

Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society
NEWSLETTER
August 2007

Mid Sussex Matters



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER.

I would like to devote my space this month to complimenting the Committee and all its helpers on the considerable effort put into the setting up and the operation of VHF NFD. Despite the threat of an almost certain washout their plans went ahead and were, thankfully, rewarded with wonderful weather on the weekend concerned.

I was unable to attend but did keep an ear open and managed to contact them on a couple of occasions. They did very well, I understand, as did the Sunday morning 80m net on that weekend. It was visited by 16 members, a record as far as I can recall, better than anything in the 30 years or so that the net has been running.

So, despite the poor HF conditions MSARS are still on the air looking for contacts and working the DX. There is hope for us yet!

All this does not just happen, and we should be grateful to the Committee and everyone who made VHF NFD such a great occasion this year and who are providing so much more for us to enjoy in the months to come.

73, Ken Gibson, G3WYN

Welcome

MSARS welcomes a new member – Stephen Somers M0ZHX. Be sure to give him a QSO, either eyeball or on the air.

On The Cover

The 2007 VHF Field Day Scrapbook. Photos by G0BUX, 2E0FQV, G8KMP, and G0WGP. Read the article on page 5.

From the Chair

Well, here we go again, running late with my bit for Bob and the news letter. I had a great time in Friedrichshafen this year; once again we met up with the MSARS Irish branch (see pictures and article in this issue), along with Kevin G4XBG and Millie 2E1CCI. So come on folks, it's a great weekend and if Horsham can make a holiday of it every year, then I'm sure that a few of us could also?

On a serious note, I will be sending out a general email to those members who volunteered for the Events group. I intend to call a meeting sometime within the near future so that we can discuss any future events that MSARS may take part in and choose a chairman for this sub-group.

It has been decided that a working party will be held on Monday 27th August 2007 (yes this is the Bank Holiday Monday) at Cyprus Hall to investigate the G5RV aerial and to carry out any remedial work necessary, as it is felt by some that this aerial is not performing as it should. So if you would like to lend a hand please have a word with Alan G8YKV. We do not require too many people, but I would rather have too many names at first than none at all!

Short but sweet from me this time. Just time to say a BIG THANK_YOU to all of those members who turned out at some point for VHF NFD (just need a few more operators!). The weather was kind and the main thing was, we enjoyed ourselves!

Until next month

73

Kim Newland G7AIE

We are pleased to announce that the Society has awarded an honorary membership to Mark Wooden (aka "Lippy") for his help to the Society over the years.

Editorial

In the last issue there were a number of complaints about the WX. So what did our complaints bring? More rain! The hardships of the residents of Hull, Sheffield, Tewksbury, Gloucester, etc. have been more than adequately reported by the professional media but they appear to have omitted any mention of the efforts of amateur radio operators. Neither the flooding nor the ham radio involvement was on the scale of Katrina but nevertheless British hams were there, if in some cases only on standby.

I am pleased to see that our Society has taken the first steps toward being prepared for emergencies in Mid Sussex, in the form of the coverage exercise conducted on 27 July. A number of us deployed to presumed black holes in the area and I was amazed to see how well we were able to communicate with Haywards Heath, even with minimal power. This was especially gratifying because the parallel test with the District Council's PMR system was an apparent failure. The only part of our test that didn't succeed was the 5MHZ portion, mainly because my mobile whip for the band proved to be totally inadequate. I am now in discussion with G3WYN about alternative portable antennas and I hope we can get another test set up soon, preferably with the participation of the other NOV holders in the club. There will be a more complete report on the exercise in the next issue.

The Tour de France may have ended in disgrace but it certainly got off to a great start on 8 July with the first leg through Kent. Kent Raynet was a bit short handed so I volunteered to stand by the roadside in Tonbridge to assist with backing up police communications. In the event, the police radio system didn't fail but it was still satisfying to know that we were ready to help if needed. And I did have a good view of the race. Well, in truth, the bikes passed by in a matter of seconds, hardly enough time to snap a photo, but the cavalcade of hundreds of support and sponsor vehicles that preceded the racers was impressive. You don't see many parades moving at 40 mph.

