

Wythall Radio Club meets from 8pm every Tuesday and Friday evening at Wythall House, Wythall Park, Silver Street, Wythall, B47 6LZ, near Birmingham. Visitors are very welcome. **Wythall Radio Club** is affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain. Contact g0eyo@blueyonder.co.uk

The Xmas Contest 23 years old !

At the Xmas Social in December 1994, our then Chairman Simon G4TVR issued a challenge to those present to work as many members as possible from Xmas Day to the following Sunday. A few members remembered and were on channel S20 on Christmas Day after which it was a bit more difficult.

Alan G0HBC (now SK) worked some 13 members and Chris G0EYO worked 10 members. We decided that the following year (1995) we ought to write

First places in both sections are hard fought for by club members and although participation was a little down in 2016, the trophies and certificates are much prized.

This year Kevin 2E0NCO won 1st prize in the 2m/70cm section with a total of 182 QSOs giving 115 over the best 5 days and 35 multipliers plus bonus points giving a total of 4275 points. Ian 2E0IDR came second with a total of 2256 points and Phil 2E0WTH, was third with a total of 1951 points.



David G7IBO won first prize in the all bands all modes section with 155 QSOs giving 102 over the best 5 days with 33 multipliers plus bonuses giving him 4066 points. Chris G7DDN came second with 2182 points and Peter M5DUO was third with 2016 points. Certificates were



after the contest are looked forward to by all.

Roll on the Easter Contest when we can do it all again.

Chris G0EYO

some rules and make it a regular feature in the club calendar. Twenty three years later the Wythall Club Xmas contest has developed into an established event, and is perhaps unique amongst radio clubs.

The contest now has two sections; an all mode section and a 2m/70cm FM section. Rules are essentially the same as were developed in the first few years. Work members each day over 9 days, take the total QSOs of the best five days and multiply it by the number members worked. Due to the hard work of members Lee G0MTN, Chris G7DDN and Colin G0MGM (SK) over the years we have logging software.

also awarded to Juliet M6RSC for leading Foundation licence holder is the 2m/70cm section and Les M6IOI in the all modes section.

Congratulations to all who won and participated. Special thanks also to Lee G0MTN who organises the contest, adjudicates it and looks after the logging software. His presentations



Jon's Day Off!

Jon's day off in December began with a full plan consisting of taking the car for a service, Hospital appointments, taking my wife for lunch and Christmas shopping, however by 8:20am Giles G0NXA had put paid to all of those 'best laid plans' by informing me that there would be a team from the University of Leicester arriving in a small village a few miles north of me to launch a High Altitude Balloon to the edge of space! Well of course all plans went out of the window at that point .

We met the team, consisting of three budding physicists from The University of Leicester and members of AstRoSoc UOL, on a very damp and grey morning on the large village green in the riverside village Twynning near Tewkesbury. The UOL Astronomic Society is a STEM society which engages in academic projects and has worked in the past with NASA and other space agencies in various outreach activities.

This was their first launch and flight of a HAB (High Altitude Balloon) and the air (at ground level) was filled with a mixture of excitement and anxiety to say the least. The flight of these type of balloons is a growing hobby and interest worldwide and we as amateurs can get involved as they normally have on board, as did this one, a small 70 cm transmitter that will transmit telemetry information, gained from GPS and other on board sensors, via RTTY to earth receiving stations (normally Amateurs) who then receive and decode this information before pushing it up to the internet where it is then displayed on a Map allowing the balloon flyers to chase the balloon and recover it from its final destination.

They use a standard weather balloon filled with Helium to get the lift and normally they are simply left to ascend to their target height of around 30,000m before the air pressure around them drops so low that the balloon expands and pops and then a small parachute deploys to return the payload to Earth. However this team from UOL wanted to test and prove their engineering skills and rigged up a method whereby, controlled by an Arduino, at a certain time (pre calculated based on ascent rate) a valve would be opened and the helium would be vented at a rate that allowed a controlled descent back to Terra Firma. Personally I have not seen this method deployed before and it was great to see the effort that they had gone to, to achieve this using interesting and readily available technology and 3d printed components.

