

A history of the West Kent Amateur Radio Society

1948 - 1965

By Dave Green, G4OTV

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Introduction

The chapters which follow set out to document the history of the West Kent Amateur Radio Society (initially called the West Kent Radio Society) year by year from its formation in 1948 to the end of 1965. As each year is documented, the relevant chapter will be made available.

The initial sources of material are the society's minute books and copies of the RSGB Bulletin but this has been supplemented by information from the Society's newsletter QLF, members reminiscences and from such other sources as have become available from time to time.

The author would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks the assistance that he has received, primarily from Society members, in writing this history and for the provision of documents and other material.

Although the society held its first meeting in April 1948, there is evidence that a radio society existed in the Tunbridge Wells area in the inter-war years as is shown by the clipping below from the Kent and Sussex Courier in 1926.

WIRELESS SOCIETY. — The annual meeting of the Tunbridge Wells and District Wireless Society was held at the Mikado Cafe, Vale-road, which is, in future, to be the headquarters of the Club. The meeting was well-attended, and after a brief resume of the activities of the Society during the past year the balance sheet was passed, and officers for the ensuing year elected, Sir Robert Gower, O.B.E., being the new President. The Club Room will, in future, be open to members on Monday evenings, when the aerial and Society apparatus will be available. The popular Hon. Secretary is Mr. H. Featherstone, A.M.I.E.E.

No further information is available on the Tunbridge Wells and District Wireless Society. However, in June 1939 there is mention in the RSGB magazine of a Hamfest held by the Medway Amateur Transmitters Society at which a number of societies participated. Amongst these was the Tunbridge Wells Radio Society. Was this the same society as is referred to above? Had it perhaps changed its name? Also of interest is an entry in the July 1939 issue of the magazine where there is mention of the National Field Day. This includes an entry listed as "Tunbridge Wells" and includes G2UJ amongst the participants. This was Bert Allen who, in 1948 became the first President of the West Kent Radio Society and was no doubt instrumental in its formation.

Regrettably no further information has so far been found on these early organisations. Anyone who has information on this or, indeed, on the West Kent Society is invited to contact the author whose email address is dave.w.green@btinternet.com

By the time the West Kent Radio Society was formed in April 1948, W H Allen, G2UJ, had already become a regular contributor to the RSGB's Bulletin starting with an article on the soon to be released two metre band published in the January 1948 issue. This was followed by other articles published in subsequent months including a regular column which he wrote starting in April 1948 called "Around the VHF's" (his apostrophe, not mine!). Bert Allen also participated in the 1947 five metre contest coming 39th out of 51.

It is also perhaps worth reminding readers that all amateur radio licenses were cancelled at the beginning of the second world war in 1939 and all transmitting apparatus was impounded by the General Post Office. This was returned once the war ended and radio bands were gradually released to amateurs starting with 28-29 Mc/s at 100 watts and 58.5 – 60 Mc/s at 25 watts in December 1945. Most of the bands had been made available by June 1946.

The Radio Amateurs Examination (RAE) was announced in February 1946 with the first examinations being held in May of that year under the auspices of City and Guilds.

Chapter 1 - 1948

A lot of things happened in 1948. Long playing records were introduced, Velcro was invented; the NHS was created; the railways and the electricity supply industry were nationalised; polo mints went on sale for the first time as did Land Rovers and the Issigonis designed Morris Minor; bread rationing came to an end and Prince Charles and the author of this book were born. Oh, and the West Kent Radio Society was formed.

The title of the Society did not contain the word “amateur” in those days. The first meeting was held on 7 April at Culverden House, Tunbridge Wells. Culverden House was a large Victorian mansion located on the A26, St John’s Road opposite the bus garage in Tunbridge Wells in which meeting rooms could be hired but which has now long since been demolished and flats built in its stead.

Mr W H (Bert) Allen MBE, G2UJ was elected at the meeting as the first President, Mr F (Frank) Barnard, G4FB, was appointed Vice President, Mr L (Laurie) King, G4IB, became Treasurer and Mr R L Pluck, G4AY, (first name unknown) was appointed the Secretary. A total of 12 people were present at the meeting. The early minutes were written in quite a formal style with members being referred to, for example, as Mr L King with no first names given in the minutes and always with the prefix Mr.

The first meeting discussed the proposed Articles of Association of the Society although no record of those Articles has been found. The annual subscription was set at eight shillings (40 pence) for full members but could be paid in two, six monthly, instalments. The subs for associate membership (not defined) were set at four shillings (20p).

A letter was read out from G3AMG, a garage owner from Dunton Green, which sent good wishes to the society and there was also a letter from Bernard Thorpe and Partner of London concerning the proposed use of land at the Great Bounds estate in Southborough as a site for a station to compete in the forthcoming June National Field Day (NFD) CW contest. It is clear from this that some work had been done pre-empting the formation of the society. The meeting also agreed to make the necessary application and arrangements to participate in NFD “on 1.7 and 3.5 m/cs”

The next meeting of the society took place just two weeks later, on 21 April with Frank Barnard in the chair. 14 people attended. The possibility of providing slow Morse transmissions for SWL members on 1.7 mc/s was discussed but it was decided not to proceed with this until there was sufficient demand. Some things never change! Then the meeting went on to discuss the arrangements for NFD.

It was agreed to hire two tents at seven shillings and sixpence (37.5p) each and that the transmitter installation would be done by Mr Worsell, G3BGU. Bert Allen would provide a transmitter monitor, a vibrator pack and a Morse key. Mr Pluck would provide a receiver and a motor generator, Mr Burge a second receiver, Mr Worsell a second motor generator, messrs King and Copper would supply accumulators, Mr King an aerial coupler unit, Mr Brewer and Mr Barnard would supply the aerial mast and Mr Barnard the aerial wire.

After the discussion there was a demonstration by Mr Worsell of the transmitter to be used for NFD and agreement reached that Mr Worsell would modify it so that both the 3.5 and 1.7 m/c bands could be tuned by the oscillator stage.

A brief report of this meeting appeared in the local newspaper, the Kent and Sussex Courier on 30 April 1948.

The next meeting was held on 5 May with 11 people present. Discussions on the arrangements for NFD continued with Mr Worsell saying that he would mount his 12 volt motor generator on a baseboard complete with foot switch and with the secretary's generator being held in reserve. Frank Barnard said that he hoped to obtain a small petrol driven generator for the purpose of accumulator charging.

A letter had been received from Short Wave Magazine regarding the publication of reports of West Kent Radio Society meetings. After a ten minute canteen break, "an excellent lecture" was given by the President, Bert Allen, on the subject of modern valve techniques for VHF. The talk was illustrated with useful circuit diagrams on the blackboard. The lecture "provided food for some very hard thought among many VHF minded members".

June 2nd, just three days before NFD, was the date of the society's fourth meeting. A proposal that the society should purchase printed notepaper for the use of members and officials was agreed but a decision on obtaining printed handbills advertising the club for display in local radio shops was deferred. Agreement was reached that a list should be maintained of equipment owned by members which was surplus to requirements. The remainder of the meeting was given over to final NFD discussions but no details were recorded in the minutes book.

NFD took place on 5 June with the Society using the callsign G4FB/P (Frank Barnard's callsign) at the Great Bounds Estate, Southborough. This was the Society's first ever contest entry. The transmitter was designed and built by Mr Worsell and was based around a Hartley oscillator with a PA stage and voltage stabilisers. There was an aerial coupling unit coupled to the TX tank, a motor generator for the transmitter HT supply together with a 12 volt accumulator; receivers were a 6 valve superhet with an army number 12 set being used for band checking and as a monitor. A separate motor generator was provided for the receiver with 6 volt LT accumulators. There was also test equipment available including a crystal oscillator and frequency meter.

The antenna was a voltage fed long wire, 260 feet in length with no feeder. The station transmitter operators were Frank Barnard, G4FB, R L Pluck, G4AY, Laurie King, G4IB, G2CLD and G4LJ. The station made 10 contacts on 3.5 m/cs (22 points) and 90 contacts on 1.7 m/cs (194 points) making a total of exactly 100 contacts and 216 points. No serious faults were reported with any apparatus during the contest hours. The results of the contest were published in the August 1948 issue of RSGB's Bulletin. The club scored 216 points with its "A" station but did not have a "B" station. The results were calculated by adding the scores of "A" and "B" stations together. With only an "A" station, the society was placed 86th out of 100 entries.

And so the meetings continued through the remainder of the year. At the 23 June meeting, chaired by the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ, an executive committee was elected with representatives for each area within the catchment of the society. Mr Exall was elected to represent Tunbridge Wells; Mr Brewer for Southborough; Mr Micklewright for Tonbridge; and Mr Worsell for Sevenoaks. Mr Burge was elected as the fifth member of the Executive Committee but presumably without portfolio! Normal business of the Society was to be dealt with by the Executive Committee with that business being put before the membership on a monthly basis only.

There was criticism relating to the calling of the June meeting and the form of postal notification given. As a result, it was agreed that meetings would be held at regular fortnightly intervals. After the canteen break Mr Ludlow gave the first of his “television talks” – this one mainly dealing with the camera and transmitter end of the operation. The speaker also included some possible cures for both radiated and mains-borne TVI which generated a lot of interest.

The agreement to meet fortnightly didn’t last long because the meeting following 23 June was held on 21 July! There was a letter from the BBC giving permission for a members’ visit to the frequency checking station at Tatsfield which was to take place on 14 August. Regrettably there is no record of the visit taking place although it is thought likely that it did. The second half of the meeting consisted of the showing of two RSGB films, one on portable operation and the other on direction finding.

On 6 October the Society held what is referred to in the minutes book as the “Half-yearly Business Meeting” with an impressive 21 members present. The meeting discussed the borrowing of 16mm sound films on technical subjects with the loan of a film called “Electronics” being confirmed. It was also agreed to accept an invitation from Short Wave Magazine to submit an entry for a top band contest .

The members also agreed on a group visit to the RSGB organised London Radio Exhibition which was being held on 20 November.

There was a financial report which stated that in the first six months of the Society’s operation, income had amounted to £6.0s.9d (£6.04) with expenditure of £5.13s.5 ½d (£5.67) leaving a balance of 7/3½ (37p)!

There was agreement that monthly reports of Society meetings should be sent to both Wireless World and Short Wave Magazine.

On 26 October there was a quiz followed by the showing of the 16mm film “Electronics”.

On 3 November the Society enjoyed a talk on “Commercial receiver construction by modern methods” given by a Mr Mitchenall. The presentation was followed by half an hour of questions and answers on the subject of “Mass produced radios”.

A meeting of the Executive Committee took place on 10 November at which a range of business matters were decided including the production of membership cards, the instigation of the first annual dinner to be held in April 1949 and a provisional programme for the coming year.

A general meeting held on 1 December enjoyed a talk and demonstration given by Laurie King, G4IB, on “High frequency converters”. This was the last minuted meeting of the year although there is mention of plans to hold a raffle of radio gear on 15 December. Raffle prizes were to be donated and wrapped by members of the committee. It is unclear, however, whether this raffle actually took place.

