



Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society
NEWSLETTER
June 2007

Mid Sussex Matters



In this issue

- **Congratulations George**
- **Scarborough Reef**
- **Windmills Weekend**
- **Aspidistra Revisited**
- **Over the Hills & Far Away**

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER.

Here we are in May, the holiday season is beginning and the rain has arrived at last, just in time to spoil the Mills weekend.

It's time, though, to think seriously about improving your antennas, since the weather won't always be wet and we are promised drought conditions soon. Hosepipe bans will be with us soon no doubt.

Remember, if your antenna doesn't fall down occasionally it wasn't big enough in the first place so make plans to put more wire in the air rather than relying on shiny (expensive) commercial devices. If you really think that you can't improve your antennas and will have to settle for second best, talk to me and I'll give you some ideas.

I hope you all have a good summer. Band conditions, whilst poor at the moment, will improve over the next few months and with the number of outside events in our programme already, some of them at least will be in brilliant sunshine.

If it keeps on raining the best place to be is in the shack anyway!

Ken Gibson G3WYN

On The Cover

George Lord G4PTJ in his Lindfield shack. George has just worked Scarborough Reef for country 337. Read the article on page 5.

From the Chair

Well, here we are in May already; the weather has taken a turn for the worst, so much so that only for the second time in recent years the society did not take part in the "Mills on the Air". To be fair, it wasn't the weather's fault. The Jill Mill society at the eleventh hour informed us that they were carrying out major works on the mill and didn't want us "in the way on site". The call GBOJAJ had been obtained so it was left to any individuals to pop up and operate from the car park, I know that one member did - thank you, Roger.

Looking back over the last few weeks, we have enjoyed a talk and demonstration by Graham Somerville showing the capabilities of Bhi's DSP speakers and modules. I know that one or two of you took up the offer of discount and purchased a speaker or something. The quiz night was won by Chris ZCS, Peter AKG and John XTW. Well done chaps - please keep the cup polished for the next winners! Talking of cups, this year's Boule evening will be held at the QTH of Mike G1TDL, "The Homestead", Burgess Hill, along with other games (?); nibbles will be provided, but please bring a bottle. For those of you who have forgotten, my team have won this event for two years running, so can the "Vice Squad" make it a hat-trick? Or can Tony G3XQM and team get their revenge? Looking ahead, Bob G0BUX will be giving a talk/demonstration on APRS. Please note that this will be UPSTAIRS and not down.

Hopefully, you all remember my plea for helpers/volunteers to form an "Outside events group". We have now a pool of 8 people, plus the regulars. Hmmmm, not very good for a membership of sixty! So the plea is still there, we will still require helpers for VHFNFD and I am sure that John and Roger would be glad to see any of you for the Practical Wireless contest on 10 June (this is a Sunday), as last year they had just one visitor! Going back to NFD, Sue YPY has volunteered to oversee prep work and organisation for this year. So if you can offer any help, please see Sue. I am looking to form the "events group" into something a little more organised, with its own chairman reporting to the committee, thus taking some of the load off the committee members. If you are interested, please come and have a word with me.

Well that's about it for this month, don't forget to listen out for the 'E's' on six meters, there have been a couple of openings to CT over the last few days so things may be on the way up for the summer.....let's hope so!

Kim Newland G7AIE

Editorial

You have no idea of the obstacles that I had to overcome to get this issue out the door. Not fire, flood, war or pestilence – much worse: a computer crash. On Sunday morning 13 May I was happily editing Ken's "From the President's Corner" when (and I am sure this is only a coincidence) the machine froze. Attempts to restart were unavailing and I soon discovered that the machine was un-bootable. I spent the rest of the day trying to get it running but on Monday morning I gave up and rang Dell's technical support.. We got the machine running again but at a cost far greater than the mere £34 support charge – the hard disk was wiped clean.

I spent 40 years in the computer business ranting at people about the importance of backing up data so it would have been very embarrassing if I hadn't backed up my own data. I had, but the difficulty was not that I didn't have backup files but that I had too many of them. It took another day to figure out what I had and in what order the files should be restored, and then copy the files back to hard disk. I was able to recover most of my data although I am sure that a few things have been overlooked. Lesson 1: keep better records of the backup files.

