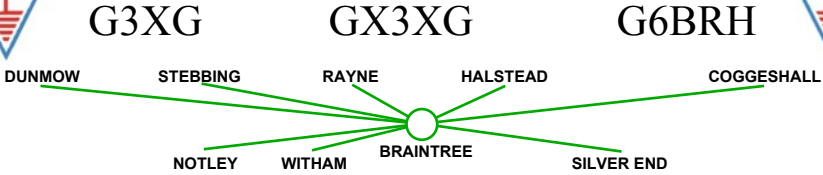




BARSCOM



Monthly Communication of the Braintree and District Amateur Radio Society

February 2013



©James Shooter/Daily Telegraph

Snow blankets the county forcing meeting cancellations - and a lack of photos!

Club Activities

Tony GØLAG

GB1ØØRSGB

The RSGB centenary special event call sign has been allocated to us on Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th July 2013. After negotiation with the centre manager, we have been granted the use of the bandstand in the George Yard shopping centre, Braintree for the 2 days.

The centre staff were very helpful when we took the club station there last year. We will keep you all informed of planning progress. This will be a great opportunity to show the public what amateur radio is about, and what our club can do to help any interested people.

Natter Night

The Monday 7th January Meeting became a "what radio gear did you get for Christmas" show night. Of the 18 members present, there seemed to be no shack "pressies" to show. However, we all sat round and had a good chat. The Christmas theme continued when Melvin produced hot mince pies which we all enjoyed, thanks Melvin. I enjoyed

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the format of the evening we should do it again.

Meeting, 21/1/13

The meeting was cancelled due to bad weather and an "On-Air" meeting took place on 145.375 Mhz starting at 20.00 hrs and ran on a "round robin" format. About 8 of us called in at various times; subjects discussed ranged from the weather (of course), aerials, solar panels and related subjects. The meeting on the air finished shortly after 21.00 hrs.

It would have been better if more club members had called in.

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Club Meetings and Nets

*Club Net - 08.00pm local time
2 Metres (145.375Mhz)
70 cms (433.575Mhz)*

February

- 4 Airfields I have visited - Tony GØIAG
- 11 Club Net - 2 Metres
- 18 "How I'm going to win the next construction contest"
- 25 Club Net - 70 cms

March

- 4 Morse Evening - Keys, Programs, On-Air
- 11 Club Net - 2 Metres
- 18 Baluns & their construction - GØEMK
- 25 Club Net - 70 cms

April

- 1 Equipment Safety Testing - II
- 8 Club Net - 2 Metres
- 15 RSGB Regional Officer
- 22 Club Net - 70 cms
- 29 Club Net - GB3BZ Repeater

May

- 6 Mills w/e Planning - Natter Night
- 13 Club Net - 2 Metres
- 20 AGM
- 27 Club Net - 70 cms

June

- 3 Essex Air Ambulance
- 10 Club Net - 2 Mtrs
- 17 Construction Contest
- 24 Club Net - 70 cms

July

- 1 Rig Clinic
- 8 Club Net - 2Mtrs
- 15 Evening DF Hunt
- 22 Club Net - 70cms
- 29 Club Net - GB3BZ Repeater

August

- 5 Club BBQ
- 12 Club Net - 2Mtrs
- 19 Aerial Clinic
- 26 Club Net - 70cms

September

- 2 Junk Sale
- 9 Club Net - 2Mtrs
- 16 TBD
- 23 Club Net - 70cms
- 30 Club Net - GB3BZ Repeater

October

- 7 JOTA Planning

Reminder

The annual dinner takes place on Sat 2nd March 2013. Please return your menu selection forms A.S.A.P. If you have not got a form, contact me to get one. Booking closes 18th Feb. Meeting.

Improving the RSGB

Tony, GØIAG

In the January 2013 RadCom, on page 11, Grahame Coomber GØNBI, the RSGB general manager wrote a short article entitled “Do you know how we we could make the RSGB and amateur better?” After a great deal of thought, and research, I sent my reply. A precis of which is as follows:

I feel that the society does not have enough contact with the clubs; the regional managers should visit clubs bi-annually, without waiting for an invitation, in order to answer questions, and pass the latest info to the clubs. I also suggested that the society would get more members if they were to give the clubs more up

Morse Classes Restart

Trevor, M5AKA

Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society started Morse classes again on January 31 in a new venue - The Bell Function Room, 128 Main Road, Danbury, CHELMSFORD. CM3 4DT - the Village Hall, Committee Room is no longer available.

to date and IT relevant publicity material. This should be carried by the regional managers. The RSGB, being the tool of its membership not the master, will only expand its membership if it helps the clubs to promote the hobby.

I made a lot more constructive suggestions about making the public aware of the hobby, the clubs and, consequently, the RSGB.

As a result of my reply, I have been invited to be part of a small advisory team, 5 of us including the society marketing manager, to come up with ideas to promote the hobby, the clubs and the society. The team would welcome any good ideas, so if you have any, contact me by phone or e-mail and I will pass them on to the rest of the team for discussion.

