



Wythall Radio Club Newsletter

Spring 2006

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

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 Report	2	Lottery Grant	9
Contest Calendar	2	Wythall Rally Needs You	10
Contests Entered	3	FT857 Review /P Poland	12
Contest Results	4	Shack Refurbishment	13
Foxhunt December 2005	5	Christmas Social	14
DXpedition Dream	6	“It’s Busted Mate”	14
Christmas Contest Results	8	Sunspot Serenade	15

Editorial

Well I am back from an enjoyable holiday in the Amazon, but this did mean that I was not able to take much part in the Christmas Contest. There is always next year.

At the end of March, Martin G8VXX will be joining me on a trip to the Libyan Sahara to see the total solar eclipse. We will be doing a talk later in the year and I will be doing a write-up for the next issue.

The club has been busy over the last few months. The shack refurbishment is

almost complete and we are looking for lottery funding to make some significant improvements. We have had the Christmas Social, Yuletide Foxhunt and Christmas Contest, details of which are in this issue.

We are rapidly approaching the Rally which, with the help of members of the club, we hope will be successful.

Looking further ahead, Chris G1VDP is planning a DXpedition to the Cook Islands in 2009.

Contest Report

As hoped for, the club shack renovation project has been drawing to a close. Radios have now been reinstalled, and some cables moved. A set of antenna switches has also been installed, and additionally the remote ATU for the longwire is now operational, giving us an antenna to use on all HF bands. The final step of installing the desktop PCs is now underway. Already the new wall mounted TFT monitors have been used in conjunction with the laptop.

The last few months have seen a number of big club activities — the AFS contests. In both of the VHF events, and the 80m SSB events, several club members operated from the club in ‘timeshare’ mode — increasing the amount of contacts they made. Each club member used their own call sign, and operated independently from the others. This is perfectly legal and supported by the

contest committees. The only downside is that in some high rate “team event” contests it may have been better to have produced 1 large log rather than 2 smaller ones.

Please remember the club facilities are available not only on Tuesdays — we used to be there most weekends operating VHF and HF a few years ago — before TVI / RFI problems got the better of us. But 100w output on all HF to UHF bands, with the possible exception of 50MHz, seems fine. Even our persistent noise problem on VHF has been a little better as of late.

There are a number of events coming up in the next few months, which are good for the beginner or old hand alike, to try from the club or home. Please see any of the contest committee directly if you’d like more information.

73, Lee G0MTN

Contest Calendar

Rules & Info:

HF: <http://www.rsgbhfcc.org>
<http://www.sk3be.se/contest>

VHF: <http://www.vhfcc.org>

Activity nights each month:

First Tuesday: 144 MHz, Second Tuesday: 432 MHz, Third Tuesday: UHF
Fourth Tuesday: 50 MHz, Fifth Tuesday: 70 MHz

Also, the 144 MHz Club Championship contest takes place concurrent with the 144 MHz UKAC on the first Tuesday of every month.

April

HF

1-2 Sat 1400 — Sun 1400 SP DX Contest SSB/CW :-)

VHF

23 Sun 0900 — Sun 1200 1st 50 MHz Contest

May

HF

6-7 Sat 2000 — Sun 2000 ARI DX Contest — SSB/CW/Data
20-21 Sat 2100 — Sun 0200 Baltic Contest — SSB / CW

VHF

6 Sat 1400 — Sat 2200 432 MHz Trophy
20/21 Sat 1400 — Sun 1400 May 144 MHz
21 Sun 1100 — Sun 1500 1st 144 MHz Backpackers

June

HF

10-11 Sat 0000 — Sun 2400 ANARTS WW RTTY Contest

VHF

11 Sun 0900 — Sun 1300 2nd 144 MHz Backpackers
17-18 Sat 1400 — Sun 1400 50 MHz Trophy

Contests Entered

December 2005

144 AFS: Call / kms / QSOs

1 M0COP/P 9110 / 62	2 G1WAC 8819 / 59	3 M0COK/P 6341 / 50
4 G4LCH 4244 / 43	5 G6ZDQ 3607 / 35	6 G0EYO 3388 / 32
7 G6KMQ 2944 / 37	9 G0NES 2346 / 25	
10 M0MCX 1993 / 31	11 M0AEJ 896 / 18	12 M0VRR/P 714 / 12
13 M3SDE 187 / 2		

