

Ham Radio Holiday

If you're like me, each time you go on holiday you probably pack as much of the shack into the car as you can in order to ensure that you don't miss that exotic DX whilst away, to keep in touch with events at home, or just to be able to operate from a different location when the weather fails and there is nothing else to do.

he has in everyday use is new but he has certainly retained some very interesting radio-abilia and has been able to donate several items to the National Wireless Museum on the Isle of Wight.

Ernest first made radio contact on spark in about 1917 from within his school Cadet Corps (using his in-

tials as a call-sign), completing an initial distance of thirty feet: eventually DX was possible over two miles on 440m. Ernest has had a great deal of experience with radio, indeed his father, once a senior PO executive took out a licence as soon after the First World War as they could be obtained – a G2 'artificial aerial' call, with which Ern eventually worked America on 75 meters.

Ernest is possibly the only surviving person to be an honorary founder fellow of the London TV Club (the Royal Television Society) and a founder member of IERE, and he was president of the RSGB just after the last War although, as he admits, mainly because he happened to be about at the time.

The call-sign G6GR was taken out in 1932 and has been in use extensively ever since on many bands under many modes, and currently on all the HF bands, 2m and 70cm. It is surprising that there is any room left in the present shack for anything besides radio equipment, but Ern has other projects such as a fully working home-made electric organ and a computer.

Have you ever noticed that as soon as Christmas is over, tour companies immediately start trying to wheedle out what little money we have left? Trevor Butler, G6LPZ, has been looking at an alternative to those overcrowded Spanish beaches.

One holiday which I recently discovered, however, allows – in fact, positively encourages – you to be involved in amateur radio at your /A location. Listed by the ETB (apparently that's Japanese for English Tourist Board!) as an Activity Holiday Establishment, I found myself at a West Country hotel, the home of Maggie and Noel Tolkien (the latter a relative of *The Lord of the Rings* creator).

The Fairmount House Hotel (née The Fairmount Guest House) is a quiet, small hotel overlooking Chelston in Torquay, sunny Devonshire. Starting life as a Victorian family house, much renovation and decoration took place in order that by 1978 it could open its doors to accommodate guests, and it is now a comfortable eight-bedroomed hotel in the fashionable part of Torquay.

Last year, however, the number of available letting rooms was reduced to seven with the arrival of G6GR. Now there's an old call-sign worthy of further explanation. Its holder, Ernest Gardiner (Ern for short) is Maggie Tolkien's father. Having retired from the midlands where he was president of the Wolverhampton ARS and vice-president MARS for some years, he has now set up his modernised shack in the hotel. Much of the equipment



The Fairmount Hotel

Radio Shack

The shack at The Fairmount is freely open for use by any licensed amateur staying at the hotel and it is very well furnished. For HF, the popular FT1012D Mark 3 is used, complete with FM adaptor, and, although plans for a cubical-quad would probably be quashed by the Local Planning Authority because of a Preservation Order, existing antennas work well. A trap-dipole at an advantageous height covers the UK on 3.5MHz and most of Europe on 7MHz with impressive results due to the splendid take-off across the Channel. 'Top-band' works well and proves very popular in the West Country on Sunday mornings.

For DX working on the 20, 15 and 10m bands, a trap vertical with