



# Wythall Radio Club Newsletter

## Autumn 2006

g1wac@wythallradioclub.co.uk  
<http://www.wythallradioclub.co.uk>

*25th Year*

Wythall Radio Club meets from 8pm every Tuesday evening at Wythall House, Wythall Park, Silver Street, Wythall near Birmingham. Visitors are very welcome.

Club callsigns: G1WAC, G4WAC, G7WAC, G0WRC and M5W

Wythall Radio Club is affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain



### Contents

Contest Group Report	2	Wythall Carnival	14
ZK1 Cook Islands 2005 Pt II	4	GB5HQ	15
Notice of Annual General Meeting	7	Amateur Radio Licencing Update	16
Electronic QSLing	8	VHF National Field Day	17
Alderney Island DXpedition	9	My 80m 'V' Shaped Thing	19
SWR Meter Project	12	Club Diary	19
Summer Fox Hunt	13	Members List	20

### Editorial

Having gone from struggling to get articles, once again this is a packed issue. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed and I am sure that you will find this an interesting read. If your article has not made it in this issue, then hopefully I will be able to fit it in the next.

Following feedback we have a more compact contest report allowing more space for other articles, including the second part of Tim's trip to the Cook Islands. We had

a successful VHF field day in July — see article in this issue — and at the beginning of September HF field day. Hopefully there will be an article in the next issue.

Over the next couple of months we have the Hanbury Steam Fair, JOTA, the Lord Pettit Shooting Trophy and a rather interesting talk about the trip Martin and myself took to see the total solar eclipse.

Enjoy this issue.

## Contest Group Report

After raising the question in the last newsletter, and following consultation with the club membership at club meetings, it's been decided not to publish non-club station contest scores in the club newsletter from now on. Individuals' own entries will still be published in the monthly Contest Report submitted to the club email reflector.

With more club events on the calendar, and with people like Tim SDE and Chris VDP traveling and operating from unusual locations, there have been more articles than available space in the newsletter. I think most people would prefer to read stories and articles about club events and club members rather than see long strings of callsigns — usually mine(!) — with some numbers after them.

At the time of writing, one of the major 'club' events has drawn to a close for 2006. The 80m Club Championship was enjoyed by many members, and this is visible in the overall club score. There are still several events to be adjudicated, but at the time of writing, the club lies in 12<sup>th</sup> place out of 73 clubs nationwide. Individuals have made several good finishes too — Callum M0MCX reached 5<sup>th</sup> in the difficult SSB

contest in June, and I've had a few podium finishes in RTTY this year.

VHF NFD has come and gone — please see the writeup elsewhere in this issue. Also Callum has an article on his experiences operating with me as part of the GB5HQ activity in the IARU contest. Coming soon is the SSB Field Day at the start of September where the club will be making it's first entry in the Restricted section. This will be a more serious event than VHF NFD, and as such the team are looking for a good score.

The club's decision to hold "on the air" nights for new members is a good idea. Maybe some of the new members, or our old hands, might then try some contest operating? Don't forget that the club has now invested in a Heil headset that can be used with the Icom 2m radio, and thanks to Alban the club PCs are loaded with up to date logging software. These "on the air" nights are great for demonstrations of how everything works.

As autumn is around the corner, some club members will be looking forward to CQ WW. This contest also sees good club support — what band or section will you try this year?

*Lee G0MTN*

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## Club Results

144 MHz UKAC:

Cumulative G1WAC — 9<sup>th</sup> place in Open section

Cumulative 'club' score — 7 / 19

May: 9 / 14 Open Section

June: 11 / 18 Open Section

July: 9 / 14 Open Section

## Contest Calendar

### RSGB VHF

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Contest Name</b>
Every 1st Tuesday	2000 - 2230	144MHz UK Activity Contest & Club Championship
Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	2000 - 2230	432MHz UK Activity Contest
Every 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2000 - 2230	1.3/2.3GHz UK Activity Contest
Every 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2000 - 2230	50MHz Activity Contest
2/3 September	1400 - 1400	144MHz Trophy Contest
3 September	1100 - 1500	144MHz Backpackers Contest #5
17 September	0900 - 1200	Second 70MHz Contest
7/8 October	1400 - 1400	432MHz - 248GHz IARU
7 October	1400 - 2200	1.3GHz Trophy & 2.3GHz Trophy
15 October	0900 - 1200	Second 50MHz Contest

### RSGB HF

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Contest Name</b>
2/3 September	1300 - 1300	SSB Field Day
3 October	1100 - 1500	21/28 MHz Contest (CW/SSB)

### Other HF

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Contest Name</b>
9/10 September	0000 - 2400	Worked All Europe (SSB)
23/24 September	0000 - 2400	CQ WW RTTY
23/24 September	1200 - 1200	Scandinavian Activity Contest (SSB)
7 October	1600 - 2000	EU Sprint SSB
8 October	0600 - 1000	ON Contest 80m (SSB)
21/22 October	1500 - 1500	Worked All Germany (SSB/CW)

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## Postage Stamps



Reg G7OJO is still collecting stamps for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Even if you only have a few they all help. There is a bag on the notice board in the shack.