Tara RTTY Melee	G0MTN	75Q
ARRL 28 MHz	G0MTN	35Q (Mixed)
	G1VDP	24Q (SSB)
9A CW	G0MTN	34Q
Stew Perry	G0MTN	10Q
OK RTTY	G0MTN	25Q
RAC Winter	G0MTN	34Q
144 UKAC	G1WAC	
432 UKAC	G1WAC	
Christmas Cumulatives	M0COK	26 th : 8Q / 27 th : 14Q

January 2006

80m AFS SSB:

Team A: G0MTN 254 / M0MCX 233 / M0COP 103	= 5900 pts
Team B: G0ICJ/P 54 / G0EYO/P 53 / G6KMQ 48	= 1550 pts
Team C: G6ZDQ/P 42	= 420 pts

144 UKAC	G1WAC	42 Q
	M0COP/P	31Q
432 UKAC	G1WAC	3 Q
50 UKAC	G1WAC	1 Q (!)
AFS CW	G0MTN	215 Q
	M0COP	76 Q
IRTS 80m	M0MCX	51 Q (SSB)
	G0MTN	47 Q (mixed)
ARRL RTTY	M0COP	40 Q
	G0MTN	404 Q
UK RTTY	M0COP	13 Q
	G0MTN	68 Q
UBA SSB	M0MCX	113 Q (40m)
	G0MTN	132 Q (20m)
HA DX	G0MTN	162 Q
BARTG RTTY	G0MTN	190 Q
CQ160CW	G0MTN	214 Q
REF CW	G0MTN	21 Q (80m)
SARTG HNY	G0MTN	76 Q
AGCW HNY	G0MTN	41 Q

Contest Results

Nov 144 UKAC	M0COP/P	3 / 3 O
	Wythall	7 / 16 AFS section
IOTA	G0MTN	1 / 27 IOTA 12Hr Mix
Autumn EU Sprint CW	G0MTN/P	83 / 95
Autumn EU Sprint SSB	G0MTN	82 / 100
HSC Contest	G0MTN	27 / 37
ANARTS RTTY	G0MTN	179 / 426 (1 st G)
	M0COP	355 / 426
144 UKAC December	M0COP/P	3 / 5
OK DX RTTY	G0MTN	227 / 239
WPX SSB	M5W (M0MCX)	1 st 40m LP
	G0MTN	3 rd AB HP

Postage Stamps



Wythall radio club has received a letter of thanks from Guide Dogs for the Blind, for the four pounds in weight of stamps collected by club members and others.

This goes to show that whether it is one stamp or one dozen they all mount up, and I too would like to thank you all.

Reg G7OJO

Fox Hunt December 2005

Five teams gathered at the Henley in Arden Golf Club for the annual post-Xmas Fox Hunt.

The teams comprised:

Team 1

Chris G0EYO (driver),
Colin G6ZDQ,
David G0ICJ

Team 2

Peter M5DUO
Anita (driver)
Wendy & Janett (lucky old Pete!)

Team 3

Chris G6KMQ, (driver)
Martin G8VXX
Reg G7OJO

Team 4

Vaughan M0VRR and Sherryn

Team 5

Ian G8PWX and daughter Victoria

The weather was quite cold with the occasional snow flurry. Team 1 were the first fox and after about 4 shouts they were



found by Vaughan, closely followed by Ian. Vaughan then became the fox and he was found by Chris KMQ's team. Chris's team chose to hide up near Bearley radio station (as was — now a gliding club) and they were found by Team 1. Pete was often seen going in the opposite direction and they seemed to be able to DF the garden centres and craft shops easier than the fox. On the last hunt, Ian seemed to end up on the motorway. We all had a great time and it was the best turnout we had had for some years. As usual on Fox Hunts we all ended up at a pub for lunch. This time the Navigation near Wooten Wawen

Chris G0EYO

Subscriptions.