Bob Clinton GØBUX

VHF National Field Day

Sometimes the sun does shine upon the just. The weekend of 7-8 July was such an occasion, when the rain clouds temporarily parted to allow a dry (though windy) VHF National Field Day for the Society. We were back at the usual QTH on the South Downs, with a convoy of vehicles proceeding gingerly over the potholed track on the Saturday morning to set up the antennas and tents. Everything was ready for the start at 1400Z. Initially the contact rate was slow on 2M and 70CM but 6M was fairly lively and 20 QSOs were logged in the first two hours. Most of these were DX stations, including an impressive contact with VE1YX in Nova Scotia.

By the time the event ended on Sunday activity had picked up on all three bands and each had a respectable number of contacts. The best DX on 70CM was DR9J and on 2M it was DR2X. By the time G5RV went QRT on Sunday the 2M station had made 79 contacts for a claimed score of 17,182, there were 40 QSOs on 70CM for 8,090 points and 39 on 6M for 36, 876.



Those participating, either in the set-up, take-down or operation included Kevin G4XBG, Alan G8YKV (Plus Stella), Rob 2E0RJA, Chris G0GMC, Chris G4ZCS, Chris M1CSE, Luke M3RXO, Jacqui 2E0FQV, Sue G6YPY, Geoff G6MJW, Russell G7TMR, John G6XTW, Roger G7VBR, Alex M3TEU, Dick G4YCN, Peter G4DXO, Phil M5BTB, Bob G0BUX, Kim G7AIE, Ron G0WGP and Mike G8KMP.

Our HF Field day stations will be at the same QTH on 1-2 September. Please plan to be there.

Friedrichshafen 2007

Once again a faithful few from Mid Sussex decided to attend the *Ham Fest* in Friedrichshafen, Southern Germany.

This was my third trip to the show and I will never stop being amazed by the amount of equipment and variety of bits and bobs that can be had. Once again Walters and Stanton flew the flag for the U.K. (Yes and UK prices), along with Graham Somerville of Bhi. There were the big three, Kenwood, Icom and Yaesu, of course, all showing their latest rigs. This year again, we stayed at the Hotel Knoblauch, (which in English means Garlic), with the MSARS Irish contingent of Sean EI7CV, Gerry EI9DZ and Aidan EI5HW, whose constant banter makes the whole trip worthwhile.

The "Messe" consists of 7 halls. The main hall is taken up by the main dealers e.g. W+S; WiMo from Germany; Italian dealers, plus many others of whom I've never heard. Also in the main hall you will find the stands of the various Radio Societies from around the world such as RSGB, DRAC, ARRL and then the "Sub" clubs IOTA, DXCC, SOTA etc.



Three of the smaller halls (I say small but you could still park a dozen or so small aircraft in them!) are used for the "Flea market" Oh boy! Some Flea market. There are a number of small traders from Europe here and one in particular grabbed my attention. This chap came from Italy and was selling his antennas, mainly for VHF, but there were a couple of HF "Mini beams", and the quality and the workmanship was outstanding, all stainless fittings.....the price?.....about 300 yoyos, sorry Euros, that's about £210.00 and the nearest I've seen over here will cost you £400+. As you stroll into the next two halls the equipment won't go amiss in a junk sale, but there are still bargains to be had, for example, an ex eastern bloc Lada Radio truck (about a 10tonne) complete with all working radio gear and generator. I think the P.E.P. from this thing was about 5Kw! The asking price a mere 9,500 Euros (plus the diesel to get you home).

As you can see from my brief description, you will need two days out of the three to have a good look around. Then on the third day, go back about lunchtime, just as people are packing up. This was when I was offered a full size HF Tri-Bander for around £100.00! The dealers were doing all sorts of deals. I did try to explain in Italian that Mr Ryan wouldn't be too happy

for me to smuggle the beam on to his 737.

Hmmm, perhaps next year I'll take the Discovery with roof rack? As for the Irish contingent, well once again they manned their own stand "Ballooning and Amateur Radio Club of Ireland" (www.EI2AIR.com) and with the help of Jacqui 2E0FQV managed to muster a lot of interest in aeronautical mobile operations. Looking in the visitors book, I could see calls from VK4, K5, 4X, JA and VU2 as well as DL, G, IK, SM, LA, EI, GI, SV and the list goes on.

