



Wythall Radio Club Newsletter

Summer 2006

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<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



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Editorial

For the first time since I have been doing the newsletter, I actually had more material than I could fit in. I am sorry if any article didn't make it, but I will try and get them into the next issue. This does not mean that you are all off the hook though — keep them coming. The Tolkien Weekend writeup will be in the next issue.

As this newsletter is for you the members of the club, I am always open to suggestions about what you would like to see in it. With this in mind I would like to canvas the club's

opinion on a suggestion Lee G0MTN has made.

Do you want to see the full contest results printed each quarter, or would you prefer a cut down version with just highlights, and maybe the diary?

Please let me know and I will adjust accordingly.

I hope you enjoy this issue, which is packed with interesting articles.

Rally Report

The club held its 21st Annual Radio and Computer Rally at Woodrush Sports Centre on Sunday 12th March and it made a significant contribution to club funds. Many club members turned out to help both on the Sunday and for the setting up on the Saturday before. We managed to fill two halls again, the Sports Hall as in previous years and the School Hall which we were offered as a replacement for the Gymnasium which was out of bounds because of the new flooring and walls that had been installed since last year.

We attracted some 36 traders and over 400 visitors despite a very cold day with serious snow showers to the north, southwest and east of us. In fact only two traders failed to turn up because of the weather. The weather did hit attendances but local advertising made up for it and at the end we were only 50 visitors down on last year. As last year the rally was run by a committee



with members taking responsibility for various duties. Chris G6KMQ looked after the people doing the collection on the doors, Martin G8VXX and company did the parking and signs, Colin G6ZDQ and Peter M5DUO looked after the School Hall and Callum M0MCX looked after the Sports Hall. Reg G7OJO sorted the catering and David G0ICJ looked after the Bring and Buy. Vaughan looked after the rally web site and Chris G0EYO organised the traders, the press releases and the talk-in. Our thanks to all of those and the many other club members and family and friends who turned out to help make this a most successful event for the visitors and traders.

We plan to run another rally next year but there is some uncertainty over whether the school hall will be available. We intend to try and build a relationship with Woodrush School over the coming months in order to keep their good will.

Chris G0EYO



WRC QSL Manager's Report

Hi Wythall Radio Club Members from Tim M3SDE, m3sde@btopworld.com — Cell Phone 07976 292980.

I am a fairly new member to the Wythall Radio Club, one of my first evenings at the club was the 2005 AGM in which I heard that Pete M0COP was to step down as QSL manager for the Wythall Club due to his house move. I have spent several years working as a QSL manager for various DXpeditions and IOTAs and felt that I had something to contribute to the Wythall Radio Club. Many thanks to Pete M0COP for his time as QSL manager from all the members and from myself for offering to show me the ropes!

QSL Postings

So as QSL Manager I am happy to introduce a new service for the members of the Wythall Radio Club. I have an International postal contract in which I can save up to 35% on international postal charges and can extend this saving in cost to any members sending QSL cards through the post. If you feel that you can benefit from this service please drop me an email along with your telephone number and I can explain what to do. The first person to take up this offer was Chris G1VDP. On his first mailing I saved him about £10.

QSL Design and Printing

Another service I am offering to members is QSL design and printing in co-operation with ON5UR QSL printing service. I have known Max ON5UR for about 16 years and we both share a passion for high quality design and QSL printing at an affordable cost.

If you are thinking about having a new QSL card printed drop me a line I would

be happy to help in any way I can. If you want to see some samples of the quality of the QSL printing let me know. I have had 6 designs printed with Max in the last year.

QSL cards and what to put on them?

For me, a QSL card is more than just a confirmation of a 2-way radio communication. It can tell someone a lot about you and your station and your interests in the hobby.

There is nothing more annoying than when you have just worked that mega DXpedition using 10 x Yaesu FT-1k Mk V with StepIR antennas from that rare prefix you only dreamed of and then the QSL card arrives on the door mat. "Oh dear another cheap card that lacked imagination".

So what do you put on your QSL card? Think about the design you want. It will be only as good as your imagination allows. How about a photo of you in the radio shack, or at the helm of the WRC newly refurbished shack or a photo of you in pursuit of another hobby? Or a photo of that tower and the StepIR on the top in your garden!

Remember that your QSL card may be used by others to claim awards so you should always remember to put on all relevant information. For IOTA claimants the IOTA number and the Island name MUST be printed on the QSL card. NOT hand written. We may live in land-locked Central England but we are IOTA Reference EU-005 England Mainland and this MUST be on your QSL card to be valid for an award claim. Your IARU Locator number, WAB square, Longitude and Latitude, CQ Zone, ITU Zone and Station Equipment, are all as useful and as important as the QSO report panel box, your callsign and name on the QSL card.

Wythall Radio Club QSL Card

This leads me on nicely to the next WRC QSL card, for which I want to get a design together at some point this year. This QSL card will represent you the members. If you are attending any club functions this year take along your digital camera and get snapping. I am looking for high resolution images of life at the Wythall Radio Club. Whether it's contesting in the clubs radio shack or out and about in the field. Of course the Wythall Community Club will be featured on the front so if you're anywhere near the club at sunset anytime get snapping! You can sent your images no matter how large to my email address above.

That is all for now folks, — See you at the Wythall!

