

---

# BeechLog

---

The Magazine of Burnham Beeches Radio Club

February 1998 Issue

---



## Morse !!

The end of 1997 had a special significance in Britain, with the closing of the 500kHz distress monitoring service. With this act, the whole future of the place of morse in the amateur service has been thrown into question.

My own thoughts on this matter have been aired before, but it is interesting to consider the historical place of morse in ham radio. In the early days at the start of this century, the only radio communication possible used morse code. However, soon it was realised that a radio carrier could be made to vary by the sound picked up by a microphone. This led to broadcasting, but morse was still retained for long distance communications by commercial, military and government services.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## BBRC Web Pages

For some time now Mark G7LTT has hosted the BBRC web pages for us, on a computer at his works location. Anyone with Internet access could look at these pages at Homestead Data Products.

Sadly (for us) Mark has gone and got himself a better job! And of course his old boss, wants our web pages off of his computer at some time in the near future..

At this point I offered to host the pages from computer space on my Demon Internet account. After a chat with Mark it was decided that, rather than give you all the real address of the pages, we would get a permanent address for the BBRC, and here it is:

*(Continued on page 3)*

## In this issue

Morse !!	1
BBRC web change	1
Slough History	3
Gadgets	4
Yaesu FT50R Review	6
Delusions	7
Editors' bit	7
It's Obsolete !	8
What's On	10
Purple Cow	10

*(Continued from page 1)*

It was useful throughout Hitler's war, since the coded messages passed around the world by both parties to the war were suited to morse transmission.

When I passed the RAE in about 1980, I wondered why a morse test was used as the passport to HF operating. Some people said it was necessary so that we could read distress messages which might be heard on those LF bands we shared with maritime services. Others suggested that the authorities needed a pool of CW proficient operators in case of war.

However, in 1980, although the test was mandatory, no-one was compelled to maintain proficiency, and it was not required for us ever to use morse code on the air. However, morse was very popular, many hams enjoyed using the code, and found it useful for weak signal and international communication.

Of course, the original reasons given to me in 1980 now no longer apply. The maritime service has closed, and the military and government services use encrypted digital transmission methods. So I think it is quite reasonable to question the necessity to demonstrate our ability to use morse code, when the authorities are not concerned whether we use our skill or not.

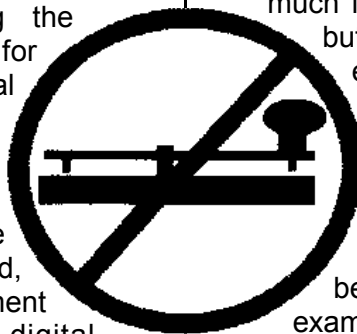
It has been suggested that the abolition of the morse test would lead to the eventual demise of CW operation on the ham bands. I think that this will eventually be true, but while morse is still useful, hams will use it, learning from others if necessary. There are still aspects of our hobby which are served best by morse code. These include Topband DX, operation on the VLF bands, Meteor-scatter and moonbounce working, long distance auroral contacts, and probably many more. Anything that involves very low or distorted signals is still best served by morse, and hams are very keen on stretching their capabilities.

Maybe there will eventually be some sort of digital code sending and reading that can rival morse. At the moment there are some systems which maintain contact even when the operator cannot head any signal, but these are still pretty useless in a DX pileup. The combination of morse code and a trained ear is going to be hard to beat.

I really don't know how we could replace the code test with something more useful or relevant. The nearest skill seems to be knitting, but that's dying out faster than morse. My personal view is that we don't need a replacement, after all the attractions of ham radio are much less than they used to be, so we are less likely to be deluged with undesirables than 10 years ago. The RAE presents a barrier that's higher than it needs to be, not so much in the nature of the questions, but the difficulty in finding an exam centre.

However many hams will object strongly to the removal of barriers, so a re-assessment of entry requirements would probably be of benefit. Drop the CGLI exam, and replace it with some sort of peer exam. This could be administered by a board of elected hams, with regular exams. Or maybe by volunteer examiners, licensed by the RA. There has been little abuse of the RSGB morse test system, nothing detrimental to the interests of hams anyway, so there is no reason a ham administered system should not meet suitable standards.