There is a Car Park by the side of the building. Tea or Coffee or Soft Drinks can be purchased at the Bar and taken to the Function Room (or will be delivered there, Staff being available.) Real Ales are also served.

Those interested in learning Morse code or wanting to increase their Morse skills should contact: Andrew, GØIBN, on 01621 868347 email:

g0ibn@kersey1.freemove.co.uk

ARCI Newsletters

Dave, G3PEN

Continuing a look at some old articles from 2010:

There was a very good article on measuring the DC resistance of loop aerials - because of the very low radiation resistance of such aerials, it is imperative that resistance losses are kept to an absolute minimum - we are talking about identifying individual resistances in joints and in the connections to variable capacitors in the milli-ohm region; an ordinary ohm-meter cannot approach such levels.

A Buildathon was run in Christchurch, New Zealand, making simple receivers - most of those taking part on this project were of school age. There was also a Tx/Rx project that was well attended. David Searle, ZL3DWS/GM8WNY, has a useful video on Buildathons - Getting Started Guide - on ZL3DWS@nzart.org.nz. It probably would take a lot of organising (not to mention problems with the 'Elf and Safety mob), but this would be a great way of advertising Amateur Radio in a local school or community centre.

A useful tip concerns trying to fix a coaxial socket to a thin flat piece of metal e.g. when using a small sweet tin or similar for a project. Particularly with BNC sockets, the twisting motion for connecting /disconnecting the plug can quickly break the socket from the tin, which is very thin and flexes easily. Simply fit a small piece of PCB inside the tin, copper side towards the inside, gluing it down with epoxy or similar (clean both surfaces first and roughen with fine sandpaper to ensure the glue holds well). Drill the hole for the connector through this reinforcing PCB and the tin itself. Make sure that the PCB surface is soldered to the inside of the tin with a small strap, to complete the RF circuit. Fit the connector. Job done!

Have you ever tried to get rid of the white powder left on equipment or connections from leaking batteries? Depending on what sort of battery it is, try wiping the affected area with a cotton-bud dipped in vinegar (for NiCads) or a solution of baking powder for other sorts. One or other of these should do the trick. Thoroughly rinse the area afterwards with clean water and dry well.

Do you know why the copper wire with Teflon insulation is always silver-plated? Apparently, this



is because the temperatures needed during the extrusion of the Teflon would immediately cause the copper wire surface to oxidise. The silver plating avoids this problem - and incidentally makes the wire even more conductive for RF - great!

"Solid State Design for the Radio Amateur" is a great ARRL publication. The second printing has a circuit which is very simple, and highly recommended by WA5BDU. The circuit uses a single transistor as a crystal oscillator, with a meter to obtain relative readings of crystal activity, but by replacing the transistor it can be used to see how good the transistor is - or with different crystals to check how high in frequency the transistor will go.

He tested a modern "plastic" transistor to see how much heat it could take, by winding the leads round the tip of a temperature-controlled soldering iron, setting it to 150 degrees C, and leaving it for over 20 minutes He found that the transistor he tested performed exactly the same after the heat treatment as before - which he says merely proves how much better they are than 30 years ago! However, it does mean that one should be able to make a decent soldered joint to a

modern transistor without cold joints or fear of ruining it.

Trying to wind small toroids without getting cramp in your fingers? Have a look at:

www.cliftonlaboratories.com/toroid_holder.htm. Also click on "Adventures in Electronics and Radio" for more items of interest.

The Winter issue of 2010 had an interesting set of comments on fault-finding on "old" equipment. Basically, they highlighted what apparently is quite a common fault - a lack of a good soldered joint at one end or other of a component. The component will initially make good contact, even without solder, and function well for years, but eventually corrosion will cause the joint to fail, possibly intermittently at first, with eventual total failure of some vital function. When chasing that elusive fault on old equipment, don't trust any soldered joint - check each one in the suspect area, and poke or pull them slightly as well.

This problem is as common with SMT components as with old-style (big is beautiful!) types, as the solder/flux masks used in the production phase can get clogged up and "miss" a joint.

To be continued... 

Rallies

3 FEBRUARY

28th CANVEY RADIO & ELECTRONICS RALLY - 'The Paddocks', Long Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 0JA (southern end of A130). Free CP, OT 10.30, C, DF, TS. Vic Rogers, G6BHE, 01702 308 562, nvrblueyonder.co.uk. Visit website: www.southessex-ars.co.uk

RADIO-ACTIVE RALLY - Civic Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5DG. Organised by the MidCheshire Amateur Radio Society. CP, OT 10.30, TS, B&B, C, DF. Simon, G8ATB, 01270 841 506, SimonG8ATB.co.uk. Visit website: www.midcars.org

10 FEBRUARY

HARWELL RADIO AND ELECTRONICS RALLY - Didcot Leisure Centre, Mereland Road, Didcot. TI S22, free CP. OT 10.15/10.30, £2.50 (under 12's free), TS, FM, SIG, LB, C, DF. Ann, G8NVI, 01235 816 379, ann.stevens@btinternet.com. Visit website: www.g3pia.org.uk

3 MARCH

BRATS RAINHAM RADIO RALLY - Rainham School for Girls, Derwent Way, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0BX. TI, OT 10.00, DIS 9.30am, C. Trevor, G6YLW, 07717 678 795, www.trevwig1.co.uk.

