

STARLITE

THE JOURNAL FOR THE STOURBRIDGE AND DISTRICT A.R.S.



**G6OI
G6SRS**



ISSUE: DECEMBER 2022



G4CVH

**STOURBRIDGE & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
INCORPORATING
OLDSWINFORD HOSPITAL SCHOOL RADIO CLUB**

MEETINGS NORMALLY HELD AT

**OLDSWINFORD HOSPITAL SCHOOL
HEATH LANE
STOURBRIDGE
[8:00 TO 10:00 PM]**

VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

**DURING COVID, THE SOCIETY HOLDS ITS MEETINGS
EVERY MONDAY AT NORTON SOCIAL CLUB,
OSMASTON ROAD, STOURBRIDGE**

RSGB AFFILIATED SOCIETY

STARLITE

Telephone Enquiries to:-

Hon. Secretary
John Clarke M1EJG
[01562] 700513

Or by Email to:-

honsec@g6oi.org.uk
johnclarke.m1ejg@btinternet.com

All correspondence/enquiries should
be addressed to the Hon Secretary at:-

StARS
c/o The Mill House
21 Mill Lane
Blakedown
Kidderminster
DY10 3ND

StARS Website URLs:-

www.g6oi.org.uk

StARS Facebook Page:-

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stourbridge.ars/>

Forthcoming Meetings

December 5 th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
December 12 th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
December 19 th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
December 26 th	Boxing Day – No Meeting ??
January 2 nd 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 9 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 16 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 23 rd 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 30 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 6 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 13 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 20 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 27 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
March 6 th 2023	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm

Editor's Comment

[Editor: g4xom@g6oi.org.uk]

Silent Key: It is with regret that I must report the passing of Arthur John Bills G3KZG on the 10th November. Along with his late father, Frank G3CLG, John had been a member and supporter of the Society for many decades. I remember John was the first person to welcome me and my late father, Den G0KZM, to the Society when we first joined in 1979/80. The funeral was at Gornal Wood Crematorium on November 30th.

At a recent Committee meeting: The situation at OSH was discussed, but there has been no response from the headmaster at the time of writing.

With regard to a regular meeting place, I would encourage you to read Ross' 2E0RLX report in this issue.

You will notice a lack of news items in this and, possibly, future issues of Starlite. I was getting my information from the Southgate Amateur Radio News website, but this had not been updated since October 8th. I recently heard that the compiler, G4TUT, has become Silent Key and it appears that the website has been taken down. Another site I used, OPDX, has also closed due to the compiler's retirement. I've found one source of DX news and I will try to find other sources in the coming months.

Contact details changed? Not being possessed of psychic qualities, I cannot see into the future, neither am I a mind reader. So if you change your contact details (i.e. email address) please let me know in order for me to update your details for posting Starlite, etc. Thanks.



A Potential New Home For StARS?

You may be aware that I have been trying to find somewhere suitable in the light of our contact at OSH being "incommunicado" for one reason or another.

Following my investigative call a couple of weeks ago, we had an invitation to inspect St. Thomas's Church Hall in Stourbridge centre (there are actually 3 available rooms).

There were only 3 club members who were there, being Alan M7ALS, John G6GTB and myself 2E0RLX.

The facilities are ideal with seating for 20 plus a long table and settee, Kitchen area with constant boiling water, cups (so long as we wash up after use) and toilet facilities. Opening windows would allow us to erect and connect to aerals which would initially need to be broken down after use. There is also a flat roof which may provide an opportunity for more permanent aerals once we can see during daytime. There is adequate storage space with lock and key for our equipment currently held at OSH (hopefully still there).

The cost to us would be £12 per hour and we thought that 2 hours would be plenty for a night on the air, classroom, workshop, toolbox talk, etc.

There is, also, free parking for 10+ vehicles.

It is likely that committee and club members will be asked to vote on whether to take up this opportunity for us to return to usual activities.

Ross 2E0RLX

I was hoping for a couple of photos to fill this space.

Foundations of Amateur Radio

The Ripple Effects of making change ...