As well as the control mechanism mentioned above and the GPS and transmit-

ter, the payload also contained, two other methods of tracking via satellites for backup and 3 cameras from which you can see some of the amazing pictures taken here.

The launch window agreed with the CAA was 12:00 to 14:00 and due to unforeseen technical difficulties (including losing a small screw and having to use the heat from a car engine to soften plastic tubing) every minute was needed and the launch took place at 13:56, with a countdown provided by children from the local village school who were intrigued about the goings on in the village and had come out to watch.

It was an extremely successful flight with the balloon reaching an altitude of 28,000m, deploying the venting system and landing in a field in Warwickshire where it was successfully found using DF techniques (reminiscent of our very own fox hunt) and recovered at 16:00 that afternoon after its trip to the 'edge of space'. It was tracked on the ground by multiple radio amateurs including G8FJG on the frequency 443.061 Mhz decoded using the software FL-DIGI (with add-ons for HAB) and uploaded to the internet site WWW.HABHUB.ORG where you can go to find out lots more information and, download decoding software and see live tracking of other balloons worldwide.



both on the subject generally and some wonderful footage taken from payload cameras.

All in all, a really great day off from work but my original plan went completely to pot and I still owe my beautiful wife, Annette, a posh lunch somewhere in Cheltenham

Jon M0JMM



For further information, please search YouTube for "High Altitude Balloon" and you will find a lot of interesting videos

VDSL problems ruining Amateur Radio

I have been following comments on other forum's with regard to the interference being caused on the HF bands through the use of VDSL technology knowing that both Ian M0IDR and Tim M0URX have both suffered (are suffering?) from its use. I saw an forum comment from Martin G0HDB who had repeated an extract from a posting by John Rogers M0JAV, the Chairman of the RSGB's EMC Committee, on the RSGB's EMC Matters forum to the effect that Ofcom are not recognising the problem and cannot agree with RSGB on the number of complaints that have been made to Ofcom (Ofcom say the number is insignificant).

" PLT apparatus are now required to conform to EN50561pt1 which requires notching. VDSL devices are required to conform to EN55022 (or EN55032 from March 2017) neither of which has a limit for radiated emissions below 30MHz. They require conducted emissions on the telecoms port to be less than 20dBuA and BT report that all of their devices are compliant. Measurements we have taken of devices which meet this specification, still cause significant levels of RFI to amateur radio.

However we know that all the devices in the green boxes for VDSL (DSLAMs) have provision for notching the amateur bands but apparently it has not been activated by Openreach. We have formally

requested that this be introduced. Ofcom have not supported us because they say as a result of their measurements "There was no evidence of interference that would cause restricted use of the amateur radio frequencies tested at any of the locations visited. At one of the locations visited there was evidence of a slightly raised noise floor, on a band that was not in use by the amateur." Our own measurements at these sites show levels up to S9+20dB and we dispute their statement and readings.

Fortunately Openreach have been helpful in other ways with Line balance checks for all lines around amateurs who we have confirmed are suffering from higher than normal VDSL interference.

We have recently completed our investigations at 11 locations and presented the 170 page report to BT and Ofcom. In this we suggested a number of actions to BT/Openreach and await their response. I hope to publish a short summary of this report in the near future. I can assure you we have banged the table with Ofcom many times it just makes your hands sore.
John Rogers M0JAV"

As you'll see from the information provided by John, Ofcom seems to be in complete denial about there being a

problem of interference to the amateur service caused by VDSL; I would urge everyone who is suffering from QRM from VDSL or any other source to report it to the RSGB EMCC so that John and his colleagues have as much ammunition as possible with which to keep battering Ofcom (at the risk of making the EMCC's members' hand even more sore...).