Renewal date for the current Club year was 1 September 2005 but historically subs have been collected following the AGM in October. There are still several members who have not renewed and I shall be pleased to accept your subs at any time. Most of us will be at the Rally so that may be a good day to remember to renew.

Renewal letters re Wythall Community Association were sent to several of our membership in January. However, there are still one or two who have not responded to my letter. It is a requirement of Radio Club membership that we are paid up members of the Association, so memberships must be renewed for continued attendance at the club. Those who have not renewed following my letters will now have to apply for new membership and pay the joining fee of £5 in addition to the basic membership fee. If there are any queries please speak to me or telephone 01564 82 3627 or E-mail to david@ddawkes1.wanadoo.co.uk

David G0ICJ (Hon treasurer)

DXpedition Dream

Having been licensed since the mid 80s, I wanted to get on the HF bands and chase that elusive country or island (DXCC entity for this article) at the other side of the world. At this time I read with interest the DX columns in Practical Wireless, Shortwave Magazine (before it became the magazine for listeners), and Rad Com when I joined the RSGB, and was enthralled by the articles on expeditions to DXCC entities like Spratly (1S), Albania (ZA — yes this was very rare as they were a Communist country and the Govt would not allow even TV!), and The Cook Islands (ZK1). I thought that these countries would be out of my reach (on radio or to visit) as I could not pick up Morse (CW) and get up to the required speed of 12 words per minute to get (what was) the A licence! And then the announcement came a couple of years ago that CW was no longer a requirement for access to HF and any Class B licensees would be given the HF privileges — what a break for me!

So in December 2003 I renewed my

licence (I had not transmitted since 1987) and got on the HF bands and started Dxing. I also met Tim M3SDE at this time through both of us working nights and getting on the air and chasing the DX at the same time, even telling the DX station we were calling if either of us were struggling. In January of 2005 Tim then went to the Cook Islands and operated as ZK1SDE for nearly a month (see separate article) and every day I was on 14.260 listening for him, and I had the thought that one of those early elusive DX entities was being put on the air by a friend of mine. Sadly I never worked him, but heard him on a couple of occasions. This was it; a DXpedition could be done by an ‘ordinary ham’. I then thought that maybe I could do this and had a word with Tim when he returned home.

Nothing was done or said until 30th October when Tim came to visit me as the CQWW phone contest was winding down. We sat talking and he showed me some photo’s of where he had been operating from and his experiences from the last

DXpedition. We then sat and talked it over and decided to stage a DXpedition to the Cook Islands for the CQWW contest.

We put pen to paper, making notes on what we would like to achieve and do on this trip. Who would we ask on the trip? How would we fund



it? What equipment would we need? When? So to start with we looked at the calendar for the next few years and thought about the sunspot cycle and where it would be in 2008. With the forecasts saying it would bottom out in 2006 we felt that 2008 would be too soon, so we said resolutely "October 2009". We know from the previous cycles that the number of sunspots and radio conditions get better quicker on the upward shift, as opposed to the down slope which is much more gradual.

It was then considered who we would ask. A couple of weeks previously I had asked Lee (GOMTN) if it would be of interest to him, so he was the 3rd name on the list. We then asked a couple of other members of Wythall Club and so we then thought of putting it to all the membership. We are not only looking at a purely Contest trip — some of the non-members we have asked (friends around the country and Europe) are wanting to take their families, wives and girlfriends. So we then decided on a major trip with 2 teams of operators. All the team will go to the South Cooks and then a smaller team to move on to the North Cooks for the contest.

We then thought about the funding and we thought of sponsorship and Lottery funding. This is something that I am currently investigating and hopefully will be able to get both from various sources for equipment etc. But the travel costs will have to be covered by each member of the team (estimated to be £2500.00 approximately). We also thought that we could also educate some of the locals on the island and try to get them licensed, and maybe leave some equipment for them to use in the future. We also thought about starting the educational side over the internet from here so that we have licensed locals on the islands ready to assist with the fun! Which at the end of the

day FUN is what we want to have from start to finish.