Any changes which exclude the morse test will need to be in line with the ITU regulations on this issue. There has been a lot of work put in to align the exam requirements of CEPT countries, and the ever growing list at the bottom of our licence document bears witness to the desire of the worlds governments to harmonise and simplify the administrative burden of ham licensing. It can take only one major government to start a trend - look at the spread of the six-metre band in Europe after our RA gave us an



(Continued from page 1)

<http://bbrc.home.ml.org>

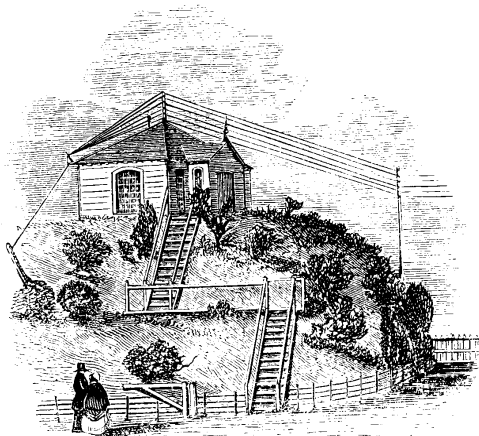
Now the beauty of this address is it redirects anyone entering the above address into their web browser to the REAL address of the BBRC pages..

In the future I might get fed up with the Internet and another member would take over the pages, from their web space. Not a problem, you would still use the [bbrc.home.ml.org](http://bbrc.home.ml.org) address, and be redirected to the new real address.

The files that make up the BBRC web pages have been structured with, if the need arises, portability in mind. One problem that did arise was the guest book, but that has been sorted. Also included is a visitor counter. Give it a try, see what you think..

One last thing before I forget, thanks for writing and hosting the pages Mark.. I've got the easy bit!!

BBRC webmaster : [mike@g7hid.demon.co.uk](mailto:mike@g7hid.demon.co.uk)



The Electric Telegraph Cottage, Slough.

Built in 1843, this cottage housed the west end of the telegraph line between Paddington and Slough. It is famous for playing a part in the capture of murderer John Tanswell, who was later hanged at

## Slough History

Last years anniversary of our club set me thinking about the history of the area around these parts. The Slough area seems to have been populated for a little while, for when I lived in Iver, I remember the unearthing of an Iron Age settlement just across the road from my house.

You cannot miss Windsor Castle, which has been built on a site used by English royalty for many years prior to the present building. But there other buildings of some age scattered around, which we frequently pass without giving a second thought.

The Red Cow in Upton was originally a private house, Pond House. Built in the 16th century, the licence was transferred from the original Red Cow in 1837. The original Red Cow was somewhat younger, being built in the 17th century. It stood derelict for many years, and was partially demolished, although a preservation order was granted about 1950. It is now 53 Albert Street.

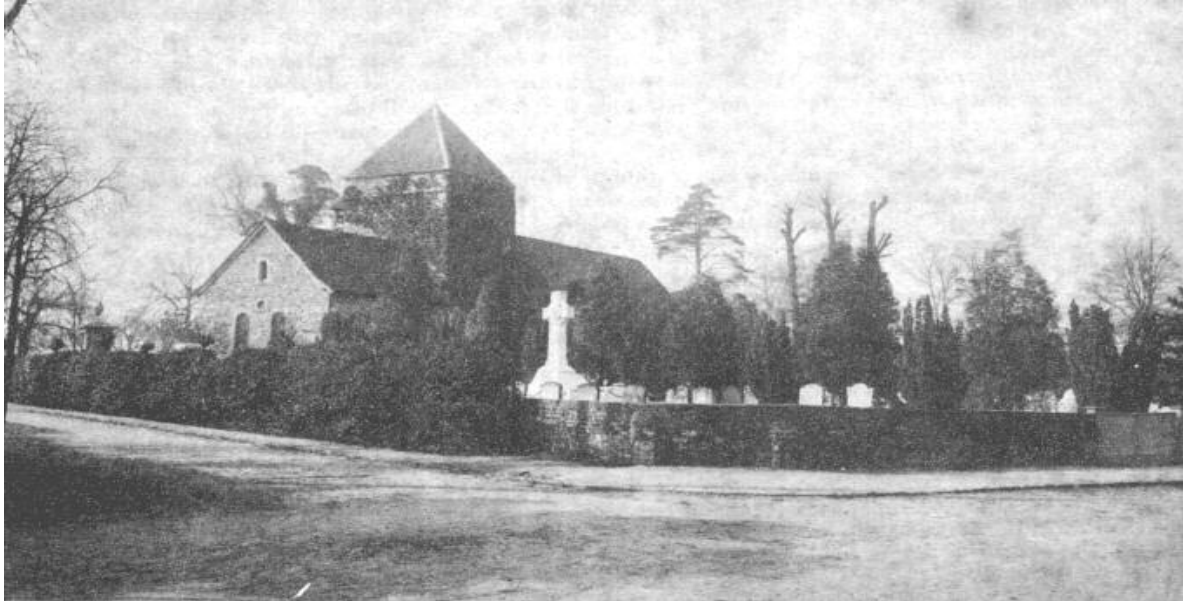
There are several other 17th century houses nearby, including 74 Upton Road. This house bears some resemblance to the Three Tuns, which was built, possibly by the same builder, about the same time.

