STARLITE

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

G6OI
G6SRS

G4CVK

ISSUE: JANUARY 2024

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

MEETINGS CURRENTLY HELD AT

NORTON SOCIAL & SNOOKER CLUB
OSMASTON ROAD
NORTON
STOURBRIDGE
[8:00 TO 10:00 PM]

VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

HAPPY NEW YEAR

RSGB AFFILIATED SOCIETY

The views expressed in STARLITE may not be those of the Committee – Stourbridge and District Amateur Radio Society

STARLITE

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StARS Website URLs:-
www.g6oi.org.uk

StARS Facebook Page:-
https://www.facebook.com/groups/stourbridge.ars/

Forthcoming Meetings

January 1st	**New Year's Day – No Meeting**
January 8th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 15th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 22nd	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
January 29th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 5th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 12th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 19th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
February 26th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
March 4th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
March 11th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
March 18th	**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024**
March 25th	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm
April 1st	Club Meeting at Norton Social Club. 8pm

From The Editor's Desk [Editor: g4xom@g6oi.org.uk]

A message from the President:

I hope 2024 will be a better one for the club. Now we will be meeting the 3rd Monday in each Month at Norton Community Centre. Kempton Way, Stourbridge.DY8 3AP at 20-00hrs until 22-00hrs. These meetings will be made up of on air nights, talks and other radio based activities.
In February we are planning to resurrect the President Dinner, time and place to be announced soon.
March. Monday 18th 20-00hrs Stars AGM at Norton Community Centre. (3rd Monday).
All other Mondays of the month Will be at Norton social club, Osmaston Road, Stourbridge.
The last meeting before Christmas at the Norton Community centre was an on air and repair evening.
Finally, I would like to send Season's Greetings to all members, friends of StARS and their respective families for 2024.
Alan Stanley. M7ALS. President

This month you have a larger issue than usual and the lead article came from Wayne M5LLT. I feel certain that you will find it interesting. Together with this issue you will receive a bonus item for your perusal. It concerns all radio amateurs in the UK and is Ofcom's proposals for changes to the amateur radio licence. It is quite a lengthy document, but we should take the time to read its contents.

In this issue:

Silent Key

Long time members of StARS will remember Gordon Bryant G0TZV. Sadly, Gordon became a Silent Key on 14th December 2023.

There will be a cremation at Stourbridge Crematorium at 2.10pm on Wednesday 03 January 2024.

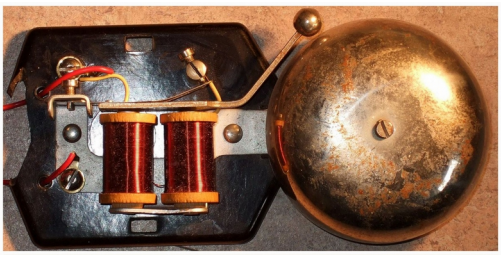
RIP Gordon

My Radio History

Wayne Mocroft M5LLT

As a child, I remember being taken by my parents to see grandma and grandad on my mother's side. Grandad apparently, when my mother was at home before and during the war (WWII), used to build not only crystal sets, but wireless with valves etc. She related how headphones were the only way to listen, but if everyone was in the room and something important was to be announced the headphones were put into a big fruit bowl on the table, thus amplifying the sound....that's how it was. Also, he had to go down the road to "Tom's" house and tell him his wireless had gone into oscillation and it was transmitting every word they were saying in their front room. Microphonic Valves eh?

Whenever I visited he always had something for me to play with. One time it was a simple switch and battery with a lamp, showing me how to wire it up, or a bell with similar wiring, on a board. Iit totally fascinated me and kept me quiet for hours, apart from the bell - never found out what happened to the bell.....



Moving on, he used to give me radio chassis to play with which came home with me. Strangely, they too seemed to disappear not long after I got them home. I put it down to the magic of wireless.....

Later I had read about crystal sets and wanted to build one. As Amazon hadn't been invented, nor the internet, I was taken to a man in a pokey little shop that my now late grandad used to "knock about with", as was said in those days. This man, was a TV and radio repair man by the name of Aurther Parkes, in Wolverhampton Street, Dudley. He always had his white lab coat on. He provided us with a tuning condenser and an OA51 crystal diode and a recovered ferrite rod and coil along with a crystal earplug (pink body with a clear earplug section and cream twisted wire) and sketched out the simple circuit. It was all built into a plastic sandwich box, twisted wire connections, a long wire thrown out of a window and an earth wire attached to a water pipe, boom... Radio4 & Radio2 sorry the Home Service & The Light Programme. Later visits to Arthur Parkes to improve the crystals sets sound furnished us with an OC71 and a handful of other components with a small speaker along with a pencil sketch on the back of a white paper bag. A Remploy soldering iron was purchased for me and the construction began. Who would have thought all those years ago I would have been at the same radio society as he was, sadly no longer with us.