I will take this opportunity to thank Sean, Gerry and Aidan who kindly donated two spare passes to Jac and me for free entry to the show, hence this is why we helped to man their stand.

On a final note, I placed our own G5RV/P QSL card on to the QSL wall and this caused a bit of a stir. I had a note pinned to it, asking could someone meet there at High Noon! I did and had a very interesting chat with Gunter who knew Louis many years ago and had stayed with him in Burgess Hill. Small world. It has been suggested that MSARS take a stand next year to promote G5RV, not the antenna, but the MAN with a little bit of background and history. So what do you think? Answers on a postcard please!

Until next year 73

Kim Newland G7AIE

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

Deadline

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

15 August 2007

Tesco Race For Life 2007

The Race for Life is a 5-kilometre run, jog or walk organized by Tesco. It is for women and girls of all ages and abilities who are encouraged to enter in order to raise money, by sponsorship, for Cancer Research UK. Across the country about 800,000 women take part, and I entered for the Race taking place on Saturday 30 June at Stanmer Park, Brighton. It was not an ideal day, somewhat wet although there was very little wind, and along with the rest of the 3,800 entrants I went to Brighton ready for the 2pm start. But even with the rain there was a great party atmosphere. We started with warm up exercises, run by a PE Instructor, and then I joined the walking group, with my mother 76 years young, who was also taking part!



After the runners had set off we got going, a long stream of women as far as we could see. The course was extremely muddy in places. In all there were three hills and each one seemed to get longer, but the final one led to the finish line! Lots of the women wore different kinds of fancy dress and there was one lady on crutches but that didn't matter - it was girls and women of all ages and abilities who all seemed united in being determined to enjoy themselves and get to the end.

The runners of course lapped all the walkers, but we kept going and after just one hour Mum and I reached the end of the course where we were each given a bag full of freebies, a bottle of mineral water and the all-important medal to say we had completed the course. We both felt really good and a sense of satisfaction at having completed it as well as the exercise, which I am sure was good for both of us. Looking back we could see a long stream of competitors still walking towards the finish line, so we had the satisfaction of knowing that we were far from the slowest in the Park. Many thanks to everyone who sponsored me, and next year I hope to enter again, when perhaps some more of you will join me.

From a VERY WET (Despite wearing waterproof clothing)

Stella Rogers

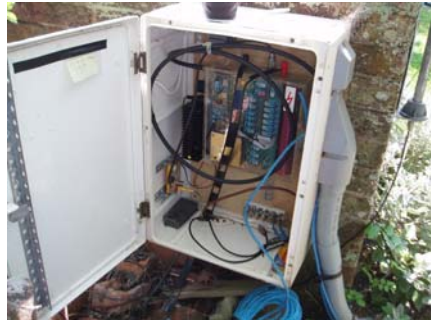
Down the garden path...Lives PicaTune.

In response to Bob's series of articles illustrating members' shacks, I went to the bottom of my garden with a camera.

In 2000 Peter Rhodes wrote a series of articles for RadCom describing an automatic antenna tuner. In 2002 we had an evening lecture by Paul Berkeley who demonstrated the unit in action. As a result, a number of members started a batch of PicaTunes.

Construction progressed through the winter with some of the first being completed in mid-2003. Mine was a delayed by investigation of alternative capacitor material. The resulting components were tested with about 600W of signal. No smoke or flames!

The completed unit was banished to the bottom of the garden where the antenna feeders live. The coax feeder is run in an ex BT conduit, (now I wonder where that came from?), and the enclosure is a surplus meter box from a building site.



The first photo shows the original installation of the PicaTune. In addition to running a delta loop I was running an end fed wire for 5 MHz. Unfortunately the results were never as good as expected, so in the winter of 2006/7 I investigated the reasons.

It seemed that my experimental antenna switch, in the tobacco tin, was causing an earth short to one leg of the balanced feeder for the loop. It also transpired that the earth was running back to the shack along the coax screen before going down to RF ground!

With failing eyesight I started to tidy up the enclosure, completing the earth bus system and connecting it where it should have been all along.

The switching presented a challenge, so I decided to build a 6-way switch operated from the PicaTune. The part built unit was exhibited at this year's construction contest (pity Tony missed my soldering faults, as there were a couple of shorts that took me an age to find).

