



Mid Sussex Amateur Radio Society
NEWSLETTER
July/August 2008

Mid Sussex Matters



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

You will have seen in last month's Newsletter the varied events arranged by your Programme Secretary for the next 6 months. I was given a peek at the list a few weeks ago and was delighted to see the mix of lectures, outside events and social affairs set out for our future enjoyment.

Your Programme Sec., of course, has much time on her hands to think about these things but nevertheless has produced once again a truly excellent programme for us.

The whole of your Committee work very hard, as the events detailed in each Newsletter record, but, having served as a Committee member myself a few times I can remember that praise seldom comes your way. On the other hand should there be any kind of hitch, the brickbats will certainly follow.

So, give a thought to your hard working Committee and, if you like the newsletter or any lecture or event you attend give a word or two of praise to the next Committee member or lecturer you run across and watch the big smile cross their face.

The bands, by the way, are gradually opening up so now is the time to look to your set-up at home and think how it can be improved. If you need any help or parts talk to me, I have a vast junk box full of wire and insulators so no one need go short.

Ken Gibson G3WYN

On The Cover

A DXpedition to the Arctic? No, just Field Day in Sussex. G4XBG powers the Armstrong rotator while G6DGK and 2E0ZLM operate the 2M station.

Photo Credits

Cover: G8KMP; page 7: G0BUX, G8KMP; page 10: G8KMP, G8YKV, G0BUX, G4XBG

From the Chair

Those of you who missed the Treasure Hunt on Friday 13 June missed a very well planned event. Stella and Alan had obviously put a great deal of planning into the event, so thanks to both of you for all your hard work. There were six teams taking part, rushing around the Sussex countryside on lanes that I didn't know existed, but we all arrived at the finishing pub eventually. Congratulations to Sue and Mike Mundy for coming first.

Again I find that I have to remind you that it can be dangerous to mention whilst on the air, that you are going on holiday. You don't know who else is listening and it could end in tears. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.**

After asking in a previous From The Chair if there was a member who could teach Morse code we have not had anybody come forward. If you missed this and are willing to help please see me and we will try to organise the shack for you.

Friday 27 June saw approx 16 of our members visiting The Horns Lodge public house at South Chailey for the annual Boules match. Only three teams took part this year: defending champions the Vice Squad, The Satellites and The Tartlets. We played a round robin of matches and after some very close matches, and before the final match to decide the winners we had a very good buffet which I think all enjoyed. By the time we had all had a bite to eat the light was beginning to fade but we continued under torchlight and the final got under way. The result is we have new champions this year – The Tartlets, so congratulations to them and commiserations to the losers. Hope to see you all there again next year. Thanks to all who joined in the fun of the event.

Windmill evening this year was disappointing with only a handful of the members venturing out. Also the weather was inclement, but the alternative at the foot of the Downs was warmer. Thanks again to those of you who joined us.

NFD this year saw some very low contact numbers on all three bands. Hopefully this was the same for all the contest entries. Weatherwise it was not the best we have enjoyed, with Saturday morning overcast and windy, the afternoon hot & sunny, evening cooling down again and very windy, Sunday morning cool and overcast, and then heavy rain appeared. But with all helping the tents and masts were taken down and are all drying now. Thanks again to all of you helped this year in difficult conditions.

(Continued on page 5)

Editorial

On 6 June David from Emergency First Aid Solutions gave an excellent presentation to the club on the subject of Electric Shocks and Strokes. Compared with activities such as sky diving, amateur radio is not an inherently dangerous hobby, but there are some hazards that we need to be aware of, and the fact that most of us go for years without incident may cause us to become careless. Electric shock is the most obvious risk, and the resuscitation techniques described in David's lecture are ones that we should all be aware of. But an even better approach to electric shock is to avoid it in the first place. Even with today's solid state rigs, mostly running off 12V supplies, there are still lethal voltages in the shack – from the mains supply if nowhere else. Of course we will all ensure that our wiring is in good condition but of greater relevance is to apply the rule "stop and think before you grab."