Tim is also friendly with the traditional leader of the Cook Islands, Queen Tuta Marangi, and we have asked her to be the Patron of the trip. She has kindly agreed and is looking forward to seeing and welcoming us all to the Cook Islands.

But it is not just the team on the Cook Islands which is important. We will need a support team here in the UK and plan to have Marty M1DCV as the UK team leader. Marty is also our antenna man, and he has kindly offered to be the one to make the required beams, and we will also need various wires and possibly verticals. The UK team will also be needed to help with packing the equipment and logistics, and maybe the QSL-ing when we return.

All are welcome to join the team and we will need a firm commitment from all by the end of 2006. Tim has a full presentation on the Cook Islands with some wonderful photo's and will (if allowed) put the presentation on at the club (again) in the new year to give you all a feel for the Cook Islands. I will also present my follow up on the initial idea at the same time!

The dream to be part of a major DXpedition is finally coming true. I have also thought of maybe a couple of minor trips in between now and the departure for the Cook Islands, so maybe you will want to come on one of these. Let's talk about the dream...

Chris Colclough G1VDP

More info and pictures on accommodation in the Cooks are available at: www.ginasaitutaki.com

More on the trip by Tim can be found at: www.zk1sde.inkink.net

Wythall Christmas Contest Results 2005

This year's Wythall Christmas Contest was well fought out, as usual, with just a few points and multipliers separating the leaders. As a surprise when the results were announced at the February committee meeting, there was one change in claimed score amongst the leaders, and submission of a high score log just days before the closing deadline.

So congratulations go to Reg G7OJO for a deserved first time win, and well done to Chris G6KMQ and Chris G0EYO for good scores which make up the other podium positions. Special mention should also be made of Josh, M3OQO, for overall fourth place who takes the leading Foundation Licensee certificate. Darren GW7HOC, operating from Wales, also has a commendable score — proving with persistence (and a little help from GB3DX) it is possible to do very well, despite being a long way from Wythall. Next year Top 3 Darren?

I was in Poland for most of the Christmas holidays. I did take my own portable station with me, but the antenna and conditions were never favourable to easily reach back to the UK. A solution provided itself in the form of a trip to SP5ZCC radio club, where contacts with Darren, Chris G6KMQ, and Pete M0COP were made on 80m.

This year's scores are substantially down on previous years — most likely due to several Christmas Contest stalwarts being missing on holiday. There was also a lack of activity on 145.225 — I would like to urge local club members to use this frequency when possible — although of course repeater contacts are still allowed to catch the 'out of town' members. In the final adjudication, it was found that no single club member worked all of the

available multipliers (club members).

Previous attempts to run a summertime contest have not met with much enthusiasm — so I guess we'll run the event next December once more. If anyone does have any suggestions for rule or format changes — please let me know. But remember that the intention of the rules is to keep them simple, so as not to put anyone off, and to be inclusive and maximise the amount of people on the air — so bonus points for CW etc. also might not be in the best interest (although I wouldn't complain personally!). It would also be good to receive a few more logs next year.

1	G7OJO	860	Winner
2	G6KMQ	840	2nd Place
3	G0EYO	798	3rd Place
4	M3OQO	720	

Leading Foundation Licensee

5	GW7HOC	624	
6	G6ZDQ	608	
7	M3JPP	233	
8	G0ICJ	208	
9	M0AEJ	198	
10	(SP/)G0MTN	165	
11	M0COP	110	

Lee G0MTN



WRC considers applying for Lottery Grant

Chris GIVDP has obtained information from the Lottery on the grants available for local groups and communities. This is a simple scheme for awards between £500 and £5000. It is to fund projects that enable people to take part in art, sport, heritage, and community activities, as well as projects that promote education. Chris's discussions with the Lottery people indicated that we would have no problem getting funds that enabled us to increase our educational capability. Although our club is reasonably well provided for equipment and cash, certainly enough for our immediate needs, it is worth us thinking if we have the interest and resources to set up a project for which we can receive funding. If we think we can justify it we will make an application for financial assistance.