With one eye and a seriously solder- burnt finger I managed to complete the unit and test it.

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The second photo shows the completed unit piggy-backed on the PicaTune.



The enclosure is just a bit full with feeders and the draw cord!

The test results now show an improvement to the loop performance on 15M and dramatic improvements on other bands. The 60 M wire now gives vastly improved results and even tunes on all the low bands with a Pica-Tune match outputting an SWR of 1: 1.

Chris Saunders G4ZCS

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!



G5RV has a Field Day

For NFD this year MSARS again used our much treasured call, G5RV, for the two metre station entry and elsewhere in these pages there is an account of the operation. At some later date we will learn of our degree of success in the contest but before then I would like to take you back in time to an earlier NFD when G5RV himself competed.

The year is 1948. The Amateur Band allocation for two metres was released in two segments in 1948 and 1949 but it was not until ten years after that, in 1959, that the first VHF Field Day took place. Back in 1948 the contest Louis is taking part in is on HF and what's more, in his preferred mode, CW.

The local press picks up on the story and this is their reporter's version of the event.

"Crouched over their transmitting and receiving sets in two tents in a meadow behind the Running Mare, Galleywood, nine Chelmsford radio amateurs, several of whom have held licenses for over twenty years, contacted the world during the weekend. They were one of the five portable stations in Essex taking part in the National Field Day organized by the Radio Society of Great Britain. The rules of this field day were that the amateurs must use portable sets, must be under canvas, aerials and masts must not be fixed to buildings and they must not use a mains electricity supply. Although the members thoroughly enjoyed the field day, which started at Saturday at five in the evening and continued till five on Sunday, it was organized as a practice for making amateur stations available to the authorities in times of national emergency. These radio "hams" are members of a world-wide movement which embraces every creed and colour in one brotherhood. Among them there is a prince and the mayor of a large English industrial town. They bar politics in their conversations and boast 'ours is a world of total peace.'

"The two stations in Galleywood, which are known throughout the world by the call-signs G5RV and G2HPF transmitted on four wavelengths -- G5RV on 170 and 80 metre bands and G2HBF on 20 and 40 metres. They picked up messages from Jersey, C.I., Holland, Eire, Czechoslovakia, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, and Hungary. Messages consisted simply of code words giving the strength of the signals and greetings. At other times the "hams" held conversations with other amateurs across the globe as easy as two people converse in a room, using no more power than is required for a motor car side lamp."

That report shows that the newspaperman had been well primed, and even in those instances where there is a suggestion of intrigue, with the operators “crouched over their transmitting and receiving sets” and “messages consisting of code words” it is likely that Louis would have approved. After all it was only eighteen months earlier that he’d been released from his SCU in Royal Signals where his wartime duties gave him scope for a spot of cloak and dagger.

Let us now look at the event from the alternative perspective, Louis’ log and the entries for the 5th and 6th June 1948.

June 5th 1948, QTH - Meadow back of Running Mare, Galleywood.

Tx. CO - PA. Input 4.4 W.

Rx. HRO

Ant. 270’ long wire

What does that tell us? Well, for openers Louis wasn’t going to go short on creature comforts. The Running Mare, a short walk from Louis’ home in Galleywood Road, was his local, so how civilized is that? Incidentally, I’ve Googled it and not only is the Running Mare still there but the Google Earth link shows that the meadow also remains in place.

The transmitter, the CO is almost certainly the Colpitts Oscillator, built by Louis in 1927, which survived to be exhibited by him when he was the guest of honour at the Leicester Rally in 1998.

For those of you unfamiliar with the HRO receiver, in its army designation it is the R106, has plug-in coils and weighs a ton. I’m exaggerating, maybe it’s only half a ton but you get the idea. Louis, still fit from his army service and just four days shy of his 37th birthday would have had his work cut out to lug it across the meadow but no doubt he would have had some help from the rest of his team. The long wire antenna; no problems there, the Google link shows plenty of trees surrounding the meadow to support 270 feet of wire.

