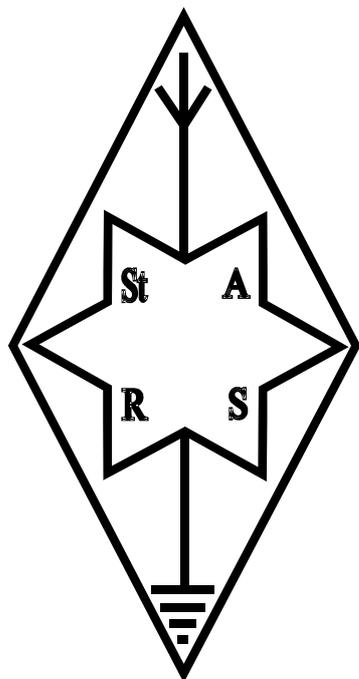


STARLITE

G6OI
1938

The Award Winning Newsletter for Members and Friends of
**Stourbridge and District
Amateur Radio Society**
incorporating
Old Swinford Hospital School Radio Club

G6SRS
1938



G4CVK

1969

**ISSUE
07/2014**



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MEETINGS

Visitors always welcome
The Society holds its full meetings on the



RSGB
Amateur Radio Society

RSGB Affiliated Society - The views expressed in STARLITE may not be those of the committee - Stourbridge and District
Page 1

STARLITE

1st and 3rd Monday of each month at

**Old Swinford Hospital School
Heath Lane
Stourbridge
(8.00pm – 10.00pm)**

Additionally the shack is open during the same times on the intermediate Mondays

**Telephone Enquiries to :-
Hon Secretary
John Clarke M1EJG
(01562) 700513**

**Or by e-mail to :-
honsec@g6oi.org.uk**

**All correspondence/enquiries should be
addressed to the Hon. Secretary :-
STARS
c/o The Mill House
21 Mill Lane
Blakedown
Kidderminster
DY10 3ND**

**STARS Web Site URL :-
www.g6oi.org.uk**



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Following the likely loss of the shack we have decided to sell some surplus equipment, here is an initial list, if you are interested please contact Myself or either of the John's

Osker SWR-200
Yaesu FT101B
Sharp Screen LQ
Kantronics Packet communicator3
PSU X3 (various)
Yaesu FT101b
P.S.U
2 sets T/K Brackets
8Ft 2” Mast
4X 6Ft 1 ¼ “ Mast
Tray of Miscellaneous components
Farnell P.S.U.
Variable P.S.U.
Waterproof connection box
2Metre Linear.
Hot Air Gun
23 Cm Corner Reflector Antenna
H.F. Vertical Antenna
2 Metre HB9CV Antenna
3 X Brackets.



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Kelvin's Thank-You Note To The Club

to the radio club.

Thank you very much for allowing me to join this wonderful club. It has been an amazing two years.

In these two years, I've learnt in depth how radio works, thanks to the well-knowledged instructor team — I will definitely progress onto Intermediate in Uni time. Also, I have given my first 'talk' to an external group of people, which also lasted an hour — much longer than what I usually do. This greatly boosted my confidence which, in turn, is a great preparation for my interviews.

I have also learnt a lot, being a committee member of the club. I've recognised the importance of paperwork in a formal meeting.

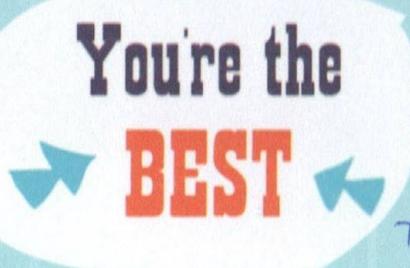
Thanks to the many emails from our Hon Secretary, I've learnt how minutes and agendas are typed and formatted.

Thanks for those voting for me — it has been a new experience for me to be in an official meeting.

In addition, thanks to the Club for sponsoring my membership fee. It was very nice as I was able to try and pursue in my new interest & hobby when my pocket money was not able to finance the cost of it. However, my 'word of mouth' with the school management & students could have outweighed the economical cost!