We have started discussing this at Committee and have asked for ideas on what sort of project we could realistically undertake. The grant can cover putting on an event, providing training courses, improvements of community facilities, start-up costs, publicity, professional fees and volunteer expenses, equipment and materials, making health and safety improvements. This will be an ongoing discussion so there is still time for members to make suggestions

Here are a few ideas we have had to date.

- Run intermediate courses in a room upstairs accessible by the disabled using the fund to meet costs, books, lecturer expenses, etc
- Provide disabled access to the shack, Stannah lift perhaps
- Make shack more comfortable with new floor and some form of air conditioning and better storage
- Buy shack LCD projector and screen
- Refurbishment of meeting room & storage area to incorporate:
 - Re-routing of water pipes
 - Electrical cables
 - Installation air-flow
 - New floor (similar to shack)
 - Decoration
 - New door area into shack area
- Versatower refurbishment / major service / overhaul .

To make an application we need to submit a copy of our constitution, annual accounts and bank statements. We need to find a referee who knows us but is independent and supports the application. I don't anticipate a problem here. The application needs to be a good one, i.e. well thought out, fully costed, with deliverables identified. It needs to benefit members of the community not currently benefiting from the club's existence.

If you have any ideas then do let me know.

Chris GOEYO

For Sale

Lady's Shopping Bicycle (Folding), Shopping bag fitted to rear carrier. 20" wheels
3 speed gears, In good condition, Small donation to club funds.
Contact Lew

The Wythall Rally Needs YOU!

You will know by now that our annual rally will take place on Sunday 12th March at Woodrush Sports Centre, Shawhurst Lane. For this rally to be a success we need your assistance. We all know that without the proceeds from the rally that the club would not have the facilities it currently enjoys, indeed it is doubtful whether the club could exist at all. The members fees barely covers the rent, insurance and licences. At a recent committee meeting I expressed my concern that although membership is at an all time high, we get very few members taking part in club activities. I stressed how important that we get new members to understand why the rally means so much to the very existence of the club and why we expect every member to come along on the Saturday and or Sunday to help set it out and run it. Under the same rules as last year,

no one member has overall responsibility for the rally but it is in the hands of a committee — see below.

The main activity starts on the Saturday in the afternoon when we need as many members as possible at the Sports Centre to help with off-loading and laying out tables. We also put up the road-signs on that day. On the Sunday it is a very early start (7am) to help the traders off-load and to organise the parking. Later on in the afternoon we help the traders pack up and load the tables back onto the lorry. We have organised a disabled toilet this year to overcome some of the previous year's criticisms about the facilities in the sports hall.

Please offer your help on this very busy weekend — don't just leave it to the others.

Chris GOEYO

Rally Committee

Chris G6KMQ Chairman
Chris G0EYO
Martin G8VXX
Callum M0MCX
Colin G6ZDQ
David G0ICJ
Reg G7OJO
Vaughan M0VRR

Visitor entrances
Traders' bookings and talk-in
Parking and signs, Rally Team Leader
Sports Hall and poster publicity
Gym Hall
Bring and Buy
Catering
Rally web site

www.wrcrally.co.uk

Midland Amateur Radio Society Summer Rally 2006

Alderbrook School
Blossomfield Road
Solihull B91 1SN
Sunday 7th May 2006
10:00 - 15:00

Trade Stands in Two Halls
Local Clubs Refreshments
Large Free Car Park
Admission Only £1.50

www.midamradio.co.uk

WYTHALL RADIO CLUB RADIO & COMPUTER RALLY



Sunday 12th March at
Woodrush Sports Centre,
Shawhurst Lane, Wythall
10am — 3pm
£1.50 admission

**WILL YOU HELP US THIS
YEAR?**

FT857 Quick Review / Portable in Poland

Last summer I purchased a Yaesu FT857, with the intent of using it portable in the UK, maybe abroad, and also doing some VHF as well as HF with it. Although many people have bought an FT817 and been very impressed with the receiver and its size, its lack of standard transmit power has been a frustration. The FT857 is not much bigger than an FT817, although of course a power supply or battery needs to be brought along too, but the benefit of up to 100 watts output makes QSOs much easier — especially when the antenna used is less than ideal. The FT897 is another possible choice, with almost identical features and performance to the FT857, but with the option of an internal battery.