Earlier still is Upton Court. This was started in the 15th century, and modified a couple of centuries later. It was built by the monks of Merton Priory.

St. Laurence church in Upton was built in 1100, the tower and nave are original! It was enlarged by Merton Priory in 1160, when the nave was extended about 20 feet, and the chancel was added. Alas it fell into disrepair in the early 19th century, this may have been deliberate as there was a move to build a new Parish Church in Slough. However it was bought by a local farmer, and restored during 1850-51.

Although much had been lost, much still remains. During restoration, original timber and plasterwork were uncovered.

(Continued on page 4)



*(Continued from page 3)*

Many of the brasses had been lost, although some remain. Many tombstones have disappeared, and one was found in use as a draining board in the Red Cow!

There are other churches founded in the 12th century, e.g. St. Mary's, Langley. St. Peter's, at Iver, may have been started a little earlier.

To the west of Slough there are also some historic buildings. Cippenham Place (The Old House) was built in 1550, on the site of an earlier building. There were many other houses of the 17th century standing not too long ago, although most of these have been demolished to make way for modern housing. Some of the barns at Cippenham Court Farm date back to that era.

Henry III had a palace at Cippenham, although no-one knows quite where. There are also thoughts that there were Saxon buildings too, although once again no trace of the rumoured Mercian kings remain.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some attractive buildings around St. Mary's in Langley. There is some detail about this on a web site which is maintained by a local vicar. The URL is as follows:

<http://www.argonet.co.uk/users/ian.gooding/Langley.html>

Since few of you bods have come up with

St. Laurence's, Upton, in 1851, after restoration. The ivy on the tower suggests that "Gray's Elegy" may relate to this church, rather than Stoke Poges, the latter having a spire. The top of the tower above was altered early this century.

## Gadgets

It is interesting to read the technical press, to see what new gadgets are waiting around the corner. Every week I read things like the predictions of the demise of music cassettes and CDs, to be replaced by an on-demand service via a broadband data network of some kind. Or the demise of printed matter - newspapers and magazines. The VCR is to be replaced by video jukeboxes wired to every home.

As you all know, I am extremely sceptical about all this! There is always some overlooked fact which makes possible technologies fall by the wayside. Anything that requires a broadband data feed means it will cost more than most people are prepared to pay, and won't be available in places we currently take for granted. Like in the car, on holiday, on the train, etc. And will use more electrical power than anything currently in use.

We have had high quality replacements of the audio cassette for some years now - DAT, DCC and Mini-Disc, but you'll have a job finding the equipment in the shops.



(Continued from page 4)

Music companies are frightened of the ease at which high quality copies could be made, regardless of copy protection. Feature films on CD are quite possible, but the same fear is holding back the appearance of the hardware.

Even when things 'come together' they are still imperfect. As you will have read in *BeechLog*, I carried a laptop PC around the USA for about 6 weeks of last year. But the manufacturers and customers seem to have missed out considering how these things are used. The first point is that the battery powers the thing for only two hours, if you are lucky. The second is that while the beasts can be quite small, the paraphernalia that you have to carry with them is too big and heavy.

