



Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society
NEWSLETTER
February 2008

Mid Sussex Matters



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A new Committee, a round table with lots of useful suggestions, and we are set for another lively year. All the signs are that members are keen to see and to participate in a raft of activities not all related to HF radio but designed to promote a well rounded Society.

On my part I'm glad to note the enthusiasm of the new Committee and, with the HF nets being supported by more members than ever and new members paying their subscription and joining us every month, I anticipate some lively discussions over the air soon.

Our overseas members and friends still listen out for us as evidenced by the emails I receive and I would like to encourage them to send our Editor some copy telling us what they have been doing since last we spoke to them over the air. Meanwhile, keep listening to and participating in the HF and VHF nets whenever you can, even if you just drop in for a couple of minutes, it's how we keep in touch.

Ken Gibson G3WYN

On The Cover

Royal navy station (later GKZ) at Grimsby Dock in 1920. Turn to page 5 to read Terry Stow's article on the early days of this station and its 80th anniversary observance.

Photo Credits

Cover and page 5 - provided by Terry Stow G0SWS

From the Chair

May I first take this opportunity to wish all our members, who I have not had the opportunity to do so already, a Very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Also I would like to thank Kim, Chris & John for all their hard work and input into the society's success over the past few years, and to welcome onto the committee Luke M3RXO and Phil M5BTB; Phil has taken the role as Leading Instructor so good luck to you both.

We had our first committee meeting recently, with a lot of issues to discuss, but the most important issue was to elect a Vice-Chairman and I'm happy to tell you that Alan G8YKV was elected to fulfil that role, so congratulations to you Alan.

Bob G0BUX recently asked me to do a short resume for the newer members who have joined the society in the last few years. My intro to MSARS was by accident in Sept 1992. My wife Val went along to enrol for the maths evening classes at Oakmeads School, (needed for her nurse training prior to university), and at the next table was John Fuller G0OIO who going to run The Radio Amateur Examination at Marle Place, so I took the opportunity and signed up for the course and came along to MP and joined the society. I believe that I was co-opted on the committee when I helped Terry Stow G0SWS in his role as shack manager in about 1994.

I have also served as chairman for a few years. To quote from December/January 2001/2 Mid-Sussex Matters "And perhaps in the future I will stand for election again".

How I first became interested in amateur radio will be continued on 7 March at our meeting entitled "How I Became Interested in Amateur Radio".

Sue G6YPY has been very busy with organising events for the coming year and there should be something to interest all of you. Please remember Lecturers really appreciate a good crowd so even if you are not that interested in some of the lectures come along and support fellow amateurs.

Finally something I used to include in my "From The Chair" reports all those years ago, DON'T TELL EVERYBODY ON THE NETS YOU ARE GOING ON HOLIDAY, as you don't know who is listening and some people take great pleasure in taking your possessions.

Russell Nelson G7TMR

Editorial

This month's profound observation is that we live in a world of change. This affects all aspects of our lives and – most importantly – it is a big factor in amateur radio.

One of the changes happening at the moment is that cyclic phenomenon, the sun spot cycle. No, it only feels like it has been in the doldrums forever – it really is on the way back up. Don't rush to your rig, tune up on 10 meters and expect the DX to start rolling in. We are still having a few days with no sunspots at all and the number hasn't risen much. Space Weather News for 4 January reported "The wait is over. A magnetically reversed, high-latitude sunspot emerged today. This marks the beginning of Solar Cycle 24 and the first step toward a new solar maximum. Intense solar activity won't begin right away. Solar cycles usually take a few years to build from solar minimum (where we are now) to Solar Max (expected in 2011 or 2012). It's a slow journey, but we're on our way!" If you have forgotten what a sunspot looks like visit <http://spaceweather.com> for pictures of new sunspots and updates.

Other changes affect those who enjoy working DX. Effective 17 November 2007 Bosnia – Herzegovina callsigns have new prefixes. The new prefix range is E7A-E7Z, replacing the old T9A-T9Z allocation. The old range was felt to have too much association with the recent Balkan wars and the change is only one of many to help the citizens put those times behind them.

Another change (and one likely to concern few members other than George Lord) is that the Mongolian MRSF QSL Bureau is no longer operating. Should any of the rest of us be so lucky as to work Mongolia (probably not on 10 meters), the QSL bureau for Mongolian QSLs is now at Mongolian Amateur Radio Society, QSL Bureau, PO Box 830, Ulaanbaatar-24, Mongolia.