Occasionally I read in the ham radio press of a new silent key being created by electrocution from a rig, but more common hazards lurk when we go outside to work on our antennas. The following item from the ARRL Letter requires no further comment:

Kansas Ham, Son, Electrocuted While Erecting Antennas

While putting up backyard antennas on the afternoon of Sunday, July 13, Edward Thomas, KC0TIG, of Kansas City, Kansas, and his son were electrocuted. The elder Thomas, 65, was pronounced dead at the scene. His son, 27, was rushed to the hospital but died later that day. Initial reports suggest that the antenna they were installing came in contact with 7620 V power lines. Neighbors reported a "loud popping sound" and the electricity went out on the block.

Even if a falling mast doesn't hit a power line it can still be a source of injury or death if someone (or even the family cat) is crushed by it. If you are not 100% confident of your rigging ability, get help before erecting a mast or tower. The risk doesn't end when you get a tower securely in position as your next step will undoubtedly be to climb it to work on the antenna. Don't even think about this unless you have a proper safety belt.

Electric shock and climbing accidents account for most ham radio fatalities but there are other hazards as well. Did you turn out for Field Day? This year the greatest hazard may seem to have been hypothermia, but for most Field Days and other outside events it is important to make sure you have your sun screen and hat and an adequate supply of drinking water. Erect-

(Continued on page 5)

From the Chair (Continued from page 3)

Some good news: we are getting a replacement radio for the 726 which has now gone to a new home. We have been offered a FT847 which was used for the 70CM NFD contest this year, so we look forward to seeing this being used in the shack. We have also had made a new 10 metre sectional mast to replace the lightweight mast which we have used for the 70cms station. On the subject of equipment we are looking to obtain a small frame tent (2 person size), so if any of you know of one please think of us.

Finally on a sad note, you will know that Sheila Cook ,wife of Chris G0GMC, passed away suddenly after a stroke on 25 June. We were represented at her funeral by 20 members who came along to support Chris and his family. I know that Chris was very touched by this support by the members of MSARS. We will be making a donation to a charity chosen by the family in due course

73 till next time

Russell Nelson G7TMR

Editorial (Continued from page 4)

ing FD antennas can be hard work, so if you are not in peak physical condition, listen to the messages your body sends your brain – stop and rest.

If you get out to Field Day or even just come to a club meeting, you will almost certainly do so by car. Driving can be hazardous enough on our busy roads but the added distraction of mobile operation can add to the risk. Just because ham radio operation is excepted from the mobile phone ban doesn't mean that we can do so with impunity. We all have a duty of care in driving, to other drivers as well as to ourselves. And be especially prudent after the fox hunts, which invariably conclude at a pub.

As the ham population ages and we put maximum effort into recruiting younger members, please don't make the problem worse by having your ticket cancelled by an avoidable accident.

Bob Clinton GØBUX

VHF Field Day

In contrast to the heat and sun of last year's VHF NFD, this year we had rain and wind. It is hard to improve on the weather report in Russell's "From the Chair" on page 3, but the following comments from Roger G7VBR will add to the appreciation of the difficulties that the Field Day team faced, particularly on Sunday:

The weather this morning was very windy and we had a little rain whilst I was waking up at about 06:40. That dried up and I managed to get my tent packed up while it was dry. Not so the 6M tent as there were not enough of us floating about to take it down safely. The wind made it at least a four man job so it was left until the end of the day. Then we had three wet tents to take down and find somewhere to store them to dry. Just after 1400 the rain managed to penetrate the 2M tent and a few drops fell into the laptop which immediately threw a wobbly and died with an error message. That Dell laptop is currently in my airing cupboard to get it as dry as possible before I attempt to get it working to remove the data from the logging program. Fortunately the main operator, Chris 2E0CSE had used the paper log all along. It was the rain splashes that I noticed on the FT 847 that caused me to say shut down the station. Nothing had been happening for at least an hour so nothing was lost. The 70CM tent remained reasonably dry but somehow I managed to get my laptop dampened in its case.

One of our honorary members, Lippy, the owner of the trailer used to haul the gear to the site, came to see us in the early afternoon and had a chat and a cup of coffee.

The sun began to shine as we left the field to drive back to the club house where we unloaded the gear and spread out two of the tents to dry, the third being taken home by Phil Brown M5BTB to dry there.

