



Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society
NEWSLETTER
October 2007

Mid Sussex Matters



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Another busy month for all of us. Everyone seems to have been doing something to benefit MSARS, with a team sorting out the antennas on the roof of Cyprus Hall, others producing what proved to be one of the best Newsletters yet, much activity on the bands and many of you still managing to cram in a holiday as well.

The 3B7C Dxpedition is on as I write and has proved to be one of the best organised operations I've ever heard. Despite the very poor DX conditions at the bottom of the cycle, the operators working with the aid of modern technology and software have made more than 63,000 contacts so far and they are only halfway through their stay on the Island. The first contact was made with them just 1 second after they started operation!

Their website allows those amateurs who have worked them to check to see if their name is in the log (and if not go back and work them again), preventing disappointment when no card turns up, and it also allows you to see just how well some other amateurs have been doing. Some stations have worked 3B7C on 17 band/modes already.

They've promised to slow down their CW speed next week however so there's hope for me yet!

This just proves how, on what we might have thought was a dead band, thousands of contacts can be made so.... keep on listening and calling even if you think that there is no one about.

Bob, N4XAT came up on 15m yesterday and the predictions for next month are even better, so who knows whom you'll work if you give it a try.

73

Ken Gibson G3WYN

AGM – 19 October

If you can only attend one club meeting this year this should be the one. Pressure of work has compelled three committee members – including the Chairman – to stand down at the end of the year. So be there to vote on their successors – or even better, to volunteer to fill a vacant position.

From the Chair

It's that time again! This could be one of my last "From the Chair" because one of you may be the next chairman of MSARS! (Well from January 2008). Whether you are reading this before or after the AGM. it doesn't matter, I just would like to thank you all for your support over the last few months.

Over the last few meetings we have welcomed visitors to Cyprus Hall on Friday nights, some old faces and some new, but the main thing is that you are all welcome and we will do our best to make you feel at "home".

News this last month? Well you will read elsewhere in this issue the outcome of the working party last Bank Holiday and the investigation of the G5RV. Many thanks to those who came to help, the numbers were just right. Plans are afoot to pay a re-visit and do some "running". As most of you will know by now, Geoff Davis G6MJW has been in and out of hospital over the last month or so. At the time of writing he is at home and making a slow, but positive recovery, so Sue/Geoff all our thoughts go to you both and wishing you well. We hope to see you soon at Cyprus Hall.

A reminder that Christmas is coming, (I've just been to Tesco's shopping and, yes, there's Xmas stock on the shelves already!). Now is the time that I need to know names and numbers for the Christmas dinner (7/12/07), at the Thatched Inn Keymer. Please see the menu which is available at the club on Friday nights.

That's all for now

STOP PRESS: Word has just been received that MSARS came fourth overall in this year's VHF Field Day. We were fifth in the 144MHZ section, second in 433MHZ (we should get a certificate for this) and fourth in 50MHZ. Congratulations to all who took part.

73

Kim Newland G7AIE

On The Cover

A typical antenna installation in the USA – and no planning permission was required! The QTH of KNØI in Canton, Missouri

Editorial

I hope that many of you will have read the item on page 7 of the October RadCom. Those who haven't should search out a copy because it contains some excellent advice for hams anywhere in the world. The name "Riley Hollingsworth" is probably not known to many British amateurs but all US hams know it well because he is Special Counsel in the Enforcement Division of the Federal Communications Commission with responsibility for enforcing the amateur radio regulations. He is also a licensed amateur - K4ZDH. Riley's team performs vigorous policing of the ham radio spectrum in the USA, but this is done with remarkable fairness and understanding. No one will lose his or her license because of honest mistakes and those who commit infractions are given every opportunity to mend their ways. But the few who flout the law face license revocation and, occasionally, large fines. Riley's common sense approach to enforcement is reflected in the RadCom piece; although it was extracted from a speech he gave to American hams, the advice is valid on both sides of the Atlantic.

I spent the first two weeks of September back in Riley's domain, visiting friends and family in the middle of America. I took along a 2M mobile rig and made a few contacts, mainly in my former patch in central Missouri. It was good to hear familiar voices on the repeater and to see some of the faces that go with them at a club meeting that I cleverly managed to slip in among the more conventional social engagements.