## ZK1 Cook Islands 2005 — Part II

ZK1 North CANCELLED Press Release:

### **Day 17, February 15th**

Cyclone Nancy hit Aitutaki Island late last night, winds were not as severe as Cyclone Meena, so little damage was done, just fallen trees again blocking our exit of the lodges. Yesterday we had a team meeting and decided that due to the cyclonic depression covering the Cook Island area we must think about the safety of the team and after browsing weather charts of the South Pacific it was agreed to cancel the Manihiki Atoll Expedition. A very disappointing decision but safety comes first. The Cyclonic depression has been caused by cold air moving north from Antarctica meeting the hot humid air towards the equator. This has caused a huge depression emitting cyclones in the Fifi to Cook Island area. The last cyclone to hit the Cook Islands was 6 years ago and in two weeks we have experienced 2 cyclones with another one approaching us from Samoa. Are we the most unlucky DX Team? 3 cyclones to hit during the time here! It is unfortunate that we could not come here in November, the best time to avoid cyclones, but money and time off work is not so easy to schedule. Our antenna systems were taken down last night but will be put up again after Cyclone Olaf has passed by, possibly on Wednesday or Thursday. Air Rarotonga evacuated their aircraft up to Aitutaki this morning to avoid the Cyclone on Rarotonga.

### **Day 18, February 16th**

I am writing this at 04:00 local time. We have just had the biggest pile up of the expedition so far — from 23:00 last night the conditions to Europe on 20m short path have been incredible. Signals up to 5/9 logged across Europe — it is just amazing conditions. Jed was trying to sleep. I heard

many sighs from Jed as I continued to work the pile up. In the end he gave up trying to sleep and has taken over from me “On Air”. 5 hours ago I had started eating a packet of crisps. One thing you do not do here is leave food on the table. Without noticing, as I had been so engrossed in the pile up, not only the crisps but my body was crawling with ants and I have been bitten many times — what else can happen on this trip! This morning Jed has flown over to Rarotonga on the early flight to meet up with Victor ZK1CG and Jim ZK1JD. This afternoon the Swedish team will also fly back to Rarotonga to spend a day as tourists. The world seems to be causing “Panic” over cyclones Nancy and Olaf, and there are reports of a “Supercell Cyclone” forming near here. Every met-office report gives conflicting information... Should I get the hell out of here? Or is it all media hype, because what the media is reporting is not what I see from the met-office?

### **Day 19, February 17th**

Short opening to Europe this morning. I am keeping a watch on cyclone Olaf today, 300 miles west of Aitutaki. The Sweden team heard today that their flight back home is cancelled due to the hurricane over ZK1. They will now have to stay in Rarotonga and take cover from the storm. Here on Aitutaki the storm got a lot closer than predicted and raged all day and night. Lots of damage from the sea surge. My 20m monoband suffers a broken element and will have to be taken down again for repair. Conditions today quite good — over 500 in the log while cyclone Olaf raged.

### **Day 21, Feb 19th**

I repaired the damaged director element on the 20m yagi yesterday. The bands

are much quieter here today and working Europe was very difficult. One consequence of the cyclones is that the supply ship has not arrived here so there is no petrol on the island, and hardly any food. I just managed to fill up with the remains of the diesel so I can still drive around the island. 40m is very busy here, not by amateurs but by Pirate sea fisherman, jabbering in what sounds like Indonesian. No call signs are used and they talk for hours. Above 7.100 MHz is broadcast AM and almost impossible to work the 100 — 200 section of the band at any time of night.

### **Day 23 February 21st**

Last night the only DX I could work was on 40m — all other bands almost silent. Great to work Europe thanks to F9VO Bernard and ZL2UO Tony. This morning a good pile up to USA on 20m. Only one QSO to Europe, OZ7YY from Denmark. This is the 3rd day with only a small opening to Europe. I can only hope things improve in the next few days. At least the weather has improved — sunny and 33°C. Thanks also to G3SED Mike, sometimes the only signal from England!! Staying in the lodges here are 3 of the most gorgeous Australian student doctors you could imagine!!! I think I need to make an appointment! Time for some beers at the Samade Bar!

### **Day 24 February 22nd**

An improvement on band conditions today but still not enough to work a pile-up over the poles. Good conditions to the Americas today. Jed ZK1SDZ made his final few days operations from Rarotonga visiting ZK1JD Jim and ZK1CG Victor. We noticed that there was a definite advantage on Rarotonga as far as working to Europe. Jed returns home today. A day off from radio operations now. Firstly a boat ride over to the Queen Tutai's private hideaway on Akaiami Island,

which is one of the small islands on the edge of the Aitutaki Lagoon. Sitting on the beach looking across the lagoon is stunning as you look back over to Aitutaki. Akaiami is only 300m across and maybe 600m long but walking inside the island is like a scene from Jurassic Park. It is dense jungle and lots of birds in the trees, large herons circling above ready to dive to the sea to catch the fish. Before the mosquitoes chop my leg off it is time to head back for a rest before the evening. It is the student doctors last night on Aitutaki before they fly home to Australia. They have been working here for the last month at the hospital. We are off for an Island Dance night at the Samade Bar for a farewell party.

### **Day 25 February 23rd**

Again a big improvement on conditions — 1 hour of strong opening to Europe this morning. I was to close down early as I have some errands to run here for the owner of the lodges. The Swedish Team arrived safely back in Sweden after a very tiring journey from Aitutaki to Rarotonga to Auckland then Los Angeles to London and finally to Gothenburg. The diversion was due to their original flight home being cancelled due to the hurricane. Piff! ohh guys, now you can sleep!!!! Still no supply ship here, food on the island is running very low, no petrol left at all, fresh juice and water also now on low stock. The supply ship is scheduled to arrive early next week. This evening I again had good conditions to Europe and was able to work a pile up again... not for long... you can be sure someone will start transmitting on the same frequency or just 1kc away... Why? I ask! Okay so now I made a big mistake. I made a QSY to 14.195 Mhz, great another pile-up was under way... again only for 30 minutes before IT9RYH started calling DX and the pile up was gone.