TAK-Tenna

Our Tom (M0ZSA) is always on the lookout for an out-of-the ordinary antenna. This month he has found a link to the TAK-Tenna web site - www.tak-tenna.com. It looks interesting - have a look and see what you think. You could be the first MSARS member to own one - unless Tom beats you to it. Tak-tenna does not have a distributor in the UK but they are quite willing to ship from the USA.

Our tentative results are:

Band	Stations worked	Best DX	Claimed Score
2M	60	GM4ZUK - 690KM	12,471
70CM	31	GM4ILS - 690KM	7,504
6M	11	EI9E - 493KM	3,155

Members who participated in the event were:

Russell Nelson G7TMR, Roger Ferrand G7VBR, Phil Brown M5BTB, Kevin Murphy G4XBG, Gavin Keegan G6DGK, Mike Pollock G8KMP, Chris Childs M1CSE, Luke Milburn 2E0ZLM, Bob Clinton G0BUX, and Chris Saunders G4ZCS



G7VBR working EI9E



G7TMR working the fish & chips



A lonely vigil on 70CM - M5BTB



Action in the 2M tent - G6DGK, G4XBG & 2E0ZLM

St. Lawrence Fair Report

On the same Saturday as VHF NFD a small group of us set up a demonstration station at the St. Lawrence Fair in Hurstpierpoint. We had done a similar thing last year, but then it was 2 weeks later so it did not clash with NFD. We were invited to set up a station again this year, so with the committee's agreement we went ahead.

We were thinking that the Saturday was going to be wet. However it turned out to be a very pleasant day, less windy than it seems to have been at the NFD site.

With the help of Kim G7AIE, Jacqui 2E0FQV, Rob 2E0RJA and Stella we got the station set up ready for the start of the fair at 12.00. We rigged a 67ft Doublet between the flagpole in the bowls club and a convenient oak tree in the South Avenue Recreation Ground, where the fair was taking place. This was connected to my Kenwood TS2000 via a Transmatch Tuner. We were able to make contact with several German stations on 40m, Gerry EI9DZ made an appearance on 40m also.

Visitors were a bit slow to start with, but when the parade of floats arrived the number of people increased tremendously. Quite a few people showed an interest and took away some of the leaflets we had. We had to compete with the Public Address at times, and during several noisy times we found some Morse to let the public hear. It was interesting to look around at the public to see those people that had knowledge of Morse; you could almost see their ears twitching.

A good day was had by all of us. Many thanks to Kim, Jacqui, Rob and Stella for their help.

Alan Cragg G8YKV

Lighthouses

Don't forget the International Lighthouse and Lightship Weekend

16-17 August

Details at www.illw.net

Chris' Lectures

We had not one but two lectures at the meeting on 11 July. Both were delivered by Chris Saunders G4ZCS and he described them as “mini lectures”, advertised to run 5 to 10 minutes. They actually took longer, a good thing as both contained a lot of interesting information.

The first one was about the Sun. Despite suggestions from the audience about Page 3 girls, this lecture was really about the star which provides earth with its light and which has a great influence on HF propagation. We are all familiar with the concept of the eleven year sunspot cycle and with the fact that we are currently at a low point. The question in every mind is “when will things improve?” Chris couldn't answer that but he did have the encouraging prediction (substantiated by a graph of past cycles) that when sunspots finally return conditions will get better quite rapidly. The few spots that have been observed recently have been left over from Cycle 23. We know that because of their magnetic polarity. With each cycle the sun's magnetic field reverses and this enables astronomers to distinguish the spots of adjacent cycles.

The second lecture was on the 4 meter (70 MHz) band. This band is authorised for amateur operation in certain countries in Europe and (with the exception of Somalia and South Africa) nowhere else. Despite the limited opportunities for working DX it can be quite interesting, with occasional openings to the continent and a number of regular nets here in the UK. The countries which permit operation on this band are Gibraltar, Italy, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal/Azores, Somalia, Greenland, Croatia, South Africa, Denmark/Faroes, Slovenia, and Eire. Among these countries there are various sub-band allocations, some of them quite narrow. The band falls midway between six meters and two meters so it exhibits some of the characteristics of each of its neighbours. But in common with various other rarer allocations, there is a continuing concern that insufficient use may result in it being taken away from amateurs and reassigned, possibly to the PMR service. So the message is “use it or lose it.”