I should have been able to get the system rebooted on my own if I had a bootable CD. I thought I had one but when I called on it, it refused to work. Lesson 2: rehearse the emergency restart procedures and make sure that they actually work. The more technically astute among you will surely ask "Why didn't you use the Windows re-installation CD?" I would have done but I discovered that none had been supplied with the machine. Lesson 3: when commissioning a new machine, make sure you have all the necessary re-installation disks and that they are properly labelled and stored in an accessible place.

My son, who makes his living as a computing wizard, added Lesson 4: buy an Apple Mac, but I pay no more attention to him than he did to me when he was a teenager.

I had intended to use the Sunday to ignore the weather and drive over to Jill Mill to see who was flying the club flag, but the struggles with the computer squashed that plan. I am pleased to see that G7VBR, 2E0RJA, G4ZCS and G0GMC got there despite the weather and the other impediments – read Roger's report elsewhere in this issue.

I will close with Bob's thirteenth law of computing: whenever you think you have a free day, your computer will find some way to fill it.

Bob Clinton GØBUX

CONGRATULATIONS GEORGE!

George Lord, G4PTJ tells me that he has managed to work his last two DX Entities (Countries to you and me) having nabbed both Swain Island N8S and Scarborough Reef BS7H over the last few weeks to bring his total DXCC score to 337. That, to those of you who don't follow these things, means that he has now worked every single country or DX Entity that exists.

This is an outstanding achievement - no it's rather more than that, it's almost unbelievable when you consider that George did this with a small beam and often limited power from a small garden in Lindfield, and that he was competing with the best in the world with their kilowatts, monster masts and massive beams

He tells me that he finally used a coax fed single wire delta loop made to the dimensions I calculated for a 10Mhz DX antenna only a week or so ago because his beam did not cover this band, and with this it only took 7 minutes to crack the huge pile up and work the Swain Island station.

He also reminds me that I introduced him to DX hunting in about 1983, since when it has taken him 24 years of listening for, and calling DX stations throughout the world to achieve something earned by only a very few dedicated amateur operators.

Scarborough Reef, always the most sought after DX and only on the air every 10 years or so was also worked with the delta loop on 10Mhz and again on 14Mhz with his beam. The pileup for this one on 14.185 had to be heard to be believed and the split frequencies where they were listening were between 14.265 and 14.280. This meant that you called somewhere in that range and hoped that they just happened to be listening exactly there to hear you.

That might not have been too difficult but for the thousands of others doing the same thing and the boneheads spoiling it for everyone by deliberately interfering both on the split frequencies and the DX station's calling channel.

George, many congratulations from all of us. We are proud that MSARS has such an illustrious member amongst us. Now that you have no more to work we hope to see more of you on our nets and at the meetings in future.

Ken Gibson G3WYN

Scarborough Reef

As reported elsewhere in this issue, George Lord G4PTJ, managed to work Scarborough Reef, the world's most-wanted DXCC entity, before operation ceased on 6 May. Before BS7H went QRT, Wolf Harranth, OE1WHC, of Documentary Archives Radio Communications in Vienna interviewed team member James Brooks, 9V1YC, via satellite telephone. His report was included in the 4 May ARRL letter which is the source of the information in the remainder of this article.



Brooks explained that the team has been operating from wooden platforms mounted atop each of the reef's four rocks that are exposed during high tide. "Basically, we're like little birds perched on a small rock in the middle of the ocean," Brooks told Harranth. "It's a very dangerous reef," he went on to say. "There's lots of

hazards. There's rain, there's wind, there's lightning, there's piracy."

The coral is also very sharp, and most of the team members suffered cuts and scrapes. Changing shifts three times a day has been difficult and time consuming, and Brooks says the individual stations have barely been able to see each other during daylight. The DXpedition team was visited by several fishermen from the Philippines who asked for fuel and water.

The most difficult path from BS7H was to the US Northeast, although many stations were successful in working the DXpedition on 30, 20 and 17 meters, and signals were reasonably strong. Not everyone was thrilled with the extremely large pileups, however. On 20 meter SSB, the pileups often extended 50 kHz or more up the band from the BS7H transmitting frequency and interfered with other activity.

Stations trying to work any rare DX station should exercise courtesy and make sure they have a clear frequency before transmitting, to avoid interfering with ongoing communications unrelated to the DXpedition.

Brooks explained to Harranth that Europe, Japan and Oceania were easy to work most any time of the day.