### **Day 28 February 26th**

In a 16 hour slot today 800 QSOs were added to the log, mainly from USA and Japan — only a few into Europe. Thanks again for the help of G3SED Mike for keeping the frequency open in Europe. Yesterday there was a delivery of diesel and petrol to the island. Just in time, the electricity power station was on the last gallons of diesel. The ship will be back from Rarotonga in a few days with food supplies. Unusual that the band is closing here in daylight hours and is buzzing after dark, not what I am used to on 20m. Last night the band was open throughout the night to most of the world. Am I dreaming or did I really see on the weather chart hurricane number 4 on the way? Cyclone Percy passed Tokelau last night, its path being tracked very carefully.

### **Day 29 February 27th**

Although the band has been quiet it was nice to work two Indian Ocean stations long path, 3B8FQ & FR1AN, with good strong signals. Now the 5,000 QSO mark has been passed in my log which, given the conditions, I am very pleased with. In a QSO with ZK3HC on Tokelau Island, he explained that cyclone Percy had now passed causing devastating damage to the Island. Now a category 4 cyclone the winds are at extreme destructive force. The latest prediction puts its path midway between Aitutaki and Niue Island — if that happens everyone will be happy. If it goes another path we are in trouble! The next few hours are critical. An opening to Europe on 20 and 80m was most welcome this evening.

### **Day 31 March 1st**

Cyclone Percy moved south as predicted and should be only a minor threat to the Cook Islands as its winds are decreasing to storm force today. The only effect of the storm so far is heavy overnight rain. At last I have

made some QSOs to Europe on 80m in the last couple of days, to Italy and to England. 40m was excellent for a while last night with conditions to many parts of the globe. The pick of the bunch was working TZ2LC in Mali. Africa is difficult from here. 20m has been very quiet now for 2 days.

### **Day 32 March 2nd**

Cyclone Percy made us all very worried today but thankfully passed 300 miles to the west without much damage to Aitutaki. My adventure comes to an end in the South Cook Islands now as tomorrow morning I head back to Rarotonga to meet Jim ZK1JD and Victor ZK1CG and then home to England. There are so many people that have helped me on this project, from England, Sweden, Cook Islands and not forgetting my web manager Anthony MW0JZE from Wales. Thanks also to the Pacific Cyclone Emergency monitors that have been so important to our safety. FOUR hurricanes hit this expedition, forcing us to cancel the proposed ZK1 North activity, previously only 2 cyclones have hit this island in 40 years... am I just lucky or what? Today I have at last managed to contact our friends on Manihiki Atoll. I have had to pay them for all the food that was ordered for the cancelled week there. Well at least that should keep them sweet for next time we want to go. I have spoken to the Swains Island DX Team who have also been affected by delays by the weather. Also had the pleasure of speaking to the Peter 1st Team down in southern Argentina. Their efforts were also hit by time delays and I really felt for them when I heard they had decided to cancel the expedition for another year. It's been a tough month for DXers!!! Especially as I close my account the SFI falls to 75 now I know that the challenge I had set myself was one that was very tough

but I rose to the challenge and enjoyed a wonderful experience here in paradise.

### **Day 33 March 3rd**

The hurricanes continue to cause havoc. My flight off Aitutaki is cancelled this morning and re scheduled for late this afternoon. The Air NZ flight to LA and London is still on but a decision will be made later today to see if that will be cancelled too.

I finally left the Cook Islands 5 days late on March 7th after Cyclone number 5 hit us while I was on Rarotonga Island.

My log closes with 5,943 QSOs in 125 DXCC entities. Plus another 2,000 QSOs on logs from ZK1SDZ Jed, ZK1WET Magnus and ZK1XMY Tomas.

*73 de Tim ZK1SDE 85*

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## **Notice of Annual General Meeting of Wythall Radio Club and Wythall Contest Group**

**17<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at Board Room, Wythall House, Silver Street, Wythall  
commencing at 8.30pm**

### **AGENDA**

1. Appointment of Minute Secretary
2. Apologies for absence
3. Proxies Received ( **if you wish for a proxy form contact the secretary below**)
4. Acceptance of minutes of 2005 meeting
5. Matters arising from 2005 minutes
6. Chairman's Report
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Secretary's Report
9. Matters arising and acceptance
10. Constitutional issues proposed (**notice must be given to the committee of any proposed changes 7 days before AGM**)
11. Election of Chairman,
12. Election of Treasurer
13. Election of Secretary
14. Election of Committee
15. Appointment of Auditors
16. AGM of Wythall Contest Group

Issued by Chris Pettitt, Secretary Wythall Radio Club, 6 September 2006

**CHRISTMAS SOCIAL FRIDAY DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> BRITANNIA HALL  
WYTHALL PARK — SKITTLES EVENING, AMERICAN SUPPER BRING  
ALONG YOUR FOOD AND SHARE WITH OTHERS!!**

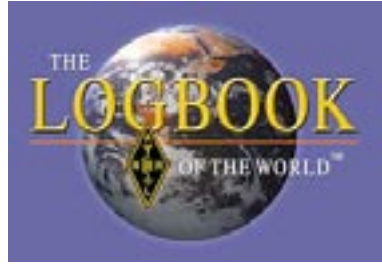
## Electronic QSLing

A popular aspect of amateur radio is confirming contacts through QSL cards. Traditionally paper QSL cards have been sent and received to confirm contacts. Using QSL cards as proof, many operating awards can be earned from award organisers around the world. The most popular awards programme is the DXCC — DX Century Club — which is based around operators confirming contacts with different entities (countries/islands) on an official list.

In the last few years, electronic QSLing has become a reality. Essentially, users can upload contacts in electronic format to a central database. Cross checking with other users takes place, and so credits for awards can be earned. There are two popular programmes running — the ARRL's Logbook of the World (LoTW), and eQSL. I'll describe them separately.