Kind Regards,
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Morse Code Practice Oscillator

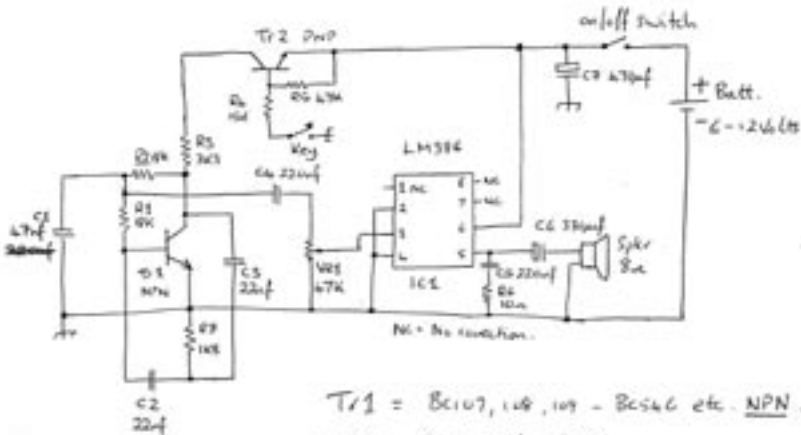
Here is a simple, but useful, project for anybody who fancies having a go at homebrew. I have made several printed circuit boards which are there for the taking if you don't want to use your own layout etc.

Tr1 and its associated components form a phase-shift audio oscillator, R3 is the collector load, R1, 2, 7 and C1, 2, 3 form the phase-shift feedback network. Unlike 555 timers and other astables, this oscillator produces a clean pure sine wave which is easy to listen to over prolonged periods (astables produce square and sometimes triangle waveforms, which give the note a raspy-rough sound). C1, 2, 3 along with R1, 2, and 7 determine the frequency of operation, which in this case is approximately 700 Hz. If you require a higher frequency, reduce the values of C1, 2, 3 accordingly but keep the ratios of these capacitors the same. Likewise, if a lower frequency is required, then increase the value of the capacitors again keeping the ratios the same.

Tr2, R4, R5, form a dc switch. The

reason for having this is because I originally built this circuit for use as a side tone generator with my 80m cw TX. The TX produces a contact closure to ground in key-down via an opto-isolator. This is used to trigger the side tone generator by way of Tr2. You will notice that Tr2 is a pnp device, its emitter connected to ht (+9 volts) and its collector to the top of R3. With the key up (or in my case, the transistor in the opto isolator is non-conducting i.e. off), Tr2 is biased off due to the 47k resistor between its base and +9 volts. However, when the key is depressed (a contact closure to ground), Tr2 is biased on via R4 and thus conducts putting +9 volts on the top end of R3 which in turn starts the oscillator.

You can, if you wish, remove Tr2, R5, R4 and connect your key between C7 positive terminal and the top end of R3. Just bear in mind you will have the battery positive terminal now connected to your key, and if you mount the circuit in a metal box (which is connected to battery negative, or should be for screening purposes), be



careful not to accidentally let any exposed part of the key with +9 volts on it touch the metal box causing a short circuit across the battery.

The audio output from the oscillator is taken from the junction of R1, 2 via a dc blocking capacitor C4. This is then taken to the top end of the volume control. From the slider of the volume control, audio is then presented to the input of the audio amplifier Ic1. Pin 5 of the chip is the amplifier output which feeds the loudspeaker via dc blocking capacitor C6. C5 and R6 form a zobel network which basically stops the amplifier from becoming unstable (or, even sometimes breaking into high frequency oscillation, causing the chip to become very hot and fail if not caught in time) at high frequency. This network has virtually no effect on the audio pass band of the amplifier. The on/off switch can be part of the volume control if you wish — alternatively, a separate switch can be used.

Well, that's it, have fun. For

encouragement, I will leave the PCBs along with enough components to populate two boards (sorry, speakers, pots etc you will have to find yourself) in the club shack. Some of the components will be used, but working. Make sure you put Ic1 in the correct way, the little “dot” on the top of the package denotes pin 1. Check, and then check again, if you put it in the wrong way, then you will probably destroy it! Also, if I get time, I will build another oscillator and leave it at the club for perusal — also I will post a picture on the reflector showing a completed board. If you get stuck or have any questions, just ask! There are plenty of members at the club who can help (brush up on your resistor colour code chaps!). One last thing, the circuit is not critical regarding component values, so, if the circuit requires an 18k resistor and you only have a 15k, then put it in! The circuit will work with any voltage from 6 to 12 volts.

Regards, Barry M0DGQ

DXing from Somerset

During mid-February there was a major DXpedition to one of the remotest areas of the world, Peter 1st Island in the Antarctic, carried out by a group of hams from the USA, Russia, and a few European countries (details and photos on www.peterone.com). Their slogan was “More people have flown in outer space than have set foot on Peter 1st Island” which to me is a pretty impressive statement and it sums up how remote and inhospitable this island is.

Being a DXer and loving every minute of being in a pile up and finally cracking it, I followed the expedition with interest and tried to work them on all the bands I have antennas for from my station here in Nuneaton. Unfortunately I only managed to work them on 20M, and I must thank the operator (which I believe was the Russian operator Andy) for pulling my signal out of the cacophony of all the other signals and trying 3 times to get the call correct, but I did hear them on 40M and 15M.