This absence has somewhat distracted me from the newsletter so this month's offering is a bit slimmer than usual. I will try to get it filled out a bit more next month but of course I can always use your help in the form of articles and pictures. This time G4ZCS has come to the rescue with the first of a series of articles that promises to be useful and interesting. Read it on page 6.

Bob Clinton GØBUX

Deadline

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

15 October 2007

Antenna Working Party Report

On Bank Holiday Monday 27th August, a small group of us met at Cyprus Hall with the intention of raising the centre of the G5RV antenna. As many of you will have noticed, it had quite a severe dip in the middle.

The ladder line was disconnected from the coax under the eaves. Then we had to untangle it from the anti-bird netting that had been put up by Cyprus Hall management after the antenna was erected, and release it from a tile clip that it somehow was under.

The intention was to pull the antenna up from the flagpole end but we found that when the antenna had been erected by RCS Communications they had fitted the pulley that the lanyard goes through onto the flagpole with a hook and swivel. The result is that the pulley and lanyard have twisted round and no amount of coaxing and cursing will get it to untwist. So we diverted our attention to the rear of the building where the other end is tied off. More problems. The antenna had been tied off via a dogbone, using blue polypropylene rope. This had begun to deteriorate due to sunlight. It has now been replaced with sash cord that will not suffer from the same problem. If it had been left the rope could have broken, resulting in the end of the G5 disappearing across the roof.

Having sorted out that problem we were satisfied that we had got the antenna as high as we could on this occasion. Rob 2E0RJA was tasked with reconnecting the ladder line to the coax and threading it through the nylon netting to keep it off the roof and metal brackets. As he was doing this he noticed that the ladder line insulation had split on both sides and some of the wires inside were sticking out.

So the upshot is that we now need to renew the ladder line before we can reconnect the G5RV antenna to the radio. Therefore at present we are not QRV on HF.

The new ladder line has been sourced. A date has yet to be arranged to replace it.

Many thanks to Kim G7AIE, Rob 2E0RJA, Chris G0GMC, Luke M3RXO and Chris M1CSE

Alan Cragg G8YKV Shack Manager

How good is my radio?

An occasional series explaining the jargon and technicalities of the “sales blurb” that accompanies new radios.

I know that most of us have our favourite make and model, so it will be no surprise that “my radio is better than yours” is sometimes heard in radio circles.

Many of us have been convinced that a particular make is the best thing since sliced bread, but reading the specifications for radios in general, it appears to indicate that the newest is the best. Is it?

In each article I will try to explain what some of the specifications really mean, and whether they have any real “value” to us, the operators.

Looking at the current crop of new radios they seem to fall into two main groups:

Group 1 have 12,457 buttons and knobs on the front panel, and need the use of a magnifying glass to see each one.

Group 2 have 1 button but a huge multi-coloured screen display. For these radios a PhD in computer science is needed to navigate the menu complex!

Prices range from about £100 to over £10,000. “Mine’s bigger than yours” is possibly of no real value as, in this day and age, surface mount component technology (SMD) means that some of the largest radios are full of fresh air.

So where do we start?

Let’s make the first function the easiest: Transmitter Power. In the context of the current licensing legislation there are only 3 levels we need to worry about: The Foundation level allows 10W, the Intermediate 50W, and the Full 400W. So radios are made in one of the 3 power levels? No!

Radios come in a range of 10mW right through to 400W. Many have a maximum power of 100W and are adjustable either continuously or in steps from about 500mW up to 100W. So what is best? If you are looking for the best, is it the maximum power or the most watts per £? You pay your money and you take your choice, based on what you expect from a radio. If all you need to do is rag chew with your mates, say, on 10M mo-

bile, a figure of 25 Watts should be sufficient, so why go and buy a 400W radio? On the other hand if you are attempting to achieve DXCC with all 337 entities, you will need a radio that can feed 400W at the antenna feed point. That's 401W if you have one of Ken's antennas but 600W if you've got a bought one (depending on feed line length and efficiency).

Confused yet? It is still about watts per £. BUT remember that the output power is only one feature of a radio that needs to be considered.

More next time.

Chris Saunders G4ZCS

We would like to thank all the members who attended the "Chair's" barbeque, held at our QTH at the beginning of August for their generosity. As in past years we held a raffle which raised a little over £75. This money has again been donated to our local ambulance service to put towards any equipment they may require.