Later on, while at Dudley Boys Grammar School, I had seen advertised in Practical Wireless, the Sinclair Micromatic matchbox size radio kit to build. This particular issue contained a cover project of a 2 meter AM Transceiver, where, when you called CQ you announced "tuning high to low" for response.....

I built the kit and it worked! I took it into school and showed the physics master (Jack Brabham) who was suitably impressed.

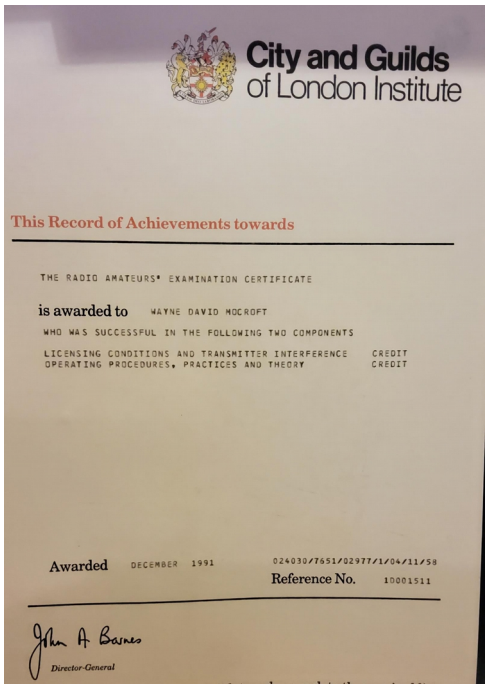
I started having several Radio magazines and got interested in this hobby Amateur Radio. I didn't realise how long this next stage was going to take.

I had always wanted to get into ham radio, so in my final years at grammar school I met a now long term friend, Phil Cadman G4JCP, and I joined the Dudley Amateur Radio Society. Phil at the time lived about 10 houses down the road from me and I used to go to his house and play "Radio" in his shack. I used to go with him to rallies, as I couldn't drive at the time, Drayton Manor, Leicester Granby Halls, Longleat, etc. I eventually put in for my RAE exam at Ounsdale school. If I remember it was Bob Tompkiss G3NOW (someone correct me it was a while ago. *That is correct. Ed.*). I passed part one licence conditions, but failed the theory paper. I'd not been one for writing pages and pages in exams, even though that's what they wanted. How I passed and got all the good grade "O"level I'll never know. Physics, chemistry, technical drawing, art, English, mathematics. They asked if I wanted to try one of these new fangled "CSE" chemistry exams, so I did, passed grade 1, which gave me a second chemistry O Level to add to my "B" (grade1 pass gave you a C grade O Level) , I digress.

So much disheartened I gave up trying at that time .....

Moving forward, now married and with my own house, still Radio interested and regular at Dudley radio club, my wife surprised me one Christmas with a CB radio (I know, but it was radio none the less). A few years passed and CB radio was getting, shall we say, childish and I gave it up.

A few more years passed radio free. Dudley Society disbanded and work and prospects took main stage, then suddenly, a renewed interest in radio came forefront. They had changed the exam format. Still 2 papers, licence and theory, with more questions, but it was all multiple choice. Ah, my essay writing fears had gone away. So I bought the latest RAE manual (blue cover) and set about reading it from cover to cover. I sat several mock exams and I was getting 85-95% pass rate. Time to put in for the Exam. The only place near me was Redditch college. All booked, I rocked up at the college like a school boy going to the headmaster's study. Reception guided me to a classroom on the 1st floor. Waiting outside the invigilator arrived. I asked if it was the correct place, she replied looking at her clip board "well I have 1 person sitting 1 paper and 1 person sitting another". Hmmm, that will be just me then I said. I sat the exam and had a few minutes left to check over my answers and handed in my papers, then waited.....