LoTW offers DXCC tracking, Worked All States award tracking, and has the possibility in future to be opened up to other award programmes like IOTA. For non-USA amateurs, a copy of your radio licence, plus another form of identification like a driving licence must be posted to ARRL HQ. Using a downloaded application on your PC, an ADIF file containing QSOs from your logbook software will be converted to a different format, which guarantees its origin and makes the system secure. This new file can be uploaded via the web, or emailed to ARRL.

eQSL has a simpler registration that can be done via email. I took a digital photo of my licence and submitted it, and received acknowledgement that same day. eQSL accepts ADIF logs exported from your station



logging software. eQSL offers its own country awards scheme, and State and CQ Zone awards, although they are not recognised yet as the longer established awards from the ARRL or CQ magazine.

Both systems will show you the number of QSL matches you have. I've found my own QSL rate to be around 10%, which many people also report as being typical. As more people try electronic QSLing, the percentage will rise. LoTW contains over 100 million QSO records, and eQSL 65 million.

Once I'd finally got round to applying for registration, I found both systems to be less hard work than I imagined. It only took a couple of hours for me to upload over 120,000 QSOs to both systems when I got started, and sending updates is a simple task too. I earned new 5 band/mode DXCC awards with LoTW, without the need to sort through QSL cards, or send them off to be hand checked. It's also nice to get confirmation for a QSO within hours or days — remembering that the QSL bureau can sometimes take many years. eQSL's basic award is for just 25 countries — within the grasp of all of us.

Get started here:

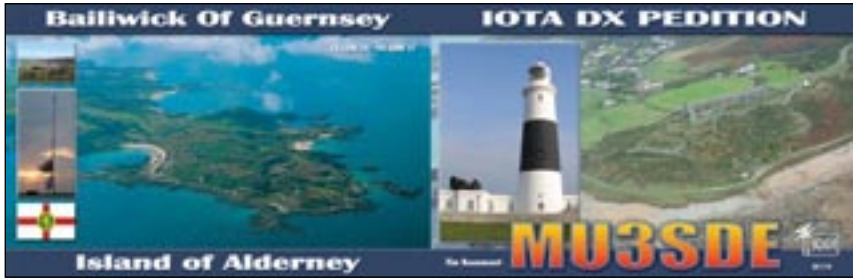
LoTW <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/>

eQSL <http://www.eqsl.cc/>

*Lee G0MTN*



## Alderney Island DXpedition



The Team Manager for Alderney Dx-pedition Lite is G1OCN Dave. At the time this idea came about Dave was the Chairman of the Portland Amateur Radio Club and put the idea to the members, Russell G5XW (He's only 38) was first to join the team, along with Dave's wife Carol 2E1DQZ. Dave asked Russell if he knew 2 more people that would like to join them. This is where Anthony MW0JZE, and myself, Tim M3SDE, stepped in. Dave outlined the purpose of the trip to activate from Alderney Lighthouse but despite reserving our dates we found that the lighthouse had been double booked and we had to rethink our accommodation on Alderney. A friend of Dave's on Alderney Island had just built a new house and said that we could use his old farmhouse as our base for the duration of our expedition.

I have a fear of boats after several journeys before to the Channel Islands by catamaran and been quite ill. I was relieved to hear that we were due to fly with Rockhopper Airline direct onto Alderney, although Russell has a fear of flying. Time to do some breathing exercises Russell!! The return flights are ~£104 per person from Bournemouth Airport. The Rockhopper plane is only very small, holding 8 passengers with a baggage allowance of just 15 Kgs. With such a small amount of luggage allowance the team would have to post all

antennas, co-ax, masts and clothes ahead of our arrival. Parcel Force is the carrier the team used to safely carry our equipment.

The plan is to set up to four stations operating simultaneously all bands and as many modes as possible using the following stations:

Tim MU3SDE/P would be operating with: Yaesu FT-920 — Palstar PSU. Heil HC4 Pro Set Quiet Phone headset/microphone; Antenna — Comet H-422 V Dipole (Sponsored by <http://www.nevadaradio.co.uk>); Laptop using Winlog 32 Logging software & DX Atlas mapping software.

Other Sponsors <http://www.kenwood-electronics.co.uk>



The time soon comes round for us all to meet up at G5XW Russell's home as we prepare for our trip to Alderney. An early start on 12th October, G1OCN Dave arrives at 06:00z with his wife Carol. We have a short drive to Bournemouth International Airport where our adventure begins. A wet and windy autumn morning is not the start we hoped for, but a clearing in the weather allows our flight to leave on time. Jane from Rockhopper Airline ensures that all of our 130 Kgs of luggage are squeezed into what I can only describe as a coffin with wings. An eight seat aircraft with no aisle is cramped and noisy and certainly not quite what we expected.

We arrived at Alderney Airport safely and we were met by Richard, our host on the island. We are to stay at Richards home, a farm on the highest part of Alderney at 288 feet above sea level. We started erecting the antenna systems in pouring rain and a howling wind that rarely stopped all afternoon. Soaking and quite tired we had to change out of our wet weather gear and set up the radio equipment to get 4 stations active simultaneously. After about four hours of operating today we retreat to the local bar for some welcome food and beer. Conditions this evening are very poor although contacts to Thailand and Alberta Canada are on the log on 20m.