Ironically, little did we know that within a few days we would need the help of the ambulance guys yet again. As some of you may already know, Geoff has been unwell for some time and this culminated in him being admitted to hospital in the early hours of August 7th. We all believed he had further heart problems but unfortunately he had blood clots which had gone undetected for some time. Life was very touch and go for a while but he is now back home making rather slow progress but each day sees some improvement.

We may well not be at the club for some time but no doubt Geoff will soon start listening to the "nets" before long so beware what you say about him!

Sue G6YPY and Geoff G6MJW

Editor's Note: *We are happy to report that, as this goes to press, Geoff is continuing to make good progress toward recovery. We look forward to seeing him back at club meetings and on the air very soon.*

Weather in America

Planning a trip to the USA? Of course you will be taking your VHF rig along so you can access the nearly 20,000 North American repeaters. But if your rig can receive frequencies in the vicinity of 162 MHz there is another – and potentially more vital – reason to take it: the network of over 940 weather stations operated by the National Weather Service, known as NOAA Weather Radio. These stations broadcast continuously, providing information on weather and climate for their coverage areas.

The frequencies in use are: 162.400, 162.425, 162.450, 162.475, 162.500, 162.525, 162.550. Just about anywhere in the 50 states you will be within range of a station on one of these frequencies, probably two or three.

If you are just interested in seeing what the weather will be for tomorrow's outing, you only need to tune to one of these stations and within a few minutes you will hear a detailed forecast for the next few days. But if you are more concerned with being warned of possible severe weather then there is another feature of NOAA Weather Radio you should know about. This feature is known as the Emergency Alert System; it triggers an alarm and turns on the weather broadcast if there is a serious weather event possible in the area. To take advantage of this feature you must have an EAS-equipped radio, and many US-model handheld and mobile amateur transceivers have it built in. Unfortunately, the European models do not, so if you are planning an extended trip to a part of the USA where severe weather can be expected, you may want to buy a weather radio with the EAS feature. These are generally quite inexpensive – I have found them on the internet for as little as \$26 – and can be found at retailers such as Wal-Mart or RadioShack. Get one with the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) feature – this allows you to specify a locality of interest and will prevent you being awakened in the middle of the night by an alert that applies to an area several counties distant.

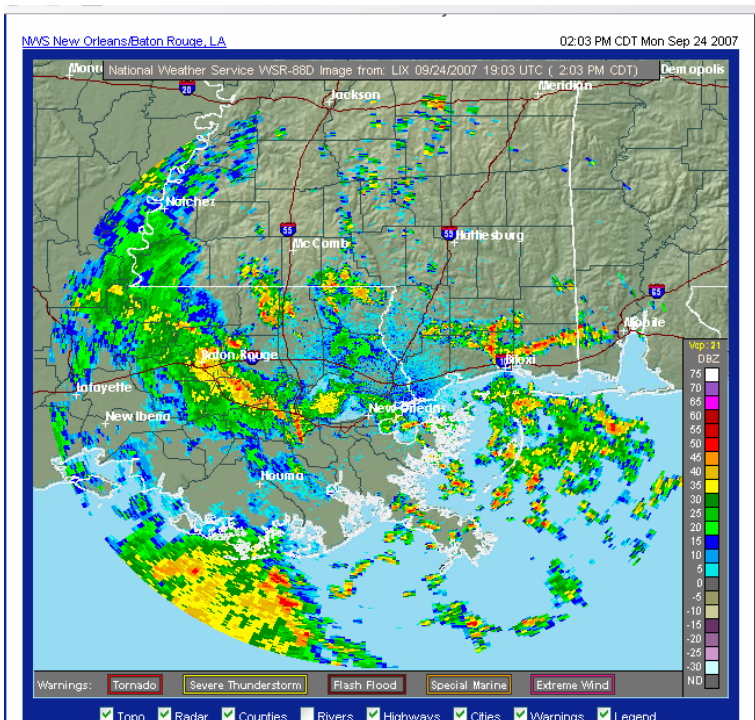
You can find out more about NOAA Weather Radio on the web at <http://www.weather.gov/nwr/> If you want to hear what a broadcast sounds like, go to <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/streamaudio.htm#livestream> and select a location of interest.

If you want to see a visual representation of US weather, then go to <http://radar.weather.gov/> and click on the location of one of the weather radar sites. This will take you to a display of the radar picture in the surrounding area and you can get an indication of any approaching weather systems. In

areas prone to severe thunder storms it is fascinating (and sometimes frightening) to watch storm cells approaching your QTH.