One of the big success stories must be email. This is one application that has advantages over the current technology, letter post. Quick, cheap delivery of almost any document which can be expressed in digital form. But they missed one point. Apart from those with a permanent connection to the net, you have to dial up some machine and ask it if there is any mail waiting. Sending mail is convenient, but collecting it is not.

It always amazes me that the GSM network operators have not exploited this. Some commercial concerns have done so, and offer email via SMS and a laptop computer. But there is not one phone with everything inside. All it needs is a bit of software and a bit more RAM. Even the Nokia Communicator has not really got things together.

As radio hams, we actually have a network capable of doing this sort of thing, i.e. delivering mail as it arrives. Alas the software is not really up to it, it is too easy to screw up the White Pages (blushes). We have not got handhelds with built in keyboards and packet terminals. But this sort of

thing should be dead easy for the likes of Vodafone.

I might as well go off onto a tangent here, and winge about ham radio software, particularly packet radio in its various forms. What has happened to all the innovation? Here I am still using DOS software on my PC, because no-one to my knowledge has written any really decent software to replace it. There's all this Visual Basic stuff, which fills your PC with vast numbers of extra files and folders. And looks horrible, and is so overkill that it soon gets deleted. And then the IP stuff. It seems that this is still clothed in total mystery, quite baffling for the average ham. I understand why many IP enthusiasts like it this way, but where's the bit of software that sits between Windows 95 TCP/IP and your TNC?

I have noticed that John carries this gaudy pager with him. Very nice I am sure, but are we missing something? These pagers are almost on two metres. Now ten years ago someone would have been retuning these, and building a station to talk to them. The chaps who started packet over here didn't get put off by our restrictive licence. So why isn't it happening? Don't ask me, I'm too busy writing all this stuff!



## Yaesu 50R Review

The Yaesu FT50R handheld

This is another of those modern radios with so many functions that it's impossible to remember how to operate them all! I bought mine in a wild, uncontrolled moment, and found a quite versatile handheld with some surprising features.

Some of these features are a little annoying. Like the four pole miniature microphone jack - quite neat, but not to be found in any component suppliers catalogue I've looked into! The power socket is a conventional coaxial type - however I've not yet found a plug to fit it!

The radio also features an SMA connector for the aerial. For those not in the know, this is a small screw-thread affair with a respectable pedigree. Probably more reliable than a BNC too. But unless you are a microwave enthusiast, you're unlikely to have one in your spares box (luckily I have!).

This radio, unlike its more expensive brother, cannot operate in true duplex mode, but is capable of checking its second VFO for activity as frequently as every 200mS. Split frequency operation is possible - such splits can be programmed into any memory for instant recall. Although the radio can be toggled between the two transceive VFOs, there are in fact four bands in which it can receive:

- 76 to 200 MHz
- 300 to 400 MHz
- 400 to 540 MHz
- 590 to 999 MHz

It can receive AM, NBFM or WFM. These modes are switched automatically, e.g. AM is switched in between 108 and 137 MHz, and 300 to 335 MHz. However this can be overridden, and any mode used on any frequency.

There are 100 memories which can store any setting - all on UHF if you like. In addition to frequencies, these store the tun-

ing step, repeater shift, DCS and CTCSS frequencies, Tx power, Tx offset, and mode. There is a useful "Memory Tuning" function, which allows you to tune away from the stored frequency in whatever steps you have saved. You can also save a "Home Memory", and ten preset band edge memories. The latter can be

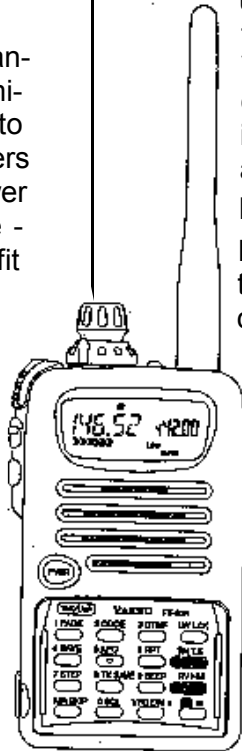
used for any frequencies, e.g. the 70cm repeater sub-band, the VHF airband, etc.. Selecting one of these memories and activating "Memory Tune" allows tuning and scanning within the limits preset.