Anyone interested in seeing the rest of the postings in the thread that John started a few days ago on the EMC Matters forum about the article in the latest RadCom about Ofcom and VDSL will find the thread at:

[Radcom January 2017 article by Ofcom on page 44 Ofcom's approach to VDSL | RSGB Forums](#)

Chris G0EYO



WYTHALL HAMFEST 2017

The 32nd ANNUAL WYTHALL HAMFEST will take place on SUNDAY 19th March 2017.

SUNDAY 19th March 2017. 10:00am to 3:00pm

DISABLED ACCESS FROM 09:30am

Wythall House, Wythall Park, Silver Street, Wythall, BIRMINGHAM, B47 6LZ

- Lots of Radio and Electronic Component Traders
- Refreshments from 9:00am & a Licensed Bar from 12:00 noon
 - All under cover in 4 Separate Halls
 - On-site & road parking
 - Just two miles from M42 Junction 3
 - Open at 10:00 am (09.30am for Disabled)
 - Admission £4.00
 - Well signposted

First steps in operating remotely!

Bob Whelan G3PJT's talk on remote operating stimulated me to get my Xmas present - a pair of Remoterig black boxes - configured for my router and IC7100. Having fairly basic technical skills, I decided not to try to emulate Dave G3YXM's home designed remote set-up but go for a ready-made, follow-the-instructions solution! As a result of which, I now know rather more about port-forwarding, dynamic IPs and the value of YouTube videos when you get stuck!

ton on the IC7100 control head, which is a very nice feature. The port forwarding functions in the router are then configured so that the Remoterig control box (at the operating QTH) will be able to talk to it.

Control (operating) QTH:

This is where-ever I am located when operating remotely. Microbit (the Swedish company that produce Remoterig) provide a facility so that the Control box can be automatically configured to connect to the Radio box via their server.

signed for table use.

I made my first QSOs in early February by participating in the 70cms UKAC contest on SSB (see photo), and later on 80m. With a good internet connection it is just like operating from home. In the 70cms contest, my first qso was with Gerard F8BRK who is 370kms from my home QTH in Birmingham, but only 100kms from my operating QTH in Chichester!! I kept having to remember that in radio-terms I was in good old Brum!!

The lessons: Very little equipment is needed at the operating QTH - control head, Remoterig box, PSU, mic and key. Smarthing power switch is very effective, and tuning the radio on separately gives extra protection. The manufacturer's instruction manual on setting up the boxes is very detailed, but even so it's possible to go wrong. I also didn't know how to configure my router. However a quick search on the internet turned up some very useful videos and pdfs from people who had been there!! I learnt a lot from this process and now I'm a fan of Remoterig!

Next steps: It was fun doing the 70cms contest remotely, but I don't have computer control of my rotator so I was only projecting RF in a south-easterly direction - where I'd left the beam pointing at home. But a replacement rotator to enable me to control it over the internet is in hand for the spring!

I'm happy to bring the control equipment down to the club if anyone would like a play and knows the Wythall RC WiFi logon details!!

Chris G3YHF

I visit Chichester quite often, but cannot erect any antennas at that QTH, so remote seemed the ideal solution. The set-up is as follows:

Remote (home) QTH: This is where the radio and antennas are located. One Remoterig box is configured for and connected to my broadband router (Virgin Superhub 1). All the configuration of the Remoterig boxes is undertaken using the software provided by the manufacturers, and using the very comprehensive instruction manual!! As the radio room is some way from the router, I connect the Remoterig box by ethernet cable to a Powerline extender - it will just about work via my domestic WiFi, but not consistently.

The Remoterig box is connected to the IC7100 radio via a single Icom cable (this is the cable normally used to connect control head to radio). A single PSU drives the radio, Remoterig box and autotuner. A Samsung Smarthing plug, operated from my mobile phone, is used to switch the PSU's mains power on and off. The radio itself is switched on and off remotely from the normal power but-

erig box, and through this also powers the IC7100 control head (a separate connection to power the control head is not needed, which minimises wires!!). The mic and headphones plug into the control head and the paddle key plugs in to the Remoterig unit, which has a speed control on the front. This minimises jitter on cw compared with plugging the key in to the Icom control head.