CAMBRIDGE & DISTRICT A.R.C. RALLY - Wood Green Animal Shelter, King's Bush Farm, A1198 London Road, Godmanchester, Cambs PE29 2NH. OT 10.00, CP, £3, TI S22, TS, B&B, LB, C, DF, SIG, FAM, David, M0ZEB, 01353 778 093, www.rally2013cdarc.co.uk.

EXETER RADIO & ELECTRONICS RALLY - America Hall, De La Rue Way, Pinhoe Exeter EX4 8PW. TS, B&B, C. OT 10.15/10.30, £2. Pete, G3ZVI, 07714 198 374, g3zvi@yahoo.co.uk.

MILITARIA, ELECTRONICS & RADIO AMATEUR HANGAR SALE - Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8AL. OT 10.00, civil, military & vintage radio equipment, vehicle spares & more. Rod Siebert, 01270 623 353, www.hackgreen.co.uk Coldw@rhackgreen.co.uk.

Braintree and District Amateur Radio Society

Braintree and District A.R.S. meets every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at The Clubhouse, Braintree Hockey Club, Church Street, Bocking. Doors open from 7.30 pm for an 8 pm start to the meeting. Prior to 8 pm, and during the refreshments break, when a cup of tea or coffee is available free of charge, members have the opportunity to sell or exchange equipment etc. Meetings normally finish at 10 pm.

The Club Membership fee is £16 annually; Senior members (State Retirement age) and Junior members (under 18) pay a reduced club subscription of £10. Door fees are payable per meeting. Rates are £1 for members and visitors.

A Club Net operates on the 2nd and 4th Mondays (excluding Bank Holidays) under the callsigns G6BRH and G3XG. The net commences at 20.00 local time on V30 (S15) - 145.375MHz and SU23 - 433.575MHz, unless QRM. In months with 5th Monday the net operates via GB3BZ 430.850Mhz.

BARSCOM is sent to members by e-mail on the first of the month; paper copies are available at the first meeting of the month. Members unable to attend club meetings may lodge S.A.E.s with the Editor for printed copies. Usual deadline for copy is the 28th of each month.

Members advertisements are published free of charge.

For more information and pictures of events and projects see our Web Site at www.badars.co.uk

The next edition will be published on March 1

The deadline for submissions for the next edition is February 25

Contests

VHF/UHF

February

- 3 0900-1300 432MHz Affiliated Societies O SF
Affil'd Societies (S3) O SF
Cumulative contest (S5)
- 5 2000-2230 144MHz UKAC
- 12 2000-2230 432MHz UKAC
- 19 2000-2230 1.3GHz UKAC
- 24 1000-1200 70MHz
Cumulatives #1
- 26 2000-2230 SHF UKAC
- 26 2000-2230 50MHz UKAC

March

- 2-3 1400-1400 March 144 432MHz
- 5 2000-2230 144MHz UKAC
- 10 1000-1200 70MHz
Cumulatives #2
- 12 2000-2230 432MHz UKAC
- 19 2000-2230 1.3GHz UKAC
- 26 2000-2230 50MHz UKAC
- 26 2000-2230 SHF UKAC

April

- 2 0900-1200 First 70MHz
Contest
- 7 2000-2230 144MHz UKAC
- 9 2000-2230 432MHz UKAC
- 14 0900-1200 First 50MHz
Contest

HF

February

- 4 2000-2130 80m CC SSB QRP
- 9-10 2100-0100 1st 1.8MHz
Contest UK Non-UK DXCC &
UK District Bonus (M3)
- 13 2000-2130 80m CC DATA
QRP
- 21 2000-2130 80m CC CW QRP

March

- 4 2000-2130 80m CC DATA
LOW QRP
- 9-10 1000-1000 Commonwealth
Contest OPEN RESTRICTED
Multi-Op HQ Commonwealth
Contest (S2)
- 13 2000-2130 80m CC CW LOW
QRP
- 21 2000-2130 80m CC SSB LOW
QRP

New RSGB website

For the past year an RSGB team has been working on a replacement for the current RSGB website. Members of the Society can preview the Beta version of the new website and offer their opinions and suggestions using an online form.

New Yaesu FTdx3000 HF/6m Base



The new FTdx3000 HF + 50MHz 100 Watt Transceiver is another exciting new product that is certain to capture the hearts of determined DXers and Contesters as well as casual operators looking for solid communications.

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