Finally, Motorola has purchased Yaesu. The Motorola share price fell drastically last week so perhaps we should each rush out and buy a new Yaesu rig to help the global economy.

These are all changes imposed from outside but we are all free to initiate our own changes and 2008 would be a good year to try some new things. Ours is a hobby with almost limitless variation so try working a new band or a new mode, try out a new antenna, upgrade your license or even write an article for MS Matters. But whatever you do, enjoy 2008.

Bob Clinton GØBUX

The 80th Anniversary of Humber Radio Station GKZ

Regulars on the Sunday morning net and long-time members will know Terry Stow GOSWS, who has been a member of MSARS for many years since he lived in Hassocks. He retired to take up a peaceful life in Mablethorpe and has since been running around doing good for other folk ever since. He sent us the following article:



The station then operated by The Post Office, at opening in Trusthorpe Nr Mablethorpe

Many radio enthusiasts will have had contact with GKZ in one way or the other, either as shortwave listeners, Radio Officers on board ships or Radio Amateurs who had taken their Morse test at the station. Established as Grimsby Radio by the Royal Navy in the First World War, the station was taken over by the Post Office in 1920. It was housed in three old railway carriages on West Pier in Grimsby docks. The Station was moved to Trusthorpe Nr Mablethorpe in 1927

and was officially opened on 7th December that year. Along with all the other Coastal Stations, GKZ was closed down in June 2000.

At one of the monthly meetings of the Eagle Radio Group in Mablethorpe, one of the members, Steve Burke M5ZZZ, highlighted the fact that had the station still been operational it would have been 80 years old this year, 2007. Although still standing, the main building was in a poor state of repair and is due for demolition when the site is re-developed. The Group decided that this occasion should not go unrecognised and the station disappear without one last Hurrah. A small group got together to plan a special event station to be on air for the nearest date to the 7th December that could be arranged. The special callsign of GB80GKZ was applied for and permission from the land owner to operate from the site was sought. Robert Howell of Robert Howell Plant Hire gave us the OK for the two days of 8/9th December. Two caravans and a trailer mast were organised along with two generators as there was no power available. (The building is all boarded up and was unsafe to enter). A display in the local village hall was organised and the event belatedly publicised around the world via

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

the internet because the special licence only came through at the eleventh hour.

The weekend forecast was not good: high winds, heavy rain and lower than average temperatures. This proved too accurate and erecting the aeri-als was a difficult task in winds gusting to 70 knots. The main aerial was chosen as a doublet at about 35 feet with an auto ATU at the base driven by a twelve volt battery. This proved to be a wise decision as anything larger would have been almost impossible to rig and we did have the advantage of all that lovely metal matting that was still underground. The main oper-ating rig was a FT990 at 100 watts. This had been donated to the Group by the late Gerry Whitehead G2ACZ, who was an operator at GKZ, so it was fitting for it to be used on this special occasion. At 09.44 I managed to put out a quick test call hoping to catch the RNARS Saturday 80m net and managed a couple of quick overs, with Mike G0VIX being first in the log. At that point the aerial was still moving around in the wind and needed extra support.

That done it was on to the erecting the Cobweb and 2M beam on the trailer mast and it was still getting colder and frequent breaks were needed to in-crease blood circulation. Just about the time that we discovered that we had a serious problem with the Cobweb the rain started hitting us horizon-tally and it felt like ice. With wet and frozen hands it was difficult to in-spect plugs etc and in the end we had to take refuge in the caravan. Thor-oughly cold and soaked through we decided that the quickest solution would be to erect another doublet in an inverted V configuration. About two hours later this was completed and most of the team went home to get changed into dry clothes. It got dark very early and the operators endeav-oured to make as many contacts as they could in difficult conditions. Sev-eral of our scheduled operators did not turn up because of a bout of 'flu that had been doing the rounds, but we managed as many bands as we could. Through the efforts of Eddie Lingard G3WNQ and David Barlow G3PLE, a CW contact was made between GB80GKZ and GB2LD. Colin Higgins G3NRQ worked the station /MM using an FT817, a G Whip and two pieces of wire as his keying aid.

The village hall was opened at 10am on the Sunday with a display of pic-tures, a visual display and some memorabilia. Several ex Radio Officers visited together with a group from RAOTA. It was pleasing to see some of

the ex RO's exchanging stories and chatting about old times especially as some had not seen each other for some time. As befits such an occasion a cake was baked and there was a ceremonial cutting, accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoress of Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea. At the end of the day we were pleased that we had made the effort and we all went home tired but happy. Perhaps there will be another opportunity in the future when GKZ can be heard on the airwaves once more.