City and Guilds of London Institute

This Record of Achievements towards

THE RADIO AMATEURS' EXAMINATION CERTIFICATE

is awarded to WAYNE DAVID MOCROFT

WHO WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THE FOLLOWING TWO COMPONENTS

LICENSING CONDITIONS AND TRANSMITTER INTERFERENCE	CREDIT
OPERATING PROCEDURES, PRACTICES AND THEORY	CREDIT

Awarded DECEMBER 1991

024030/7651/02977/1/04/11/58

Reference No. 10001511

John A Barnes

Director-General

The wait passed quickly and in the mail I had passed with credits in both parts "wooohoo!"

I applied for my callsign straight away and was given G7LLT. Having used CB for sometime previously, but having the Amateur background, mic shy didn't enter into it. First calls were put out ..... I always remember a G4 had been calling and I went back to him.....nothing, he ignored me. He replied to someone else and both were very close, so I called him again, pointed out our close range and why wasn't he answering me..... He then awkwardly had to respond (you could tell in his voice) I was not taking this discrimination lying down. At that time there were operators who didn't speak to lesser individuals. Fortunately that no longer is the case.

I didn't need to have Morse to get my full G7 licence, but later I wanted to go on HF and I wanted my call sign registration plate, so I set about attaining the 5WPM

ticket (full HF and 100W max. My rig only put out 100W so that was perfect). At that time DVLA got greedy and pulled all of the G1/2/3/4/6/7/8/0*** number plates and put them into auction only, starting price of £1000. So I told them to keep it. What they didnt know was, there were now call signs starting M5, and my preferred call sign was available, as was my plate for the standard £250 all in including transfers. So my pal, Tony G0SKG, sadly no longer with us, set about training me on 2M every night for months, sending and receiving till he thought I was ready to put in for the exam. So I checked on DVLA my plate was available. Yes, I checked with OFCOM if my chosen call was still available. It was. They even offered to reserve it for me until i got my Morse ticket. So with all that in place, I made a call to Martin Lynch & son and booked my test down in London for the following Saturday.

I arrived at the store very nervous and had a chat and a coffee then set about starting the test. First receiving, ...what was going on? I could take a sip of coffee between the characters this guy was sending me!! Then it was my turn to send. He passed me the test piece and away I went, just like I was sending to Tony before. Finished, the examiner looked up and said "Well done, I can give you a 12 WPM ticket if you want". WHAT!? .....Noooo! I wanted the M5 call - you can't have M0 on a registration plate. So to his amazement he wrote out the 5WPM pass slip. During that drive back up to the Midlands, I had a grin all across my face. I went on line when I got back, bought the number plate and registered my new call, M5LLT. I kept the old call for a few years, but as you then had to pay for your licence each year i dropped the old one eventually. The point of all this was it was a means to an end - I got onto HF, I got my Number plate. Did I use CW? ..... never since. That said, as I approach retiring from earning an honest crust (can't see that happening yet. I keep trying, but folks keep asking for work to be done!) I keep getting twinges to plug something into that socket on the FT991A that says key/paddle .....

Even though I've not used CW, it's sort of like riding a bike, you never forget. I hear something on a film or tv programme and say to the XYL "that wasn't what he sent" she's looking at me gone out. So I'm probably rusty, but with a bit of WD40 I reckon it wouldn't take much to get back up to speed. Maybe one day.....

So...that's my story what's yours?

It would be really good if you all thought back long and hard and put your radio life story down to paper and send to our illustrious news letter editor Rob for publication.

Everyone has a story in them. Put it down on paper as one day it will be forgotten, gone forever. I look forward to reading everyone's story.

Design Your Own Coax Choke Baluns

Basic rules-of-thumb for home -builders – easy-to-remember – no complex maths – with examples

In developing new ham antennas, I have painfully learned the importance of testing an antenna prototype through a 1:1 choke balun. On- paper, concepts that "seemed promising," when it became an actual antenna often gave unpredictable results until I included the balun. Using a 1:1 choke balun for all my design work is now "standard operating procedure."

Yes, there are other types of baluns. Though to me, the 1:1 choke balun is the most universally useful balun type. Even most of my commercially built antennas have them have one. They're effective, inexpensive and simple to make. One merely winds a few turns of the coax directly in the feedline. Voila, that's all; what could be easier? A well-known example, found widely for the HF bands on the internet, is the HF "ugly balun," Figure 2.