Lastly, I need to thank James French for being extremely, incredibly and excessively caring & nice to me, despite I wasn't able to attend recent meetings. Also, to the two Johns for being very welcoming. I will also miss the chats with some members, i.e. Mark's EDZ-radio business, Wayne's endless jokes, 'The Dr's' engineering advice. Wish you all the best.

Kelvin
2014



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SEEN ON THE INTERNET

TX Factor Episode 3 From Martin Lynch and Sons

If you have not already viewed the TX Factor Episodes from Martin Lynch & Sons I strongly advise you to take a look.

The May 2014 half hour program covers :-

Exeter Radio Rally
Kite Aerials with Roger Stafford (G4ROJ)
Military Wireless Museum at Kidderminster (G4BXD)
The new Quad Band Mobile from Wouxun

Search for "TX Factor Episode" on Youtube or Google.

The third program is every bit as watchable as the previous two episodes. It would be worthwhile viewing one of the episodes at the club one evening.

QRM or QRN?

The following entry was sent in by Peter (M6ZXH)

Although the story comes from Boulder, Colorado it is not altogether unlikely that you may experience a similar problem in your neighbourhood. Ham operator Tom Thompson had noticed that it had been getting progressively harder to make radio contacts. The cause of the problem seemed to be local, so Tom created a direction finding aerial to try and locate the source of the problem. Before long he tracked the problem down to Marijuana growers. Several states allow marijuana to be grown for medicinal and recreational purposes so the police were not concerned. The problem is caused by the heating and lights which are used to propagate the plants.

For the full article visit :-

<http://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/local/2014/06/05/pot-growers-lights-interfering-ham-radio-chats/10015757/>

Boafeng Name Change to Pofung

The following entry was sent in by Peter (M6ZXH)

Radio supplier Baofeng has changed its product distribution name to Pofung for all sales outside China. In an announcement on its website the company says that it feels it's time to adapt its brand to the global stage. It notes that the current name Baofeng is a literal translation of its Chinese character name, and as such it may be difficult for a hobbyist elsewhere in the world to pronounce. The company say that its new product name of Pofung is easier to pronounce and more friendly to its customers, while maintaining the phonetic symbolism of its brand. The company's official web domain www.baofengradio.com will remain unchanged.



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AN IMPULSE BUY

Have you ever walked into Lidl or Aldi with your shopping trolley, list and biro at the ready? Half way around the store you come across the special offers and think, well I might as well have a look and see if there are any bargains? The next thing you know, there is an item in your shopping trolley that is certainly not on your list. If it's Lidl you went into, you can almost certainly guarantee that some kind soul has already opened the box and the next task is to find a box that hasn't been messed about with. It was in this way that I managed to purchase yet another item from the *ta-dah* Silver Crest electrical range. By way of a crumb of consolation, there are much more expensive stores to make an impulse buy.

Previously I have recently gone through the exercise of getting rid of my small collection of VHS cassettes and I have managed to transfer nearly all the cassettes of interest to DVD. So with breathless excitement and a similar aim in mind I returned home and unwrapped my purchase and it was in this way I bought my audio cassette digitiser. I have a large number of audio cassettes, which I have accumulated over the years and listened on my daily commute to work. More recent cars have come supplied with CD players and in excess of a hundred audio cassettes have languished in a box unplayed.

My recent car has the facility to play MP3 CDs. With a small amount of trial and error I found that it is possible to have multiple directories on a CD and each directory can hold up to 99 mp3 files. So a directory per audio cassette seems to be a reasonable arrangement. Note a DVD does not work in my CD player, it must be a CD. Your experience may be different.