Chapter 2 - 1949

On 28 January 1949 the Society's President, Bert Allen MBE, G2UJ was elected to the RSGB Council.

The first Society meeting of 1949 was not held until 2 February. However, during the year a total of 11 general meetings (including the AGM and 2 committee meetings) were held according to the minute book. On average, about 21 members attended each of the general meetings, a number not dissimilar to those attending today.

Probably the biggest highlight of the year was the first annual dinner held at the Pantiles Grill on 13 April. The dinner was attended by 21 members and two guests and was immediately followed by the first AGM of the Society at which all the officers and committee members were re-elected *en bloc*.

An interesting decision was taken at the meeting on 5 May when it was agreed "that a letter of congratulation be sent to Telegraphist French of HMS Amethyst regarding his recent devotion to duty whilst in Chinese waters." The Amethyst was a Royal Navy frigate which, during the period of the Chinese Civil War, was travelling between Shanghai and Nanking on the Yangtze River when, on 20 April 1949 she came under fire and was eventually grounded. It was not until 30 July that she was able to escape. Further information is available on various web sites including

<http://www.submerged.co.uk/h-m-s-amethyst.php> and also on

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amethyst_Incident although the neutrality of the article on the latter is disputed. Numerous lives were lost during the incident. The incident received wide publicity in the UK at the time and became known as "The Amethyst Incident" or sometimes as "The Yantze Incident" and a film based on it was made in 1957. Telegraphist French was awarded the DSM with the following citation:

Distinguished Service Medal

Telegraphist Jack Leonard FRENCH, D/JX 671532, for outstanding devotion to duty. After the early hours of 21st April, he was the only Telegraphist left in HMS AMETHYST, and from then onwards his efforts kept the ship in almost continuous communication with the outside world. He carried on single-handed, continuously and unsleeping, receiving and transmitting vital wireless messages with accuracy and speed for a considerable period before arrangements could be made to give him periods of rest.

It is not known whether Telegraphist French had any direct connection with the West Kent Radio Society.

Discussions were held concerning National Field Day. WKRS entered both an "A" and a "B" team scoring 263 points and 212 points respectively. The callsigns used were G4FB/P for the A team and G4IB/P for the B team. The Society was placed 71st out of 105 club entries.

There was also discussion in July of a forthcoming direction finding contest the result of which was discussed at the October committee meeting although the actual results are not recorded. At the September meeting the members decided to hold a "Radio Exhibition" and also to organise a social evening.

In the minutes for the committee meeting held on 12 October, there is the first mention of Mr Richards. This was probably Hugh Richards, later to become BRS40902 but never licensed, who was

later to become a popular President of the Society. At this meeting it was also agreed that a commission of a third should be charged on the sales made at the forthcoming auction. It was also noted that slow morse transmissions were being made by Mr W Chalcroft, G2CLD, on Monday evenings.

At the December meeting, it was noted that a regular Sunday morning net had been started on 1860kc/s. Also at this meeting the annual raffle and auction took place.

The format throughout the year was to start each meeting by dealing with business items and then, following a break, a lecture took place often accompanied by a demonstration. Subjects covered during the year included:

- Live telephony
- Radio servicing
- Antennas
- “Occasions in radio”
- The crystal oscillator unit

And so we move into , the 1950s.....

Chapter 3 - 1950

The first meeting of the 1950s was held on 11 January 1950 with the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ, in the chair and 18 members present. The second annual dinner was discussed and agreed to be held on Friday, 3 February 1950 at The Greyhound Hotel, Langton. There is no record of the dinner taking place in the minute book but it is assumed that it did.

This meeting also elected an exhibition sub-committee. In addition, the secretary was instructed to convey to Mr and Mrs King, the thanks of those members who took part in the recent contest. The minute does not say which contest this was, but it was probably the Affiliated Societies CW contest which traditionally takes place in early January. Indeed, the Society not only took part in this contest but won it! The author of this history is the current keeper of the winner's plaque for the event (see photo).



The inscription on the somewhat worn and tarnished plaque reads "R.S.G.B. Affiliated Societies Contest. Winners 1950. West Kent Radio Society". With the plaque is a sheet of paper written by

the late Alex Korda, G4FDC, a long time society member. He has written "Members present G2UJ, Bert Allen, president; G4IB Lawrence King; G4FB, Frank Barnard; G8KG, F M Smith; H F Richards; possibly one other". It is not known from what source Alex obtained this information but it is probably a correct list of those involved with the winning station.

The meeting held on 1 March received a report from Hugh Richards saying that any individual member who wanted to do so could also become a member of Culverden House (the venue where general meetings were held), for the sum of 10/- (50p). It is not stated what the benefits of this membership were, but perhaps the venue had a bar or members' lounge.

Of perhaps more importance was an announcement by the Chairman that the Society had now become affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain, an affiliation which has continued without interruption to the present day. This would, *inter alia*, allow the Society to take part in the forthcoming Clubs' Contest and the names of those wishing to take part were requested. Nine of the 18 members present indicated their wish to do so. The first report of the Society's activities appeared in the RSGB Bulletin for June 1950.

At the same meeting the members agreed to adopt the "outstanding" publication QLF and that a letter to that effect be sent to the Editor. This clearly indicates that QLF existed prior to this meeting. It continued as the Society's newsletter for many years.

It was also agreed to send a letter to G2FS, an amateur residing in Chelmsford, regarding the interference he was alleged to be causing to other licensed amateurs. Finally, at what was obviously a busy meeting, it was noted that a committee meeting had been arranged for 8 March but no minute of this proposed meeting is in the minute book and so it is unclear whether it took place.

The following meeting, held on 29 March was taken up by discussions on the forthcoming 1950 NFD. A site at Matfield was agreed and Mr Burge was chosen as NFD Liaison Officer. Frank Barnard "outlined his proposed teams of operators etc. and methods of progression analysis." ! The Annual General Meeting was held on 12 April with 20 members present and Bert Allen in the chair. The following officers and members were elected to the committee for 1950/51:

- Bert Allen – President
- F M Smith – Vice President
- Hugh Richards – Treasurer
- A C Pollard – Secretary
- R Freeman – Publicity Officer
- E Trend – Representative for Tunbridge Wells
- F J Bowler – Representative for Tonbridge
- L Young – Representative for Southborough
- L J Dumble – Representative for Crowborough

The position of Representative for Sevenoaks was held over.

It was agreed to issue QLF free to members monthly. This would include the future programme and thus resolve complaints that had been received about meeting notification.

A committee meeting was held in May at which the arrangements for NFD were finalised with an "A" and a "B" station being proposed. The report of NFD which appeared in the RSGB Bulletin for September 1950 indicated that our entry had taken place from a site near Lamberhurst even though at an earlier meeting it had been agreed to operate from Matfield. The published results showed that our "A" team, using the callsign G2UJ/P achieved 267 points and that the "B" team using the callsign G3KG/P achieved 200 points. This placed the Society 72nd out of 111 club entries.

In the June issue of the Bulletin, the results of two metre field day contest showed that an entry from Bert Allen was placed 23rd out of 42 entries.

The next recorded meeting was the half yearly general meeting which was held in November. The meeting agreed arrangements for a social meeting to which "the ladies would be invited" to take place at the Red Lion on 20 December.

A Mr Carruthers of Crowborough was present at the meeting who said that there were eight or so other enthusiasts in the Crowborough area. It was his hope to form a local group which could be affiliated to WKRS. The President extended an invitation to those enthusiasts to attend the WKRS meetings.

A committee meeting was held in December. At this meeting a number of ambitious plans were made for the coming year. These included a series of eight short lectures with each one preceding a general meeting. The subjects suggested were:

- The electron, resistance, inductance and capacitance
- Simple valve theory
- Use of the valve
- Simple receivers
- The superheterodyne receiver
- Power supplies
- Aerials
- Propagation

In addition, it was proposed that a DF contest should be held on 7 Mc/s and that visits be organised to STC at Fooths Cray, the BBC at Wrotham, the BBC at Tatfield and the GPO. Films proposed to be shown were "The cathode ray tube", "The generation of electricity" and "The transmission of electricity" with each film programme to be preceded by a "quick quiz".

On top of all that it was proposed that the first WKRS Listening Contest should take place on Sunday 14 January 1951 on 14 Mc/s from 1030 to 1230 GMT with separate sections for telephony and CW. It looked like 1951 was going to be a busy year!

Over the course of 1950 five general meetings and two (or possibly three) committee were held. Regrettably, 1950 was the last year in which minutes of general meetings (other than the Annual General Meeting) were kept. Thereafter the minutes only recorded committee meetings and the AGM.

Chapter 4 - 1951

The first committee meeting of the year was held on 24 January at Culverden House. Committee members discussed the plans for the year including the holding of the AGM on 11 April and the annual dinner on either 21 or 28 March. It was agreed that the dinner should be at the Greyhound Hotel in Langton and should include a tombola and small raffle. The ticket price was set at 6/6d (33 pence).

Mr F M Smith volunteered to organise the lecture programme and suggested that lectures should be held fortnightly.

Five entries had been received so far for the WKRS Receiving contest and a QRP club to operate within WKRS was suggested. An article on QRP operation was to appear in QLF and a Society QRP contest was to be run concurrently with the RSGB QRP contest.

There was a general meeting on 14 March when it was agreed to enter the coming NFD with both an "A" and a "B" station.

At the 22 March committee meeting it was reported that only three members had attended the recently held technical lecture but it was agreed to hold one more to see if attendance improved.

The April edition of RSGB's Bulletin reported on the January issue of WKRS's QLF newsletter which, it said, in addition to listing details of past and future events also contained a new year message from the President, a sad poem on what happened to ten members of a local net (!), the difficulties of serving both amateur and professional enthusiasts and the rules of the forthcoming 7 Mc/s direction finding contest.

The AGM was held on 11 April at Culverden House with the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ, in the chair. There were 15 members present. It was agreed that the RSGB AR (Area Representative?) should be an *ex officio* member of the committee. The officers elected at the meeting for the 1951/52 year were

- President W H Allen
- Senior Vice President F Barnard
- Junior Vice President J Burge
- Secretary L S King
- Treasurer H F Richards
- Editor F R Freeman
- Contest Organiser F M Smith

At the May committee meeting, congratulations were extended to G2AJ who was the highest scoring UK station in the VK/ZL contest. This result was also noted in the April edition of the RSGB Bulletin.

There was an Extraordinary General Meeting held on 8 May. The main purpose was to propose an increase in the annual subscription fee to 10/- (50 pence) for members and 5/- (25 pence) for associates. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The meeting also agreed that QLF should be published monthly as a two page (four sides) magazine although this could be increased to three pages (six sides) if sufficient material was available.

Also in May, the results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published in the Bulletin. The club operated stations in both the CW and telephony sections using the callsign G4IB/P. 186 points were scored on CW and 178 points on telephony. The club was placed 4th out of the 28 clubs that entered.

A meeting, to which the Society was invited, was held in Maidstone on 17 June at which the Association of Kent Radio Amateurs was established. The Society sent a representative to the meeting with a brief not to commit the Society to membership at this stage. The objectives of AKRA were to exchange lecture plans and visits and to maintain liaison with amateurs throughout Kent.

