It replaced the central graphic with a new circular design that was being used on the club website and social media. This graphic was also being used on the club banners and posters, so we now have consistent branding across our media channels.

A close up of a card

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Mike G8DJO is the longest serving Editor who has held that position for the last 8 years. The Willicombe family (Bob, Norma and Dave) have held the post for 14 years out of the 44 years since the first official issue.

**BADARS BARSCOM MAGAZINE EDITORS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1980 | Dave Boniface G3ZXX |
| 1981 | Bob Willicombe |
| 1982 | David Drizen G8UUO |
| 1983 | Dave Penny G3PEN |
| 1984 | Fred Glover G6HWA |
| 1985-1986 | Phil Kelly G13818 |
| 1987-1988 | Bob Willicombe |
| 1989 | Rob Taylor G8ZHF |
| 1990-1991 | Derek Mayes G3MMA |
| 1992-1995 | Norma Willicombe G0FPW |
| 1996-1997 | Bob Willicombe G6CJA |
| 1998-2002 | Dave Willicombe G0DEC |
| 2003-2007 | Dean Saxton G4WQI |
| 2008-2010 | Geoff Stokes G0BYH |
| 2011-2016 | Ian Wager G8MKN |
| 2017-2024 | Mike Adcock G8DJO |