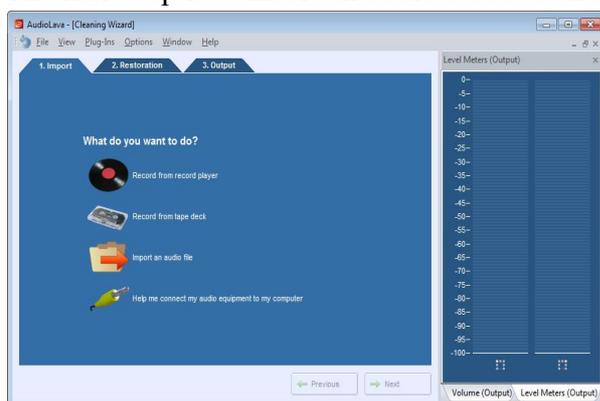
So What Is In The Box?

My Silver Crest SKD 1000 A3 came with a Microsoft software CD, some cheap earphone buds, a USB lead with USB2 plug at one end and mini USB on the other end and the cassette digitiser. You need to supply your own pair of AA batteries, which are only required while the USB is not connected. Last but not least is an instruction booklet, which is adequate and surprisingly for Lidl the first section is in English and the last section is in German.

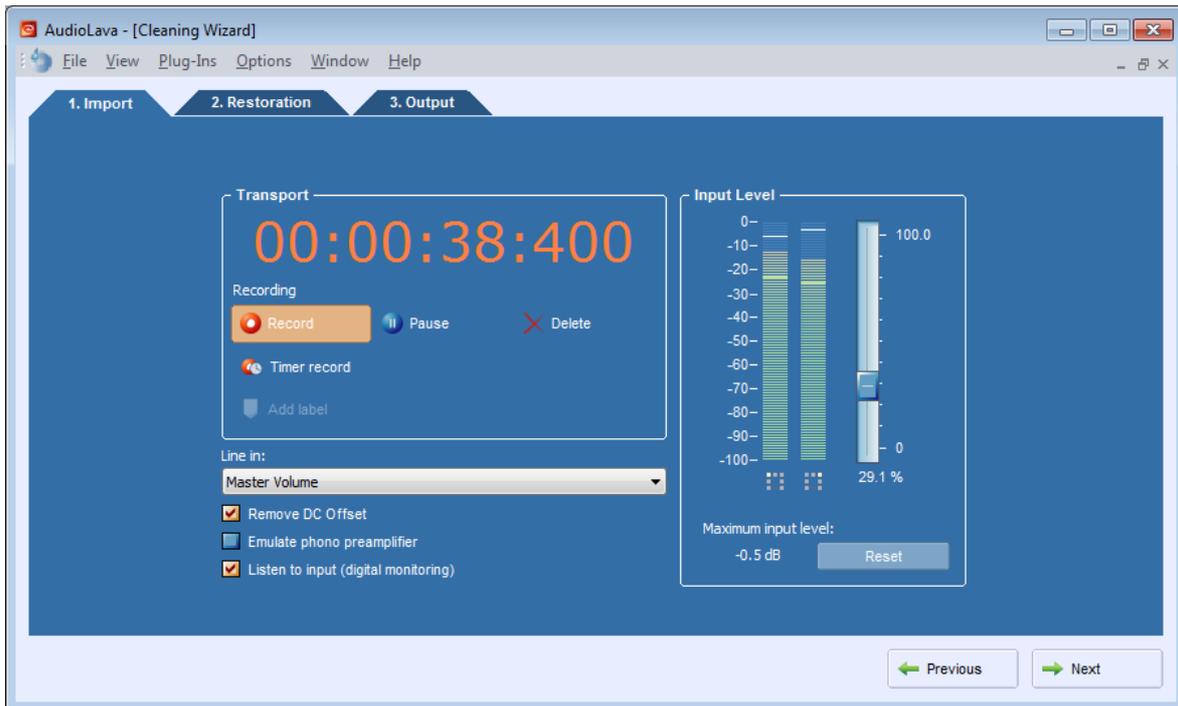
Copying A Cassette

Step one is to install the AudioLava software, which was uneventful. Next the unit is connected to the PC and after this the AudioLava software should be started. The software is version 1.0 so expect some minor issues, but none that make the product unusable.