During the week a new piece of software was born. It's not going to solve world hunger or address man-made climate change, but it will help some testers who want to get on air and make noise without actually making noise. From my vk6flab github page you can get yourself a copy of a tiny little bash script with the catchy name of ssbdaemon and use it to launch your very own remote-controlled voice-keyer.

After making the announcement I received several emails from excited testers who wanted to thank me for my efforts and I have to tell you, making something that others find useful is very rewarding.

My announcement also sparked some discussion around using voice-keyers including some who consider that this isn't a useful addition to the hobby.

More on that in a moment.

After the code was written, I had to actually, you know, use it. So I hooked up my radio, launched ssbdaemon and fired up my current contest logger of choice, TLF, and attempted to make noise. Unfortunately I wasn't so lucky as to make it all work on the first try. TLF needs to be in CW mode for ssbdaemon to work and someone, somewhere at some point, decided that when you change band, the mode needs to be set, so despite me setting my radio to either Lower or Upper Side Band, TLF would helpfully change it to CW, which actively prevented me from making noise.

Since TLF is Open Source, I was able to download its source-code and after some trial and error, including discussion with the TLF developer community, I added my own little flavour to my copy of TLF to make it always use sideband. My fix isn't useful long-term, but right now it will make it possible for me to operate my voice-keyer. An alternative would have been to turn off rig control.

This also sparked discussion on the TLF mailing list about how we might implement this kind of functionality long-term. Those two things, the fact that I could hack my own copy of TLF and discuss long-term updates is why I think that Open Source and Amateur Radio are an obvious match.

I released my ssbdaemon script as Open Source too, so I immediately benefited from other people looking at it and giving me feedback. As a direct result my code improved, my tool became more useful and those changes were published for anyone to use, immediately.

At this point I should mention that although I'm using TLF, ssbdaemon is a drop-in replacement for cwdaemon and should work anywhere as a direct replacement, so tools like CQRLOG, Xlog and others can use it with no changes to their code.

Back to the discussion about the usefulness of this tool in relation to our hobby.

I think that a tool like mine does a number of things. It achieves the direct purpose that it was built for, making it possible to create a more universal voice-keyer, but it also does other things.

I set out to make TLF do callsign voice-keying, but in solving the problem, I managed to build a tool that was universal to any station using an external Morse-keyer, regardless of whether or not they were using TLF.

Several emails commented on the way that I'd come to this solution and observed that this opened opportunities beyond my script, including operating Single Side Band contests remotely.

As a direct result of my release there's now a discussion underway in relation to how TLF manages band changes. It's not finished, likely it'll go through several iterations and might not be implemented immediately, but the fact that this discussion is happening comes as a side-effect of my script.

This little script, truthfully almost trivial script, is causing change to happen in unexpected places.

It did make me wonder if there are little things like this that we can do to bring awareness and activity to other areas, things like man-made climate change and how we might achieve that in tiny unexpected ways.

As for running a contest with my new voice-keyer, propagation permitting, keep an ear out and let me know how it goes.

I'm Onno VK6FLAB

- *This article is the transcript of the weekly 'Foundations of Amateur Radio' podcast, produced by Onno Benschop, VK6FLAB who was licensed as radio amateur in Perth, Western Australia in 2010. For other episodes, visit <http://vk6flab.com/>. Feel free to get in touch directly via email: cq@vk6flab.com*

- *If you'd like to join a weekly radio net for new and returning amateurs, check out the details at <http://ftroop.vk6flab.com/>, the net runs every week on Saturday, from 00:00 to 01:00 UTC on Echolink, IRLP, AllStar Link, Brandmeister and 2m FM via various repeaters, all are welcome.*

TM90, FRANCE (Special Event)

Members of the "Radio Club de Wingles" (F4KLR) will be active as TM90GF during some days of October, November and December, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the passing of General Gustave Ferrie (a pioneer of military radio comms). The listed days of activity are: ~~October 29-30th, November 5-7th, November 11-13th, November 19-20th, November 26-27th~~, December 3rd and December 10-17th.

Operations will be on various HF/VHF bands using CW, SSB and FT8.