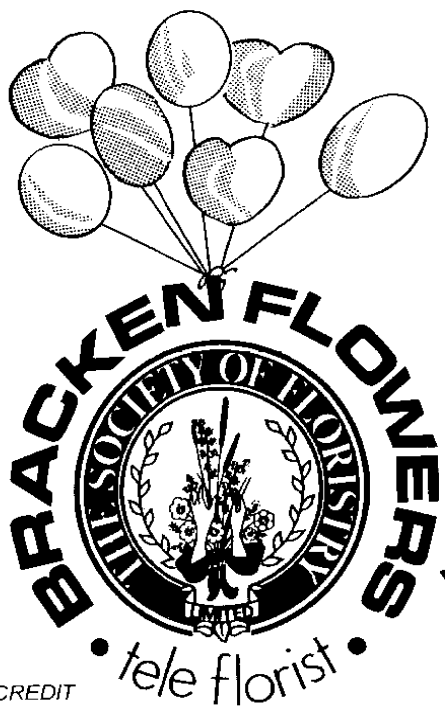
Most of the very numerous functions can be set up with just one control. You press the tuning knob down for half a second, and then 'tune' through the list that appears on the display. For example function 30 is the WBFM squelch threshold. After selecting the desired function, press the knob again, and you can 'tune' through the settings available. Pressing the PTT (it doesn't transmit) saves the new setting.

This facility allows things like the battery voltage to be displayed instead of the second VFO frequency, the CWID string to be set, and the "Auto Range Transpond System" to be controlled! Many other functions are set up via the keypad, like the CTCSS tones, and memory programming.

These radios seem to be getting more and more gizmos built in, and less buttons to control them with, although a "Help" button would seem to be a useful addition. How on earth one can remember how to set up the complex paging system, I cannot imagine. The radio seems to work quite well, however, although I have no intention of throwing it from one end of the room to the other, as suggested by Mr Lynch's sales manager!

Roger G0HZK





CREDIT  
CARDS  
ACCEPTED

31, Eton Wick Road • Eton Wick • Windsor • Berkshire • SL4 6LU

Fax Service

## Balloons

FOR PARTIES, WEDDINGS, AND BIRTHDAYS  
- OR JUST FOR FUN

FRESH, SILK & DRIED FLOWERS • BASKETS  
ARRANGEMENTS • BOUQUETS • WEDDINGS  
FLORAL TRIBUTES • CHRISTENINGS • BIRTHDAYS

SELECTION OF PLANTS ALWAYS IN STOCK

LOCAL • NATIONAL • INTERNATIONAL •  
DELIVERY SERVICE

Pamela Sanders ASF  
01753 833225

*Baby China*

SELECTION OF VASES AND CANDLES  
DRIED & SILK ARRANGEMENTS  
ALWAYS IN STOCK OR MADE TO ORDER

## Delusions?

Mr Smith gets terribly stiff  
as he practices keeping fit  
hoping soon  
that he'll look real cool  
like the guys that make dames drool.

Twice a day he makes his way  
to the place where he does Tai-chi  
and its off with his shirt  
thrown in the dirt  
as he tries to make the years flee

Back in his room ignoring the gloom  
he switches on the tv  
nothing to watch, so wait for the game  
open three tins and pour'em in  
sitting in front of the frame.

Gets his win but it seems a sin  
'cos his life hasn't changed a bit  
turns in for the night  
and out like a light  
to dream of being a hit.

But his brain's in a whirl  
bedclothes unfurl  
and its all because of the beer  
What a shame they won the game  
and all he wants is a girl.

Settles down at last  
an all-star cast  
as his life unwinds before  
can't even begin, because he's not thin  
times wasted and not even a score.

Age ten and three score  
he can't try it no more  
clock stopped and he's gone to sleep  
left it too late - Smith's at the Gate  
will St Peter open the door?

(c) Kipping 16th November 1997

## Editors bit...

This month is noticeable by the lack of members contributions, although I do thank those who have written something for this issue.

Please note that I am willing to consider publishing anything, even John's poems, so please, please send me something for the next issue. the deadline is March 16th.