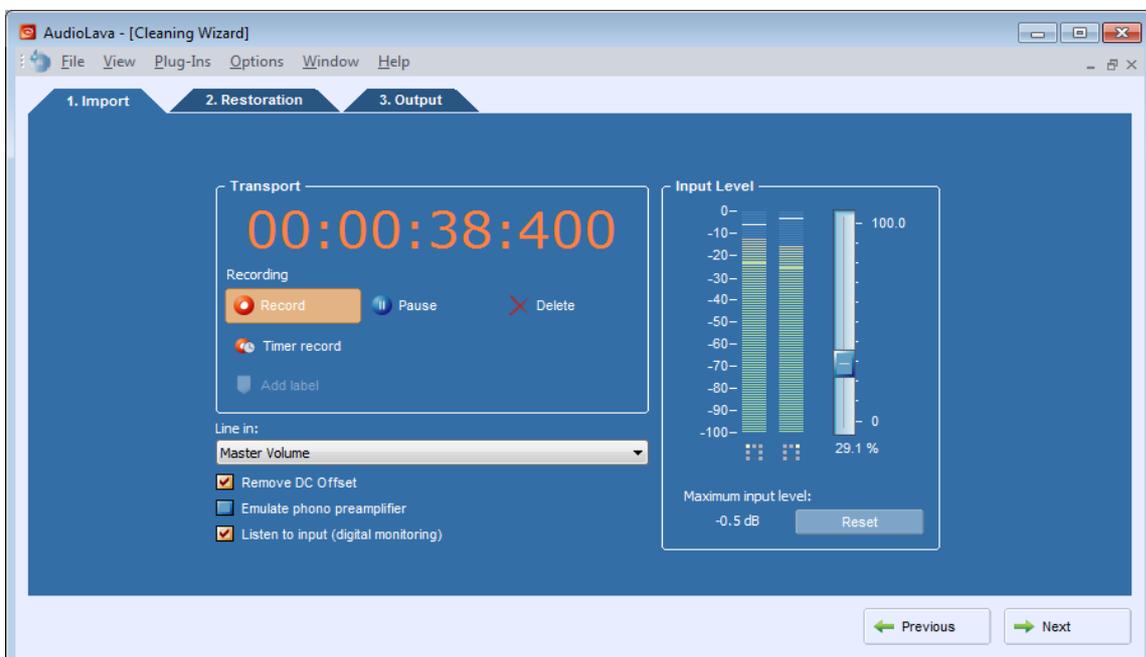
The next step is to insert an audio cassette and select "Record from Tape".



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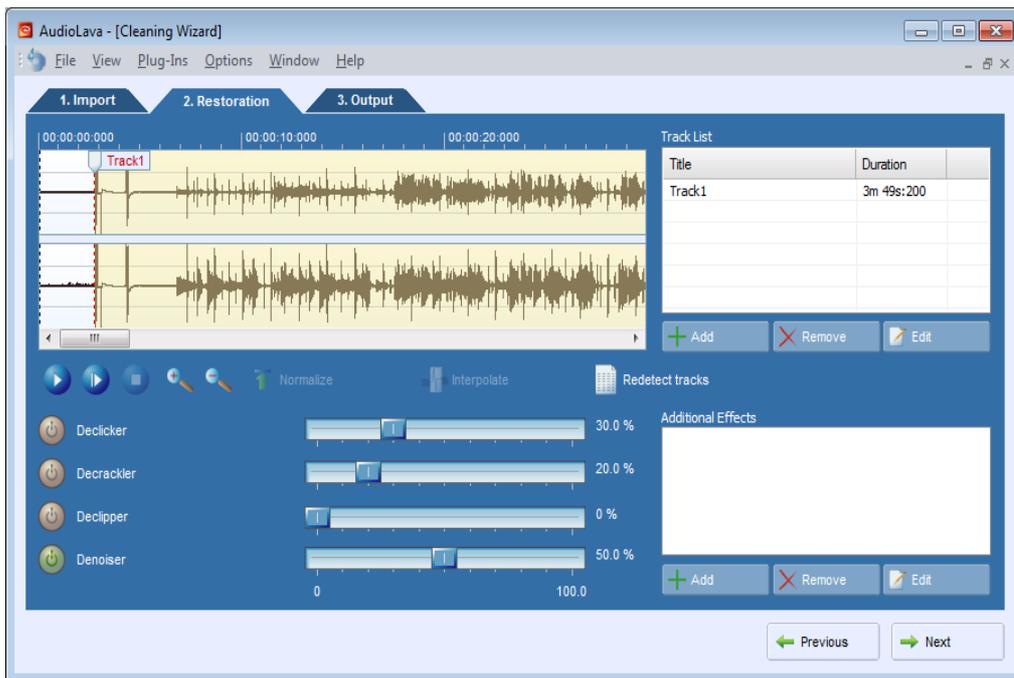