Particular thanks must go to The Radio Officers Association, The Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society, The Radio Officers Radio Society and all the individuals around the world that lent their support to our application for the special call GB80GKZ.

Terry Stow G0SWS

HY Calling YOU

Luke, M3RXO, has offered to run a net on Sunday evenings using the HY repeater. If you are unable to get on the other Sunday 0800 80M or the 1100 2m nets, then this is a good opportunity for you to meet other Club members on the air.

Luke will start this net on Sunday 3rd February at 2000 clock time on the usual frequency of 433.125MHz, CTCSS of 88.5 (E).

Any newcomers who are unsure about any aspect of this friendly net, please ask Luke or me, my eMail address is g7vbr@msars.org.uk.

Please make an effort to join in as this will enable more of the M3s to get on the air.

See you there.

Roger Ferrand G7VBR

How Good is my Radio?

An occasional series by Chris, G4ZCS

Complexity. (My radio must be better than yours 'cos it's so complicated that even I don't know how it works.)

Just how complex does a radio have to be? Many modern radios have a menu style setting procedure for just about every function possible.. Us old'uns can sometimes have problems with this type of system and may prefer the "knobs and buttons" method of setting up the operation of the radio.

When you are in the fortunate position of being able to choose a new radio it is important to decide how you will cope with a complex radio.

Ask yourself the following questions:

What is my skill level? Do I have the dexterity to operate it in comfort? Do I really need all of these features? How many of them will I really use?

Most of us will only use about 25% of the features of a complex radio, although, of course, we can brag about **ALL** of them!

There is an example of the owner of a brand new FT 2XXX (not in our club) who was feeding a cheap coax up to a dipole in the attic without a balun! He was wondering why the radio was making so much noise in the receiver circuit and trying to work out why the noise blanker circuit was no good. (Perhaps he needed to go on a course to learn about antennas and radios.) In his own mind the radio was useless and the cause of his problems.

"RTFM" is a good motto. Read the Manual, thoroughly, before attempting to do anything. In this day and age it is possible to download copies of the technical and operators' manuals of most new radios from the internet, before purchasing one. It is a good idea to try this as if you become completely confused and out of your depth it will most likely that you will also be if and when you buy the radio. The choice of a simpler radio might well be considered before parting with your hard earned cash.

Before we finish with the "complexity" subject, a point comes to mind following conversations with Eric, G3HUA. As time goes by our physical well-being degrades, dexterity and eyesight being the most important. If you intend to keep your radio for the autumnal years of your life, consider whether you will still be able to see the small displays on the front panel.

Will you have the strength in your hands to connect and disconnect the cables and wires? Will your fingers be able to grip the tiny knobs of the controls? Some computer controlled radios allow for a large external VDU to allow those with failing eyesight to see what is happening. However there is no assistance available to operate an antenna switch!

In the next article I will start on the technical detail of modern receiver circuits, including “DSP”. Is DSP the fix for all ailments? And, most importantly where in the radio is the DSP?

At a recent club talk by Grahame Sommerville we were introduced to the AF DSP products from BHI. These products are attached to the audio output of a radio and control the amount of “noise” that is passed out of the speaker or headphones. There are those who do not like the effect on the audio, but I, for one, find the removal of white noise and loud hiss a great advantage. The second, and possibly most beneficial, DSP is in the IF circuits of a modern radio. The practice of “adjusting” the signal and the audio in the IF can be better as it occurs nearer the source than at the end of the signal chain. Finally the ultimate DSP is found in the single chip SDR, (software defined radio), that uses a very high speed computer to directly sample the RF spectrum for a required signal. Operating this type of radio can quickly depart from ‘just operating’ to experimenting with very complex computer programs.

Now, these beasts are really “complex”.

Developments in this field advance every month so I will leave this one till later in the series.

To be continued.

Chris Saunders G4ZCS

Reg Ellis G3FSX SK

MSARS were informed recently that Reg Ellis G3FSX, who was a long time local amateur and one-time member of the Society, had died peacefully on Wednesday 16 January 2008. Mike Pollock G8KMP recalls that Reg was one his first QSOs, in November 1975.

Committee Matters

A request has been received by the Committee to investigate the possibilities of starting a series of Morse Code classes and, perhaps, a practice net to be held on a weekly basis. The committee will be very happy to try to facilitate this request if there are enough interested members who would wish to take part in the classes and practice net. If you are interested, would you please let our Programme Secretary, Sue Davis – G6YPY know by e-mail: g6ypy@msars.org.uk

The South Coast Amateur Radio Forum (SCARF) are planning to run a Fox Hunt on SUNDAY 2nd March. The hunt has been devised by Adrian Boyd who is the Chairman of the Horsham ARC and is planned to start at the Mannings Heath Recreational Field (TQ206290) at 1000hrs. The hunting frequency will be 144.725 and, as ever, the event is planned to finish in the vicinity of a welcoming hostelry.