Operating remotely: So does it work?

Yes, it is an excellent way of operating remotely, as those members who had a chance to play with G3PJT's set-up the other week will have seen. The IC7100, like the K3, is perfectly designed for remote operation because the control head sits on the table in an ergonomically sensible position - unlike, for example, the FT857 control head which isn't de-

This means that the only thing that needs to be set up at an operating QTH is to connect to the local WiFi (the box has a WiFi function and antenna) or router. The Remoterig control box is connected to the IC7100 control head with another single Icom cable. A small Yaesu FT817 2 amp psu powers the Remoter-

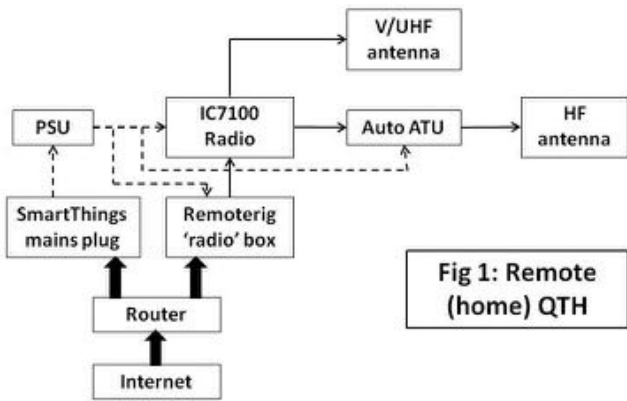
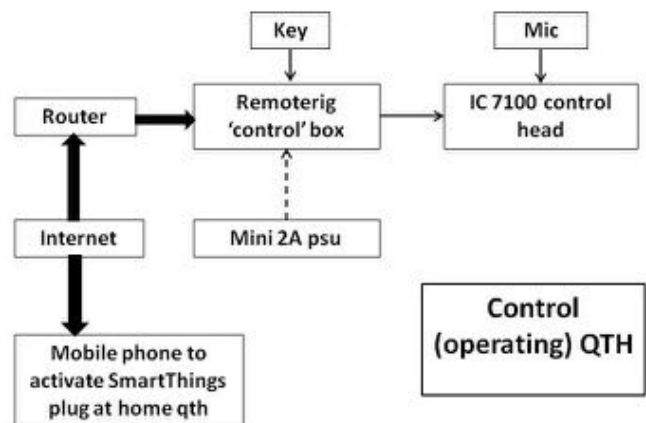


Fig 1: Remote (home) QTH



Simple Touch CW paddle - Great for non-technically minded people

I had the inspiration to do this project when my paddle broke and all I had was computer keying to the radio. I did a little research on the internet and came across a simple design by MOUKD so I decided to take that and make some slight changes to suit what I had lying around.

For this project you will need the following materials:

- BC548 NPN Transistors. It is important that you get this type or similar to ensure it is sensitive to the small electrical current supplied by your body when you touch the paddle.
- Small plastic project box or similar (NOT metal)
- 1m of thin 3 core cable. I used 8 core CAT5 networking cable.
- Stereo Jack plug to the size to suite your radio's CW key port
- 3x Pennies or thin metal strips (These act as you paddles and earth)
- Thin wire 1mm is ideal

Tools can include:

- Soldering Iron
- Knife or wire strippers
- Dremel or similar cutting tool

To make the CW paddle I started on the small plastic project box. Using a drill and a drill bit a similar size to the main wire feed between paddle and radio drill a small hole into the back of the box. Then using the Dremel tool, cut 2 slots to the size of your pennies/metal strip. Push your metal strips through (it should be a tight fit) If it is not a tight fit the fill up the gaps/movement with some hot glue or blue tac.



TIP: Solder a small length of the 1mm thin wire to the inside of the metal strip before securing in place.

Next you need to solder the Base from the Transistors to the paddles. To some it may seem obvious but - One transistor to One paddle.