The next committee meeting was held on 28 June and discussed the results of a questionnaire that had been sent to all members. Unfortunately, only seven responses had been received. The analysis indicated the following areas of interest:

- Amateur radio 21 points
- Radio competitions and outside events 21 points
- Receiver design and construction 17 points
- Construction & use of test equipment 7 points
- Quality reproducers (?) 7 points
- Conversion of ex Government gear 7 points
- Radio control of models 7 points
- Television 5 points
- Recording 4 points

The committee authorised the sums that had been expended at NFD. These were

- 9/2d (46 pence) for foodstuffs
- £1-0s-4d (£1.02) for feeder cables
- £1-10s-0d (£1.50) for petrol

It was agreed that the general meeting to be held on 4 July would include lectures on quartz crystals and Army communications systems and that the informal meeting to be held on 18 July would include discussion on the design and construction of equipment for the Low Power Field Day.

The last committee meeting minuted during 1951 took place on 6 October and agreed a future programme up to the time of the 1952 AGM. The programme was as follows:

- 24 October – Recent VHF Developments by Bert Allen and Frank Barnard
- 7 November – Annual junk sale and draw
- 21 November – Radio surveying. A discussion on testing the radio suitability of various local sites
- 5 December – Team quiz. WKRS members against members from the Association of Kent Radio Amateurs
- 12 December – Christmas gathering at the Red Lion Hotel, Tunbridge Wells
- 19 December – Informal meeting

- 16 January 1952 – “Straight receivers – design and construction” by Bert Allen
- 30 January – Informal meeting
- 13 February – Film show
- 27 February – Informal meeting
- 12 March – “Receiver design” A discussion under the chairmanship of Mr J Burge

Unfortunately, from 1951 onwards the minute book records mainly committee meetings and the AGM with most general meetings being unrecorded. Five committee meetings are recorded as having been held during the year.

The October issue of the RSGB’s Bulletin reported the results of National Field Day. The WKRS “A” team scored 408 points using the callsign G3FCQ/P and the “B” team scored 314 points using the callsign G4IB/P. The Society was placed 26th out of 105 entries.

In the same issue of the Bulletin, the results of Low Power Field Day were also published. These showed Laurie King, operating G2IB/P from Frant taking 9th place out of 14 entries. In a further RSGB low power contest held in October, Laurie was placed 10th out of 37 entries.

The picture below and its caption has been taken from a later edition of QLF

Chapter 5 1952

In the January edition of The Bulletin, the RSGB's AGM, which had been held in December, was reported. Bert Allen had stood for the position of Bulletin editor but was narrowly defeated by Jack Hum – 1143 votes to 1119 after a recount. As a result, Bert was no longer a member of the RSGB Council. However, his connection with RSGB and The Bulletin continued to be strong as his monthly column, "Around the VHF's" carried on throughout the year and a major article by him entitled "A modern straight receiver" appeared in the May issue. The Bulletin editorial in June 1952 was headed "Accent on VHF" and recorded developments that had been achieved on the higher frequency bands including Bert's two metre converter and his grounded grid amplifier which "... in little more than a year has become a classic." The editorial said that Bert was one of three "VHF architects".

The minute book records three committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting for 1952. The first committee meeting recorded was held on 20 February chaired by Bert Allen. The low numbers attending Society meetings were discussed with one reason being put forward being "general apathy under present living conditions"! It was noted that fundamental radio lectures had been "completely ignored" and that attendance for the AFS contest from Five Oak Green was very poor. At the time of the meeting there were only 16 fully paid up members although some 50 copies of QLF were being despatched mainly in the hope of getting recipients to join the Society.

In view of the difficulty in selling tickets for the annual dinner in 1951, it was agreed to replace the dinner with a more informal supper without entertainment which should substantially reduce the cost to members.

The future programme was agreed as follows;

- 26 March – Discussion on NFD arrangements
- 20 April – annual receiving contest on the 14 Mc/s band with both CW and telephony sections
- 7/8 May – A society stand to be entered in the Hobbies Exhibition in Tunbridge Wells
- 21 May – Visit to South East Electricity Board's Tonbridge generating station



The WKRS stand at the Tunbridge Wells Hobby Exhibition. It is not known on which year in the 1950s this photograph was taken

It was announced that Mr J C Burge, Vice President, had resigned from his position although he remained a member of the Society. His decision was a result of the commitments he had to the Territorial Army.

Member Frank Barnard, G4FB, was listed in the February edition of the RSGB's Bulletin as the town representative of RSGB for Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. However, his name was not included in the listing that appeared in the April issue or but did re-appear in the listing contained in the December 1953 edition.

The results of the Affiliated Societies Contest appeared in the March issue of the Bulletin and showed WKRS as coming a very creditable 3rd out of 25 clubs submitting entries. Using the callsign G4IB/P, Laurie King's callsign, the Society scored 156 points in the CW section and 138 points in the telephony section.

Also in the March edition of the Bulletin a list of affiliated societies was given but WKRS was not included in the list. It is not clear if this was an error or whether the Society had fallen out of membership temporarily. The Society was again included in the July 1953 edition.

There was a committee meeting held on 8 April at which discussion took place on the forthcoming Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition which was being sponsored by the local Round Table. It was agreed that a live station should form the focus of the WKRS exhibit.

The AGM took place on 9 April with Bert Allen in the chair and just ten other members attending. The following officers were elected:

- President – W H Allen
- Senior Vice-President – F Barnard
- Junior Vice-President – Mr Bowles
- Secretary – F R Freeman
- Assistant Secretary – E Scrase
- Treasurer – H F Richards
- Editor – Mr Mather
- Contest organiser – L S King

It was agreed that enquiry would be made at Culverden House as to whether a room could be made permanently available for use as a workshop and radio station.

The 21 to 21.2 Mc/s band was made available to UK amateurs from 1 July but initially restricted to telegraphy only. Bert Allen wrote an article for the RSGB Bulletin which appeared in the June issue entitled “Will you be on 21 Megs?”.

In July, the results of the two metre field day were published. G4IB, Laurie King’s callsign, was placed 28th out of 38 entries. The station was operated from Mark Beech. It is not clear whether this was a personal entry or a WKRS team entry.

The National Field Day results were published in September where the WKRS “A” team using the callsign G4FB/P scored 353 points and the “B” team using G4IB/P scored 390 points. The club was placed 37th out of 136 entries.

The final committee meeting recorded for 1952 was held on 19 November. The following programme was agreed:

- 10 December – Quiz, possibly involving other societies
- 17 December – Get together at the Red Lion to which members’ wives and friends could be invited
- 14 January – Frequency Measurements by G2UJ including a demonstration of the new RSGB frequency meter

G2UJ would also request the loan of the RSGB film which featured NFD 1952.

RSGB reported in December that Laurie King, G4IB, had been appointed RSGB representative for the county of Kent (outside of London). The appointment took effect from January 1953.

Chapter 6 - 1953

The first recorded committee meeting of the year was held on 13 April, just over a week before the AGM. The main item of discussion was the forthcoming Hobbies Exhibition. The WKRS stand was to be set up on the day preceding the opening of the exhibition and the 144Mc/s equipment would be tested.



A further picture of the WKRS stand at the Tunbridge Wells Hobby Exhibition. It is not known in which year in the 1950s this photograph was taken but it was almost certainly the same year as the photograph which has been included in the 1952 chapter. It was probably no later than 1953 since the pennant shows WKRS and not WKARS.

The AGM was held on 22 April with just seven members reported as being present. The President reported on the loss of F M Smith, G8KG, a former Vice President of the Society who was an enthusiast for WKRS, particularly in the contest field. He also announced that the Society had agreed to co-operate with the Maidstone club in contests with Maidstone operating in the 1.7 and 3.5 Mc/s bands and WKRS operating in the 7 and 14 Mc/s bands.

The Treasurer (Hugh Richards) reported that expenditure for the year had been £9-4s-5d (£9.22) with the main item being the cost of QLF at £2-6s-11d (£2.35). Income was £10-6s-2d (£10.31) giving a "profit" of £1-1s-9d (£1.09) He reported that we were very lucky to get the use of Culverden House

at the rate of 2/6 (13p) per member per year through the auspices of the Kent Education Committee. The Treasurer reported, however, that the balance sheet was not in its final form and that the completed document would be presented at a future meeting.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

- W H Allen MBE – President
- F Barnard – Senior Vice President
- F Bowles – Junior Vice President
- F R Freeman – Secretary
- L King – Assistant Secretary
- H F Richards – Treasurer
- D Mather – Editor
- Jack Weaver – Contest Organiser

Mr Mather proposed that the name of the Society be changed to West Kent Amateur Radio Society. Hugh Richards pointed out that this would render existing stocks of stationery redundant whereupon Laurie King offered to donate 1000 sheets of new stationery, an offer that was gratefully accepted. There was a counter proposal from Frank Barnard that the society be called the Tunbridge Wells Amateur Radio Society but this was rejected as being less attractive than the title proposed. A vote was taken and West Kent Amateur Radio Society became the new Society name. The vote was unanimous and thus on 22 April 1953, WKRS became WKARS, a name which it has retained ever since.

In recognition of his past work for the Society, the members present at the AGM agreed unanimously that F M Smith, G8KG should be made a Life Honorary Member. It was, however, pointed out that the Articles of Association then existing did not have provision for life membership whereupon the following proposal was put, voted on and adopted unanimously "that any former member who has rendered outstanding service to the Society may be made an Honorary Member by election at Annual General Meeting."

The results of the AFS contest were published in the April edition of the RSGB's Bulletin. Using the callsign G4IB/P, the club scored 161 points in the CW contest and 147 points in the telephony contest. The entry was placed 8th out of 23.

The final committee meeting recorded for the year took place on 15 July. The following programme was agreed:

- 22 July – A quiz and a tape recording demonstration. For the quiz, teams of two people were to be made up of a senior and a junior member
- 2 September – Discussion on a proposed 144 Mc/s DF hunt to be held based on Tunbridge Wells Common
- 16 September – "Strange item" night. Members to bring pieces of unidentified gear for the "experts" to figure out what they were

30 September – Mullard film strips with

Chapter 7 - 1954

In the January issue of the RSGB Bulletin it was reported that, at the national society's AGM held in the preceding December, Bert Allen had been presented with the Founder's Cup for outstanding services to the Society. The AGM was held at the Institute of Electrical Engineers premises in London. Bert was continuing to write regular articles for the Bulletin as well as his monthly VHF column although this was to be the last year that he wrote the VHF column..

The WKARS Annual General Meeting was held on 28 April at Culverden House with 10 members present. The Treasurer, Hugh Richards reported that the finances were in a sound condition and that a purchase of poles to use as aerial masts in contests represented an important investment for the Society.

The following officers were elected for 1954/5:

- President - W H Allen, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – L S King
- Junior Vice-President – F Bowles
- Secretary and Treasurer – H F Richards elected to both roles
- Assistant Secretary – D Mather
- Editor – F R Freeman
- Contest Organiser – R Dancy
- Co-opted committee member – A McKay

A proposal was put forward that the Society should hold a Hamfest and it was agreed that the possibility of doing this should be investigated.