Then on the 18 Feb 2006 my friend Tim (M3SDE) invited me to join him on a trip to see some friends of his in Somerset, a drive from our homes here near Coventry of 170 miles and 3 hours duration, to go and operate from their place in the country. We were also joined by Ant (MW0JZE) who also drove 120 miles from his home near Swansea to have some fun.

We left my house at

04:30z and arrived with Peter (M0ILT) and Peter (M1SOM) at their country retreat at 07:30, then Ant joined us at about 10:30 (he had slept in!!!). When Tim and I first arrived it was very foggy with visibility to around 100 yards, so we missed the wonderful views of the Somerset countryside. Pete and Pete made us welcome and the first priority was to get the kettle on for a good cup of tea (always the first priority!!!). We then set up the radios and checked the amp and antennas were working.

We listened to the radio, and chatted about the old times and various expeditions and generally had some fun. We worked DS1JFY (South Korea) just to check that all was OK and sat and drank more tea (again a must is to have plenty of tea on the go when DXing).

All the time we had the antenna pointing towards 3Y0X listening on 18.145 for their signal to become audible. We kept swapping operators and taking it in turns to listen for the guys down on Peter 1st, and at around 11:30z they started to appear



on the band. I was in the chair and at 11:50z they pulled out my call sign from the melee and I was in the log. There was then a mad scramble in the van (see attached pics) to get to the microphone and be the second op to work them. We all got through within 5 minutes with Peter M1SOM being the last to get in the log. In celebration we had another cup of tea and took some photos.



It was then time for lunch (another excuse for a cuppa!) and back to listening. We all sat there with big grins, and happy we were in the log for band number 2 (we all had worked them on 20M SSB only up to this point). More conversation and tea being drunk, band changes and tuning, to listen for the next opportunity to work the DX. As the afternoon wore on we tuned the radio to 21.295 knowing that this was a frequency they used. We heard them in the noise at about a 4/1, so we sat and listened and again kept swapping to see who could be the first to work them.

At 17:28z Ant MW0JZE was in the log, followed By Tim M3SDE until we had Peter M0ILT on the microphone. Sadly the conditions changed and at 18:45Z we decided to call it a day. Unfortunately Peter had not made that final 15M contact, but he was happy that we had all had a go. He may have managed to get them the following Sunday on 15M but this was one of their last days on the island.

The travellers (Ant, Tim and I) set off at around 1900z back home. We said our

goodbyes and thanked the two Peters for their hospitality and letting us work from their portable station. We called at a Motorway Service station and had something to eat. Tim and I said our goodbyes to Ant and set off back to the Midlands arriving back at my QTH at around 22:00z.

A good day and a long one, but it was worth the trip to make these 2 contacts!!! The equipment we used was a Yaesu FT920, with a RM KL 500 amp at 300W (M3SDE having to turn off the power), and a 2 element SteppIR.

In closing I would like to say a big thankyou to Tim (M3SDE), Pete (M0ILT), Ant (MW0JZE), and Pete (M1SOM) for asking me to join them on the trip and for making the tea (I even managed to get out of making a brew!) and I look forward to our next foray into the wilds of Somerset for some Ham Radio fun. I am now looking forward to receiving the QSL confirming this contact and rare Island and DXCC entity.

Cheers and Beers

Chris Colclough, G1VDP

Its our 25th Anniversary this year

Looking through the excellent history written by Alan G0HBC on our web site, I suddenly realised that 2006 was the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Wythall Radio Club. The club is going to commemorate this occasion with a number of events this year, starting with our annual VHF NFD on 1st/2nd July. On the Saturday we will be having our usual summer BBQ on the contest field at Wythall Park. We will be inviting past and founder members of the club to come and join us on the Saturday evening BBQ.

Later on in the summer we will be registering special event call sign GB25WRC and over a period of several weeks we shall be running this call sign from the shack and from a caravan at the Wythall Carnival on August 13th. We would like to work as many

ex-members as possible and indeed get ex-members to come along to the shack or carnival to see the special event stations and renew some old acquaintances.

Finally we hope to organise some kind of social event before Christmas to which founder and ex-members would be invited to come along. Obviously as time progresses we will firm up on these plans but we would like founder and ex-members to get in touch with us so that we can include them on our mailing lists. So if you happen to know the addresses of founder or ex-members, or if you happen to be a founder or ex-member and get to read this notice, please get in touch with me,

Chris G0EYO

e-mail g0eyo@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris G0EYO, WRC Secretary

Contest Report

We continue to have good club support from club members operating from home in the VHF UKAC contests, and the 80m CC contests.

The club's next major contest activity will be VHF NFD. Subject to approval from the club, this year's event should be focused on a competitive 144 MHz entry, without trying to be active on all the bands, and giving time for more socialising, and perhaps playing on HF as we've done in previous years.

Speaking of HF, Callum M0MCX is hoping to organise the first Wythall entry into the HF SSB Field Day contest at the start of September. Please see Callum or

myself if you're interested in taking part. It should be a lot of fun, and it's good to see a few people have already said they'd like to help out.