This will take you to the next screen where you should adjust the audio input level. This is done (inelegantly) by changing the volume control on the unit and checking the 'VU meter' display maximum signal such that there is no clipping of the signal. When you are happy that the setting is correct make a sample recording.

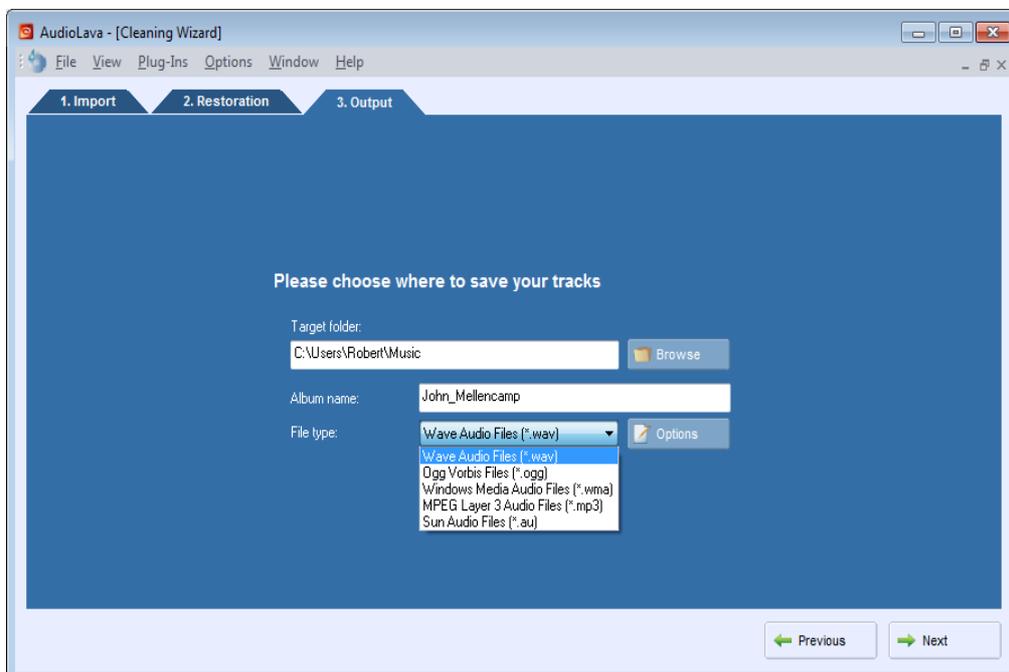


Recording stops when the pause button is clicked on the AudioLava Import screen. In practice it is possible to set the unit to play both sides of the cassette continuously and leave it to run. If tracks are recorded twice these can simply be deleted. There is a check box to click on the software to listen to input, but this did not work on my PC. The next step is to process the captured audio tracks and

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there are sliders to de-click, de-crackle, de-clip and de-ionise the audio. Tracks can be deleted and selecting → Next takes you to the next screen which gives the option to burn a CD or create audio files in a directory of your choice and in one of four formats .wav, .mp3, .wma, and .au. File creation is compute intensive and will depend on your processor. My Intel i3 cpu took around 40 seconds per track.



What Next?