The results of the AFS contest were published in April. The club had used the callsign G4IB and scored 233 points in the telephony section and 191 points in the CW section. The club was placed 13th out of 26 clubs entered.

The April issue of the Bulletin also reported that WKARS would again be exhibiting at the Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition and that top band, 7Mc/s and 144 Mc/s stations would be in operation.

A committee meeting was held on 4 May. A possible visit to the BBC's VHF station was discussed together with a possible visit to Tatsfield. It was also agreed to contact Mullard for the supply of films for a film night. It was agreed that copies of the Society's magazine, QLF, should be sent to the East Grinstead and Medway radio clubs. Unfortunately none of the early editions of QLF seem to have survived (unless anyone knows better). The earliest copy we have is from 1967.

A meeting programme for the following three months was agreed:

- 12 May – NFD Discussion and a talk on portable transmitting and receiving equipment
- 26 May – Surplus equipment sale
- 23 June – Film night
- 7 July – “A modern 14 Mc/s transmitter” by Laurie King
- 21 July – “Getting on two metres” by Bert Allen

The final committee meeting recorded for the year was held on 27 August. The main business of the meeting was to agree the programme for the remainder of the year. This was agreed to be:

- 8 September – “Talks by four speakers on subjects of interest”. No detail is provided but it was noted that a tape recorder should be used if available.
- 22 September – (Another) surplus equipment sale
- Week commencing 9 October – Visit to Mortley Sprague’s premises [Currently (2017) this company is shown as being a firm of electricians based in Tonbridge]
- 20 October – Talk on VHF receivers by Bert Allen
- 3 November – Visit to the shack of member, Mr Dancy
- 17 November – Film night
- 8 December – Another surplus equipment sale
- 15 December – Annual supper at The Red Lion

It was hoped that members would participate individually in the low power contest to be held on 2 and 3 October and also agreed that members should be encouraged to participate in the Low Power Field Day on 5 September. A station would be operated from the South Downs.

The August edition of the Bulletin listed WKARS as an affiliated Society with Hugh Richards shown as the contact point.

The National Field Day results were published in the September edition of the RSGB Bulletin. The society had once again co-operated with the Maidstone club to produce a joint entry. The WKARS station operated from Cemetery Hill, Bayham Road, Hawkenbury, Tunbridge Wells using the callsign G2UJ/P. The society’s “A” team scored 278 points and the “B” team scored 242 points. The joint entry was placed 70th out of 108 entries with 80 metres being the busiest band followed by 160 metres and then 40 metres and 20 metres.



The photograph above is of Bert Allen operating the Field Day station G2UJ/P.

In the November issue of the RSGB Bulletin, the last VHF column to be written by Bert Allen appeared. His first VHF column had appeared in January 1948, a few months before the formation of WKRS. The column was originally called "The month on five – and six". In his final column Bert said "The work and correspondence entailed is proving more than the writer can manage." His first article was just over half a column long. The last one was five and a half columns long.

From December, the VHF column was taken over by F G Lanbeth, G2AIW who, in his first column, paid tribute to Bert saying "On taking over this column from my good friend Bert Allen (G2UJ) I would like to join in the very appreciative valedictions which have been showered upon him. He deserves them all for his good work over the last six years."

Chapter 8 - 1955

The first committee meeting of 1955 was held on 9 January. The meeting programme for the first few months of the year was agreed. This was to be:

- 12 January – Discussion on the 1955 Hobbies Exhibition
- 26 January – Discussion on Mobile Working – top band to UHF
- 9 February – Discussion to arrange experimental entry in RSGB Affiliated Contest [It is not clear what contest this referred to – presumably not the usual January AFS]
- 23 February – Lecture and demonstration “Getting the signal into the aerial”
- 9 March – Lecture and demonstration on “Transistors” by Bert Allen
- 23 March – Demonstration and discussion on FM
- 6 April – Final arrangements for the Hobbies Exhibition

There was also a proposal for members to construct equipment for the Society. This would be discussed at the next general meeting.

The WKARS President, Bert Allen (G2UJ), was voted back onto the RSGB Council at the RSGB's AGM held in December 1954 and took up his position in January.

The WKARS Annual General Meeting was held on 22 April at Culverden House with the President in the chair and a total of 11 members present. It was noted that the Hamfest that had been proposed had not taken place as the Society was concerned that similar events organised by other societies had not been well attended.

The President thanked all those that had assisted with the 1954 National Field Day but said that “our position in the results was only to be expected owing to the rain which fell for most of the two days and to the short but fierce thunderstorm which temporarily closed the station down and almost caused the loss to the Society of its Chairman by lightening”!! The President said that we had not entered the Affiliated Societies Contest but had staged a “dummy run” from Mr Dancy’s shack which had proved instructive.

He also reported that the Society’s entry in the Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition had been warmly appreciated by the exhibition organisers. This event had become an important part of the WKARS calendar.

The Treasurer (Hugh Richards) reported a healthy financial position due, in no small part, to the increased number of junk sales held during the year. The meeting thanked Laurie King who had been the auctioneer at the sales. It was agreed that some of the accumulated funds should be spent on component parts which members could then use to build equipment for the Society’s use. The Treasurer proposed that the subscription rates should remain unchanged at 10/- (50p) for full members and 5/- (25p) for junior and associate members.

The following committee was elected for 1955/6:

- President – W H Allen
- Vice-President – F Bowles
- Junior Vice-President – G Livesey

- Secretary and Treasurer – H F Richards
- Contest Organiser – L S King
- Editor – A McKay
- Ex-officio member – F Barnard (Area Representative of the RSGB)
- Co-opted member – R Freeman

A committee meeting was held on 29 April. A visit was agreed to the Brighton Radio Society for 24 May at which our society members would demonstrate FM equipment. The following meeting programme was agreed for the coming months:

- 6 May – Preliminary discussions for NFD
- 20 May – Demonstrations of FM equipment
- 3 June – Discussion on final NFD arrangements
- 17 June – Junk sale
- 1 July – Talk and demonstration on VHF by Bert Allen
- 15 July – Quiz programme. Mr Freeman in the chair
- 29 July – “Chemistry in radio” A talk by Mr Richardson

The May edition of the RSGB Bulletin reported that the club would be operating both “A” and “B” stations in the forthcoming National Field Day. Bert Allen’s callsign G2UJ/P would be used for the “A” station and Laurie King’s callsign, G4IB/P, would be used for the “B” station. Both stations would be operated from a site at Hawkenbury. It appeared that this would be entirely a WKARS entry and not a joint effort with the Maidstone club as had happened previously.

A further committee meeting was held on 26 August. General meetings for the rest of the year were agreed as follows:

- 9 September – Discussion on a proposed two metre DF hunt with equipment to be tested after the discussion
- 23 September – Meeting to arrange for the construction of equipment for WKARS use
- 7 October – Question time, number one, Receivers
- 21 October – Visit to the shack of G4IB (Laurie King)
- 4 November – Surplus equipment sale
- 18 November – Question time, number two, Power Supplies
- 2 December – Informal night
- 16 December – Annual supper

In the September edition of the RSGB Bulletin, the results of the two metre open contest were published. G2UJ was recorded as operating from Tunbridge Wells and was placed 18th out of 31 entries with best dx being a contact at 172 miles (275 km). G4FB, Frank Barnard, was shown as operating from Tonbridge in this contest and was placed 29th out of 31 with his best dx being at a distance of 60 miles (96km).

In October the NFD results were published. The "A" team scored 323 points (168 on top band; 155 on 80 metres; 178 on 40 metres and 39 on 20 metres. 15 and 10 metres were not used in this contest). The "B" team scored 217 points. Overall the club was placed 61st out of 105 entries.



A field day photograph for the 1954 contest showing Reg Freeman, G3AXV on the left, Laurie King, G4IB, operating and Bert Allen, G2UJ, in the background winding the hand generator!

Also in this edition of the RSGB Bulletin, the club was listed as an affiliated society with Hugh Richards (BRS40902) shown as the contact point for the club.

In the November edition of the RSGB Bulletin, a letter from Laurie King (G4IB) was published. The letter was an appreciation of the work being done by RSGB's Contest Committee.

In the December issue, the results of a two metre field day were published. G4IB (Laurie King) was listed in last place, 31st out of 31. He is shown as having operated from Seaford with best dx station being at a distance of 140 miles (224km).

The final committee meeting of the year was held on 30 December. The meetings programme for the first months of 1956 were agreed as being:

- 6 January – Question time, number three, Transmitters
- 20 January – Hobbies Exhibition Survey (It was also agreed that the Society's stand would be entered in the non-competitive section of the exhibition)
- 3 February – "Interesting Signals" a lecture and demonstration by Bert Allen. (It was agreed that the Treasurer should purchase 850 feet of audio recording tape so that this lecture

could be recorded using a tape recorder to be lent by Mr McKay – recording tape was expensive at this time)

- 11 and 12 February – Club entry to the Affiliated Societies' contest to be held at the Post Office and Stores in Hook Green, Lamberhurst, the QTH of Mr Dancy
- 17 February – Surplus equipment sale
- 2 March – Question time, number four, Aerials
- 16 March – “Radio Interference Suppression”, a lecture to be given by a representative of the GPO.

Chapter 9 - 1956

Whilst not directly relevant to this history, it is interesting to note that the RSGB were advertising in January for an experienced typist in their central London office at a salary of £6.10s.0d (£6.50) per week plus luncheon vouchers! There would be two weeks paid holiday annually with hours being 9.15 to 5.15 Monday to Friday plus alternate Saturdays to 12 noon. The position was still being advertised in April but the Saturday working requirement had been dropped. In May the salary offered had been raised to £7 a week. They were still looking in October!

In the February issue of the RSGB Bulletin, Bert Allen's re-election to the RSGB Council was announced. In the March issue Frank Barnard (G4FB) was listed as being the RSGB representative for Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

The first meeting recorded in the minutes book for 1956 is the Annual General Meeting which was held on 27 April at Culverden House with Bert Allen in the chair. There were 15 members present. The meeting was tape recorded but, unfortunately, the tape of this meeting and recordings that were made at some of the lecture meetings do not appear to have survived.

It was noted that although the Society had not been able to hold a hamfest during 1955, there would be an opportunity to take part in a mobile rally to take place in Tunbridge Wells. The President said that the first mobile rally had taken place in 1955 in Oxford and that a second mobile rally had been run in Northampton. Both of these events had met with considerable success.

The Society was joint winner of a cup awarded at the Hobbies Exhibition in the non-competitive stand section. The financial situation was reported to be satisfactory and that membership numbers had remained broadly static. New members had been recruited which balanced the numbers leaving, partly as a result of some members being called up for National Service in the armed forces.

Officers and committee members elected for the coming Society year were:

- President – W H Allen MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – L S King, G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – G A Livesey, G3FIB
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Treasurer – F J Bowles
- Contest Organiser – D Mather, G3KAM
- Editor and RSGB Representative – F Barnard, G4FB
- Assistant Editor – F B Freeman, G3AXV

The results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published in the April issue of the Bulletin. Using Rob Dancy's callsign G3JRD, the society's entry scored 707 points and was placed 8th out of 37.