The facilities I have just described don't have equivalents here in the UK but this is because we have far less need of them. We have far fewer sudden and severe WX events than occur across the wide and diverse terrain of North America where there frequently are hurricanes, tornadoes, thunder storms, blizzards, heat alerts, and flash floods. But don't let this put you off visiting the USA - just be aware of the weather situation in the area you visit. Even if you don't make use of the National Weather Service facilities directly, your hotel TV will probably tune in the Weather Channel which provides up to date weather information around the clock.

Bob Clinton GØBUX



Thunderstorm activity around New Orleans on 24 September.

Housecleaning

Several of our members are displaying uncommon good sense (or perhaps just bowing to XYL pressure) and are getting rid of an accumulation of treasures. This is an opportunity for others to get some great bargains.

Reg Moores G3GZT

"I am having a "clear out" with many quality, un-used electronic components.

Many, if not most, are unavailable today, from mains transformers, silver plated var. caps, pots. etc. If interested, contact me on 01273 503869, or reg@regmoores.demon.co.uk"

Chris Coward G3YTU

Chris is selling HF and VHF/UHF gear in several lots:

Lot A

- TS-530S HF Transceiver S/N 2021021 - Very Good Condition
- YK88SN SSB Optional Filter 1.8 kHz – Fitted
- YK88C CW Optional Filter 500 Hz – Fitted
- TS-530S Service Manual (Original - Not Photocopy) & Glossy Brochures
- Spares:- 6146B Valves x 2, 12BY7A x 1, Power Supply Capacitors x 2, Insulated Flexible Coupling
- QRO TS-530S (High Power Kit from Inrad U.S.A.) – Not recommended but may be useful for spares (resistors)
- KB-1 Deluxe VFO Knob - Fitted
- MC-50 Desk Microphone
- HS-5 Deluxe Headphones
- SP-230 External Speaker
- AT-230 Antenna Tuner S/N 7070330 – (Bredhurst Electronics Ltd Second Hand) Very Good Condition
- SM-220 Station Monitor – (Bredhurst Electronics Ltd Second Hand) Very Good Condition
- LF-30A Low Pass Filter – Very Good Condition
- HC-10 Digital World Clock – Second Hand Working
Service Manual (Original - Not Photocopy)
Instruction Manual (Photocopy)

Lot B

- TS-130V S/N 1041963 – (Lowe Electronics Second Hand) Very Good Condition
- TS-130V Service Manual (Original - Not Photocopy) & Glossy Brochure
- YK88SN SSB Optional Filter 1.8 kHz – Fitted
- YK88C CW Optional Filter 500 Hz – Fitted
- Power Supply Unit (Analogue) 13v 4A (Designed and Constructed by G3YTU)
- Micron Match ATU Kit (WPO Communications – Constructed by G3YTU)

Lot C

- TR-2600E 144 MHz FM Transceiver S/N 5071029 - Very Good Condition
- TR-3600E 430 MHz FM Transceiver S/N 5070564 - Very Good Condition
- PB-26 x 2 NiCad Rechargeable Battery (New cells recently fitted) - Very Good Condition
- SMC-30 Speaker Microphone - As New
- HMC-1 Headset with VOX – Replacement sponge earphone cover required, otherwise As New
- CD-10 Callsign Display S/N 5080104 – Very Good Condition
- ST-2 Base Stand S/N 8020136 (Power Supply & Fast Battery Charger) – Very Good Condition
- SC-9 Soft Case x 2 – Good Condition
- BC-2 Battery Charger – Very Good Condition
- MS-1 Mobile Stand S/N 7060048 – Brand New & Never Used
- EB-3 External Battery Case (For Mn Battery) – Brand New & Never Used
- LH-3 Leather Case - Brand New & Never Used
- AX-2 Shoulder Strap with Antenna Base - Brand New & Never Used
- TR-2600A/E Service Manual (Original - Not Photocopy) & Glossy Brochure
- TR-3600A/E Service Manual (Original - Not Photocopy) & Glossy Brochure

Most items are boxed in original packaging with instructions; most items purchased new – invoices & receipts available. Accepting offers for whole lots only. Contact Chris on 01444 458992

Peter Fry G4AKG

“Cushcraft AP8 HF Vertical 10m-80m with Handbook.26 feet high GWO £40. Can be seen working up to 15 November at my QTH Tel 01444 239371”

It's time to update your country files because Bosnia Herzegovina has just been granted the prefix block E7A-E7Z by the ITU. This replaces the T9A-T9Z block in current use. (Thanks, Jim AD1C and the ARRL Contester's Rate Sheet)

Fox hunt – 24 August 2007

The Sidney West car park is being converted into a doctor's surgery so this fox hunt had to start across the road at the Marle Place car park. The foxes were Mike G8KMP and Peter G4AKG. They were located at Red House Common, Chailey, but of course this was only revealed much later. There were four teams at the start.