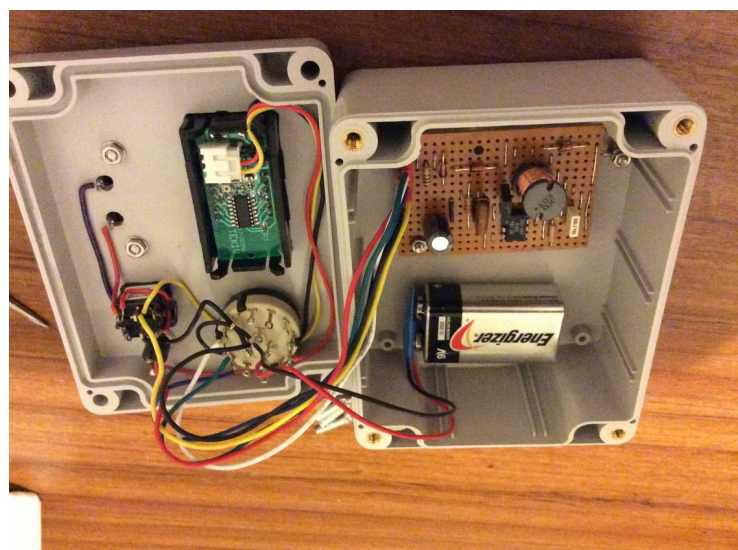
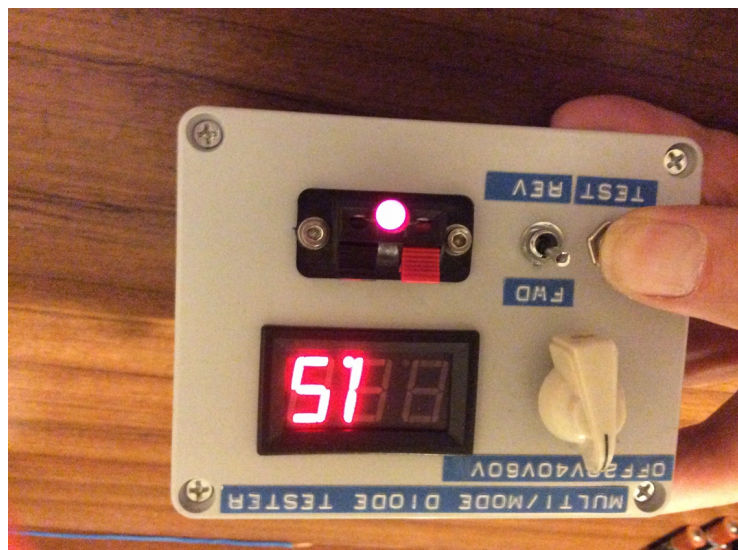
QSL via F4KLR, direct or eQSL. Cards will also be sent to everyone through the Bureau.

A Diode Tester by Geoff G0KVK

Some months ago, just going through some old radio magazines, I came across this circuit for a diode tester. Reading through the circuit description it looked like a good idea testing all sorts of diodes and interesting to build.

Using a NE555 in a oscillating configuration driving a BD139 as a switching transistor, with an inductor in its collector circuit, this produces a very high voltage. This is rectified by a diode and smoothed by a capacitor to produce about 75 volts. This is fed to a shunt regulator chain formed by three 20 volt zener diodes. Using a 4 way switch then 20,40,60 volts can be selected. The final voltage is fed to the 100volt DVM and the test terminals.

So dusting off the old soldering iron, I proceeded to make it with bits from the junk box and some from the radio rallies. It works really well.



The Transatlantic Centenary Tests

The RSGB are hosting an International Amateur Radio Activation, The Transatlantic Centenary Tests, on the HF bands, for the entire month of December 2022, to commemorate the centenary of the achievement of Amateur Transatlantic communication, during the Transatlantic Tests that were held between 1921 and 1923.

24 December 1922 was when the very first amateur radio signal from Europe was heard in North America; this was from the RSGB station (G)5WS which was established at Wandsworth in South London, as part of the Third Transatlantic Tests.

Unlike the tests of the 1920s, which consisted of one-way communication, the 2022 tests will encourage world-wide two-way communication with UK & Crown Dependency based stations by having a series of awards available for making QSOs with activating special stations. The Club Log team have kindly agreed to provide the supporting infrastructure for the Tests.