A committee meeting was held on 23 May, the main item for discussion being the meeting programme for the coming months which was agreed as follows:

- 8 June – "Mobile experiences" a talk by G A Livesey, G3FIB
- 22 June – Junk sale – auctioneer, Laurie King G4IB
- 6 July – "Frequency Modulation" a talk and demonstration by HF Richards

- 20 July – Radio quiz by F H Freeman, G3AXV
- 26 August – Open air hamfest
- 14 September – “Starting an amateur station. 1 Receivers” a lecture and demonstration by W H Allen, G2UJ

In the July edition of the RSGB Bulletin there was a full report of WKARS activities including a report of the AGM.

National Field Day results were published in September. The society used the callsigns G3IRD/P and G3GUK/P for its “A” and “B” stations respectively. Overall the club was placed 50th out of 97 with the “A” station scoring 206 points and the “B” station scoring 439 points. The “B” station appeared in the list of “B” station leading scorers. The busiest band for the society was 3.5 Mc/s followed by 14 Mc/s and then 1.8 Mc/s and 7 Mc/s.

A further committee meeting was held at Culverden House on 5 October. It was noted that R Freeman had resigned. The future programme was then discussed and agreed as follows:

- 12 October – Equipment for NFD 1957
- 26 October – Visit to the RSGB lecture at the Institute of Electrical Engineers, the subject being antenna matching
- 9 November – Junk sale to be conducted by Laurie King, G4IB
- 23 November – “Amplifiers for transmitting and receiving” a talk and demonstration by Laurie King, G4IB
- 7 December – “The transatlantic telephone cable” a talk by Frank Barnard, G4FB
- 19 December – Annual get together at the Red Lion
- 11 January – Film show (film to be supplied by Mullard Ltd.)

Chapter 10 - 1957

Throughout the year, WKARS President, Bert Allan MBE, G2UJ continued to serve on the RSGB Council. He had major articles published in the RSGB Bulletin in February and June entitled "The Airmec type C864 Communications Receiver" and "A stable oscillator for two metre receivers" respectively. He also wrote a report on the Radio and Electronics Components Exhibition which was published in May and a photograph of him recording a new 50 minute talk on VHF matters for inclusion in the RSGB Recorded Lecture Library was published in July.

The first meeting recorded in the Minutes book for 1957 was for the committee meeting held on 9 January. The main business of the meeting was to agree the general meeting programme for the coming months. This was set as:

- 11 January – Informal night
- 25 January – Discussion on the design of stand to be used by WKARS at the Hobbies Exhibition
- 8 February – Lecture by Mr Allen (G2UJ) with the title "Nucleonics"
- 22 February – Equipment night including demonstrations
- 8 March – Survey of American amateur equipment by Laurie King (G4IB) with illustrations
- 22 March – Sale of surplus equipment (Auctioneer – Laurie King)
- 5 or 12 April – AGM

At the meeting, Hugh Richards explained that due to petrol rationing the film show arranged for 11 January with Mullards had been cancelled and would be re-arranged once petrol was again in free supply.

The AGM was duly held on 5 April with the President, Bert Allen in the chair and a total of 11 members present. The President gave a review of the year just ended and mentioned particularly the Society's participation in the Tunbridge Wells Hobbies' Exhibition and the RSGB's National Field Day.

The Treasurer, Mr Bowles, gave his report and thanked, in particular, Mrs King and Mr Dancy for supplying refreshments for the National Field Day participants. He also paid tribute to the Secretary and Publicity Officer for keeping expenses low! The Society had made a profit on the year of £12. 6s. 10d (£12.34). He pointed out that the efforts of Laurie King in acting as auctioneer at sales had played a large part in securing the surplus. There were 14 fully paid up members.

The following were elected to the committee for the new Society year:

- W H Allen, G2UJ – President
- L S King, G4IB – Senior Vice President
- Mr Hallett Jr. – Junior Vice-President
- H F Richards – Secretary
- F Bowles – Treasurer
- G Adams – Contest Organiser
- F Barnard, G4FB – Editor
- Mr Clifton – Committee member

The meeting also agreed that WKARS should hold a mobile rally in September.

The Affiliated Societies contest results were published in the April issue of the RSGB Bulletin but there was no entry listed for WKARS on this occasion.

The fact that WKARS was holding its second mobile rally on 15 September was mentioned in the July edition of the RSGB Bulletin with further information being published in the August edition. The rally was to be held at Dunorlan Park, Tunbridge Wells and a prize was to be given for the “most attractive and well presented installation.” In addition there would be a raffle “with prizes for OMs and XYLs”! Control (talk-in) stations would be operated on 2 metres (G4IB) as well as on 1.8 and 3.5 Mc/s starting at noon. A report and photograph of the mobile rally appeared in the October issue of the RSGB Bulletin. [I hope to include the report and photo here subject to being able to extract it from the .pdf file and getting RSGB permission as it is their copyright]

A committee meeting was held on 18 September and agreed the following programme of general meetings for the coming months:

- 27 September – Radio Quiz
- 11 October – Demonstration and talk on Band Three Television
- 25 October – Hobbies Exhibition
- 8 November – Junk sale
- 22 November – Talk by W H Allen
- 6 December – RSGB lecture
- 18 December – Social evening
- 10 January – Talk by W H Allen
- 24 January – Film show “The Electronics Industry”

The September issue of the RSGB Bulletin contained the results of the National Field Day contest. WKARS was placed 55th out of 91 entries and used the callsigns G2UK (Bert Allen) and G4IB (Laurie King). The club used the 1.8, 3.5, 7, 14 and 28 Mc/s bands with its best performance being on 3.5 Mc/s.

The final committee meeting of the year was held on 6 December. The meeting discussed the coming Christmas social evening which it was agreed would be held at Laurie King’s house at Lower Green, Pembury. The Society’s funds were discussed and it was decided to place any spare cash in the National Provincial Bank in order to “take advantage of interest offered due to the present high bank rate.”

Many thanks to Danny Dancy, G3JRD for the following pictures from the mid 50s.

L-R

Bert Allen,

Den Mather

Frank Barnard.

About 1955



Frank Barnard, about 1955. A wet NFD.



WKARS field day cooking, some time mid-1950s.

Chapter 11 - 1958

The first meeting recorded in the Minutes Book for the year was a committee meeting held on 12 February. At the meeting it was agreed to invest in premium bonds in the sum of £10 and that a deposit account should be opened for any surplus funds. The following general meeting programme was arranged:

- 21 February – Discussion on forthcoming Hobbies Exhibition and NFD arrangements
- 7 March – Mullard film show
- 21 March – Tape recorded lecture
- 11 April – Attendance at the Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition
- 25 April – AGM
- 9 May – Raffle and auction sale

An article by Bert Allen entitled “The Minimitter MR37 Communications Receiver” appeared in the February edition of the RSGB Bulletin.

The AGM was held on 25 April with the President in the chair and a total of 15 members in attendance. The President reported that there were 18 fully paid up members and he appealed for help from all members in identifying potential new members and persuading them to attend meetings. He said that the Society’s 55th position in the last NFD was probably due to a lack of operators and hoped that we would do better in 1958 (a hope that was not realised – see below). The mobile rally had been a success but he felt that it would probably be overdoing it to hold another in the current year. Mr Wheeler, the father of a late member was introduced to the meeting. Mr Wheeler presented the Society with two cups in memory of his son. One was to be known as the John Wheeler Trophy and the other as the VS9AW Trophy, that being the callsign of his late son. The committee would decide on the rules for the winning of the cups each year.

The accounts, prepared by Mr Bowles, were presented to the AGM. Laurie King, who had audited the accounts, proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Bowles saying that he (Mr King) had “great pleasure in auditing the accounts of a very meticulous book keeper.”

The officers for the year were then elected as follows:

- President – W H Allen, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – L S King, G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – Mr Hallett, G3MDR
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Contest Organiser – D Addamson
- Editor – F Barnard, G4FB
- Assistant Editor – L S King, G4IB
- Affiliated Societies representative – Mr Hallett

The post of Treasurer was filled temporarily by Mr F Bowles until such time as a new treasurer could be found. Mr Dancy offered facilities for the Affiliated Societies contest 1959.

The results of the AFS contest were published in the April edition of the RSGB Bulletin but no entry was listed for WKARS. In the May edition's list of slow morse transmissions, regular broadcasts from the station of G3LEQ from Tunbridge Wells were listed as taking place at 1500hrs on Sundays on 1990 kc/s. It is not known whether G3LEQ was a Society member.

A committee meeting was held on 20 May. The general meetings programme for the coming months was discussed and agreed:

- 23 May – Discussion on proposed transmitter and NFD arrangements
- 7/8 June – NFD at Frant Road
- 20 June – Hi-fi night
- 4 July – Hints on constructing home built radios
- 18 July – Two metre gear – a talk by Mr Allen
- 12 September – Modern Trends in TV Construction – a talk by H F Richards

Mr Hallett was appointed as the Society's new Treasurer. A vote of thanks to the retiring Treasurer, Mr Bowles, was passed.

The awarding of the John Wheeler trophies was discussed and it was decided that the VS9AW Trophy should be awarded at the next AGM to the member under 18 years of age at the date of the AGM who had achieved the best result in a construction contest which was to be announced shortly. The John Wheeler Trophy would be awarded to a senior member in a like manner. Both contests would be judged by an outside person and points were to be awarded for electronics construction under the following categories:

- A – originality
- B – skill in construction
- C – appearance
- D – Performance
- E – Descriptive talk by constructor

In addition, it was agreed that a cash prize of £1 should be given to the winner of the junior section.

The last committee meeting of the year was held on 19 September when the following programme of general meetings was agreed:

- 26 September – Talk and demonstration on receiver alignment by Mr Hallett
- 10 October – Audio amplifier design and construction
- 24 October – RSGB tape lecture on mobile operation
- 7 November – Autumn junk sale
- 21 November – Test equipment night – talks and demonstrations
- 5 December – Film show
- 19 December – Christmas party
- 16 January 1959 – General discussion on short wave listening

The meeting discussed the proposed club transmitter and a sub-committee was formed to deal with the matter. It was agreed to postpone the entry for the Affiliated Societies' contest to a later date!

In the October edition of the RSGB Bulletin, the results of the National Field Day contest were published. WKARS was placed 90th out of 94 using Mr Hallett's callsign G3MDR. QSOs were only made on 3.5, 7 and 14 Mc/s.

It was interesting to note in the November issue of the Bulletin there was a report that tests were on-going in an attempt to make transatlantic contacts on the two metre band. This is a feat which has not been achieved to this day using simplex communication. WKARS attempted to complete a similar circuit unsuccessfully in the 1980s from the Republic of Ireland. In the 1958 attempt, the link attempted was between Preston in England and Chatham in New Jersey. Both stations were using 1kW transmitters (presumably with a special licence in the UK). The English station used a 6 over 6 over 6 over 6 slot fed yagi array and the American end used four 24 foot long yagis fed in phase.