Callum and myself will also be operating the 80m SSB GB5HQ station in the IARU HF Championship on July 8th and 9th. The station will be located at Milton Keynes, with a dipole at 100+ feet. Please work us!

Finally, it was amusing and pleasing to see that Wythall Radio Club members represented 50% of the "rest of the world" section of the Irish EI/GI 80m Counties Contest in January. Well done.

73, Lee G0MTN

Rules & Info:

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

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

Contest Calendar

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.

July

HF

| | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Sat 0000-2400 | Canada Day Contest |
| 1-2 | Sat 1100-Sun 1100 | DL-DX RTTY Contest |
| 3 | Mon 1900-2030 | 80m CC CW |
| 8-9 | Sat 1200-Sun 1200 | IARU HF Championship |
| 12 | Wed 1900-2030 | 80m CC SSB |
| 20 | Thu 1900-2030 | 80m CC Data |
| 29-30 | Sat 1200-Sun 1200 | IOTA Contest |

VHF

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1-2 | Sat 1400 – Sun 1400 | VHF NFD |
| 2 | Sun 1100 – Sun 1500 | 144 MHz Backpackers #3 |
| 9 | Sun 1100 – Sun 1500 | 50 MHz Backpackers #2 |
| 16 | Sun 1100 – Sun 1500 | 144 MHz Backpackers #4 |

August

HF

| | | |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 5 | Sat 1200 – Sun 2400 | EU HF Championship |
| 19-20 | Sat-Sun various | SARTG WW RTTY |
| 26-27 | Sat 1200 – Sun 2400 | SCC RTTY |

VHF

| | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| 5 | Sat 1400 – Sat 2200 | 144 MHz Low Power |
| 6 | Sun 0900 – Sat 1500 | 432 MHz Low Power |

September

HF

| | | |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2-3 | Sat 1300-Sun 1300 | SSB Field Day |
| 23-24 | Sat 0000-Sun 2400 | CQ WW RTTY |
| 23-24 | Sat 1200-Sun 1200 | Scandinavian Activity Contest SSB |

VHF

| | | |
|-----|-------------------|------------------------|
| 2-3 | Sat 1400-Sun 1400 | 144 MHz Trophy |
| 3 | Sun 1100-Sun 1500 | 144 MHz Backpackers #5 |

Contests Entered

February

432 AFS: G1WAC 9, G0EYO/P 4, G1VDP/P 8, G6KMQ 15,
M0COK/P 7, M0COP/P 24, M0MCX 10
CC SSB: M3UKX 3, G0MTN 48, G0ICJ/P 11,
M0COP 22, M0MCX 29, MW5HOC 18
CC DATA: M0COP 33, G0MTN 60
CC CW: M0COP 37, G0MTN 104, MW5HOC 10
144 UKAC: G1WAC 19, G1VDP 10, M0MCX 14, G0MTN 5
432 UKAC: G1WAC 3, M0MCX 1

XE RTTY G0MTN 59
WPX RTTY G0MTN 818
M0COP 100
1.8 MHz G0MTN 43
PACC G0MTN 20
ARRL CW G0MTN 400
UBA CW G0MTN 160
REF SSB G0MTN 30 (80M)
G1VDP 41Q (40M)
M0MCX 23Q (40M+hangover)
Russian PSK G0MTN 18

March

80m Data March: M0COP 31 M0AEJ 4 G0MTN 74
80m CW March: M0COP 50 G0MTN 39
80m SSB March: M0COP 54 M0AEJ 11 M0MCX 75 G1VDP 59
G0MTN 141 G0ICJ/P 46
144 / 432 G1WAC 4 or 5
ARRL DX SSB G0MTN 288 (20m)
Commonwealth G0MTN 5
Russian DX G0MTN 624 (20m) + 201 (80m)
WPX SSB G1VDP 311 20m High
G0MTN 253 20m High
M0MCX 310 80m High

April

80m Data April: M0COP 49 M0AEJ 14 (qrp) G0MTN 75
80m CW April: G0MTN 109 M0COP 47
80m SSB April: G0ICJ/P 39 G0MTN 105 M0AEJ 11 (qrp)
M0COP 28 (qrp) M0MCX 86 G1VDP 35
144 UKAC April G1WAC 16 G1VDP/P 15 M0MCX 25
M0COP/P 40 M0AEJ 8
SP DX Contest G0MTN 559 QSO (3 bands)

| | | |
|----------------|-------|-----|
| | M0MCX | 157 |
| EU Sprint CW | G0MTN | 80 |
| EU Sprint SSB | G0MTN | 117 |
| SP RTTY | G0MTN | 374 |
| UBA Spring SSB | G0MTN | 17 |

May

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 80m Data May: | M0COP 44 | M0AEJ 19 (qrp) | G0MTN 34 |
| 80m CW May: | G0MTN 122 | M0COP 38 | |
| 80m SSB May: | G0MTN 160 | G1VDP 74 | M0AEJ 11 (qrp) |
| | M0COP 54 | M0MCX 140 | M0VRR 47 |
| 144 UKAC | G1WAC 37 | M0COP/P 30 | G1VDP 20 M0MCX 10 |
| | M3OQO 15 | M0AEJ 8 | |
| Volta RTTY | G0MTN 154 | | |
| Baltic | G0MTN 253 | | |
| ARI | G0MTN 770 | | |
| | M0COP 37 | | |
| WPX CW | G0MTN 1404 | | |