13th October 2005. Once again today the rain continued while the wind just got stronger. Contacts were made on 20m & 40m to New Zealand, Thailand and North America. We continued to work on 4 stations for as many hours as possible with GU1OCN Dave concentrating on DATA modes and GU5XW on LF bands. With 5 acres of land to put up our antenna systems we can install all the wires well away from each other and keep cross station breakthrough to a minimum. On Friday one of our



friends from Weymouth, M3VWK Mike, flew over for a visit with 15kg of food which was most welcome, as the food on Alderney is expensive in the shops. Mike enjoyed his visit and also spent some time transmitting on the bands — Great to see you Mike! Saturday morning arrived and a chance to log many of the weekend only operators. At last we have a short opening to Japan on 20m but we need better conditions to log the many IOTA hunters from JA. Then the WAG contest started and no matter what frequency on every band we were active a German started calling without checking the frequency, virtually shutting down our IOTA, as our logging rate slowed to 1 QSO every 5 minutes. A break in the weather allowed for some antenna maintenance and a chance to take some photographs of our antenna farm. It was brought to our attention that the last time Alderney was active with any substantial contacts was between 2 - 5 years ago. So this was a chance to really put Alderney Island on the DX map.

Sunday 16th October. The WAG contest thankfully finished at 1500z, our contact rate had reduced to a virtual stop, but what a contrast after 1500z. The bands exploded with very courteous operators awaiting a call into Alderney. Sunday was by far the best day for the Alderney DX Team with about 1,000 contacts logged and the operating in the pile-ups was excellent. Monday, for part of the team, was a day off radio transmissions and a time to take in the Alderney way of life and explore this beautiful Island and learn about its rich history. We had a visit from Derek GU4GG. Now this guy has some stories to tell, just look on his biography on QRZ.com and you will see what I mean. Ant and Russell took him to the local pub for an afternoon drink and a chance to chat about radio. The Islanders are very welcoming and friendly, a complete contrast to what I am used to back home in the city.

While Ant & Russell were out gave me the chance to work on 20m and 40m for the day and another 550 QSOs were added to my log today, with Australia logged on 40m and some short hop sporadic E getting Alderney Island into some difficult areas of France and UK.

If you visit Alderney Island the team can highly recommend The Belle Vue Hotel. Their home cooked food is superb



and was our stop every evening for a meal and a few beers.

Tuesday was our last full day for transmissions from Alderney — good pile ups both on 20m and 40m for much of the day. This gave us a team total of 5,000 QSOs, all continents worked and 100 DXCCs working into Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines to name a few.

Wednesday morning and time to pack all the gear away and take the parcels to the Post Office to be sent back home. 130 Kgs of equipment was sent this way and 130 Kgs carried in the aircraft. Job done and a final chance to drive around the Island so that Dave “Bailey” G1OCN could take some more photos. As we were due to leave Alderney a thunderstorm delayed our departure, but we were soon in the air and on our way home.

A few words must be mentioned about our host Richard. We invaded his house for a week — people he had never met before and he had not just welcomed us but allowed us to take over the house and grounds with all our communications equipment scattered around. Thank you just does not reflect our gratitude for our intrusion into his life.

Thanks also to <http://www.shortwave.co.uk> for their support throughout. You can find more info from the Alderney DX Team at: <http://www.pmt.inkinkink.net/alderney.htm>

Kind Regards from Alderney DX Team

G1OCN Dave, 2E1DQZ Carol, MW0JZE Anthony, G5XW Russell & M3SDE Tim

Kind Regards, Tim Beaumont

M3SDE — ZK1SDE

<http://www.zk1sde.co.uk>

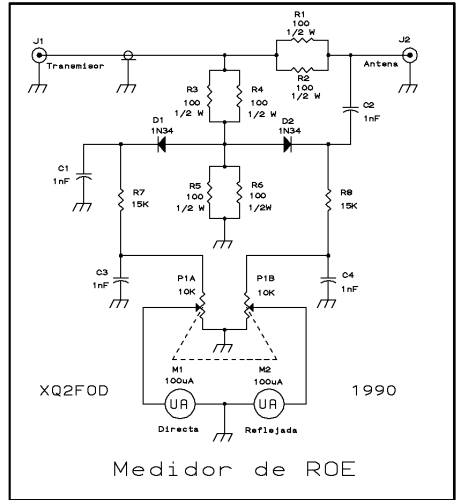
## SWR Meter Project

Thanks to the design work of Manfred Mornhinweg (somewhere in Chile!), I made it my next project to build a wideband SWR meter, probably the radio ham's most useful tool. The design, shown on his website ([www.qsl.net/xq2fod/Electron/swr/swr.html](http://www.qsl.net/xq2fod/Electron/swr/swr.html)) is quite simple, with no active devices or specialist components, but the design of the meter is restrictive; the meter dissipates three quarters of the total power, and is limited to about ten watts (the article on the Internet recommends a maximum of two watts, but I've had no trouble at ten), so when not in use it is best to remove the meter from the transmission line.

Mornhinweg recommends that the high-frequency components (including resistors 1 - 6 and the two diodes and capacitors C1 and C2) are mounted as close to the antenna connector as possible for maximum frequency operation. Since I was only planning to use this for the two metre band and below, I decided to create a circuit board for the meter instead.

I also modified the design a little, using only one micro-ammeter and a switch (DPST) to choose between power and SWR.

The circuit board was printed onto inkjet transparencies at 1440 dpi (despite the 360 dpi recommendation!), producing lovely opaque black tracks. The 'exposure' was leaving it over a pre-sensitised positive photo-resist copper-clad board on the windowsill, under a 40W lamp — hardly the same as using a professional controlled UV box, but sure enough it worked! After developing, etching, drilling



and soldering, I found the results rather satisfying.

A volume display salvaged from an old tape recorder wasn't the best bet for the meter, since it exhibited decibel markings, but it did the job.