This is a very poor quality copy of a picture from the 50s included here for historic interest particularly as it includes John Wheeler, VS9AW mentioned in the text above. It is believed to have been taken from an issue of QLF, the WKARS magazine.

And finally...

To complete our dip into the past, this photograph was taken at a WKARS field day in an unknown year but almost certainly sometime in the 1950s. Known to be included in the picture are Reg Freeman, G3AXV; Hugh Richards; Eddie Scrace, G4DM; Doug Mather, G3KAM; Frank Barnard, G4FB; Burt Allen, G2UJ and John Wheeler, VS9AW.



Chapter 12 - 1959

In the January issue of the RSGB's Bulletin, slow Morse transmissions were listed as continuing to be broadcast on top band from G3LEQ in Tunbridge Wells.

A committee meeting was held on 22 January which, as had become normal practice, determined the general meeting programme for the coming months. This was:

- 30 January – Tunbridge Wells Hobbies exhibition discussion
- 13 February – RSGB taped lecture “Adventure in Tibet”
- 27 February – NFD arrangements
- 13 March – Sale of surplus equipment
- 31 March to 4 April – Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition
- 10 April – Annual General Meeting
- 24 April – Film show

In the February edition of the RSGB's Bulletin the following announcement was made:

At its meeting on 22 January 1959, the Council elected Mr W H Allen, MBE, G2UJ, a Vice-President of the Society in recognition of his outstanding services to amateur radio over a period of many years.

Mr Allen joined the RSGB as BRS 1441 in 1934 and was first licensed as G2UJ in January 1935. He was a member of the pre-war RAF Civilian Wireless Reserve and became an “Early Bird” with 60 Group (WIS) in September 1939. He was later transferred to Signals Intelligence. After ten months attachment on special duties to the British Legation in Stockholm prior to VE Day for which work he was awarded the MBE, Mr Allen left the RAF in November 1945 with the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He has for long played a prominent part in the affairs of the Society and was for some years the RSGB VHF Manager. Mr Allen is a member of the handbook, publications, technical and VHF committees. He is President of the West Kent Radio Society and a member of the London UHF group.

The March edition of the RSGB's Bulletin carried an article entitled “A simple capacity bridge” by Bert Allen.

The AGM was duly held on 10 April at Culverden House with Bert Allen in the chair. The President thanked a number of people including Mr Hallett particularly for his “frequent and untiring sorties against those inclined to be a little behindhand with their subscriptions”! He also thanked those who had assisted at field day and with the hobbies exhibition, in particular those who had helped with “the loan of apparatus and the provision of several ingenious exhibits. He thanked, in particular, Mr Brewer who had cut his holiday short in order to be involved with the exhibition. Unfortunately “Ernie” had not smiled on the Society and had not yet provided a return on the premium bonds that had been purchased.

The accounts, which had been audited by Laurie King, were presented to the meeting by the Treasurer, Leslie Hallett. They indicated assets of £87-19s-2d (£87.96), an increase of £20 over the previous year.

The following committee was elected for the coming Society year:

- President – W H Allen
- Senior Vice-President – F Bowles
- Junior Vice-President – Mr Adamson
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Treasurer – L Hallett
- Contest Organiser – R Delves
- Editor – R Trevitt
- Assistant Editor – L King
- Official Society Representative – G Adams

The meeting also agreed that a mobile rally should be organised in Tunbridge Wells in mid or late September. Mr King reported that he had heard from Mr Dancy who was currently in the United States.

Immediately following the AGM, Mr E G Hubbard, G5OX, was invited to judge the first competition for the John Wheeler trophies. Unfortunately, there had been no entries from junior members but the entry from Mr Hallett, G3MDR, a frequency standard device, was praised both from the point of view of its original features and its sound construction. Mr Hallett was accordingly the first winner of the John Wheeler Trophy.

No other committee meetings are recorded in the Minutes Book for 1959.

There was an announcement of the forthcoming Tunbridge Wells Mobile Rally to be organised by WKARS in the July edition of RSGB's Bulletin. It was to be held on 23 August at Dunorlan Park and there would be talk-in on 3.5 Mc/s using G2UJ/P and on 144 Mc/s using G4IB/M. Consequently there was a report on the rally in September's Bulletin saying that there had been an excellent attendance. A competition was held for the "most original aerial system". This was won by G2NF for his two metre "square halo".

Also in the September Bulletin, the results of the National Field Day contest were published. WKARS was placed 72nd out of 101. The callsign used was G2UJ but operated only on the 3.5, 7 and 14 Mc/s bands.

Chapter 13 - 1960

The swinging sixties started off for WKARS with a committee meeting held on 8 January at Culverden House, Tunbridge Wells with Bert Allen, G2UJ, in the chair. As usual, the programme for the coming months was agreed. This was:

- 22 January – Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition discussion
- 5 February – Winter junk sale – auctioneer, Laurie King, G4IB
- 4 March – Film strip lecture – G Adams, G3LEQ
- 18 March – “Bert’s Bit” – a demonstration of how to build something that works in double quick time by Bert Allen
- 1 April – Informal evening
- 29 April – Annual General Meeting

Following a suggestion from Laurie King, it was agreed that slides should be made up into a programme to illustrate the Society’s activities in a typical year.

The AGM was duly held on 29 April with 14 members and one visitor present. It was noted that work on the Society’s transmitter was progressing with the cabinet being designed and the exciter and PA stages having been completed. It was noted that Mr Leslie Dumble had died. The club had organised the disposal of his equipment and that most of the revenue from the junk sales had been used for Mr Dumble’s benefit. The Society had also paid two years’ insurance on the trophies and had written off the value of the aerial poles in the accounts.

The following officers were elected:

- President – W H Allen MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – L S King, G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – R Delves
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Treasurer – L Hallett
- Competition and Affiliated Societies Representative – G Adams, G3LEQ
- Editor – R Trevet
- Assistant Editor – L King

The President introduced Mr Hubbard, G5OX who had been invited to judge the annual competition entries. Regrettably there were no junior entries but the senior trophy was awarded to Michael Hallett.

A committee meeting was held on 6 May. Mr Bowles and Mr Colwell were co-opted to the committee and the following programme was agreed for the coming months:

- 13 May – Discussion of the arrangements for National Field Day
- 27 May – “Getting going on two metres, part one, aerials, converters and receivers” by W H Allen
- 11 and 12 June – National Field Day
- 24 June – Informal evening

- 8 July – Hi-fi evening
- 22 July – “Getting going on two metres, part two, transmitters” by W H Allen

The meeting decided to write to ITA, Dover and to North Foreland Radio with a view to arranging visits.

The results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published in the May issue of RSGB’s Bulletin. The Society was placed 40th out of 52 using the callsign G2UJ/A.

The next committee meeting was held on 2 August with all committee members present. Mr Trevet said that he would write an article on the Dover visit which had presumably taken place since the previous committee meeting. The following programme was agreed for the coming months:

- 2 September – “Ham operation in Europe”, a talk and slide demonstration by G Adams
- 16 September – Informal evening
- 30 September – Junk sale
- 14 October – “The RSGB Cambridge Convention” a talk by W H Allen
- 28 October – Discussion on suitable receivers for the amateur bands
- 11 November – “Getting going on two metres, part three” by W H Allen
- 25 November – SSB – a talk by L Williams, G3MDO
- 9 December – Audio night
- 21 December – Christmas party

The meeting agreed that morse practice should be arranged for 7.15pm to 7.45pm on meeting nights at Culverden House.

The November issue of the RSGB’s Bulletin published the National Field Day results. The Society was placed 86th out of 108 with a single station using the callsign G2UJ. The best band for the Society was 7Mc/s followed by 3.5 Mc/s and then 14 Mc/s. No entry was made on 1.8, 21 or 28 Mc/s.

The final committee meeting of the year took place on 15 December. The morse practice sessions had been poorly supported and would be discontinued. The following general meetings’ programme was agreed:

- 13 January 1961 – Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition discussion
- 27 January – Hi-fi techniques
- 4 and 5 February – Affiliated Societies contest
- 10 February – Film evening
- 24 February – Visit to Crawley club and a talk by Mr Garrett on the history of radio
- 10 March - Informal night and final arrangements for the Hobbies Exhibition
- 24 March – Arrangements for National Field Day
- 4 April – Set up for Hobbies Exhibition
- 5 to 8 April – Hobbies Exhibition
- 14 April – Annual General Meeting

The December issue of the Bulletin gave details of the Society's forthcoming Christmas party which was to be held on 21 December.

The top band slow morse transmissions from Society member Gordon Adams, G3LEQ which had been regularly listed in the RSGB Bulletin seem to have been discontinued from part way through the year.

Chapter 14 - 1961

Throughout the year someone was regularly providing the RSGB with information on the Society's general meeting programme since a listing regularly appeared in most issues of The Bulletin during the year. The programme appeared in either "Regional and Club News" or "Forthcoming Events" and, on one occasion, both! The Bulletin also reported that WKARS ran regular activity sessions on 80 metres on Sunday at noon and on 144.850 on Wednesdays at 8.30pm.

The first meeting recorded in the Minutes Book for the year was a committee meeting held on 17 March with Bert Allen in the chair and six other committee members present. As usual, the meeting programme for the coming months was agreed. This was to be:

- 14 April – AGM
- 28 April – How to become a radio amateur by G2UJ and G4IB
- 12 May – Informal meeting with, it was hoped, an interesting guest
- 26 May – Final National Field Day preparations
- 9 June – Quartz crystals, how they work and how they are used by Doug Brewer
- 23 June – Informal evening
- 7 July – tape recorders
- 21 July – Direction finding competition

It was agreed that a further mobile rally should be held in 1962 and that the date would be published in the autumn of the current year. Mr Allen agreed to try to arrange a visit to the BBC at the Crystal Palace television transmitter and to the television Centre.

The Annual General Meeting was held, as planned, on 14 April at Culverden House with Mr Allen in the chair and 15 members present. The President expressed his regret that Leslie Hallett, G3MDR, was leaving due to his undoubtedly richly deserved promotion to Manager of the National Provincial Bank at Midhurst. A number of members were thanked for their services to the Society during the year including those relating to National Field Day, the Hobbies Exhibition and the Christmas party.

Mr Hallett presented the accounts for the past year to the meeting and said that income and expenditure over the year were broadly in balance. He also mentioned that third party insurance had been obtained in the sum of £5,000 for a premium of £1 5s 6d (£1.27). A large proportion of the proceeds of junk sales during the year had gone to Leslie Dumble's family.

The following officers were elected to serve for the coming year:

- W H Allen MBE, G2UJ – President
- L King, G4IB – Senior Vice-President
- R Delves – Junior Vice-President
- H F Richards – Secretary
- W Dobson – Treasurer
- R Trevett – Editor and Publicity
- D Colwell – Contest Organiser
- G Adams, G3LEQ – RSGB Representative
- F Bowles – Assistant Editor, co-opted member

The results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published in the May edition of the Bulletin. WKARS was placed 37th out of 47 using the callsign G2UJ/A.