For a portable antenna, I've used a screwdriver antenna, which essentially consists of a vertical whip, and a large coil which is altered to achieve a resonance on the band you'd like to operate on. Adding a counterpoise wire brings much better results too. It's a good solution if you can't guarantee being able to 'throw a wire

outside'.

The dry run was at the RSGB HF Convention last October, where I set up in my hotel room. My first DX QSO was about 50 feet to the demonstration station in the same hotel. This was interesting because I may have been the first station ever to give the new super FTdx9000 radio some grief to its front end. After that thrilling QSO, I worked around Europe in the EU Sprint contest on 40 and 80 metres CW.

Next stop was back to Warsaw for Christmas. Taking radios abroad adds its own challenges. There had been numerous stories of problems with security staff from Birmingham Airport not allowing transceivers to fly. I was also armed with my licence, and the transceiver instructions. I was lucky — but Sylwia did have to remove the 'bang' strip from the Christmas Crackers she was carrying home. Amazing! Actually, I was stopped by Polish security on the way home, but this just for a quick check. Laptops are now required to be removed from cases too. A far worse experience befell my VooDude contest friend Vince when

returning from Africa last November. His amplifier was deemed to be a security threat — he was virtually arrested, and his amp taken to the far side of the airport for the bomb squad to examine!

Anyway, back to the story. In the second floor flat where we were staying, there was as expected a lot of concrete surrounding the antenna in all directions. Only a few CW QSOs were possible on 20m and



40m to Germany, Slovenia, and OH9SCL (Santa Claus Land) special event. I was keeping in touch with the club and the contest progression via the internet chat room, but was unable to join in. For info, Internet enabled repeaters are not legal in Poland yet.

My one chance to make some QSOs back home was when I again visited the Sulejowek Radio Club, SP5ZCC, and my friends there. I used their FT920, and 80m dipole 60 feet up, to make a few QSOs on 80m CW and SSB. Again, use of the Internet chat room was essential and saved

the need to setup schedules, or just ring folk up on the phone!

The QSO with Darren on CW was quite hard work — but he was definitely pleased with the result. Chris G6KMQ and Pete M0COP were actually very easy to work and I'm sure I could have made contact with a few more club members had they been around.

I hope to be back on air with the FT857 this summer, maybe from some local hilltops, or further afield. Watch this space...

Lee G0MTN

Shack Refurbishment — Update

The shack refurbishment is almost complete with the radio room now being fully wired up RF wise and this has resulted in three operating positions, one for HF, one for VHF/UHF and a third high power position for 70cms. We have yet to wire in the 2m linear and to network the computers but the new LCD screens are in place and with the installation of the long wire ATU, we are now seeing the club equipment being used on a regular basis for contests, etc, both on Tuesdays and during the weekend. The club have introduced the concept of time-sharing on some contests whereby individual license holders can operate as own callsign/P for 20-30m sessions during the duration of the



contest. This enables them to participate in contests when they don't have the right equipment at their home QTHs.

Chris G0EYO

Diary

March 12th	Wythall Radio Rally, Woodrush Sports Centre, Wythall.
May 7th	MARS Summer Rally, Alderbrook School, Solihull.
May 13/14th	Tolkien Weekend, Sarehole Mill.
July 1/2	VHF NFD
September 8/9th	Leicester Radio Rally

Christmas Social

The club held its Xmas Social on the 9th December at Wythall House and this year the theme was simply Beer and Skittles. Attendance from members was down on previous years so we may need to re-think the format for this year's social. However those who did come had a really good time and with family and friends we numbered around 40 people. Darren, Carol and Philip drove up from South Wales and we thought that they would be our furthest travellers, but they were beaten by Roy and Tony who had come direct from the airport after returning from the Canaries. As is normal, we organised an American Supper and there were lots of lovely things to eat. We had lots of prizes donated by members (thanks for that) and so most people won something on the raffle. The stand up bingo was won by Darren and the booby prize (ie the last raffle prize — a 1m power lead) was won



by yours truly. I forgot to make a note of who won the skittles but well done to them. Colin came up with the idea of throwing 10p pieces to see which landed nearest a bottle of Scotch and guess who won that prize. Yes — me. All in all a good night and we collected some £67 towards the costs of putting it on.