Chris has more mini-lectures waiting on his laptop, so keep a watch on the Mid Sussex Happenings page. However you, too, could create a mini-lecture on a subject of interest to yourself and the other members of the Society.

Summer Scrapbook



Milly 2E1CCI with Sean EI7CV (left) & Gerry EI9DZ at Friedrichshaven



MSARS at the St Lawrence Fair



They couldn't find the fox - but they found the pub.



The Tartlets - Boule evening Champions. Andrew Forsythe, Val Nelson, Sue Mundy, Sue Davis G6YPY, Mike Mundy G1TDL.

Windmill Evening

Repairs to the Jill Mill sails continue, so the 20 June Windmill Evening to celebrate the club's birthday was once again banished to the car park. And once again, the weather was uncooperative – it was cold. Nevertheless, thirteen members showed up. A few – Ron G0WGP Tony G3XQM Tom M0ZSA Gordon G3XTH and Andrew SWL – stuck to their post and worked a few contacts. The rest – Alan G8YKV, Stella, Russell G7TMR, Luke 2E0ZLM, Phil M5BTB, Peter G4AKG, William M3VRE and Mike G8KMP– soon retired to the warmth of the Jack & Jill public house.

Proposed visits.

The Aspidistra site is quite high up in Ashdown Forest not too far from Nutley and is currently used by Sussex Police. Such a relatively mundane use belies its original purpose which was to make extremely high power transmissions, in German, to try to confuse our enemies during WW2. Later, the Aspidistra Station was redeployed as part of the Diplomatic Wireless Service sending encoded messages to British embassies and legations throughout the world.

The Committee are hoping to be able to arrange a visit to this interesting site later this year and would like to hear from any member who would welcome the opportunity to visit Aspidistra as part of an organised party.

Similarly, the Committee is planning to organise a visit to Bletchley Park, which is situated close to Milton Keynes. The plan would be to hire the HPP Community Bus, to be driven by Gavin G6DGK, and to leave from Burgess Hill area on a Saturday or Sunday morning to drive up to Bletchley for the day. The journey time is estimated at about two hours each way. The entry fee is reduced if the booking is made on line and there are concessions for those who are entitled to them but the whole trip should be possible for about £10 per head for the bus (16 seats - all must be filled) and an entry fee of around £8 per person. It would be advisable to take an individual picnic and drinks to be consumed en route because there is apparently so much to see. The Park closes at about 1700.

If you are interested in either or both of these visits, please would you let me know, preferably by e-mail or by phone, and dates will be discussed and agreed and the bookings will be progressed.

Gavin Keegan G6DGK

Club membership pin

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

Available from Stella Rogers, MSARS Treasurer

£2.00 each. Plenty of stock!



The IARU Contest 2008.

As usual the IARU held their annual HF contest in mid July. I like to use this event to get up to speed for the IOTA contest later in the month. The idea is to work as many stations as possible in the 24 hour period. As a non contest station we give a report of R & S and our ITU zone (27). Each country's HQ or national club station will give a report and follow with the organisation's initials. The RSGB stations used GB7HQ as a call and "RSGB" as their report.

Amongst my modest contact list appear;

HG80HQ- MRASZ, 9A0HQ- HRS, OE1A-OVSV
S50HQ- ZRS, YT8HQ- SRS, GB7HQ- RSGB
IU7HQ- ARI, SN0HQ- PZK, CS8HQ- REP
EF8U- URE, E7HQ- BH, SK9HQ- SSA
OM8HQ- SARA, LZ7HQ- BFRA, OL4HQ- CRC

Now here is a good game, try and work out the countries from these calls!!

In addition I managed to "bag" a couple of new countries for the year including Brazil, Chile, Saudi Arabia, San Marino, and The Cape Verde Islands.

As I suggested a year or so ago, it is worth loosing an hour's sleep to have a go at this one, late into the evening. Next year the bands should be open all night so have a go!

Chris Saunders G4ZCS

Fox Hunt - 25 July

Stella and Alan G8YKV and their Doppler box sat this one out but did join the hunters at the pub afterward, as did Rob 2E0RJA. The teams actively looking for fox G7VBR were Russell G7TMR and Val; Mike G8KMP, Luke 2E0ZLM and Phil M5BTB; and Gordon G3XTH, Tony G3XQM and Ron G0WGP. None of them located the fox so it is unclear who will be the fox for the next hunt. The designated pub in Fletching proved to be holding a Karaoke night so the group adjourned to the more sedate surroundings of the Rose and Crown just down the road.