You can send your bits via packet, email, letter or even by phone. Contact details:

Packet: G0HZK @ GB7WIR  
Email: BeechLog@cryogen.com  
Phone: 01753 811918 evgs.,  
07050 606725 business.

Postal Address is in any callbook.

## It's Obsolete !

Those of you who read the waffle I write here will know that **BeechLog** is produced on a collection of discarded bits, with a 486-66 CPU. I know it's getting a bit long in the tooth, but these days it is getting a bit difficult to keep up with the speed of advance in CPU's.

According to New Scientist, the 486 reigned for just less than 18 months. Then along came the Pentium. Looking through some old magazines (about a year old!) it seems that one year ago, the typical PC was based on a 133MHz version of the Pentium. Mid 1997 we all bought the 166 and 200MHz MMX versions, and Dixons Christmas specials featured the 233 Pentium and 266MHz Pentium II.

It seems that the Pentium in all its forms has lasted a few months less than the 486 did. The Pentium 200 was king for about 7 months, The 266MHz Pentium II seems to have been with us for only a short while, the 300MHz version now appearing in the shops. How long before this CPU becomes obsolete?

Of course, we don't have to buy this new

stuff. My 486 is just as fast as it was 3 years ago. The software I purchased in 1996 still runs just as well. This new year promises new operating systems which the **BeechLog** PC won't be able to handle, but there's no way I am going to shell out £150+ just to slow everything down!

### More gear in 1998.

1998 also promises the awaited combined PC/TV. What we have seen so far hasn't been up to either job, but the equipment shown at the CES show in January is in a different ball-park (this is American kit). The big question is, what is the family going to use it for? This year Philips will be introducing a \$99 set top box which adds Internet capabilities to their televisions. The box is heavily subsidised by network operator WebTV, which itself is controlled by guess who - Microsoft. Philips say that this will become available in Europe as soon as Microsoft provide a network to connect it to.

The WebTV equipment will have to

*(Continued on page 9)*



The Crown, Slough, about 1905

(Continued from page 8)

compete with similar facilities built into your normal telephone. Several companies have announced phones with 8 megs of RAM, colour LCD screens, and pull-out or infra-red keyboards. The unsubsidised price is considerably more than the set top box, but I suppose the average family TV is in use most of the time for receiving RF signals rather than anything else, so you would have to wait until everyone else had finished watching before you could check for email.

Meanwhile, I shall continue with my current PC, unless someone offers me some decent modern kit free of charge!

### IRDA phones.

Like millions of others, I am one of those users of GSM telephones. I use mine mainly for keeping in touch with my student wife, who relies on what used to be British Rail Southern Region to get to 'Uni' and back. Somehow I got my phone with a years free rental, I think that the company made a computer error somewhere. Looking at its call meter, I see that in the last 6 months I have made just 27 minutes of outgoing calls!



**... I have made just  
27 minutes of  
outgoing calls!**

I am not typical, most users like to spent as much time frying their brains as possible. The bills are not a worry to them. I know quite a few people who wander round the WWW via a palmtop and mobile phone, on a regular daily basis. While the air-time is expensive, so have been the bits needed to enable this sort of thing. Although both a GSM phone and a palmtop or laptop computer are "digital", you still need a modem, although this doesn't work quite like the conventional version. The GSM modem costs about £200, and depending on your computer, you may need an interface between the two. Psions need a module which cost about £100, but this contains batteries to power the modem card. Some

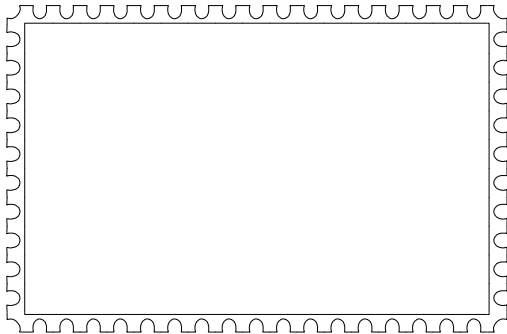
Windows CE machines have a PC card slot, although modems are power hungry and run down the 'CE batteries in about 15 minutes.