A committee meeting was held on 14 July. The following programme of general meetings was agreed for the coming months:

- 11 August – Two metre DF contest
- 8 September – Bandwidth in Communication – a talk by W H Allen, G2UJ
- 22 September – Modern developments in TV receivers by H F Richards
- 6 October – Informal meeting
- 20 October – Junk sale – auctioneer, Laurie King
- 3 November – Two metre mobiles – a talk by Laurie King, G4IB/M
- 17 November – Hi-fi night
- 1 December – Elements of design for amateur equipment
- 15 December – Christmas party
- 5 January 1962 – Film show

The date for the proposed mobile rally was agreed to be 6 May 1962.

In the August edition of RSGB's Bulletin, the results of the National Field Day contest were published. WKARS was placed 96th out of 120. A single station was used in the contest by the Society with the callsign G4IB with club activity on 1.8, 7 and 14 Mc/s.

An article appeared in the December issue of the Bulletin written by Bert Allen, G2UJ on OSCAR (Orbiting Satellites Carrying Amateur Radio). Bert was listed as being RSGB's Project OSCAR co-ordinator.

Chapter 15 - 1962

A committee meeting was held on 12 January which set the programme of general meetings for the coming months.

- 19 January – Informal night
- 25 January – Visit to Central Electricity Generating Board
- 9 February – Project OSCAR – a talk by W H Allen, G2UJ
- 23 February – Audio night
- 9 March – Planning meeting
- 23 March – Films – “North Sea” from the National Films Library and “Transistors” from Mullards
- 13 April – AGM
- 6 May – Mobile rally at Dunorlan Park, Tunbridge Wells
- 11 May – Final NFD arrangements

It was also arranged for a party of six to eight members to visit the Crawley Radio Club on 28 February.

The rules for the award of the Society’s trophies were amended so that there would be a single section open to all members with the John Wheeler Trophy being awarded to the winner and the VS9AW trophy awarded to the second placed person. The age of each competitor would be taken into account in the awarding of points and, if the winner of a trophy was under the age of 18 he would also be awarded the sum of £1.

It was decided not to enter the Affiliated Societies’ contest in 1962.

A number of articles on Project OSCAR, penned by the WKARS President, Bert Allen, G2UJ, appeared in the RSGB’s Bulletin. The articles appeared in the January, February, March, May, June, July and August issues.

In March, the RSGB announced the introduction of a VHF National Field Day to be held in July each year. In due course this was to become a contest that would be regularly entered by WKARS.

The AGM was held at Culverden House on 13 April with the President, Bert Allen in the chair. It was agreed that the exciter and PA units which had been completed for the Society’s transmitter but for which the Society had no use, should be put up for sale. A visitor to the club, Mr Hubbard, G5OX, was welcomed. The President reported that we had not entered the Affiliated Societies’ contest this year due to a lack of licensed operators and that, for the same reason, we would not be entering the National Field Day contest. In addition, the Society would not be participating in the Tunbridge Wells Hobbies Exhibition this year following a change in the management of the event. He stated that there had been a very successful visit to the Decca Navigator Station.

The Treasurer, Mr Dobson, reported that the year had not been successful financially as it had ended with a deficit of expenditure over income of £4 14s 6d (£4.72) as a result of a fall in membership subscription income. The President, however, stated that the Society was still in a sound financial position overall.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

- President – W H Allen MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – Mr L King, G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – Mr R Delves
- Secretary – Mr H F Richards
- Treasurer – Mr W Dobson
- Editor – Mr R Trewett

The positions of Assistant Editor, Contest Organiser and RSGB Representative were left open.

In the June issue of RSGB's Bulletin, a report appeared on the WKARS mobile rally. It read as follows: "The West Kent Amateur Radio Society rally held on 6 May took place at Tunbridge Wells and drew a total of 90 visitors and 30 mobiles. The poor weather turned what is normally a beautiful park into rather a dismal place but despite this a happy time was had by all who attended. In view of the weather it was decided to put all the prizes into the raffle and so six ladies and eight gentlemen's prizes were presented to the lucky winners. The 144 Mc/s station, G4IB/M, was very successful in working incoming stations but the top band station, G2UJ/A, experienced difficulty due to being crystal controlled and so being unable to move out of QRM."

Also in June's Bulletin there was a full report on the WKARS AGM. The general meeting programme of the Society was regularly published in The Bulletin throughout the year.

A committee meeting was held on 3 September. The general meetings' programme for the coming months was agreed.

- 14 September – Television Principles by R Trevett
- 28 September – Visit to International Rectifiers at Oxted
- 12 October – Surplus equipment sale, auctioneer L King
- 26 October – "Nucleonics" a lecture by W H Allen, G2UJ
- 9 November – Film night
- 23 November – Audio night
- 14 December – Equipment demonstration evening
- 11 January 1963 – "Amateur Transmitters" a talk and demonstration by L King

Chapter 16 - 1963

The first committee meeting of the year was held on 17 January and agreed the following general meetings programme for the coming months:

- 25 January – “The building bricks of radio” with exhibition of various items
- 8 February – NFD discussion
- 22 February – Audio night
- 8 March – Film night
- 22 March – Informal evening
- 5 April – AGM
- 26 April – Colour television – a talk by R Trevett
- 10 May – Guest speaker – to be announced

A letter had been received from RSGB concerning the organisation of mobile rallies and the co-ordination of dates. It was agreed to reply that WKARS policy was to organise rallies in alternate years to give other clubs in the south east the opportunity to organise their events. It was also agreed to point out that whilst the Society appreciated the publicity given by RSGB to the WKARS mobile rallies, the Society preferred to organise its own events in its own way. It was agreed that the Society should enter the VHF NFD contest in September.

The March, June and July editions of RSGB’s Bulletin contained details of the WKARS general meetings programme with the June edition also containing details of the WKARS elections at the AGM.

The Annual General Meeting was held, as scheduled, on 5 April. The President, Bert Allen, reported that the mobile rally had been a success “despite some slight difficulty with the talk-in station.” There had been visits to the Hastings society and to International Rectifiers. The garden party at Mr King’s home had gone well and the President spoke highly of the talk that Roy Trevett had given on colour television.

The Treasurer, Mr Dobson reported a successful year with income exceeding expenditure by £13 8s 4d (£13.42) due to increased subscription income, a profit on surplus equipment sales and a profit of £1 0s 4d (£1.02) on the rally. The meeting agreed to write down all old assets, other than components, to £3.

The following officers were elected for the coming 12 months:

- President – W H Allen MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – L King G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – R Delves
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Treasurer – W Dobson
- Editor – R Trevett
- Assistant Editor – P Welton
- Affiliated Society’s Representative – B Pooley
- Contest Organiser – D Colwell

An invitation had been received from the Hastings club for visits to two of their meetings. In addition, other visits were proposed including a return to Tatsfield. Mr Trevett suggested a picnic. It was agreed that the closing date for entries for the John Wheeler trophies would be delayed until 10 May.

A committee meeting was held on 11 April which agreed that a series of lectures under the general heading of "100 years of wireless" should be organised. There would be five lectures covering Historical; Amateur Radio; Broadcasting and Television; Audio and Future Trends. These subjects would be covered by Mr Colwell, Mr Dobson, Mr Richards, Mr Trevett and Mr Allen respectively. The general meetings programme for the coming months was then agreed as follows:

- 10 May – Guest speaker
- 21 May – Visit to Hastings
- 24 May – Audio night
- 14 June – 2 metre Convention – a talk by Bert Allen
- 23 June – Visit to Tatsfield
- 28 June – Modulation – a talk by Laurie King
- 12 July – Junk sale
- 26 July – Gadgets Galore
- 25 August – Picnic at Sheffield Park
- 7/8 September – VHF NFD at Lamberhurst Quarter
- 13 September – 100 years of wireless – a talk by D Colwell

The September and December issues of RSGB's Bulletin contained articles by Bert Allen. The September article was a short update on the OSCAR amateur satellite programme with the December article being full length and entitled "A simple pre-amplifier for 3.5 to 30 Mc/s".

A further committee meeting was held on 4 October. Further programme dates were agreed as follows:

- 11 October – 625 line television – a talk by Hugh Richards
- 25 October – 100 years of wireless – Amateur Radio by W Dobson
- 8 November – VE, VR2, VK – a talk by Ben Pooley, G3PAH
- 22 November – Linear Amplifiers and SSB – a talk by Laurie King, G4IB
- 13 December – Visit to Hurst Laboratories
- 20 December – Christmas party
- 10 January – Audio night
- 24 January – 100 years of wireless – Broadcasting and Television – a talk by Hugh Richards

It was also agreed that a visit should be organised to the Tonbridge factory or Messrs. Mortley either on 17 October or 14 November. The meeting decided to donate two guineas (£2.10) to the St Peter's Scout Group for the loan of tents in September for VHF NFD and £2 to the Region 8 RSGB Official Regional meeting at Folkestone.

After a discussion, the committee agreed to enter the 1964 Affiliated Societies contest from Five Oak Green.

The final committee meeting of the year was held on 6 December. The meeting discussed arrangements for the forthcoming entry in the Affiliated Societies contest which was due to be held on 1 and 2 February 1964. The committee also agreed the coming general meetings programme as follows:

- 13 December – Informal meeting [the planned visit on this date must have been cancelled]
- 14 February – Test equipment evening and demonstrations
- 28 February – A Layman's Approach to Hi-fi – a talk by D Colwell
- 13 March – A talk (subject and speaker to be decided)
- 10 April – Annual General Meeting

Chapter 17 - 1964

Throughout much of the year details of the club's meetings were published in the RSGB Bulletin with full details of the club being published in the February issue.

The first meeting for the year recorded in the Minutes Book was the AGM held on 10 April under the chairmanship of the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ. The President reported that over the previous year, members had enjoyed a lecture by the Crawley club on how to win NFD (!) as well as visits to the BBC station at Tatsfield, the factory of Mortleys at Tonbridge and the United States Air Force station at West Malling. There had also been a visit to the Mullard 625 line television evening at Maidstone. The club had entered the Affiliated Societies contest and VHF National Field Day.

The Treasurer, Mr Dobson, reported that there had been a small deficit of £1.16.8 (£1.83) over the year but that there was £68.0.10½ (£68.04) in hand. It was reported that the premium bond held by the club "had not yet earned its keep"!

The following officers were elected for the coming year

- President – W H Allen, MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice President – L King, G4IB
- Junior Vice President – R Delves
- Secretary – H F Richards
- Treasurer – W Dobson
- Editor – R Trevitt
- Contest organiser and RSGB Representative – B Pooley
- Assistant Editor – E Tucker

A committee meeting was held on 22 April which agreed the following programme

- 24 April - Preliminary NFD arrangements
- 5 May – Test gear demonstration, Mr Simmons
- 22 May – Final NFD arrangements
- 6 and 7 June – NFD
- 12 June – Competition night and trophy awards
- 10 July – Film night
- 24 July – Audio night
- 30 August – picnic at Sheffield Park
- 11 September – Test gear demonstration

Other dates that were mentioned were 10 May for a visit to the Thanet Mobile Rally and 5 July for a visit to the Decca Navigation Station at East Hoathly. It was also decided to hold a junk sale in the autumn and to enter VHF NFD.