Chris GOEYO

“Its Busted Mate”

By way of a Codicil to my last contribution and as a young man being exposed to pieces of wire and components that do fantastic things (when put in the right order that is) I found myself in the late 70s to be the owner of a small but lively Motor factor emporium which became a local stop-off for tea and coffee and of course items of a sustaining nature called 11s which continued all day for many folk who drove horseless carriages. By now you might wonder where this is leading and what has this to do with our hobby. To expand a little further and to give you, the reader of this essay, an explanation, one of the visitors partaking in a beverage in the inner sanctum of my establishment suggested to me that something exciting was

happening on the airwaves, “do you mean radio”, I said “No CB”, he said. As most of you know, operation of 11mtrs was taking place, much to the chagrin of the authorities policing the airwaves.

As per chance I was given one of these radios. “It's busted mate” was the rhetorical sound ringing in my ears. Not to be dismayed a repair was affected and, low and behold, I could hear and talk to people who were referring to things like “motion lotion”, “bright lights”, and “superslabs”. At this time I was beginning to think that these people were inventing another language. To continue, in the rear of my premises known to others as the coffee shop, a corner was designated which subsequently became the shack, where rather a lot of action was

taking place repairing these clandestine radios. This was due to the owners and fitters not knowing positive and negative, and as these radios were unprotected when incorrect polarity took place we all know what happens “It’s Busted Mate”.

This was an interesting time but lacking something, and by chance I was talking to a member of the public who kept referring to his call sign, which seemed rather strange because it began with G3. He said that he was operating on 2mtrs. As you can imagine my adrenaline pumped at full pressure and within a short time I found myself back in the classroom taking an exam called the RAE. In due course my amateur licence arrived and my recently purchased Yaesu 290 was pressed into operation. One month later I found myself working in the Middle East where we had a repeater on top of a hotel in Bahrain.

Having returned to the UK (late 80s) and finding that activity was at a very low ebb, my 290 went in a drawer for about 12 years (no BM repeater). My journey through radio, I thought, was now at its end. But similarly to what colour TV did in the 60s, a

dear friend mentioned that not only would I be able to work HF due to sterling work of the RSGB but something different was happening on 2mtrs. Other international countries were coming through on previously unused frequencies in the 2mtr band. Once again curiosity lead me to resurrect the 290 and sure enough, to my amazement, found a new repeater ending in DX. What is going on? Internet gateways — I need to re-educate myself. I found I was talking to people who were passionate and dedicated for the benefit of all amateurs, who offered me help, and a radio club where we can exchange ideas. So for someone like me who started joining wires and components together and rearranging what local people were listening to on their radios due to my medium wave transmitter linked to a 78rpm turntable, this was like winning the big one. Having dipped my toe into some of these wonderful facilities I decided to help (with limited knowledge) when I could. But hold on — I will reserve this on-going saga for a later addition

Geoff Reid G6UEU

Sunspot Serenade

Like the song that is dear to your heart
Our hobby to others we like to impart
From small beginnings interest expands
When the day comes when we understand
the bands

The enjoyment to be had by all
Has no equal its not for a fool
Young and old all can enjoy
Day and night weekends and who
Man and boy and ladies too

Volts and amps and RF out
There is a serious side and don't shout
To much deev turn it down
We all want to hear around the town

The facts of this hobby are manifold
With many stories to be told
Are you coming to bed she bellows
I'm in qso he says
Alright I'm coming he mellows
Off with the power climb the stair
Got to give the rig a rest to be fair

Geoff Reid G6UEU