Many hams seem to just naturally think to wind a balun neatly on a PVC form as in Figure 1a. Figure 1b is another neatly wound coax balun, but on a handy 3D printed quick -form. Don't, however hesitate to scramble wind a coax balun as a random bundle secured with zip ties, Figure 1c. My favorite way to make a scramble-wound choke balun, Figure 1d, is to loop the windings back through each other to form what is called a Torus Knot – no zip ties needed. All the baluns in Figure 1 are for VHF and higher.

One particular practical advantage of a coax balun over other types, is that it can live out "in the weather" – no sealed box, no connectors no messy tape or sealants. Yes, coax baluns can be large. Some may consider them ugly, but they are effective for a very wide range of balun applications. Most important to many is that they and are easy to make and inexpensive.

Let's now see how to build one. First you need to choose one of the build-it-yourself methods above. Next you need to determine the number of turns and the diameter of the coil for a given band. Some may consider this difficult; it isn't. Fortunately, three easy-to-remember math-free rules-of-thumb that will get you there.

Figure 1: a: neatly wound on a form: b: a handy quick form, c: scramble wound with zip ties, d: scramble wound as a torus knot

The Starting Point

The first derives from the primary responsibility of ALL baluns: to keep transmitter RF inside the feed coax. Baluns can also serve other functions other than choking off shield RF, but that is the important one. RF being carried by coax should exist ONLY between the outside surface of center conductor and the inside surface of the shield or braid. It should not be allowed to find its way onto the outside surface of the coax, where it is technically known as common-mode current. Failure to realize the importance of this fundamental reason for a balun ultimately forced me to begin using a 1:1 choke balun during antenna development. Common-mode current (RF on the shield), before then had been keeping me from seeing the performance I knew should be there.

Stopping Common-Mode Current

A choke balun stops RF on the shield by introducing an impedance (more technically a reactance) in series with the outside of the shield. Any common-mode current will then be choked off when it encounters the coil's reactance. The amount of reactance must be relatively high in comparison to the working (characteristic) impedance of the antenna system – 50 Ohms in most ham situations. Standard engineering practice suggests that a reactance be at a minimum of four times the system impedance, or 200 Ohms, is enough.

Coax Choke Balun Rule-of-thumb 1: The coax choke coil must have a reactance of at least 200 Ohms in a 50 Ohm antenna system, at the frequency of operation.

You can make it larger, but 200 Ohms is a satisfactory starting point. Many published designs suggest more, and that is fine.

Translating Coil Reactance into Windings

Coax Choke Balun Rule-of-thumb 2: (1) convert Ohms to Microhenries and then (2) convert Microhenries to turns and coil diameter.

Most RF handbooks have the math formulas to do both. I find on- line calculators much easier. Here, without endorsement, are the two that I use.

(1) Reactance to inductance: https://www.electronics2000.co.uk/calc/reactance-calculator.php

(2) Inductance to turns and coax coil diameter https://www.allaboutcircuits.com/tools/coil-inductance-calculator

Let's now look at two practical examples. Try the the two steps with the calculators for yourself; the process is straight forward.

Example 1: A 2 Meter 1:1 Coax Choke Balun

Calculator (1) translates the 200 Ohms of reactance at 146 MHz to 0.22 µH of inductance.

Calculator (2) next translates 0.22 µH of inductance into 3 turns of 0.2 in. diameter coax (RG-58 or LMR-200) on a 1 in. diameter form.

This balun seen in Figure 1b, wound on a handy 3D- printed quick form. The 3D printer file (.stl) for this coil form is available free for download at w6nbc.com/3d and arrl.org/qst-in-depth.

Example 2: A 160 Meter and Higher 1:1 Coax Choke Balun

Calculator (1) computes that a reactance of 200 Ohms at 1.8 MHz needs a coil of 18 µH.

Calculator (2) next computes that an 18 µH coil requires a minimum of 12 turns of 0.4 in. diameter coax (RG-8 or LMR-400) coil wound on a 5 in. diameter Schedule 40 PVC form. See Figure 2.

Shown is a typical “ugly balun” widely described on the internet in a variety of lengths, diameters and coax types. You may use more inductance if you wish, or more turns and a larger diameter. Many references do. This is fine, as lower frequency balun also works on higher bands.

Figure 2: The minimum 160m and higher ugly balun.

A Word on Scramble Winding

Some may be wondering about randomly winding a coax balun, Figure 1c & 1d. It’s quite okay. A neat coil on a form, Figure 1a, is not essential.