The results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published in the May edition of the RSGB Bulletin. The Society was placed 33rd out of 49 and used the callsign G4IB for the contest.

A further committee meeting was held on 14 September. Laurie King proposed an addition to the Society's Articles of Association specifically "It is a condition of membership of the WKARS that every member shall comply with the GPO regulations relevant to amateur radio". It was agreed to put this proposal to the next AGM.

The following future programme was agreed at the meeting:

- 25 September – VHF/UHF topics
- 4 October – Visit to BBC station at Tatsfield
- 9 October – Talk by representative of Erie Resistors
- 23 October – Audio night
- 25 October – Visit to Decca Navigation Station at East Hoathly
- 13 November – Which communications receiver?
- 27 November – Dual standard TV circuitry by H Turner
- 11 December – Surplus equipment sale
- 18 December – Christmas party
- 8 January 1965 – Natter night
- 22 January – Amateur TV demonstration – R Trevitt

Other plans included a possible talk on ship to shore communications, a visit to the RSGB International Communications Exhibition and entry into the next Affiliated Societies contest.

The results of the 1964 National Field Day were published in the October edition of the RSGB Bulletin. WKARS was placed 39th out of 47 in the single station section using the callsign G2UJ. Contacts were made on the 3.5, 7 and 14 Mc/s bands but there was no activity from the Society on 1.8, 21 or 28 Mc/s.

Chapter 18 - 1965

A committee meeting was held on 1 February 1965 which agreed the meetings programme for the coming months. This was:

- 12 February – Questions and discussions
- 26 February – NFD preliminary arrangements
- 12 March – Radio Components – a talk by a representative of Erie Resistors Limited
- 26 March – Dual standard TV circuitry part two. Mr Turner to explain the workings from the detector to the cathode ray tube
- 9 April – Annual General Meeting
- 23 April – Exchange and Mart and raffle
- 14 May – Final arrangements for NFD
- 28 May – Oscillators, a talk and demonstration by W H Allen, G2UJ
- 11 June – Film show
- 25 June – Audio night
- 9 July – 23cm, a talk and demonstration by John Gould
- 23 July – Discussion on VHF National Field Day

The results of the 1964 VHF National Field Day were published in the February issue of the RSGB Bulletin. The Society was placed 45th out of 54 using seven operators but only submitting an entry for 144 Mc/s. WKARS did not operate on 70, 432 or 1296 Mc/s. The callsign used was G4IB.

The AGM was held on 9 April at Culverden House under the chairmanship of the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ. There was a suggestion that the first half hour of each general meeting be devoted to a discussion of topics of a less technical nature than the level at which lectures were normally aimed in order to encourage newer amateurs. This was to be further discussed at the next committee meeting with a view to being implemented.

The President reviewed the year ended and mentioned particularly the Society entry in the Affiliated Societies contest which had taken place from the home of Mr Southern in Crowborough. He mentioned that this would be the last year in which Society meetings would be held at Culverden House and that the new HQ would be the Arts Centre in Monson Road, Tunbridge Wells. He also referred to the "vastly improved" QLF newsletter and thanked messrs. Trevitt and King for their efforts in that direction. [Unfortunately, no copies of QLF appear to have survived from these early years.]

The Treasurer reported that income had exceeded expenditure by £22.11.8½ (£22.58) for the year and that the balance sheet assets stood at £90.12.7 (£90.62) but he recommended that certain items should be written down to a nominal amount – specifically the John Wheeler trophies (currently shown at £14), a duplicator (£2) and sundry items (£4.6.6. (£4.32)). There were currently 34 paid up members.

The following officers were elected for the year:

- President – W H Allen, MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice President – L King, G4IB
- Junior Vice President – J Gould
- Treasurer – S Webb
- Secretary – R Trevitt
- Editor – E Tucker
- Assistant Editor – H F Richards

A special meeting was held before the general meeting on 23 April. This meeting amended the Society's Articles of Association. The following changes were made:

The clause "That persons seeking re-election to membership should be required to settle outstanding dues." was added.

The clause "That all members not in arrears of subscriptions should have one vote." was added.

Under the heading of "Conduct of meetings" the word "President" was changed to the phrase "the chairman of the meeting".

A committee meeting was held on 30 April. This meeting did not decide on a future programme consideration of which was deferred until the availability of the new meeting place was confirmed. A new look was discussed for QLF and it was decided to have a printing plate made for a front cover which could be used in subsequent issues. The members were to be asked to submit possible designs.

The first part of a major article entitled "The Oscar Story" by the WKARS President, Bert Allen appeared in the April edition of the RSGB Bulletin. The remaining two parts of the article appeared in the May and June issues respectively.

In the May edition of the RSGB Bulletin the results of the Affiliated Societies contest were published. The WKARS entry was placed 44th out of 54. The callsign used was G3RST (held by R V Southern, a Society member.)

Details of WKARS meetings appeared in a number of editions of the RSGB Bulletin through the year. The move of meetings to the Monson Road site was reported in the September issue.

The August edition of the Bulletin carried a letter from WKARS member, Laurie King, G4IB, in a debate being held as to whether the Bulletin had become too simplistic in its articles with some RSGB members taking the opposite view ie that it was too technical. Laurie's letter took a neutral line.

The next recorded committee meeting was held on 16 September at the Monson Road premises. No responses had yet been received to the request to members to submit designs for the cover of QLF.

The following meeting programme was agreed:

- 24 September – Natter night
- 8 October – Aerials by G4IB
- 22 October – Talk by Mr Turner of Radio Rentals on the Recorda cell system of automatic telephone answering
- 5 November – A discussion to be led by Mr Trevitt on the possibility of a combined effort to produce equipment
- 19 November – Junk sale
- 3 December – Film show
- 17 December – Transistors in Communications by John Denny, G3NTT

The possibility of visits to Feedback Ltd., International Rectifier, BBC2 and the telephone exchange were to be investigated.

The 1965 National Field Day results were published in the October edition of the RSGB Bulletin. WKARS was placed 38th out of 64 using the callsign G2UJ. This was the best contest result for the Society for some time. Contacts were made on the 3.5, 7 and 14 Mc/s bands but not on the 1.8, 21 or 28 Mc/s bands.

An article by Bert Allen describing the International Amateur Radio Convention which he attended in Knokke, Belgium appeared in the November issue of the Bulletin and a further article by him on Project Oscar appeared in the December issue.

The final committee meeting of the year took place on 13 December. A number of issues were discussed including the future programme although firm dates were not determined. There had been an offer of a visit by G6QB possibly to talk about DXing and a possibility of a talk by G3FRV on the G2DAF receiver. There was also a discussion of possible social events including a social evening and a picnic.

Chapter 19 - 1966

The January issue of the RSGB Bulletin published an article by Bert Allen on Project Oscar.

The Society's programme was published in the March, June, July, September and December issues of the RSGB's Bulletin.

The first meeting of 1966 recorded in the Minute Book is the AGM held on 15 April at the Arts Centre in Monson Road, Tunbridge Wells. 24 members were present at the meeting which was chaired by the President, Bert Allen, G2UJ. The President reported on a successful year of talks and presentations including talks by L H Tucker on ssb, Mr Turner on a "recordacall" system, Eric Tucker on Logic Computers, John Denny on Transistors in Communications and John Gould on 70 centimetres.

The Treasurer reported that there was a surplus of income over expenditure for the year of £23.12.2½ (£12.63) whereupon two members each donated ½d to make it a round figure! [Author's note: If two members donated ½d each it would still have been an odd number!] The total funds now held were £114.4.8½ (£114.23).

The election of officers for the coming year then took place. The result was:

- President – Mr W H Allen MBE, G2UJ
- Senior Vice-President – Mr L S King, G4IB
- Junior Vice-President – Mr J Gould, G6ACD/T
- Treasurer – Mr S W Webb
- Secretary – Mr P Hill, G3NPU
- Editor – Mr E Tucker, G3TXZ
- Assistant Editor – H F Richards
- Contest Organiser – Mr B Pooley, G3PAH

It was also agreed to ask Mr R Trevitt, G3SSE, G6SSE/T if he would act as Affiliated Societies representative to the RSGB on his return to England. Note: /T callsign suffixes indicated that the licence covered the transmission of amateur television signals.

A meeting of the new committee was held on 24 April. The programme for forthcoming meetings was agreed as follows:

- 6 May – TV Interference
- 20 May – TV pictures by flying spot – G3SSE
- 3 June – Constructional project discussion and final NFD arrangements
- 17 June – Aviation Radio – G3NPU
- 1 July – Radio Teleprinters – G3PAH
- 15 July – Films
- 29 July – SSB – G3PAH

Visits were also agreed – to Feedback Limited at Crowborough on 22 May and to Gatwick Airport on 3 July. It was agreed that the following Resolution should be put to the members: "That in the event of the Society winning a Premium Bonds prize of over £500, a trust fund shall be set up with the

object of purchasing and providing income for the maintenance of permanent headquarters for the Society. The Trustees shall be the officers of the Society and the manager of the Society's bank at the relevant time. Should the Society win a Premium Bond prize of up to £500, the amount shall be paid into Society funds." There is no record of whether this proposed Resolution was ever adopted....or, regrettably, of the Society ever winning such a Premium Bonds prize!

At the meeting, Mr Trevitt agreed to act as RSGB representative and it was agreed to co-opt Mr D Payne to the committee.

The results of the Affiliated Societies Contest were published in the April edition of RSGB's Bulletin. The Society was placed 43rd out of 49 using the callsign G3RST.

The June issue of RSGB's Bulletin reported that WKARS had started a project to build 10 two metre transceivers designed by G4IB. The Society's recent construction contest was also reported. The winner was G3TLB with second place being taken by G3SSE.

The next meeting of the committee was held on 12 August when the following programme of general meetings was agreed:

- 9 September – Audio night with a difference including electronic organs and stereo – G3SSE
- 23 September – Natter night
- 30 September – Espionage – Tricks of the Trade – Colonel X!
- 7 October – Junk sale
- 21 October – A discussion on ssb – G3PAH
- 4 November – Avionics – G3NPU
- 18 November – Film show
- 2 December – Recent Transistor Applications – G3NTT
- 16 December – Thames Radio – Peter Ballistrini, G3BPT
- 13 January 1967 – Simple ssb – G3UEQ

The results of National Field Day were published in the August edition of RSGB's Bulletin. The Society was placed 43rd out of 58 in the two-station section.

The final committee meeting of the year was held on 30 December and the following general meeting programme was agreed:

- 27 January – Top band natter night and VHF meeting at Wye
- 10 February – Junk sale – G3PAH
- 24 February – Film show
- 10 March – Recent work on converters – G2UJ
- 7 April – AGM
- 21 April – Thames Radio – G3BPT

The BBC had invited a visit from Society members to BBC1 and BBC2 at the Crystal Palace transmitters.

This was the last meeting recorded in the Society's original minute book. A new book was now to be started.