Horsham ARC are holding their first Junk Sale on Thursday 6th. March at the Guide HQ in Denne Road. Horsham. and all are welcome. Hot food and drinks will be available.

A suggestion has been received from a member that the Society might care to consider for this year's project the building of an 80M handheld DF set as advertised on the RSGB website. The cost of the kit is reasonably modest, and the kit is complete with all required components and a purpose designed and made case. Interest in this has been shown in other clubs within Sussex and once completed, the DF kits would prove ideal to use in 80M treasure hunts.

Phil Brown – M5BTB – has taken over from Chris Saunders as Lead Instructor and is starting to plan this year's training courses. Initially, Phil is organising both a Foundation and Intermediate course but he and the Training team will be pleased to assist any members who would like to progress further towards a more advanced licence than that they currently hold. Please contact Phil and let him know of your requirements via his MSARS e-mail address – m5btb@msars.org.uk

Gavin Keegan G6DGK, Secretary

Missing Items

A check of the inventory list of items held by the club was undertaken recently. The following list of books and equipment was found to be missing. Anybody knowing the whereabouts of any of these items please contact the Shack Manager or Vice President A.S.A.P.

Books & Videos

Buyers Guide to Amateur Radio, Angus McKenzie
Planning Permission - Advice to Members, 1995, RSGB
Newnes Wireless Constructor's Encyclopaedia
Radio Amateurs Callbook International, 1997
The Callbook, North American, 1994
N.Z.A.R.T. Callbook, New Zealand, 1987
W1FB's Antenna Notebook.
Practical Antenna Handbook, Joseph J Carr
Beam Antenna Handbook, 4th Edition, W6SAI
Practical Antennas for Novices, , John Heys, G3BDQ
Towers International Transistor Selector
The Modern Amateur Electronics Manual Vol.1 to Vol.3
GCSE Electronics, Tom Duncan
110 Integrated Circuit Projects, R M Marston
Radio - Electronics, Hobby Electronics 1974
Higher Electrical Engineering, J.Shepherd, Morton, Spence
Rapid Servicing of Transistor Equipment, 2nd Edition, Gordon King
PAL Colour TV, Mullard
Photography, J & P Dixon
UHF Westminster Front Mounted W15U & W20U
Electrical and Radio Notes for Wireless Operators, HMSO 1939
IEE Wiring Regulations, 15th Edition
IEE Wiring Regulations - Explained & Illustrated, Brian Scaddan
Sound, Hall / Mathews
The Art of Soldering, R Brewster
Video: Getting Started in Dxing CQ
Video: RSGB on Amateur Radio

Equipment

10 Element Jaybeam 2M Yagi
Ground Plane 2M
Radio ICF 2001
G3JGR Trophy
Digital Clock (Working?)
Kenwood Antenna Tuner AT-200
Revox SWR & Power Meter W570 1.6 - 1300Mhz
SWR Bridge (KW Match)
Taylor Multimeter 105A S/n 700740
Capacitance Meter (Home Brew)
Freq. Meter Black Star Meteor 15005Hz-1.5Ghz S/n 005952
Black & Decker D500 Drill
SCARF Banner "Southern Counties Amateur Radio Forum"
2 x 1 Watt Amplifiers with Extension Speakers (3-15v)
4 x Wash Bowls
Battery & Lights - For Tents (2)
Electric Jug Kettle (2)

An Analysis of the Club HF Nets in 2007

The figures for 2007 show that there were more Club members supporting the HF nets than in previous years, a most encouraging sign.

THE SUNDAY MORNING 80M NET

This net has become more popular with 20 MSARS members taking part during the year using 22 callsigns. 16 members took part in the 2006 nets and the increase in numbers in 2007 is welcome. The net is also proving useful in giving newly licensed members a start on HF, an opportunity of which several of them seem keen to take advantage. 23 other stations called in including Phil M1VTH/P making his first HF contact ever. Clearly lots of others listen to us and despite the competition for our 'usual' frequency and intense QRM on some weekends, we still managed some contacts every weekend of the year. Sean and I added another 40 contacts to our score, now totalling 1391 since our first on the 5th Jan. 1977.