Rule-of-Thumb 3: A scramble-wound coil has less inductance than a neatly-wound coil. Studies suggest de-rating a scramble-wound coil by roughly 40%.

As a fan of home-brew ham antennas, my design “mantra” is to now use a balun on ALL antennas, even commercially-build antennas. One might use a 4:1 balun, for example, for the needed impedance transformations in an OCF HF dipole, but for most other balun applications, a simple coiled-coax 1:1 choke balun works very well.

I have a good example at my QTH on the SO-239 “unbalanced output” jack of an automatic antenna tuner that feeds a multi-band 20 ft. HF flagpole antenna with 450 Ohm or open-wire window line. A short coax stub with a coiled coax choke balun, connected to the output of the tuner, takes care of both the balance issue and keeping common-mode RF off of the coax run from my rig to the tuner.

A 1:1 choke balun, whether in coax or as ferrite cores/beads, to me is the most useful form of the balun. It eliminates unwanted RF on the shield without interfering with what is going on inside the coax very well for most applications. For antenna development or modification, I now consider one an essential for consistent performance with any antenna. These few rules-of-thumb have become a basic component of an antenna design toolkit.

Top 10 Reasons to Take Ham Radio Portable

By James Stevens M0JCQ

Portable amateur radio operation is the reason I'm still in the hobby. There you go, I said it! Since getting licensed I've not lived in a house with a garden and inevitably my options for home antennas are extremely limited. Add massive noise levels across the HF bands and RFI to neighbours when I operate above the 20m band and then you have all the reasons I started taking my rig into the great outdoors.

But despite this, portable operation has a lot to offer, even if you are a shack sloth and have an awesome setup. I'll use this post to outline just what I have found through my experiences of almost exclusive /p operating over the last few years.

Now that's what I call a shack with a view!

1. Low Noise Levels

As soon as you get away from the electrical noise soup that makes up the urban environment the majority of us live in, you start to notice some big benefits when it comes to Amateur Radio. Turning on the rig away from civilisation is a breath of fresh air, often I see the noise levels across the HF bands at S1 and have even seen S0 of noise. I recently operated in a 160m contest, which you can normally expect to be very noisy, but from the (large) field I operated in I only had S2 of atmospheric noise and no electrical noise.

I primarily use an Elecraft KX3 for portable operation, so once you add low noise levels to a great receiver you can suddenly hear so much more. In fact I can often hear and work stations while out portable which are lost in noise back at my home QTH.

This phenomenon is observable from your shack, sometimes when listening to a SOTA activation you will hear another SOTA station (known as a Summit to Summit contact) and you won't be able to hear the other station. The other station is within the skip zone but is running QRP and beneath your noise floor. Despite this the two activators exchange good signal reports and can clearly hear each other. Simply put they are not battling with noise and are hearing much more.

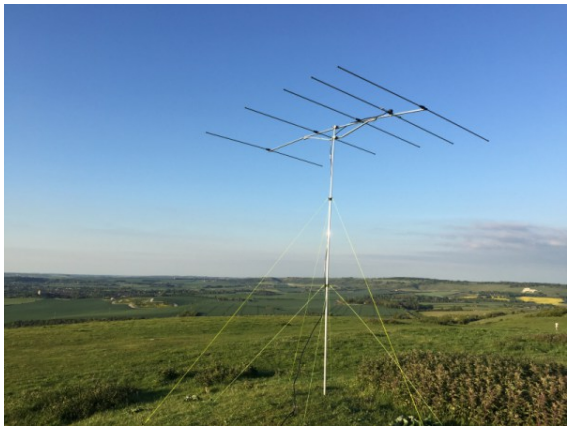
17m Band and No Noise Floor!

2. Great Take-off

Portable operation from hilltops and open spaces offer unobstructed takeoffs. On HF this means more of your power is being radiated effectively to the ionosphere as there's no building/objects to obstruct the signal. Put a HF vertical on a mountain top and that low angle takeoff really starts to do the business!

On VHF we're talking game changer. Minimal signal attenuation as obstructions are gone and if you're on a high hill top your signal will reach a lot further afield than your home QTH. There's a good reason a lot of serious VHF contesters operate /p from hill top locations!


6m Tonna at Sunset from a Hill Top


6m Yagi ready to rock and roll from a local hilltop!