Using the meter is quite simple. First, set the meter to power mode and adjust the variable resistor (sensitivity, not shown here — it hadn't arrived from Maplin electronics) while transmitting until the meter is fully deflected. Then switch to SWR (reflected power mode) and read off the relative reflected power. No deflection in the meter at this point represents a perfect match.

Thankfully, when using this meter, the transmitter never sees an SWR of more than 2:1, so that (all being well) there will be no magic blue smoke! Once I've got a nice enclosure, this meter will be a very useful tool, so long as I don't feed it with more than ten watts!

*Joshua Phillips, M300Q*



## The Summer Fox Hunt



Parliament banned fox hunting in January 2006. Oscar Wilde, a poet and playwright, who had much in common with a few of our members, described it as the “unspeakable chasing the uncatchable”. However, on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2006, members of the Wythall Radio Club decided that even the law would not get in the way of their quest for fun, and so was had the Wythall Radio Club Summer Fox Hunt.

There were four teams comprising:

Colin G6ZDQ,

Michael G4VPD and Janett

Chris G6KMQ and Alan

Roy G0HDF, and Peter G4LWF

Chris G0EYO,

David G0ICJ and Wendy

We all met at the Barley Mow Public House, Studley at 10am, to show off our portable antennas, our prowess at using a compass and reading a map (kindly provided by Lee G0MTN). Chris and Alan set off as the first fox and headed in a southerly direction down the A435. Unfortunately Chris’s motor is easily recognisable, having more in common with a hedgehog than a fox due to the number of antennas its roof supports. The rules require the fox to transmit on 2m FM for two minutes every 10 minutes. After two broadcasts, Chris and Alan were soon found by Chris and David,

lurking down a no through track (but still a public road) over near Sambourne. Chris and David went off and parked up over near Hookey’s Farm near New End over the Ridgeway. After three transmissions they were found by Colin and Mike, (probably because at that moment Wendy chose to get out of the car and go and look at some blackberries that were growing in the hedgerow). Peter and Roy would have found them first but they got within 100 yards of them and turned around. Colin and Mike then went off and ended up at Arrow village near Ragley Hall. Unfortunately they were still on an A road so got found after the first broadcast but probably more by luck than judgement by Chris and Alan. Roy and Peter were offered the chance to be fox but turned it down on the basis that they were still learning how to do this and didn’t know the area that well. So Chris and Alan went off and were found over by Coughton Fields near Alcester by Chris and David.

After that we decided to go and find somewhere for lunch. Chris G0EYO suggested the Moat House near Kings Coughton on the A435. Unfortunately he thought it was called the The Old Bull so Colin and Mike got lost, sorry guys. Eventually they turned up and at 12.30pm we got ourselves ensconced in The Moat House only to be told that it would be another hour before they could serve us any food because they were expecting a couple



of large lunch parties. So off we trooped back up the A435 to the Throckmorton Arms where, low and behold, the restaurant was empty. However, because we had not booked they could not offer us any tables until 3pm (could only happen in Britain!) So

we carried on up back to the Barley Mow in Studley, where finding a table for 10 proved to be no problem for them, and we all had a nice lunch. A good, fun way of spending a Sunday morning. We should do it again.

*Chris GOEYO*

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## Wythall Carnival — wet as usual

If those nations of the world suffering drought want to be sure of some rain then let Wythall Community Association organise a Carnival for them. Rain will be guaranteed. In one of the driest summers on record, members of the club met on the park early on Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, to put up their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary special event station, in the pouring rain. Chris G6KMQ had brought the caravan and we used a collinear for 2m and the Windom for HF erected on the mast fitted to the caravan. It only took an hour or so for us to be up and running, but in that time we all got well and truly soaked. Propagation conditions were poor and we struggled to work people on vhf and hf.

Reg, G7QJO and XYL Pauline, provided refreshments, including bacon sandwiches, for those manning the station and for those on parking duties. The weather kept the crowds away but the organisers estimated that some 3,000 visitors still came on the site. All beautifully parked by the Wythall Radio Club team comprising, Lee, Colin, Mike, Graham and Janice, Vic, Neil, Alban, Janett and Anita.

Highlights of the day included some idiot setting himself on fire and jumping from a trailer-mounted Versa-tower at about 80 foot onto an air bag. (twice — and we worry about H&S) and finished up with him blowing himself up in a coffin. The pyrotechnics really upset the German Shepherd Dog group who were organising



a dog show in the adjacent field, in fact one woman complained to the papers and it made front page on the Redditch Advertiser, (who says nothing happens in Wythall). We were next to the Archery group who were letting the public have a go for a quid. I got a bit worried when one bloke asked me to look after his guide dog whilst he had a go. Because of the weather I never got to see much of the carnival, preferring to stay in the caravan, where, while it was not warm, it was at least dry.

Nothing much else happened, except for the incident where Alan came back with his waterproofs in shreds but I will let him tell the story on that one. The oldies excused parking duties who manned the special event station included the two Chrises, Reg and Martin, but the end of the day was marked with a lovely 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary spread prepared by Reg and Pauline including an anniversary cake. Thanks to everyone who helped out. Don't forget the umbrellas and waterproofs when Colin, G6ZDQ, who was on the Carnival Committee, will be looking for more volunteers next year.

*Chris GOEYO*

## GB5HQ — Contest!

I am still pinching myself having operated the “beacon” station, 80m SSB as GB5HQ for my country along with Lee (G0MTN) and Fraser (G4BJM). Operating GB5HQ inspired me to dig deeper and to discover more about myself and it certainly gave me the chance to stay awake for 24 hours!