THE WEEKDAY 15M NET

Here we had 21 members participating, exactly the same number as last year. They used 24 different callsigns with G/N4XAT perhaps being the most unusual. 24 other stations called in, including our regulars David W1GN and Jack AA3GZ despite the poor HF conditions which have prevailed since around April. I think I detect just a sign that things may be improving now but be assured that our American friends check the frequency most days and there is no telling when their calls will be heard over here again. Whenever this is, they will be very welcome.

In general, many MSARS members have used the nets to test and improve their antennas, often ditching their shiny chrome plated new purchases in favour of a few feet of wire. The nets have served their purpose in keeping the outposts of the MSARS empire and those housebound members in touch throughout the past year.

Thanks to all those who took part, I hope that you enjoyed participating as much as I did.

Ken Gibson G3WYN

Readers' Letters

In response to G4ZCS's letter in the last issue:

Chris's problem is almost certainly due to not using a balun. It happens in any Yagi if there is not a truly balanced feed. A simple linear balun made out of two pieces of quarter-wave coax is quite adequate to fix it.

Walter Blanchard G3JKV.

The Mid Sussex Camcorder Society has extended an invitation to MSARS members to their meeting on Thursday 21st February. Terence Patrick is visiting the club to give his presentation "70 years at the BBC". This covers the period from the mid 1920s, when Mr Patrick (Senior) started at the BBC, to the mid 1990's when Terence retired. The meeting is at the Adas-tra Hall Green Room, Hassocks, at 7.45pm for an 8.00pm start.

They have requested a rough guide to the numbers that may be interested in this talk; I will check numbers at the MSARS Club meeting on the Friday before.

Gordon King G3XTH

Members' Ads

For Sale: Yaesu FT 897D. Latest model, two batteries, charger, boxed, little use. £550.00 ono. Contact John G6XTW - 07966 645 015 (work) or 01273 588 556.

We all knew it was true, but now there's Scientific Proof!

It's true! Rope (and coax) really does tangle itself up when you're not looking! A recent Science News story at <http://tinyurl.com/2rfl6m> tells the tale. No word on whether scientists have been able to tackle coils of hard-drawn copperweld yet. (Thanks to the ARRL Contest Rate Sheet)

Mid Sussex Happenings

1 Feb	Lecture John G6XTW "CCTV etc" (U)
8 Feb	Radio Night (D)
15 Feb	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
22 Feb	Debrief on Emergency Planning Exercise (U)
29 Feb	Skittles Evening Royal Oak Barcombe
7 March	How I started in Radio (U)
14 March	Radio Night (D)
21 March	Good Friday – no meeting
28 March	Surplus Equipment Sale (U)
4 April	Fox Hunt Sue and Geoff
11 April	Radio Night (D)
18 April	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
25 April	Lecture to be advised (U)
2 May	Quiz Night (U)
9 May	Radio Night (D)
16 May	Radio Night (D)
23 May	Construction Contest (U)
30 May	Radio Night and Table Top Sale (D)
12 Dec	Christmas Dinner at Thatched Barn

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

Useful Links

Don't try this at home

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUCwVQpxAXA

Extreme Homebrew

www.dailymotion.com/video/x3wrzo_fabrication-dune-lampe-triode_tech

Membership Renewal Reminder

The Society Constitution says that subscriptions must be paid no later than 31 March each year, so if you haven't paid yours for 2008 yet, now is the time to do so. Subscriptions are still £30 (£20 conc.) this year. Please contact Mike Pollock G8KMP for a renewal membership form. e-mail address is: mike.g8kmp@virgin.net or you can write to him at: 25 Meadow Lane, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9HZ

Please Note

Please note that all bills should be presented to the Treasurer for payment. Also please do not take monies owed to you from Club funds that you are holding pending passing to the Treasurer.

Many Thanks

Hon. Treasurer

Deadline

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

15 February 2008

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	Russell Nelson	G7TMR	01444 236795
Vice Chairman	Alan Cragg	G8YKV	01273 844511
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	Luke Milburn	M3RXO	01444 254728
Committee	Alan Cragg	G8YKV	01273 844511
Committee	Rob Ashman	2E0RJA	01444 232129
Committee	Phil Brown	M5BTB	
Licence Holders	Chris Cook (G1ZMS, G3ZMS) Gavin Keegan (G5RV)		
Examiners of Accounts	Roger Ferrand G7VBR, Tony Finch G3XQM		
Reserve Examiners	Mike Munday G1TDL, Chris Saunders G4ZCS		

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:-

Bob Clinton GØBUX

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