Results were mixed and varied from audio cassette to audio cassette. I found some improvement



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was possible by fast forwarding and rewinding helped as this re-tensioned the tape. Having previously played and stored the tapes in a car was not ideal. Processing many audio cassette can be time consuming.

Over All Impression

The device gives you an additional way of accessing some of your old audio cassettes, but don't expect miracles. After some experimentation I decided that the degree of deterioration of my audio cassettes varied considerably. I decided a fairer test would be to take a CD and record it on to audio cassette. I then converted the audio cassette to .mp3 format using the cassette digitiser. As a comparison I then converted the CD to .mp3 format, comparing .mp3 files from both sources. The .mp3 file from the CD was a clear winner. The converted file from the audio cassette lacked base and was generally poorer. This is not an entirely unexpected result. If better results are required then the next step would be to connect a better quality audio cassette player to a PC sound card. There may also be some scope for improvement by exploring the 'Additional Effects' on the Restoration screen.

It is easy to underestimate the improvement that took place between audio cassette and advent of the audio CD. The CD has been around since 1982, but took a while before prices dropped of both media and players. The audio cassette has been around 20 years longer than the CD and was a major improvement over vinyl. However, take a look at the dates on some of your audio cassettes and consider the conditions in which they have been stored. The inside of a car is a far from ideal place to store audio cassettes and they will have been subject to some deterioration. Recall also that the audio cassette was close to the limit of what could be recorded on open reel magnetic tape, with a stereo cassette having four tracks on a ¼ inch tape. It is also possible that your audio cassette spent some of its life in a Sony Walkman. So if you want a cheap way of converting some of your old and treasured audio cassettes to .mp3 files the Silver Crest Cassette Digitiser is a possible purchase for you, but be aware that your audio cassettes have probably deteriorated since you first bought them.

The above comments are my opinion only. It is possible that I could have obtained better results with more experimentation. The cost of my unit was at the possibly slightly expensive price of £16.99. If you are going to play your resulting .mp3 files in your car then the results are probably satisfactory. If you are more demanding it is possible that the cassette digitiser may fall short of your expectations. From my viewpoint, the cassette digitiser allows you to access some of your old audio tapes that may otherwise end up lost after being thrown away at some future date.

As usual all errors are mine.

Adrian (G0NLA) Starlite Editor

ROVING REPORTER

Due to time pressures, there will be no 'Roving Reporter' this month.

Next month should be business as usual.



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YOUR COMMITTEE

Hon. President	JAMES	G7HEZ	
Vice President	NICK	G6DQN	
Hon. Secretary	JOHN	M1EJG	(01562) 700513
Hon. Treasurer	JOHN	G8UAE	
Committee Members	MARK	G7EDZ	
	KEITH	M0HPY	
	SEAN	M3XMJ	
	PETER	M6ZXH	
	MALCOLM (Co-opted)	G8BOP	
	ADRIAN	G0NLA	

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

It should be noted that the Shack will be open every Monday evening unless shown otherwise in the Calendar

July	Mon 7th	Open Shack Night - Or on air natter
	Mon 14th	Committee Meeting
	Mon 21st	Band I and Band III TV Aerials (Geoff)
August	Mon 28th	Open Shack Night - Or on air natter
	Mon 4th	Open Shack Night - Or on air natter
	Mon 11th	Open Shack Night - Or on air natter
September	Mon 18th	No Main Meeting (Shack Open as Usual)
	Mon 25th	No Meeting - Bank Holiday
	6 th - 7 th	SSB Field Day (Sat Sun)
October	Mon 15th	High Voltage Sub Stations (Sean Spicer M3XMJ)
	Mon 22nd	Start of Foundation Course
	Mon 27th	Main Meeting TBC
November	Mon 3rd	Foundation Course Exam
	Mon 17th	Surplus Sale
December	Mon 4th	Christmas Gathering
January	Mon 19th	Main Meeting TBC
February	Mon 16th	Constructors Competition and Quiz
March	Mon 16th	2015 AGM
April 2015	Mon 20th	Vintage Radios (Phil G4SPZ)