Members' Ads

I am having a clear out. I have many new un-used components, many of which are not obtainable today. Mains transformers, Tuning Caps, Hundreds of valve type bits, RF Chokes, Caps Resistors, Loudspeakers, too many to list here. Please get in touch if there is something you might need. Reg G3GZT 01273 503869 e-mail reg@regmoores.demon.co.uk

Yaesu FT 840 HF rig with general coverage receiver - in perfect condition. £250 ono

MFJ 948 Deluxe Versatuner also in perfect condition. £50 ono.
DJ Burton G0SFV 01273 562768

Altron CM35WM slim line, tiltover, three section telescopic mast. 34.8ft extended, 15ft retracted. It comes with a braked winch which was an extra. As supplied it is for wall mounting but it can also fit to a ground post. All documentation for mast and winch is included. Asking price £130.

Located Small Dole, BN5 9YB. Telephone 01273 493079.
email fsouthwell@googlemail.com

Birthday Greetings in July

Phil Godbold G4UDU
Chris Coward G3YTU
Kevin Murphy G4XBG
Gordon King G3XTH
Giorgio Romanin IV3-57306
Roger Ferrand G7VBR

And in August

Tom Haylock M0ZSA
Peter Jones G4DXO
Chris Saunders G4ZCS
Chris Cook G0GMC
Rod Smith SWL
Luke Milburn 2E0ZLM
Tony Finch G3XQM

Best Wishes from everybody in MSARS

Mid Sussex Happenings

1 Aug	Chairman's Alfresco Supper (Garden of G6MJW & G6YPY)
8 Aug	Radio Night (D)
15 Aug	Radio Night and Table top Sale (D)
22 Aug	G3SXW - "Seven Kilowatts in the Dark Continent (U)
25 Aug	Supporting Shermanbury Church Appeal
29 Aug	Tba (D)
5 Sep	Peter, G3LDO - "SWR and all that" (D)
12 Sep	Radio Night (D)
19 Sep	Radio Night and Table top Sale (D)
26 Sep	Tba (U)
3 Oct	Jon Ruff G4RGV - "Working aurora with a shoe string" (D)
10 Oct	Radio Night (D)
17 Oct	AGM - Wine and Cheese (D)
24 Oct	John Humphrey G6XTW - "CCTV part two" (U)
31 Oct	Chris Saunders G4ZCS - "Oscilloscope Basics" (D)
1 Nov	St Wlifred's Bonfire Fireworks
7 Nov	Roger Ferrand G7VBR - "My Other Hobby"
14 Nov	Radio Night (D)
21 Nov	Radio Night and Table top Sale (D)
28 Nov	Tba (U)
5 Dec	Radio Night (D)
7 Dec	AFS 2m Contest (D)
12 Dec	Christmas Dinner at The Thatched Inn
19 Dec	Christmas Quiz and Mince Pie Evening (D)
26 Dec	Shut
2 Jan	Meet the Committee and Round Table Evening (D)

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

Deadline

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

15 August 2008

Readers' Letters

There are very many new electronic items being sold today that have built-in batteries, which require charging from computer USB ports. This means that when such a unit needs to be charged, the computer has to be left running for anything up to 14-18 hours just to charge it. Many of these are sold without any other means of charging. Often the MP3, MP4, or AMV devices are used by the travelling public, who obviously want to know that their player is not going to run out during the journey.

There are simple answers to this problem, the obvious being to carry an extra battery pack, which can be plugged in, when required, but the easiest is very simple: get hold of an extra USB cable. These are often short ones, given away with some attachments, and can be adapted to enable charging without the use of the computer USB socket. Cut the cable between the male & female plug/socket, separate the internal wires (usually 4), strip off the insulation at the ends, and with the male USB plugged into the computer, find ones with the 5 volts output using a multi meter. I have found that they usually are coloured Red (+), & Black (-), which makes things simple!

Once found, it is an easy matter to extend the ones going to the female USB end, which then can be used to allow charging to take place from a separate charger.

Reg Moores G3GZT

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

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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:-

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