The first QSO was made on 29 April. As of 1400 on 2 May, BS7H was operating four stations from four separate rocks, with two stations dedicated to 20 meters. All stations were running 800 W, and activity was on 10 through 40 meters. Substantial QRN on 40 and 30 prevented the operators from hearing most stateside signals, however.

In part because of high winds, the team did not launch the helium-filled weather balloon to support an antenna for 80 and 160 meters. On the other bands BS7H used vertical antennas, taking advantage of the salt water for a ground plane.

CLUB NET TIMES

Join in if you can. All times are UK CLOCK times.

Sunday	08:00	3.74MHz ± QRM
Sunday	11:00	S14 (145.350MHz)
Sunday	20.00	HY Net 433.125Mhz
Wednesday	20:00	S14 (145.350MHz)
Weekdays	13:30	21.330MHz. Work the USA
Tuesday	20:30	3.725 MHz ± QRM SCARF

Training Plans

An Intermediate course is being planned for September, Tuesday evenings, and an Advanced for the Autumn. Please register your interest NOW to help planning these courses.

Chris Saunders, Training Officer.

Deadline

The deadline for items for the July issue of Mid Sussex Matters is

15 June 2007

International Windmills Weekend

Because of adverse weather that was expected over this weekend, and an eMail from the Jill Windmill Society who were undertaking maintenance that would restrict our tenting and operating area, it was decided by the Committee that this event would not be supported this year. However, any member who wished, could go to the Mills car park and operate.

So G7VBR, a known idiot, decided to do his own thing and operated from his car using whip aerials 'mag' mounted on the car roof. He was joined on the Saturday by Rob, 2E0RJA, who had problems with his SWR constantly changing because the whip section of his ATAS unit was trying to go around in circles. Chris, G0GMC, also visited at the latter part of the day. On Sunday morning Chris, G4ZCS, arrived to try his luck with 4m.



Jill Mill—minus two sweeps

The conditions were to say the least, rather awful. The weather was variable from slightly windy and wet to very windy and ever so wet! There were some dry periods that allowed some of the puddles to drain away before the next shower.

On the rf side 20m was dead until the Russian contest started on Saturday at noon for 24 hours, then there was no room left for Windmill stations to operate successfully. So 80m appeared to take the strain and about a dozen Mills were heard on this band. Noise and interference persisted and good contacts were made only by those stations with a G5RV or big vertical.

The web site run by the Denby Dale Radio Club, who offered a certificate for hearing over 10 Mill stations, listed 40 Wind and Water Mills including the Jill Mill.

Operating from the car with a whip, with the rf often being reduced by leakage caused by the rainwater from the aerial mount onto the car roof, reduced the chances of contacting many of the Mill sites but 5 QSOs were

eventually completed, even if it took tries on both days to succeed.

The Mill maintenance was observed to be the removal of one pair of sweeps, which was probably done in the week preceding the Mills Weekend, followed by the removal of the main 'arms' that held those sweeps. Before leaving site the attached photo was taken. The Mill appeared to be open to the public all weekend but public access to the Mill grounds was restricted by the works.

Hopefully next year the maintenance works will not coincide with the Weekend but if so there may be an opportunity to operate from another Wind or Water Mill in Sussex.

Roger Ferrand G7VBR



John G6XTW, Peter G4AKG and Chris G4ZCS were the winning team at the quiz on 4 May. Chairman Kim G7AIE has just presented them with the cup.

Crowborough 'Aspidistra' Radio Site – Revisited

On Saturday 12 May 2007 I met up with the Horsham Amateur Radio Club at the Sussex Police Training Ground, Kingstanding, near Crowborough, a trip organised by David Ansell M3NKC

We were first taken in to a small room at the gate house and had a short description of the history of the site, given by Bob Toynbee. The site was first used during WW2 with a 600 Kw radio used to distribute 'black propaganda' to the Germans. The station had the code name of *Aspidistra* and first went on the air on 8 November 1942. After the war, the BBC rented the site to put out the European Service broadcasts. This was what I remember seeing, when the MSARS visited the site on 15 March 1979 when the radio equipment was in operation, with several masts of 360ft high supporting rhombic aerials. The station was decommissioned on the 28th September 1982.