Ok now focusing on the "dit" or left hand paddle as you look at it in the operating position. Take this transistor and Solder the Emitter to your 3rd metal strip/coin (Earth) and then take a length of the 3 core cable to your Stereo Jack plug. Solder to the relevant part of the jack plug and seen in the diagram. Repeat this for the "Dah" paddle too!

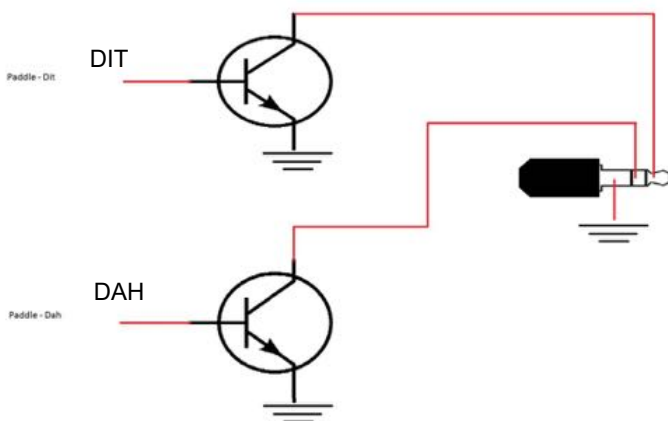
When you have soldered all components Via a 1m (recommended) length of 3 core cable or similar to you jack plug you are ready to screw the lid onto your project box and plug it into your radio.

This is designed to work with most radio's. I know that it works well with my Kenwood TS590 SG and it has been tested by other people on similar Icom radio's. It maybe a case of adjusting the settings of your radio to suit a paddle key. If the dit and the dah are the wrong way around for your liking/operating style.. Just flip it over. Simple.

I have used This paddle for a while now and I'm pleased with the way it performs and how easy/quick it was to build. It is a nice project for newcomers or those with little technical knowledge. There are no complicated schematics. Just follow the diagram and you will be golden.

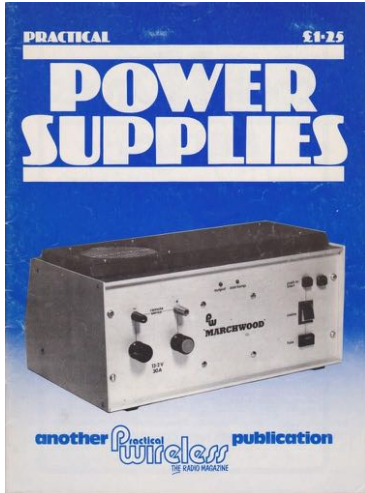
Jamie 2E0SDV

(This would normally get its power from a wrist strap connection to a 9v or 13v battery such that with enough skin resistance it switches the transistors on. Jamie is able to operate his using just the voltage in his fingers from the static in his clothing; - Editor)



Am I seeing Double? Two poorly PW Marchwood Power Supplies

Back in the mists of time – well pre 1986- Practical Wireless published for the home constructor a very substantial, bomb proof 13.8v power supply. (Editor—This was a construction project for the club about that time, I recall some 12 transformers were purchased for members)



Capable of supplying between 20 and 30 amps (depending on your chosen option) continuously and with “soft start” circuitry which also incorporates thyristor con-



trolled over-voltage shutdown, this heavy-weight is designed to protect your rig should a fault develop.

Using the ubiquitous LM723 regulator chip and the less well known MC3423 voltage monitoring chip, the circuitry is arranged to constantly monitor the output voltage and should it exceed the pre-set limit, immediate shutdown (within 10ms) is triggered by a thyristor firing to short the soft-start relay coil, thus removing the mains supply whilst discharging the smoothing capacitors safely through a 2.2 ohm 50 watt resistor.

With these linear power supplies, the usual cause of overvolting is short circuit failure of one or more of the series pass transistors and many a good rig has prematurely bit the dust in this way. The pass transistors which usually are of the TO3 type 2N3055, need really good heatsinking arrangements and attention to detail is the best way to ensure trouble free operation.