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2006, Lee picked me up and we got to the Open University club shack at 10:00am where Fraser met us enthusiastically, immediately showing us his recently-built transmit and receive antennas. There were 4 separate receiving antennas together with all the switching, to be placed in a box on top of my FT1000MP. I delighted at his workmanship and skill. He showed me the vertical antenna for 80m too and demonstrated the switch to use to flip transmit between a dipole at 100 feet or the vertical. Fabulous. Even the spotting station had its own selection of antennas, all selected by an automatic band switch. Very impressive.

We unloaded the car and had the shack built up within by 12:00 noon with working voice-keys, antenna switchers, the linear amplifier and the computer network running with the aid of Lee’s Orange GPRS mobile network card. Some RF interference to a mouse was sorted with a liberal sprinkling of ferrite snap-ons. I was invited to make some test calls on 80 meters, signing /P with my own call. Apparently we were loud. Most excellent!

Lee calmly started CQ at 1:00pm local time on the nail. We were on 3.777.00 — great. Nice number for the boys to pass to. Let’s go. It was slow and Lee checked his watch. Was it 1:00pm? Keep going, Lee had his digital voice keyer that plugged into the back of the MP. “Plink” — it made a sound when you hit the button to call CQ.

After an hour, it was my go. I couldn’t hear anything through the static. I was terrified. Don’t worry — there’s nobody there I told myself! Then I was called! But one of those quiet nasty ones. I get G2 but nothing else, just Lima or London or Lisbon or was it Monday or Guatemala or something. What? The back-end of his callsign is a mess. “Shout”, I want to say! But I stay cool, “please say the suffix three letters at a time”. Bang. I get the call. “Fifty Nine, RSGB, OK?”

Gradually the band started working and they came out the woodwork. “Thank you for working us on 20m SSB”, I would say, seeing them in StarLog’s “IN THE LOG” window that would be presented to me as I entered their call, “we’re also on 40m SSB on 7054, please work us on 40m SB, can you do this for me?” He replies positively. I hit the voice keyer, “plink” and type in the Announce window, “40m SB > DJ1ABC coming up from 80m”.

I glare at Lee sometimes in worried horror. A callsign is deep in the hiss. He picks it out using the spare headphones. He stretches across the keyboard to correct the call. We debate, no it was a Zulu, not a Bravo. Why? He’s right. It’s not fair.

We agree a format for the night. Lee takes an early sleep while Fraser and I work the pile as a double act. I find myself pulling the calls out, like Lee did for me. This is rewarding. Lee woke up and started a 90 minute stint around 1:00am, leaving me to start a long session from around 2:30am. I was very keen to have the US calling me. So many times, I’ve been the station doing the S&P on 100 watts. How would I do with the States calling me? Would they call? Yes they did and it felt great being the “loud” station.

Lee took the voice keyer at 5:00am to do

the really quiet hours. These are the dullest, nastiest hours on the planet. Most of the EU is still asleep and the US can't hear us. I crash on the floor of the shack, drifting off to the sound of the fans and an occasional: "...thank you, fifty nine, RSGB"... Plink.

During the last three hours, Lee worked hard on CW spotting whilst I felt slightly guilty just hitting the plink button. I was finally working those deaf callsigns too. I didn't need to call Lee over. I didn't panic, I'd found a different part of me.

1:00pm finally arrived. We stopped on the dot and packed silently. It was very quiet. I was still hearing callsigns in my head. I was giving reports to passing cars, reading their number plates in phonetics.

Did I achieve my goal? Well, let's clear one thing up. Contesting isn't glamorous. It was hard work and during Sunday morning I really was falling asleep at the Voice Keyer. What I did discover though, is that by relaxing the mind, you can dig a callsign out of thin air and impress your mates. However, any slight hint of concern or worry and you'll lose it. Unless you have complete confidence in your abilities, the mind will play darts with phonetic letters and you'll be running over too many of them. Confidence is therefore key to success.

Please listen for me next year calling "GB5HQ—Contest"!

*Photos at <http://www.gb5hq.com>*

*Callum McCormick M0MCX*

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## Amateur Radio Licensing Update

From late August 2006, Ofcom will start sending lifetime licences to existing amateur and ships' radio licensees six weeks before their current licences expire. This process will continue until all annual licences have been replaced by the new lifetime licences.

### Amateur radio licensing

Existing amateur radio licensees who allow their licence to expire before 1 October 2006, but who subsequently wish to reapply for a lifetime radio licence, will have to apply using a paper application form. Ofcom has proposed to introduce a one-off £20 charge for such applications. Radio amateurs who allow their licence to expire before 1 October 2006 will not be able to reapply online for their existing call-sign because of the need for Ofcom to check that the applicant holds the appropriate level of qualification before issuing the licence.

### Using the Ofcom online system

From 1 October 2006, new lifetime radio applicants wishing to use the online system

will need to register their details with Ofcom at [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

Once registered, they will be able to apply for a radio licence online. Applicants who do not wish to use the online system will be able to apply for a radio licence using a paper application form which will incur a one-off £20 fee. Existing licensees will be able to make changes to their licences online once they have registered their details with Ofcom.

### Standing orders with the Radio Licensing Centre (RLC)

If you have an automated payment procedure set up (for example a Standing Order or BACS) for renewing your radio licence, Ofcom urges you to **cancel these instructions**. If you fail to cancel your payment instructions you may incur a charge from your bank. Ofcom is not able to accept liability.

*Extracted from Ofcom Press Release 17<sup>th</sup> August 2006 by Chris G0EYO*

## VHF NFD 2006

VHF National Field Day has been a permanent fixture on the Wythall club calendar for many years — longer than some of our younger club members have been alive. Over that time the station design and equipment has changed, the bands we operated on have changed, but one thing has remained the same — try to get as many of the Wythall Radio Club members to spend some or all of a weekend in the open air, play a little radio, and have fun in each other's company. If those were the goals, then VHF NFD 2006 was a vintage year.