3. Antenna Experiments

Outside spaces away from the restrictions of your home QTH mean you can experiment with larger antennas. Want to use a half wave dipole for 160m? Go do it! I did recently use one from a large field and did very well for a QRP station – a non-compromise antenna and good ground conductivity for the band helped me do better than QRO stations at home.

Testing my top band dipole in the field

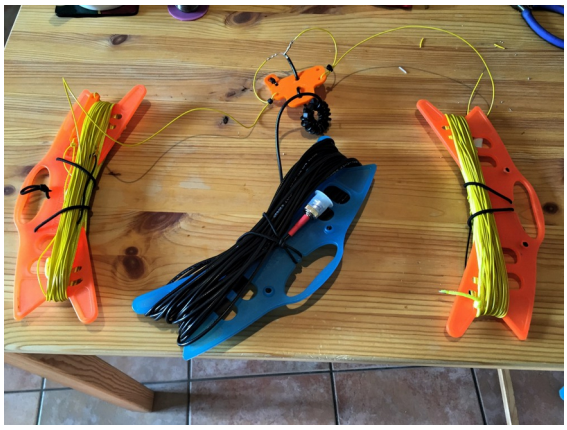
I often experiment with different antennas while portable, for HF this mostly means wire antennas and for VHF/UHF I have used 5 element Yagi's on 6m and a 19 element Yagi for 70cms.

Recently I have started experimenting with kite antennas when out in the field. Soon enough a vertical for the 80m or even 160m starts to become a reality.


Antenna at Sunset

SuperStick Antenna ready to go volcanic

Trig point as antenna mast support



My Linked Dipole Setup for Portable Use

4. QRP Becomes a Lot Easier

When you have the usual restrictions of home lifted suddenly QRP operation becomes a lot easier.

Admittedly QRP can also be a necessity if you need to walk some distance as you can't carry a generator to run that amp! You start to become very conscious of just how heavy and bulky your power source is!

I use LiFePo batteries as they offer a much better weight/capacity ratio over the more traditional SLAB batteries.

When conditions are good I like to experiment with QRPp (<1W) and have written articles about these on 10m SSB and 40m SSB.

5. It's Good for You!

Amateur Radio outside offers fresh air and the chance of exercise. There's nothing like being out in the great outdoors. Activating SOTA summits inevitably means a certain level of physical exertion, but also gets you outside into some pretty wild places.

Michael G0POT Walking Up to a SOTA Summit – Thirsty Work!

Michael (G0POT) relaxing in the snow

6. Sense of Adventure

I've walked along the rims of volcanoes, setup on the edge of mountains, operated in the dark while surrounded by 50 deer, had birds of prey circle above my dipole, almost been blown off mountains during gale force winds and even camped at the base of mountains in preparation for an early morning hike up. These have all happened because I decided to take my radio out portable and I'm glad I did!

Such activities aren't for everyone but on a nice summer's day there's no place I'd rather be than in the sunshine enjoying some radio fun.

Sunrise on a Snow Covered SOTA Summit (Corndon Hill – GW/MW-013)

This is where I woke up! It was more beautiful than I had imagined!

Spider came to see the antenna analyser in action

7. Good Advert for the Hobby

Being outside and visible inevitably means that passers by will ask questions about what you are doing. I've been able to explain the hobby to many people who would never otherwise have heard of it. I always take the time to explain what I am doing in an interesting & accesible way if I am approached while out /p.

People are naturally intrigued and my interactions with people have been positive. The spectrum of responses range from them thinking you're crazy to extreme interest.

8. Awards!

There are quite a few award schemes available for those who choose to operate outside. I personally take part in the SOTA (Summits On The Air) and Worked All Britain Trig Points awards.

These have added an extra incentive for me to go out portable and I've been to some very cool places I would never have otherwise visited let alone operated from i.e. Volcanoes and Mountains on the Canary Islands, Portugal and remotest Wales.

My WAB Trig Point Awards for 2015

9. It's Different

If you're a little bored of the hobby then why not give portable operating a go? Search out your nearest SOTA summit and arrange a visit. Many experienced operators have found a new lease of enjoyment by taking to the great outdoors with a portable rig and a bit of wire.

Going portable entails a new set of challenges that you don't need to consider when inside the shack, so you will learn a thing or two for sure.