You also need a lead to connect the card to the phone. Once again, this is a pricey item (if you can actually find one), so you end up paying £300-£400 pounds to get you on line. However, some computers now have an IR serial link system. This can be used for copying files to and from PC's (once you have found the Windows driver on the Microsoft web site), but now phones are appearing with a similar IR port. Psion 5 owners have long known that you can get online via IR to a Nokia Communicator phone, a bit pointless, as the Nokia already has its own Internet stuff built in. But with the newer phones like Nokias 6110, have been designed with this sort of thing in mind. Just put the computer and phone a foot of so apart, and off you go! No modem, adapter, or leads required.

I can't say that I am ever likely to do this sort of thing! But a

whole host of young, family-free gadget freaks will do so. I think at present the idea of separate portable computer and mobile phone still is preferable. Phones are getting smaller anyway, and even the larger ones are still to small to host a proper keyboard and screen. I suppose you could combine a Palm Pilot type machine with a phone, and keep the size acceptable, but the pen input is still very immature and slow (probably OK for web browsing, though). One fellow I know has recently revealed that he compared the speed of pen input on his Pilot, with typing with his nose (I am serious!) on his Psion 5. The keyboard easily won!

All I need is a TNC with an IRDA interface. I am not sure of the strict legality of an IR - ham radio link, but who cares? Saves all that wire. Or perhaps a handheld with a built-in TNC and IRDA port. I bet you could do that for about £15 extra on the price of the radio! 9600 baud



(Basingstoke)

- July 6th. Getting ready for the rally. G0GCL
- July 19th. Mc Michael Rally
- August 3rd. FoxHunt
- September 19th- DX Picnic (Basingstoke)  
23rd Details G4XDU
- October 5th. Junk Sale

### Purple Cow

Gelett Burgess wrote poetry in California in the late 19th century. He is remembered for The Purple Cow:

I never saw a Purple Cow,  
I never hope to see one;  
But I can tell you, anyhow,  
I'd rather see than be one.

This became very well known, presumably to the regret of Burgess, for five years later he wrote:

Ah, yes! I wrote the "Purple Cow" -  
I'm Sorry, now, I Wrote it!  
But I can Tell you, Anyhow,  
I'll Kill you if you Quote it!

Gelett Burgess, 1866-1951

The articles within this issue of BeechLog are copyright Burnham Beeches Radio Club 1998. All content reflects the view of the contributors, not that of the BBRC.

### What's On

- February 2nd. 12.5Khz tune-up (bring your 2Mtr rig.)
- February 16th. Junk Sale
- February 21st- DXPicnic Basingstoke.  
23rd. Details G4XDU
- March 2nd. AGM (wine & nibbles)
- March 16th. Digital Television,  
Simon
- April 6th. Foxhunt (G6TSF Fox)
- April 20th. Measurements, Dick  
G8DPS
- May 24th. DXPicnic Stafford  
(week long). De-  
tails  
G4XDU
- June 15th. IOTA DXpeditions,  
G3OZF
- June 21st. PW Low power con-  
test



**Go to my Psion 3a/c or 5 application page.**



#### Ham Links:

[Mike Burgess, G7HID's pages.](#)  
[Burnham Beeches Radio Club.](#)  
[Beechlog Home page.](#)

#### Psion Links:

[Daniel Pfund's Psion pages.](#)  
[Mark Gould's Psion pages.](#)  
[Matt Thomas Psion pages.](#)  
[Patrick Bell's Psion pages.](#)  
[Phil Snencers Psion pages.](#)

#### Quick Downloads:

[Pocket Packet S3](#) & [Pocket Packet](#) Packet Radio for the Series 3 and 3a/c.  
[3T File Manager](#) & [3T for the Siena](#) Keep track of your Psion files.  
[File 'Toucher'](#) Enables you to alter Series 3a/c file dates & times.  
 And more amateur radio applications for Psion pocket computers:  
[7plus](#), [QTH Locators](#), [Sysop Passwords](#), [Pocket Logbook](#), [Satellite Tracker](#)  
**Series 5 applications:**  
[3T 5.02](#) An adaptation of my 3T File Manager for the Series 5.  
[PocPac 5.00](#) A Packet Radio program for the Series 5.  
[Teddy 1.06](#) A very simple plain text file editor.

file:///C:/WWW/index.htm