The images below shows a typical TO3 to heatsink fixing.

A thin even covering of good quality new heatsink paste should be applied to both sides of the silicon insulator. This can be tricky but practice makes perfect. The aim is to ensure even transistor to heatsink contact as any unevenness may cause hotspots and therefore premature failure of the device.

It is a fact that too many commercially built linear power supplies will prove upon examination to be inadequate in this rather important aspect.

Unfortunately also the paste tends to dry out and we do have the possibility of an accident waiting to happen. Different makes of 13.8v power supplies on the repair bench have all suffered from the application of inadequate amounts of paste at manufacture.

The heatsinking of the bridge rectifier is also very important and often the combination of an inadequately rated and improperly fitted rectifier will lead to premature failure, usually by short circuit of one or more diodes.

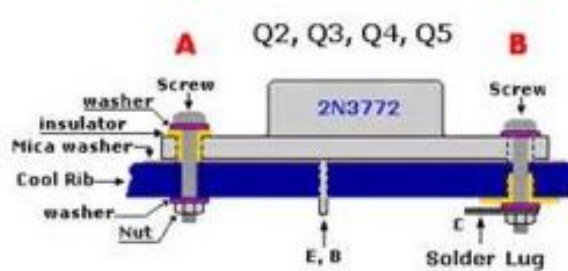


I have found that fortunately this failure will blow the mains fuse as long as the fuse fitted is of the correct rating.

Returning to the Marchwoods, both had faults and both were soon returned to service without delay.

On one there was a fault on the soft start circuit where pushing the start button started but failed to maintain operation of the power supply and no voltage at the output terminals was maintained.

On the second, there was a “fizzing” from near the mains input IEC socket when the unit was switched on.



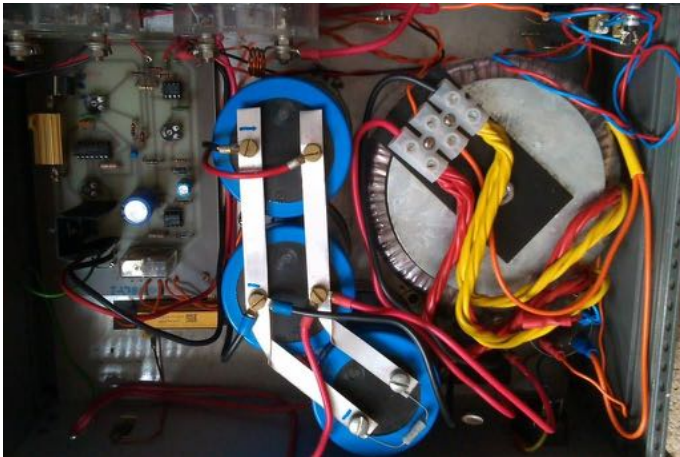
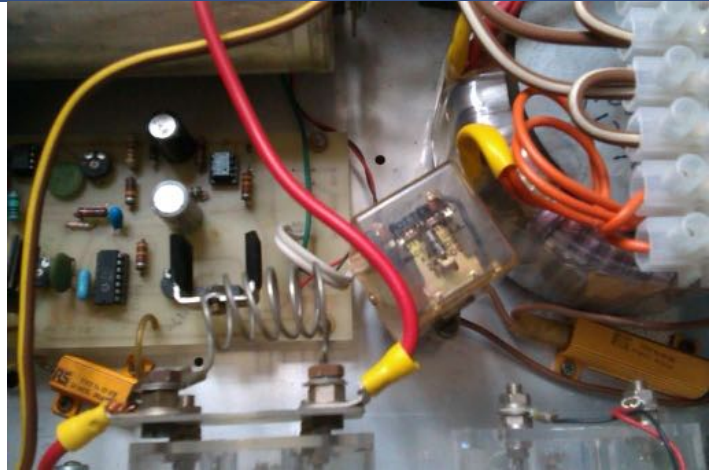
Turning first to the second one, as my thought process was to get this working as it was clearly a “mains input” problem and

Am I seeing Double? (cont'd)

then I could use voltage measurements from this working supply to compare if I got stuck.