Contest Results

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 144 UKAC January | G1WAC 3/8 Open | M0COP/P 4/8 Open |
| DARC HNY Contest | G0MTN 109/150 | Mixed |
| Baltic Contest | G0MTN 7/30 | Mixed |
| | M0MCX 30/57 | SSB |
| Worked All Germany | G0MTN 2/4 | Mixed |
| 144 Low Power | G0MTN 10/12 | |
| 144 UKAC Feb | G1WAC 8/9 Open | G1VDP 32/38 SF |
| | M0MCX 33/38 SF | G0MTN 38/38 SF (Wow!) |
| 144 UKAC Mar | G1WAC =8/10 Open | M0MCX 25/34 SF |
| | G1VDP =32/34 SF | |
| 432 UKAC Jan | G1WAC 2/2 | Open |
| 432 UKAC Feb | G1WAC 2/2 | Open M0MCX 8/9 SF |
| Christmas Cumulatives | M0COK 21/23 | |
| 1 st 1.8 MHz | G0MTN 29/35 | |
| 80m SSB Feb | G0MTN 42 | M0MCX 70 M0COP 80 |
| | MW5HOC 106 | |
| | G0ICJ/P 124 (/159 Low) | M3UKX 19 (/25 QRP) |
| 80m CW Feb | G0MTN 20 | M0COP 95 (/127 Low) |
| | MW5HOC 18 (/18 QRP) | |
| 80m Data Feb | G0MTN =6 | M0COP 41 (/71 Low) |
| CQ WPX CW 05 | G0MTN 1 | SOABLP |
| 50 UKAC Jan | G1WAC 2 / 2 | Open |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 80m SSB Mar | G0MTN 16 M0COP 76 M0AEJ 19 (/23 QRP section) | M0MCX 51 G0ICJ/P 88 (/152 low section) | G1VDP 70 |
| 80m CW Mar | M0COP 84 | G0MTN 103 (/127 Low) | |
| 80m Data Mar | G0MTN 2 M0AEJ 15 (/15 QRP) | M0COP 44 | |
| CQ WW VHF | G0MTN Sole English entrant J | | |
| IRTS 80m Counties | M0MCX 11 (SSB. Leading non-EI SSB entrant) | | |
| | M0COP 25 | | |
| | G0MTN 8 (Mixed. Leading non-EI mixed entrant) | | |
| 80m Club Championships | Wythall 12 / 70 current placing | | |
| 80m SSB Apr | G0MTN 43 G0ICJ/P 108 M0AEJ 20 (QRP) | M0MCX 53 G1VDP 119 | M0COP 15 (QRP) |
| 80m CW CW | G0MTN 31 | M0COP 89 | |
| 432 AFS | G6KMQ 20 M0COP/P 8 G0EYO/P 11 (O) | G1WAC 23 M0COK/P 9 | M0MCX 25 (SF) G1VDP/P 10 |
| | A team 6 | B team 11 | C team 14 |
| 144/432 | M0COK 10/12 (144) 11/12 (overall) | | |
| 144 AFS | G0EYO 26 G0NES 34 M3SDE 47 (SF) M0COK/P 10 A team 5 | G4LCH 30 G6ZDQ 35 M0COP/P 7 M0VRR/P 16 (O) B team 6 | M0AEJ 41 G1WAC 8 |
| April 144 UKAC | M0MCX 23 | M0AEJ 35 (SF) | M0COP/P 7 |
| | G1WAC 13 | G1VDP/P 14 (O) | |
| UBA SSB | M0MCX 3 rd 40m HP G0MTN 17 th 20m LP | | |
| ARRL RTTY RU | G0MTN 1 st G MOLP (World 6 th DX-MO-LP) M0COP 12 th G SOLP | | |

Diary

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| July 1/2 | VHF NFD |
| August 15th? | Wythall Carnival |
| September 2nd & 3rd | HF NFD |
| September Fri 8 / Sat 9th | Leicester Radio Rally |

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

My journey to the Cook Islands in January 2005 was my third trip since 2001 and each trip has taken about 1 year to plan, so my story starts in January 2005 shortly before our departure. January was the time for checking final details of the expedition and building the 40m & 80m Delta Loop. The website has now been completed and is updated regularly.

After the events of 9/11 I consider it quite important to do all you can to ensure that carrying Amateur Radio Equipment is not considered a security risk when travelling around the world. A full itinerary of all the team's communications equipment, serial numbers and an explanation of what we were doing, was e-mailed to Air New Zealand in Auckland. They have then forwarded this to check-in areas in London and Los Angeles. On my last visits to ZK1 this has proved to be an excellent way to speed up the checking-in once at the airport.

