

Serendipity

Based on an article in the *Library Local History News, Los Gatos, California* **THE MARCUSE SUNDIAL**

In the fall of 2012, on the deck of a river cruise ship in Northern Russia, I chanced to meet a woman from Great Britain. We exchanged the names of the towns we were from and when she heard I was from Los Gatos, California, she exclaimed, “Oh, I’ve been there”! Then she said, “Do you know there is a sundial in a little churchyard in Bosham on the southern coast of England that mentions the name Los Gatos, California, 1924?”

And so the quest began. Rosemary Wharton, my friend on the river cruise, wrote to Joan Langhorne, the Bosham archivist, who responded that the sundial in the churchyard was in memory of (Eugen) Gerald Marcuse (1886-1961) who was a radio pioneer in Great Britain during the first part of the 20th century. Joan contacted Gerald Marcuse’s son, who responded that all of Marcuse’s equipment had been donated to the Amberley Museum, just



east of Bosham, and that David Fry was writing a biography of Gerald Marcuse. David had mountains of information and paperwork to sift through and it seemed unlikely that he could find a ‘QSL card’ (sent to the sender of a radio message by the recipient, to acknowledge the contact) among the collection. During the chaos of World War II, much was destroyed by the bombing of England by the German Luftwaffe.

David Fry and I kept up an email correspondence, and on February 19, 2014, I received a message from him with a copy of a QSL card from CC Whysall 6ZAR-6TV, dated February 23, 1924. It was almost 90 years to the day! A sentence appears on the QSL card which declares, ‘The first radio message ever received on the Pacific Coast direct from Great Britain’. Our thanks to the Amberley Museum!

Gerald Marcuse was a fascinating man who helped the war effort (1939-1945) by recording German radio traffic while on a fishing vessel just off the English coast and sending it on to Bletchley Park—Britain’s code-breaking centre. David Fry’s biography of Marcuse is in progress and the Los Gatos Library will have a copy when it is available.

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