10. Fine Tune Your Op Skills

When I initially wrote this article I struggled to come up with a 10th point. Steve WG0AT came to the rescue by suggesting portable operation hones your operator skills to the 9th degree. He's not wrong either, if you're a SOTA activator you'll learn how to deal with pile ups, work DX using QRP power and you will have to be creative when you've forgotten an important item of equipment. A Swiss Army knife quickly becomes your best friend!

Conclusion

Hopefully this post has inspired you to get out portable with your rig and start realizing some of the benefits that are on offer.

It'll be a learning curve getting started, but once you have a working portable station you'll gain new enjoyment from our hobby.

Please let me know in the comments if you have any questions or any additional points that this post should consider.

Lazy late afternoon operating in the sun

Foundations of Amateur Radio

Planning for an emergency...

Identifying the problem is the first step in fixing it and with that I want to talk about emergencies. One of the very first things I was told about our amateur radio community was that we're here for when emergencies happen. Our purpose is to communicate, so in a crisis, we can assist by supplying communication to the situation.

I've talked about some of this before. Preparedness in the way of on-air training by contesting, in getting gear ready and even exercises for when this occurs. There are amateur clubs dedicated to putting up repeaters for just such an eventuality.

Recently there was a local news item about radio amateurs banding together, sending gear to fellow amateurs who were hit by severe flooding that wiped out their shack and with it their ability to communicate.

Another event was a friend who lost a big chunk of his shack when his basement flooded.

Across Australia and in other parts of the world in recent times we've been witness to the most devastating fires that destroyed entire towns and communities, taking with it infrastructure, communications, not to mention stock, local flora and fauna and entire wildlife ecosystems, bringing some to extinction levels.

The destruction doesn't end there. War and famine, drought, cyclones, hurricanes or typhoons, snow storms, heatwaves and the like.

All those situations can to greater or lesser degree benefit from amateur radio communications, either for amateurs affected, or for the community at large.

I started considering what would actually be required to be useful in such a situation. Could you be prepared for anything, or are you required to pick and choose? What does "being prepared" actually look like and what steps can you take once it's happening?

I asked myself if sending radio gear to amateurs who are affected by floods is the most effective way to actually help, or would it be better to pass the hat around and send the proceeds to their bank account?

Should you as an amateur drive into an emergency area and start communicating, or are there better ways to help?

There are local amateur radio emergency service groups under various names in different countries, some of which are highly effective, others much less so.

One attempt I made was to join the local volunteer state emergency services. For several reasons that didn't work out for me, but it remains a viable option for some.

Joining those types of groups gives you a framework, but does it actually answer the underlying question, that of effectiveness?

I have a drawer full of emergency service training manuals, each more dense than the next, but very little of it relates to the amateur radio. Many pages are dedicated to search and rescue, staying alert, first aid, keeping alive, hand signals, log books, mapping and the like.

I am left wondering why we as a community, with a proud century of activity, having one of the main principles as emergency communication appear to have such a poor track record of actually considering what dealing with an emergency looks like and what your own

individual place could be in that situation.

We document our radios, antennas, power supplies, contacts, circuit board designs, contesting procedures and all the rest of it, but we don't seem to do the same for emergencies.

Why is that?

In my opinion, it's time to document emergency amateur radio and if you have already started, get in touch.

I'm Onno VK6FLAB

DX News

7O2WX Socotra Island Yemen

Vladimir, OK2WX will be active as 7O2WX from Socotra Island, IOTA AF - 028, Yemen, 25 January - 12 February 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands with focus on 160, 80 and 40m, including activity in CQ WW 160m Contest.

Working condx - ELECRAFT K4X ICOM 7300, PA Expert 1K3, Monoband Verticals 160, 80, 40, Spiderbeam 5 Band.

QSL via IZ8CCW.

Address for direct QSL: Antonio Cannataro, Via Don Minzoni 18, 87040, Marano Marchesato - CS, Italy.

P40AA Aruba

Mat, DL4MM will be active again as P40AA from Aruba Island, IOTA SA - 036, 19 - 31 January 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands, CW, SSB, FT8, including activity in CQ WW 160m CW.

He will operate in Single Operator Assisted Category.

QSL via ClubLog OQRS.

J79BH Dominica Island

Laurent, FM5BH will be active as J79BH from Dominica Island, IOTA NA - 101, 17 - 24 January 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands, CW, SSB, Digital Modes.

QSL via ClubLog OQRS.

J79AN Dominica Island

David, F8AAN will be active as J79AN from Dominica Island, IOTA NA - 101, 17 - 24 January 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands, CW, SSB, Digital modes.