Day 1, Jan 30th

For the Swedish team members (Magnus SM6WET & Thomas SM6XMY) the day started early as they were up ready to leave for Gothenburg Airport at 4am local time. Jed M0SDZ and I had arranged to meet them at London Heathrow at 10am. We were soon through to check-in and our advanced letter to Air New Zealand had helped us to speed the process with all our 11 cases, weighing a total of 300 Kg, on their way to the aircraft. After a few relaxing beers we were soon on board the Boeing 747 and up and away. Flying to Los Angeles we chased the sun setting over Greenland, an awesome sight with glaciers, the snow and reflections from the sun. For those of you armchair DXers I hope my descriptions of our adventure give you a little insight into the

highs and lows of a DXpedition adventure. It seemed a lifetime but the 11 hour flight to Los Angeles was soon to end and here the fun begins, he says sarcastically! I always fear customs in LA! We had to collect our luggage and take it to the collection area for the onward flight. To our horror the customs guys were slamming the cases onto the conveyer belt and I really feared the worst about some of the equipment. We will find out later I guess! Once again my letter to Air NZ helped, as Gemma from Air NZ ground staff had been assigned to look after us and ensure that we could all board the onward flight to the Cook Islands.

Day 2, Jan 31st

After re boarding the plane late the previous night we had another stop at Tahiti Airport in French Polynesia. The temp here was 27c at 3am — A taste for what was to come. A short wait here before we again boarded the plane for the next leg. Arriving at Rarotonga about 5am local, still the journey was to continue, but we found that a 10m mast had not been reloaded onto the plane at LA and the airline had promised to forward it the next day. It actually did us a favour as this meant that we would be 10kgs lighter for the Inter Island flight to Aitutaki Island. Waiting for us at Aitutaki was Queen Tutai who drove us to the lodges



where we were to set up the expedition. By now it was close to midday and the sun was beating down fiercely. The temperature of 33°C and the high humidity was going to be a real problem for us. We started putting up the antennas, 17m and 20m 3 element mono band Yagis, a YP2 antenna which we set on 20m and that was really all we could do today. Exhaustion hit us hard by mid-afternoon after the very punishing last two days.

Day 3, Feb 1st

After a 12 hour marathon sleep for some team members, the job for the day was to set up more antennas. Conditions on 20m were very low so it was best to work the DX early and late and work on the antennas during the afternoon. A 40m vertical dipole, and a 80m Quad loop was erected, we had some great help from a local guy who was quite happy to climb up to 25 metres up the trees in burning midday heat. We paid him NZ\$50 for his dangerous work. Already I was being bitten badly by mosquitoes on my legs so I am very sore today after spending hours in what can only be described as jungle. This evening the Samade Bar was too inviting to miss, great entertainment from a Cook Island dance group, a buffet, and plenty of beer.

Day 4, Feb 2nd

Our first chance to work a pile up although the path to Europe was only open briefly on the short path this morning. One more antenna to put up this morning, the 30m vertical dipole. Band conditions, as expected are poor, but we are having fun trying our best to work the long and short paths back to Europe.

Day 6, Feb 4th

Today we have some bad news, Cyclone Meena developed in the Northern Group of

Islands and is currently around Palmerston Island and is heading straight for Aitutaki Island. Luckily we are in a location away from the sea and sheltered from the oncoming storm. However, tomorrow we will be closing down the radio stations until the cyclone has passed on Sunday. It is scheduled to hit the island on Friday afternoon. We have had many enquiries about the North Cook Islands part of this expedition but we have some negotiating next week with Air Rarotonga to air-lift our small rucksacks of radio equipment, this is proving to be troublesome at the moment. Let us hope for the best! All the heavy equipment is already on Manihiki Atoll, all we need to carry is 2 radios and PSUs and laptops. That alone weighs 25 Kgs, plus some clothes. The day passed without much sign of the cyclone. We have received mixed messages about the path and arrival of Meena, the latest weather reports from New Zealand Metrological Office didn't arrive as phone lines were down, and that's before the cyclone arrives! Weather today has been just very wet and hot at 33°C. We decided to play safe and take down the Yagi antennas and prepare them safely on the grass away from harms way. We left up all the wire antennas in the trees as they would be easy to put back up if damaged.

Day 7, Feb 5th

After stocking up on more food and water in case Meena caused damage, we settled down to what could be an uncomfortable time ahead. At least for now we still have the wire antennas and so far no power outages. By midday the torrential rain had been coming down for several hours and the wind is slowly increasing. For sure Meena is just North West of us now! This morning the bands were in good shape, even making contacts to Europe on the long path with the

wires. This afternoon I was in radio contact with A35RK Paul on Tonga Island. He gave me the co-ordinates of the eye of the storm and its expected path over the next day. This is easy to plot using DX Atlas software, where we could see the path exactly as it runs South East through the Cook Islands. The hurricane has a quadrant of 200 miles across and was just 100 miles to the west of us tracking SE at 15 mph!

Day 8, Feb 6th

Meena is hitting us hard, sitting here at 01:40 am with the noise I can best describe as a freight train ripping through. I am sure that the path of this cyclone must have changed ... we can only wait till morning to find out for sure. By 3am the electric power was cut, and trees all around hit the ground with a loud thud. The storm was now at its peak ... At 7.30 am local time I awoke to see the whole area strewn with debris, I walked to Des's house (he owns the lodges) to report to him that everyone here was safe. In fact we did not even have any structural damage to the lodges. Des had a generator going to download the latest met office charts. These showed us that our fears of a direct hit by the storm had materialised. The eye of Cyclone Meena centred just 16 miles East of us and wind speeds 115 Mph gusting to 180Mph ripped through Aitutaki Island and maintained that speed for up to 3 hours as the eye passed. Already workmen were clearing roads and working on power lines. Our driveway had to be cleared of about 5 trees before we could reach the road. Three Australian female doctors who were working at the hospital were staying in the lodges next to us and we decided to drive up to the hospital to check on casualties. This storm, people say, is the worst in living memory on Aitutaki Island and a lot of damage has been caused. Many resorts like