Winners arriving at 20:47 were Tony G3XQM, Gordon G3XTH, Phil M5BTB & Lee, a guest. Arriving at 21:04 were Chris G4ZCS, William M3VRE & Luke M3RXO. Straggling in later were Kim G7AIE and Bob GØBUX.

The fourth team? Well, they know who they are and where they wound up.

After the event there were refreshments at the Kings Head, Chailey



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.

Readers' Letters

I recently got another Epson Printer after having often problems with my Epson 600 ink jets blocking up. Mostly I use a BW Laser, so the Epson wasn't used for colour much, although it was left switched on, & ink cycled each time the PC was on, I chose an Epson Photo R265 printer, thinking that it had the jets in the cartridges, & would solve this problem?. It had other features, with 6 colour cartridges, a USB port for camera direct printing, and CD printing mode.

However, the printer was set to too few copies, so not wanting to pay about the same price for a set of Epson cartridges; I ordered a compatible set of inks from a well known firm which I often use. When these arrived and were fitted, they all indicated as being empty. It seems these printers have chipped cartridges, & are programmed to reject other makes of inks.

Whilst I appreciate that the Epson company probably sell at below cost they appear to overcharge for replacement inks to make up profits. I consider this to be some form of piracy. If I buy a car I am not forced to only buy tyres, petrol, or oil from the manufacturer in order to drive it, so why should I be forced to do the same with this printer?

I further found out that the chip programs are changed at times, just to make things more difficult. The printer I purchased was after March, when the programs were changed. I got mine in May.

So now I have wasted hours trying to get the printer to work, without success, with the result I have paid out a reasonable amount of money for a "dead printer". I can't blame the shop where I got it from, nor can I blame the ink suppliers, as neither are at fault. What do I do now? Throw it in the bin? No, I will contact the Department of Trade, and see what they will do!

In the meantime, keep your old printer, even the old dot matrix ones, as after all, most printing is done in BW. Colour is better if the memory card is taken to the local store for quality photo prints, which I feel sure will work out better and cheaper than the cost of the ink jet printer, special paper, and inks.

Reg Moores G3GZT

Mid Sussex Happenings

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 otherwise noted. U=upstairs, D=Downstairs

Visitors are always Welcome

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!



RAYNET Involved in Shoreham Airshow Incident

South Sussex RAYNET once again provided a team of operators for the two day RAFA Airshow at Shoreham-by Sea over the weekend of 15th and 16th September.

Each year an emergency plan is rehearsed and refined, in the hope that it will never be needed. This year that practice paid off as on the Saturday a Hurricane nose dived into the ground, killing its pilot instantly. The incident happened off-field and no other persons were involved.

A shout of "aircraft down" brought everyone in control to high alert. The pre-prepared messages and procedure for "Incident Off Field" were broadcast and acknowledgments sought from all on that net. This resulted in all access and departure gates being closed, all senior safety and administrative personnel being briefed, the PA Caravan being informed, and hence members of the public. Meanwhile, via the routine net, all others were told of the incident and status of the alert.

The event highlighted the need for training and preparedness. All logs were impounded, including the off-air recordings the group routinely make at such events, with scanners feeding into PC recording programs, so a permanent record with time stamps is kept. The organisers pronounced themselves highly satisfied with the way in which communications had been controlled. Once again RAYNET members went home feeling that their skills were valued and had made a real difference.

(from the RAYNET News 23 September 2007)

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

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
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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
Licence Holders	Chris Cook (G1ZMS, G3ZMS)	Gavin Keegan (G5RV)	
Auditors	Geoff Davis G6MJW, Hugh Wright 2E0HMW		
Reserve Auditors	Roger Ferrand G7VBR, Tony Finch G3XQM		

Club Web Site: www.msars.org.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:-

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