With the contest scheduled to start at 1700 hrs on the 5th of June, the four man team get off to a slow start, recording their first entry in the log at 1747, on 80 metres. From then onwards, rotating, in shifts of from one to two hours, members are making a steady number of contacts, mostly Gs but a few from overseas are also giving and receiving good reports. Once the log registers the last contact before midnight Louis changes the date to

June 6th Sunday, confirming my thought that it is being maintained in BST. The contacts begin falling off around 01.30, so he now QSYs to Top Band where things are a lot livelier for a couple of hours. There's a bit of a slack period after that but changing back to 80 metres at 5 o'clock changes their luck when Rotterdam and Jersey are logged. Rubbing the sleep from its eyes the rest of the country is waking up and from then onwards, by continually switching between the two bands, the team keep things ticking over until the last contact of the contest is made at 1659. Louis makes the final entry in the log. "1700hrs. OFF STATION G5RV/P CLOSED"

In all, 114 contacts and against each of them Louis has recorded the number of points awarded, ranging from one to four, and to begin with the numbers aren't making much sense. Distance worked doesn't seem to have a great deal of bearing on the result. How can it be that a contact between Chelmsford and Chingford, in the same county, qualifies for three points whilst Chelmsford to a GM in Stirling is only worth one? I ponder this for a minute or two and then it all clicks into place. You calculate one point for a UK base station, two points for an overseas base station with a bonus of two points for /P for either.

Nothing startling by way of DX but nevertheless satisfying to work an Easy Item, an Oboe King and an Oboe Nan. Indulge me; I'm still back in 1948, visualizing Louis and his boys dismantling their gear and trooping into the Running Mare for a sustaining pint or two so that they can cart that blooming great HRO back home.

Ron Glover GØWGP



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.

Mid Sussex Happenings

Aug 3	Chairman's Barbeque
Aug 10	Radio Operating Evening (D)
Aug 17	Radio Night and Table top Sale (D)
Aug 18, 19	Lighthouses on the Air
Aug 24	Fox Hunt
Aug 27	Working party at Cyprus Hall
Aug 31	Radio Night (D)
Sept 1, 2	HF Field Day
Sept 7	Talk (U)
Sept 14	Radio Night (D)
Sept 21	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
Sept 28	Skittles Evening Royal Oak Barcombe
Oct 5	Talk (U)
Oct 12	Radio Night (D)
Oct 19	AGM & Wine and Cheese (D)
Oct 26	Surplus Equipment Sale (U)
Nov 2	Talk (U)
Nov 9	Radio Night (D)
Nov 10	St Wilfreds School Fireworks ?
Nov 16	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
Nov 23	Talk (U)
Nov 30	Radio Night (D)
Dec 7	Christmas Dinner
Dec 14	Christmas Quiz and Mince Pie Night (D)
Dec 21	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
Dec 28	Meeting at a Pub
Jan 4	Meet the Committee and Round Table Evening (U)
Jan 11	Radio Night (D)
Jan 18	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
Jan 25	Battery Operations (U)

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

Readers' Letters

I have been using various printers on my PCs for years now, different makes, but mainly Epson. "Keeping up with the Jones" has cost a lot of cash. Now, I have finished up with a colour & several BW laser printers, and the usual inkjets.

My advice is keep the old printers, as I have, several dot matrix. These and BW Lasers are the best bet for normal letter printing. The ribbons can be re-inked; also the laser ones can be refilled and are the cheapest per page to use.

As for colour laser and inkjet, I think it is best not to buy them. Ink jets need special photo print papers and only use water based inks. Colour laser use normal paper and aren't that high finish!

Taking all cost in consideration, the costs of the inkjets, CLPs, plus the well over priced inks and colour toner when worked out per page printed are very high. I consider the best, cheapest way to finish up with excellent photographs is to take the Flash Stick or CD ROM to the local supermarket & get them printed on their processing machines, costing just a few pence per print.

I wonder what other members think?

Reg Moores G3GZT

Confused about roofing filters? There is an excellent article at <http://www.qth.com/inrad/>.

Scroll down the page and there are several links to "A Few Words About Roofing Filters"

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**Outline House,
73 Guildford Street,
Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9AS**

Web: www.hamradio.co.uk

Tel: 0845 2300 599
(Local Call Number)

Tel: 01932 567 333 (Direct Dial Number)

E-mail: sales@hamradio.co.uk

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**