Pearl Beach Resort had to be evacuated yesterday and have been badly damaged. The fishing Club at the harbour was destroyed and 5 metre sea surge damaged properties along the coast. Incredibly no people had been injured. Certainly we will have no radio activity today — the winds are still too high to work on antenna masts. Eleven hours later the power was restored and once again we can shower. All our wire antennas destroyed but repairable, we will try to be back on air by Tuesday 8th Feb. Now we have lots of hot exhausting work on antennas again ...

Day 9, Feb 7th

Today was a very difficult day for the team, we spent hours putting up the antennas after the big storm. The 80m Delta loop had to be repaired as a falling tree had sliced it in half, connection was soldered and we hired a local to climb 25 metres to the top of two palm trees to get the D loop up into the air. We were not able to work on the 40m or 30m verticals as they were tangled in a fallen tree which contained a wasp nest and these wasps are big!!! The work is exhausting in 34°C and high humidity. By mid-afternoon the work was done. Food on the island is also hard to find. Bread is sold early and by 9am it's all gone so tomorrow we will have to go to the shop and miss the Europe pile up. So without any lunch, tired and hungry, we drove to the Samade Bar late in the



afternoon. This evening provided good openings for Jed and Magnus while Tim worked on 40 & 80 ... 80m was really tough going. But thanks to those in England that did persevere with me.

Day 12, Feb 10th

The last few days have given very poor band conditions, with high K index levels at high latitude meaning the path to Europe was closed for long periods, one unusual QSO was made on 40m to Scotland at 13:15z, that is 5 hours after his sunrise. A good time to explore the Aitutaki Island lagoon, take in some sun and experience life on the Island. This evening gave a good opening to Europe. The 40m vertical was put up again today after a lot of hard work moving a huge tree that fell on the wire during last weeks storm. Thanks again to Sally's climbing guys who managed again to climb to 25 metres high.

Day 14, Feb 12th

Good openings again on 15m and 20m at sunrise and sunset gave Europe a chance to break into our log books but the openings are so short. From nothing the pile up begins and in maybe 30 minutes the band closes so when it does open we were thankful to DL5RBW to enter us in the cluster to waste no time. For the Swedish team members their mission is to work Sweden and for the English to work UK operators, the smile on our faces says it all when we achieve our goal. We have to start thinking about our expedition to the North Cook Island, Manihiki Atoll. Since arriving here we learn that Air Rarotonga are being very strict on the 10 kg luggage allowance on the aircraft



and NO excess baggage permitted. So we had to ask Queen Tutai to assist us in making a telephone call to Air Rarotonga's owner Ewan Smith to plead our case and importance of Amateur Radio to the income of his company. I think it has done the trick!!! He sympathises with and agrees that it should be ok to waive the luggage restriction on us. We wait to see if this works out as planned! ZK1WET

Magnus is active in the CQWW RTTY Contest this weekend. Many stations reply with "ZK1 ??????" as they cannot believe there is a RTTY station on the islands, I guess it is not common. However it is creating a lot of interest on the bands and well worth spending time on RTTY. With temperatures of 34°C by day and 27°C by night it is great to have a cold shower as often as you can. The Internet went down here for a couple of days and a trip to the internet café was also no good as we could not send any files for logs or photos to the web manager. The mosquitoes are biting hard, or at least trying to and this is wearing me down a little — they sure love my blood! Working 40m is difficult. It seems that there is a lot of pirate traffic in the Pacific with MM talking together from 7.000 - 7.100 MHz, never using call signs and always jabbering for hours making the band at times impossible to work. From 7.100 - 7.300 MHz after dark is full of BC stations, so again working anything is an achievement. News now of Cyclone Nancy approaching us from the North East.

Tim M3SDE

To be continued...

WARC Annual DXCC Challenge 2006

Hello all, and welcome to the first quarterly DXCC challenge report. For those who are unsure of what this is please see the rules attached. It is a new “contest”, or rather challenge, to encourage club members to get on the air and work as many DXCC countries as possible on all bands between 160m and 70cms. It is based on an idea from CQ magazine that I have adapted and made simpler so all licence classes and operators have a chance of winning the trophy in both categories.

There are two categories, Open and Restricted. In both instances there will be a trophy and certificate for the category winner, and a certificate presented to the second and third placed. We will be presenting two trophies to the winner of each category, one to keep and an annual hand-back trophy. In addition at the end of each quarter (March, June and September) there will be a certificate presented to the leading station in both categories.

A log sheet has been produced on Excel and this will automatically add up scores and show where you are in the year. This is available from chrisglvdp@btinternet.com along with a full copy of the rules.

The current standings in the table are as follows.

Restricted

1st G0EYO Chris 33 points

At the moment Chris is the only one who has posted a score with me in the restricted section.