An easy fix—the separate mains filter fitted was clearly breaking down internally and it was changed for a more modern type. Easy!

sonal preferences, dictated the internal layouts and the only differences are the type and position of the smoothing capacitor (s) and the use of a bigger external to the pcb relay on one of the supplies.



As for the second one, it was clear that the soft start relay was not latching and therefore the power supply was not starting. The relay was a rather chunky octal based 24v two pole changeover type which was pulled from its very tight socket. The pins looked clean and so I reinserted it.

Result a fully working power supply. I guess that over time a little bit of tarnish just enough to disrupt the voltage to the coil had built up and removing and reinserting was enough to wipe the pins. Both Marchwoods were very well built, using similar components (with two exceptions) and had "proper" panel meters. The front panel layouts to the users per-

parts list.

The PW Marchwood has clearly stood the test of time, being of substantially rated components and generous toroidal transformer, these will continue to give faultless service for a good few years to come. The IC's are socketed which

This latter difference is more important than it first seems as there is a potential safety issue here. The soft start relay carries full mains voltage on its contacts and placing it on the pcb gives a risky mix of full mains and 12v dc on the same board where a slip of a probe or finger could give unpleasant results.

The use of an external relay makes for a much safer construction and interestingly although the circuit board is clearly punched for a pcb mounted relay, a octal one is specified in the

makes substitution easy and all parts are easily obtainable still with the exception of the rather excellent matching V and A meters. A digital substitute could prove an alternative and our Far Eastern friends have ample designs to choose from, although the addition of suitable 5v supplies would be needed.

Possibly these lovely psu's were the quickest fixes ever- a pleasure to work on and admire their construction.

Now back to that pesky Manson...where dry joints and tarnished leads are leading me on a merry dance

Ian Reeve M0IDR

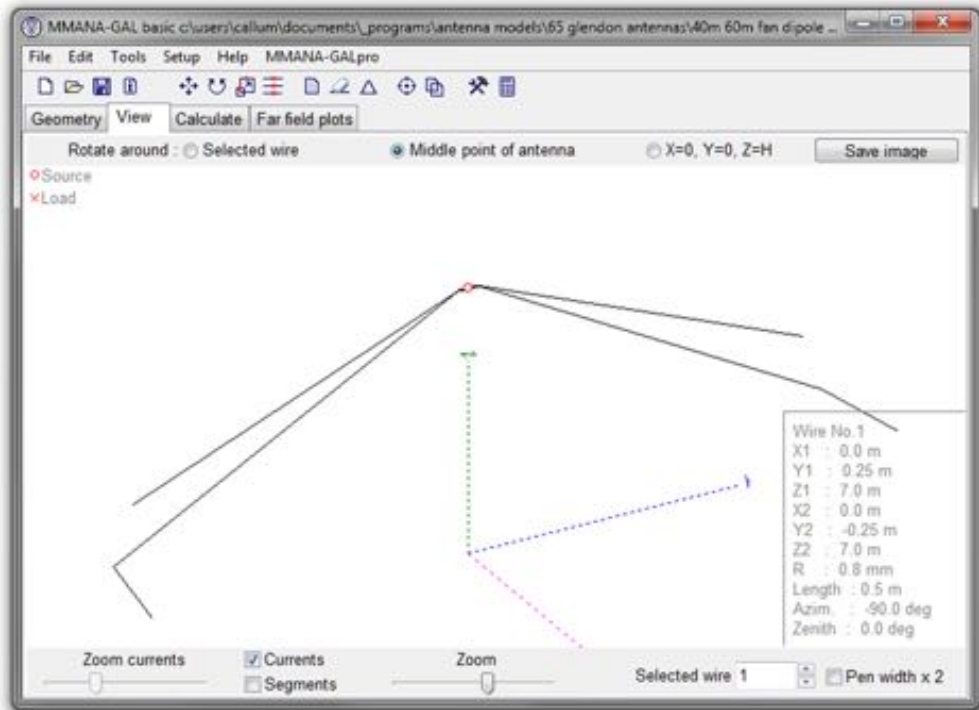


60 metre band revisited

60m is an interesting band. It's partly channelised into small segments and the propagation is a cross-breed of 40m and 80m. The band was first introduced in 2002. Over the years, various countries have allowed their amateurs radio operators to use the band. All this is negotiated and approved in conjunction with the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference(s). Many countries are now "on air" and can be heard, some on quite modest low power levels too. Be careful though, their frequencies may be different to ours.