My first visit to Wythall's VHF NFD was during a particularly wet Saturday evening, when I operated a bit of 2m whilst the operator had a break for some fish and chips. The station was set up in a tent, and the stations were in the low power category. When I became involved in helping to organise the club's contests, we tried to become more competitive. For a while we stuck at it too — I can remember 8 hours on 4m CW without relief, and I pitied the poor souls on 23cms. Oh, the stories about falling asleep with the voice keyer still going..

For the last couple of years, the competitiveness has relaxed during VHF NFD. Yes, we still put up some competitive stations — including 2 x 17 elements for



144 MHz at 100 feet, but we don't care so much if they're not manned all of the time, especially if important life or death situations like Dr Who being on TV crop up. This was the ethos for 2006 — run 144 MHz and 50 MHz semi-seriously, and leave enough time for socializing. Being the club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our summer NFD barbecue turned into a fully fledged party, with several old club members paying a visit.

For the first time, possibly ever, club members and their families arrived on the Wythall Park site on the Friday evening to enjoy the good July weather by camping outside. When I arrived with a car full of club equipment from the shack on Saturday morning, the “tented village” was already a thriving community. Tents and various motorhomes formed a circle around the focal point of the weekend. No, not the operating caravan, I'm talking about the barbecue.

Vaughan and Sherryn took on the responsibility of the BBQ for the weekend, and just like Mike did in previous years, did a fantastic job. Reg and Pauline were also there making cups of coffee and bacon sandwiches to keep the antenna builders going. Chris KMQ, Colin and Martin also did a great job with the heavy logistics — moving the tower and caravan, generators,



lights, and antennas without a hitch. The Saturday set-up went smoothly, although working in the heat didn't agree with many of us.

The contest itself was similar to previous years. Despite trying quite hard to get an operators' rota that was followed, the actual operating sessions became a little more relaxed. We exceeded last year's number of QSOs on 2m with 194, and were just a few thousand pts/kms short of last year's total. I didn't think conditions were as good as normal — the late night and early morning logs didn't show as many 'high point' European stations as we'd like. I shouted and tuned like crazy early this morning, but apart from a very brief flurry the results were disappointing. Special mention must go to Josh who signed up for a 5am stint, and was there on time working into DL on 2m. I was a little late on parade in comparison. Likewise on 6m, although Mike did find and capitalise on some Es openings, it didn't seem to be as long as the last year or two. 74 QSOs were made across the UK and Europe.

The HF window was also strung off the tower, and Chris G1VDP had some fun on 10m and with PSK when VHF was quiet. In the evening time, I connected the window to an FT817 and worked a few CW stations as a demonstration for our



new licensees. Fortunately they believed me when I said the bleeps coming out of the radio meant we'd worked Venezuela — I wasn't making it up!

Chris EYO had tried to contact as many old members as he could and invite them to attend our birthday party. It was a little disappointing not to have many replies, but it was certainly good to chat with some of the former founder members of the Wythall club who I'd not met before.

As well as the contest and the evening party, which was well attended by members old and new, and their families, there was other fun and games for the whole weekend:

As some of you may remember, there was a certain football competition going on in Brazil over the field day weekend. It was a strange sight to see a group of people huddled around a television — in the middle of a field at the start of July.

On the Sunday morning a number of balloons were inflated with helium, which gave Darren a chance for a quick QRP HF contact on a hastily constructed long wire, held aloft by the sky hook.

A number of club members' children enjoyed playing in Philip's bouncy castle — which must be a unique feature of our VHF NFD station — and it was great to see Darren and Carol make the trip up from



Cardiff to be with us.

After a weekend of sunshine, the contest finally ended at 3pm on the Sunday. After some slick packing away, we were all off site by around 5pm. From my house just a mile or so away, there were a couple of showers and a big rumble of thunder in the

following couple of hours — so we were lucky.

Thanks to **everyone** who came along, brought their families, operated in the contest, and helped us enjoy a very “Wythall” radio weekend.

*Lee G0MTN*

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## My 80M V Shaped Thing

Not the greatest, but at least it's not a 'rip off' of a song this time :) )

*Darren GW7HOC*

How does my wire radiate?  
My little end fed V  
It seems to get out very well  
Which is a great surprise for me  
It's nothing very special  
And it didn't cost a jot  
But my 80M V shape thing  
surprises me a lot.

I've fed the end with coax,  
But I haven't used the braid  
And a mirrored wire counterpoise  
Is around the garden laid.  
I'm amazed that it sends signals  
To countries far and near  
From 'Inter G' to Hungary  
My signals others hear

My tuner tunes it nicely  
And the bandwidth is quite wide

My 80M V shaped thing  
Is the best thing yet I've tried.  
I've tried many other systems  
but none were very good  
My mobile whips were useless  
I was sure they'd be quite good.

But now I have my V shaped thing  
It's hanging in the sky  
At 24 feet off the ground  
It isn't very high.  
But I'm finally on 80  
A great band for QRP  
So listen out on '560  
This is 'home' for me.

And Thanks to Chris for modelling  
My antenna in his spare time.  
To show my appreciation,  
To Him I dedicate this rhyme.

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## Club Diary

Fri-Sat-Sun	Sept 15-16-17th	Special Event Station GX0WRC at Hanbury Steam Fair and Rally
Sunday	Oct 1st	Lord Pettitt's Shooting Trophy
Tuesday	Oct 17th	Annual General Meeting
Sat-Sun	Oct 21-22nd	JOTA at Essington
Tuesday	Oct 26th	Martin's Amazing Journey — Talk