Open

1st G0MTN Lee 252 points

2nd M3SDE Tim 171 points

3rd M0MCX Callum 113 points

4th M0COP Pete 94 points

G1VDP Chris 216 points

Thanks to the members who have shown interest in this challenge, and let's hope that more will enter as it is a Marathon, and not a sprint, the scores can be built up through the year.

And don't forget that on VHF/UHF (50MHz up) the score for each DXCC is 2 points!!!

Good Luck, good DX, and cheers and beers to all.

*Chris Colclough
G1VDP*

| Call | Op | 160 | 80 | 60 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 70 | Tot |
|---------------|--------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| G0MTN | Lee | 43 | 56 | 0 | 52 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 252 |
| M3SDE | Tim | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 120 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 171 |
| M0MCX | Callum | 0 | 54 | 0 | 32 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 113 |
| M0COP | Pete | 0 | 37 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 94 |
| G1VDP | Chris | 0 | 9 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 101 | 35 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 216 |
| G0EYO | Chris | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 24 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 33 |
| Totals | | 0 | 159 | 3 | 163 | 2 | 357 | 39 | 67 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 26 | 10 | 879 |

Wythall Amateur Radio Club Annual DXCC Challenge Rules

Aim of Contest

- To encourage operators to get on the air and work DX from their home stations through the year.
- To encourage both old and new operators on the air to work as many DXCC entities as possible on all bands.

Duration

- Start on 00:01 January 1st each year through to 00:00 December 31st each year.

Categories

- Low Power – Stations using maximum of 100W. No contest contacts to count.
- Open – Any station using up to maximum legal limit output power and contesters (who could work 100 DXCC entities on each band in one weekend). Contest contacts allowed.

Eligible to enter

- All licensed members of Wythall Amateur Radio Club – regardless of licence type, and they can enter any category (i.e. M3s can enter the open section if they are contesting).

Frequencies and Modes

- All contacts on any allocated amateur frequency.
- All modes allowed by the amateur licence — with exception of contacts made using repeaters or echo link.
- Mixed mode entries are eligible — but each DXCC entity only counts once on each band.

Scoring

- Score 1 point for each DXCC entity worked on the HF bands. 2 points for DXCC entities worked on VHF/UHF bands.
- The final score is the number of DXCC entities worked on each band.

Winning Station

- The winning station in each category (Low and Open) will receive a trophy to hold for one year and a smaller trophy to keep along with a certificate.
- 2nd and 3rd placed entries will receive a certificate of merit.

How to enter

- Entries can be on the attached Excel sheet, either sent in electronically or manually.
- QSLs are not required — but please QSL the contacts if required for other awards.
- All yearly logs must be received before the end of January of the following year (2006 log for Jan 2007).
- Logs to be sent to Chris G1VDP via his e-mail or home address on QRZ.com.
- Quarterly logs to be sent in for the updating of the database to allow the running totals to be published in each newsletter.

The prizes will be awarded at the Club's Annual rally.

All logs will be checked before the final result is announced. Quarterly updates will be published in the club newsletter.

The term DXCC entity refers to the current list of countries/islands that the ARRL publish on their website (www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/dxcclist.txt). This is also useful as a reference for anyone chasing the basic DXCC (DX Century Club) award of 100 countries.

For any other questions please contact G1VDP Chris at chrisg1vdp@btinternet.com.

Remember this is being run on trust. Any cheating will be discovered (S1 is not due on the air next year or in the foreseeable future — check the DXCC list for the country). All 425 DX bulletins will be available for any member if requested from Chris G1VDP, or by subscribing at www.425dxn.org for free.

Chairman's Report

Well another three months have passed since members were updated on the club's activities.

We have seen some interesting developments. The club has successfully completed yet another rally, thus helping to ensure the clubs long term financial future. A fascinating talk was done by Chris Pettit (G0EYO) on Eddystone Radio, coinciding with the launch of www.eddystoneusergroup.org.uk. The talk succeeded in giving old and new members a thorough insight into what was once one of Britain's foremost radio manufacturers.

We also saw the 4th Tolkien Weekend event, this being big enough for the club to mobilise the tower and shack-van. A great weekend was enjoyed by all who took part. Suffice to say all these events were only possible with the help and dedication of you the club members. I would love to see even more involvement by members in these events. All too often we see the same faces doing all the work. Fresh impetus from the members not so socially active would make things easier and even more fun for all involved.

Those of you with access to the club list-bot will be aware of the significance of 2006. This being the 25th year since the formation of the club. A period that has

seen many changes, most of which can only be described as for the better. Chris Pettit has put forward some proposals on how we can celebrate the fact. To start, we are inviting all current and ex-members to come join us at the barbecue at the NFD event on 1st July. Also a special event callsign is being obtained in order that we can promote this celebratory year. During August another demonstration station is being aired at the Wythall annual carnival. These forthcoming events still require members' time and effort to be a success. The carnival is our club's way of assisting the Wythall House committee whilst at the same time helping ourselves to have an influence in how the house is run, this by keeping a good peer relationship with the house. I hope I can persuade you all to assist in this and future club events. Let's make this special year even extra special.

Also just started is the next foundation course being run by Callum and myself, with 6 candidates and hence new members. Let's wish them all success in their new hobby and welcome them to the club.

Wishing you all a happy and warm summer quarter with lots of dx for those that are active on radio.

Chris Meadows g6kmq@g6kmq.me.uk