During the years 1984 – 86, the main transmitter site was rebuilt with bomb proof doors and a mezzanine floor put in to give more room to house 150 people during the cold war era. After the cold war threat ended, the Home Office closed the site in 1992. It was then bought by the Sussex Police as a training ground in 1996

We then went on a tour of the old buildings that were still around the site. As we walked down the main drive we saw the new entrance to the bunker, then the old entrance to the original ASPI 1 Transmitter, which was wide enough to take a lorry down. This entrance sloped down until it was 50 feet below ground.



We walked further down the drive to the area called 'The Village' with road names displayed for training purposes, and came to the generator building. This once housed two diesel generators, which I remember seeing, side by side, to run the station in the event of a 'mains' power failure. It now looked very shabby, with paint peeling from the ceiling and walls, and now holds cars confiscated by the Sussex Police. Also around this area we saw the old canteen, and an area for training police dogs. We were then shown into the ASPI 4 building which once housed another transmitter, but was now used as a training area. At the side of a nearby building we saw glass insulators that the aerial leads came out of.

After this we retraced our route, and went down the new entrance to the 'Cold War' Bunker. After first going through the 'bomb proof' doors, we were shown the air conditioning units and power switch room. As we walked further around this underground bunker we were shown more training areas, lecture rooms, a canteen and a 'Radio Studio' fitted all around with acoustic tiles. The training area once housed the dormitories with very little space between each bed. We finally were on the lower floor and shown the original sloping entrance to ASPI 1.



On our return to the 'Gatehouse' we passed a round building with twin feeder insulators through the windows. This was once used as an aerial selector building.

There is only one mast there now, put up for the cold war, but several aerial anchor points for the original masts can be seen around the area.

This was a most enjoyable return visit to Crowborough and brought back memories of the original tour with the Mid-Sussex Amateur Radio Society back in 1979!

Full details of the black propaganda put out in the war years can be found on the following site:- www.seftondelmer.co.uk together with photos of the original building. (Go to bottom of first page and select - Aspidistra) Also more details at:-

<http://members.aol.com/skywave48/aspidistra.htm>



Mike Pollock G8KMP

Over The Hills and Faraway

Following his entertaining two-part lecture on Louis Varney G5RV, we persuaded Ron Glover to contribute an occasional series of anecdotes about Louis. Here is the first one. Ed.

"We need a new hedge-trimmer, do you use one?" enquired Louis.

I told him that I did. He then wanted to know, what make, what size and where did I get it? I gave him chapter and verse but he was a bit flummoxed by B and Q. "Where are they?", he wondered. When I told him, Lewes Road Brighton, he simply said, "Oh"



Ron with Louis' Log

Now "Oh", depending on inflexion, can carry a variety of meanings. This particular "Oh", with a dropping cadence, carried an air of resignation. For Louis, former world traveler for both business and pleasure, a battle with the traffic into Brighton, in his now advanced years, was too daunting to contemplate. Sensing his disappointment I offered to take him. He didn't need asking twice.

When could we go he wanted to know. "How about Wednesday, I suggested, it's ten per cent off for pensioners day." Louis' eyes lit up, the prospects were growing rosier by the minute.

The following Wednesday, Louis and Nelida, at first over-awed by the size of the superstore gradually navigated their way to the Garden section. The hedge-trimmers required careful assessment: size, weight, wattage, cable length and doubtless a mental calculation of what the ten per cent reduction represented, all came into Louis' lengthy and critical analysis. No such hesitation from Nelida, a kid let loose in a sweetie shop, she was piling cartons of bonemeal, sulphate of ammonia and John Innes into a groaning trolley without thought of the cost, ten percent discount notwithstanding.

The car loaded, we set off for home, through the Brighton traffic, back

along Lewes Road, climbed up Coldean Lane to Old Boat Corner and across the top of the Downs.

As we drew near to the Beacon, on the bridleway on the ridge of the Downs to the east, a figure on horseback, a dark outline against the midday sky, was making his way at a trot up the slight incline.

I knew of Louis' passion for horse riding. He had told me of the stables at Hanslope Park, where he was stationed in the nineteen forties and where he had the opportunities to ride. This pursuit had continued through the years and even more recently, escaping the British winter, in South America where he divided his time between putting his CX5RV call on air and saddling up the horse provided by his brother-in-law.