In anticipation of this centenary celebration, with the assistance of Ofcom (the UK licensing authority), the RSGB have reactivated five call signs which they held in the 1920s:

- G5WS, used for the 1922 tests – “the first to get across”
- G5AT, used for the 1923 tests
- G6XX, used for the 1923 tests
- G6ZZ, used for the first amateur tests on a moving railway train in 1924
- G3DR, Scottish Highlands Call - GM3DR.

These historic call signs will be activated by RSGB members and Clubs, using G5WS, G5AT, G6XX, G6ZZ and G3DR (England), GM5WS (Scotland), GW5WS (Wales), GU5WS (Guernsey), GD5WS (Isle of Man), GJ5WS (Jersey) and GI5WS (Northern Ireland).

Full details of how to participate will be published on the RSGB website at <https://rsgb.org/transatlantic-tests/>

DX0NE Spratly Islands

DX0NE Team planning activity from Spratly Islands, IOTA AS - 051, 1 August - 31 December 2022.

Team - DU1XX (AE6DG), Michael; DU3JA, Jong; 4F1OZ, Ed; and 4F2KWT, Gil.

They will operate on 160 - 6m, CW, SSB, FT8.

QSL via 4F2KWT, LOTW, ClubLog OQRS.

S21DX Manpura Island Bangladesh

S21DX Team will be active again from Manpura Island, IOTA AS - 140, Bangladesh, 10 - 16 December 2022.

Team - Manju, S21AM, Fazlay, S21RC and Aminul, S21D.

They will operate on HF Bands and also QO-100 satellite.

QSL via EB7DX direct.

Address for direct QSL:

DAVID LIANEZ FERNANDEZ, P.O.BOX 163, 21080, HUELVA, Spain.

FH4VVK Mayotte

Marek, F4VVJ ex SQ6WR will be active as FH4VVK from Mayotte, IOTA AF - 027, 1 September 2022 - 1 April 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands.

He is planning to activate Le Petite-Terre, FH – 002.

DXCC Country - Mayotte, FH.

Information received from Marek, F4VVJ.

PJ7PL Sint Maarten Island

Phil, N2HX will be active again as PJ7PL from Sint Maarten Island, IOTA NA - 105, 22 October - 9 December 2022.

He will operate on HF Bands, SSB, RTTY, FT8, FT4, including activity in CQ WW DX SSB and CQ WW DX CW Contest.

QSL via N2HX.

Address for direct QSL:

PHILIP E LANDRY, 50 Jayne Lane, Bennington, VT, 05201, USA.

Here are a few which may not be possible to work – but you never know!!

ZS7ANF Wolfs Fang Runway Antarctica

Oleg, ZS1ANF will be active as ZS7ANF from Antarctica starting November 2022.

He will operate on HF Bands.

QTH - Wolfs Fang Runway.

QSL via RK1PWA.

Ads for direct QSL:

Club station, P.O. Box 73, 164744, Amderma, Arkhangelskaya obl., Russia.

RI1ANU Novolazarevskaya Station Antarctica

Oleg, ZS1OIN will be active as RI1ANU from Novolazarevskaya Station, Antarctica, starting 24 October 2022.

He will operate on HF Bands using Icom IC7300 with PA 1 kW and antennas A4S and V-Beam.

QSL via home call.

Address for direct QSL:

Oleg Neruchev, P.O.Box 808, West Beach Vill, 7433, Cape Town, South Africa.

FT4YM Antarctica

David, F4FKT will be active as FT4YM from Antarctica December 2022 - March 2023.

He will operate from varios locations:

FT4YM: Base Dumont d'Urville, Petrels island, Antarctica.

FT4YM/P: Base Concordia, Antarctica.

FT4YM/P: Base Little Dome C, Antarctica.

FT4YM/P: Base Cape Prud'homme, Antarctica.

He will operate on HF Bands.

QSL via F5PFP.

Address for direct QSL:

Mehdi-Jean Escoffier, 460 Chemin des Closures, 38440, St Jean de Bournay, France.

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