QSL via ClubLog OQRS.

TR8CR Gabon

Roland, F8EN ex CN8EM, FO8BV, 3C3CR, TR50R will be active again as TR8CR from Gabon, 28 December 2023 - until end of the February 2024.

He will operate on 30 - 10m, CW. QSL via F6AJA.

Address for direct QSL: JEAN MICHEL DUTHILLEUL, 515 RUE DU PETIT HEM, 59870 BOUVIGNIES, France.

TX5S Clipperton Island

TX5S Team will be active from Clipperton Island, IOTA NA - 011, 18 January - 2 February 2024.

Team - Jacky ZL3CW, Dave K3EL, Steve W1SRD, Ricardo PY2PT, Gene K5GS, Heye DJ9RR, Laci HA0NAR, Walt N6XG, Rob N7QT, Glenn KE4KY, Chris N6WM, Arliss W7XU, Philippe FO4BM, Dave WD5COV Andreas N6NU, Nodir, EY8MM, Allan, EA3HSO, Francesco, IK0FVC.

They will operate on 160 - 6m, CW, SSB, Digital Modes, including 60m Band.

QSL via M0URX, OQRS. QTH Locator - DK50jh.

ZD7Z Saint Helena Island

Elvira Simoncini, IV3FSG will be active as ZD7Z from Jamestown, Saint Helena Island, IOTA AF - 022, 16 January - 4 February 2024.

She will operate on 160 - 6m, SSB, CW, RTTY, FT8, FT4.

QSL via IK2DUW direct, LOTW, ClubLog OQRS.

Address for direct QSL: ANTONELLO PASSARELLA, VIA M. GIOIA, 6, 20812, LIMBIATE, MB, Italy.

QTH Locator - lH74db.

JG8NQJ/JD1 Marcus Island, Minami Tori Shima Islands

Take, JG8NQJ will be active again as JG8NQJ/JD1 from Marcus Island, IOTA OC - 073, Minami Torishima, starting Mid January 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands CW, FT8.

QSL via JA8CJY.

Address for direct QSL: Susumu Sanada, 5- 4- 5- 17, Shin-Ei, Kiyota, Sapporo, Hokkaido, 004-0835, Japan.

DXCC Country - Minami Torishima. QTH Locator – QL64xg. WAZ Zone - CQ 27.

VP2MDX Montserrat Island

Tjaore. W2APF will be active as VP2MDX from Montserrat Island, IOTA NA - 103, 11 January - 11 April 2024.

He will operate on 80 - 10m, CW, SSB.

QSL via W2APF, LOTW.

Address for direct QSL: THAIRE BRYANT, 441 Stewart Road, PO BOX 68, EATON CENTER, NH 03832, USA.

PJ2ND Curacao Island

Jeff, K8ND will be active PJ2ND from Curacao Island, IOTA SA - 099, until 31 January 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands.

QSL via home call, LOTW.

Address for direct QSL: Jeffrey A Maass, 9256 Concord Rd, Powell, OH 43065-9625, USA.

HR5/F2JD Honduras

Gerard, F2JD will be again active as HR5/F2JD from Honduras, 25 November 2023 - 21 March 2024.

He will operate on HF Bands plus 6m, CW, SSB, Digital modes.

QTH - Copan Ruinas.

QSL via F6AJA.

Address for direct QSL: JEAN MICHEL DUTHILLEUL, 515 RUE DU PETIT HEM, 59870 BOUVIGNIES, France.

4S7KKG Sri Lanka

Peter, DC0KK will be active again as 4S7KKG from Sri Lanka, IOTA AS - 003, until 30 March 2024.

He will operate on 20 - 6m, CW, Digital modes. QTH Locator - MJ96xk.

QSL via home call, LOTW, OQRS ClubLog.

Address for direct QSL:

Peter Vossen, Vossberg 1, 33100 Paderborn-Dahl, Germany.

TR8CR Gabon

Roland, F8EN ex CN8EM, FO8BV, 3C3CR, TR50R will be active again as TR8CR from Gabon, 28 December 2023 - until end of the February 2024.

He will operate on 30 - 10m, CW.

QSL via F6AJA.

Address for direct QSL: JEAN MICHEL DUTHILLEUL, 515 RUE DU PETIT HEM, 59870 BOUVIGNIES, France.

YOUR COMMITTEE

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