I glanced across at Louis and sure enough his gaze was concentrated on the same sight that had captured my attention. By this time the rider had broken into a canter and, reaching the crest of the rise to where the bridleway took a downward slope, the horse and rider set off like the wind. From the passenger seat I heard Louis murmur, "Lucky Devil". I made no comment to break the spell of his daydream. He was miles away - about seven thousand, galloping across the hills in Uruguay.

With Great Pleasure.

Ron Glover GØWGP

N4XAT

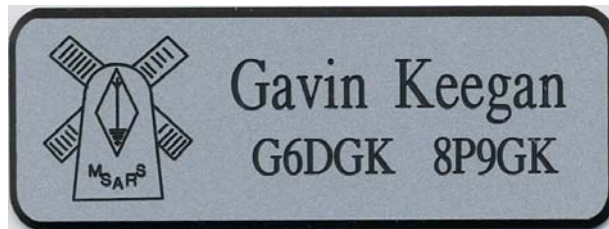
A couple of weeks before we went to press there was a worrying message from G3WYV about associate member Bob D'Imperio N4XAT, whose shack was featured in our April issue. Ken reported that Bob had suffered a heart attack and had undergone bypass surgery. But a week later Ken returned with the more encouraging news that Bob "has left hospital and is now home with a TS-850S, key and microphone by his bedside." Bob would certainly enjoy receiving cards and letters - or even better - QSOs from his MSARS friends. His address is Robert G D'Imperio, N4XAT 211 W Pacific Ave, Villas, NJ 08251-2761 USA

Mid Sussex Happenings

June 8	APRS Demonstration – Bob Clinton G0BUX (U)
June 10 (Sun)	Practical Wireless QRP, Firle Beacon
June 15	Radio evening at Jill Mill Car Park
June 22	Fox Hunt
June 29	Radio Night & table top sale (D)
July 1	Seaford Fun Day - Organized by John Humphrey G6XTW
July 6	Field Day prep – early start (U)
July 7/8 (Sat/Sun)	VHF National Field Day
July 13	Radio Night (D)
July 20	Radio Night & table top sale (D)
July 27	Field Exercise—Test reception within Sussex (U)
August 3	Chairman's Barbecue
December 7	Christmas Dinner, Thatched Inn, Hassocks

Meetings are held on Friday evenings starting 7:45 at
Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. West Sussex, unless other-
wise noted. U=upstairs, D=Downstairs
Visitors are always Welcome

MSARS Marketplace



If you would like to have a badge like this (with your own name and call), then contact Gavin. They come with a pin on the back and cost £3.00 each.



Personalised caps and other items of apparel are available from Tintagel Crafts www.tintagelcrafts.co.uk at very attractive prices.

Or see Chris G4ZCS who may be able to arrange a bulk order with even greater savings.

(Note –the pins illustrated are after-market add-ons - see below.)

Club membership pin

Featuring the club windmill logo, in ruby to celebrate our 40 years.

Available from Chris G4ZCS.

Price £2.00 each. Plenty of stock!



Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society

President	Ken Gibson	G3WYN	01444 412420
Vice President	Mike Pollock	G8KMP	01444 244953
Chairman	Kim Newland	G7AIE	01444 233040
Vice Chairman	Chris Saunders	G4ZCS	01444 247177
Secretary	Gavin Keegan	G6DGK	01825 722045
Treasurer	Stella Rogers	SWL	01273 844511
Programme Secretary	Sue Davis	G6YPY	01273 845103
Shack Manager	Alan Cragg	G8YKV	01273 844511
Committee	John Humphrey	G6XTW	01273 588556
Committee	Russell Nelson	G7TMR	01444 236795
Committee	Rob Ashman	2E0RJA	01444 232129
Auditors	Geoff Davis G6MJW, Hugh Wright 2E0HMW		
Reserve Auditors	Roger Ferrand G7VBR, Tony Finch G3XQM		

Club Web Site: www.msars.co.uk Email address: info@msars.co.uk

Newsletter

Contributions are invited from all club members. The cut off date is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Address all contributions to the editor:-

Bob Clinton GØBUX
Appletrees, Alexandra Road, Mayfield, E Sussex TN20 6UD
Home Tel: 01435 873279 Email: m.s.matters@btinternet.com

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Tel: 01293 851053 Email: mike.webb@printedword.co.uk
FAX: 01293 851900