In the UK, our power limit is 100 Watts maximum and 200 Watts effective radiated power (* see note). Only Advanced licence holders are allowed on 60M band. You used to obtain a NOV however I believe that's finished now. One quirk is that you select USB not LSB for SSB transmissions.

Some new "slots" were added recently on this band but to get around remembering everything, it's probably best just to set up some memories in your HF set. I don't know about you, but all these fancy rigs come with memories - and we never use them. 60m is ideal for getting up to speed with these Memories (and you can scan the channels too which is



something else few of us know how to work!). Go on, find the user-manual!

You can use the following table to set up most of the channels into memory for your HF set. Remember, it's Upper Side Band (USB)

Over the last few years, we had great

skip for local NVIS contacts around the UK on the 40m band however we seem to have lost that with the change in Sun Spot activity. 60m on the other hand is ideal for local (50 - 300 mile) contacts around the UK during the day.

SSB contacts are the norm, however I've also had a number of interesting AM contacts on 5.317 and you can also hear CW ops rag-chew around 5.260. Setting up my set for AM took a while and I still have some more work to achieve "perfection" however, even setting it up badly has given me tremendous satisfaction. I've had a few QSOs with operators who restore the old 19 and 52 sets from the bygone era and they do make their mark here. These old sets sound great on AM.

If you can't get on 60m, you can still use HackGreenSDR (Google it) to listen to the chaps on the frequency but if you do hold an Advance license, here's some basic antenna ideas for you:

Antenna Ideas: 60m / 40m Compact fan-dipole

If you already have a 40m dipole, say an inverted V, you can easily add the legs for a 60m dipole directly on to the feedpoint. Some fiddling will be required for the antenna lengths, but adding a compact 60m antenna should be pretty simple. Essentially, each leg should be

Lower limit kHz	Upper limit kHz	Guidelines on current usage and suggested USB frequencies
5258.5	5264.0	CW activity, 5262kHz QRP
5276.0	5284.0	USB 5278.5kHz, EMCMM CoA
5288.5	5292.0	Emergency, 5290kHz, 5291kHz
5298.0	5307.0	All modes, USB 5298.5kHz, 5301kHz, 5304kHz
5313.0	5323.0	All modes, AM 5317kHz, USB 5320kHz
5333.0	5338.0	USB 5335kHz
5354.0	5358.0	All modes, USB 5354kHz, In WRC-13 band
5362.0	5374.5	All modes, USB 5363kHz, 5371.5kHz, WRC-13 band to 5368.5kHz
5378.0	5382.0	USB 5379kHz
5395.0	5401.5	USB 5395kHz, 5398.5kHz
5403.5	5406.5	USB 5403.5kHz

60 metre band revisited (cont'd)

approximately 14m long in length, just a little bit longer than a 40m dipole frankly. And why not just float the remainder of the lower part of the legs across a fence or something. Ample for getting out across the UK during the day.

I've noted that most modern tuners with an inbuilt ATU should tune any low band 40m or 80m antenna including the shortened 51 foot G5RV. Alternatively, build a doublet of perhaps big loop of around 55m in length with a 4:1 balun.

That's what I do.

WSPR & JT65

JT65 has taken the bands by storm over the last couple of years. It's not everyone's cup of tea but handy when you just need to sit quietly and play radio. You may hear those crazy tones between the digital segments and voice segments of most bands.

On 60m though, JT65 allows you to accidentally – and very easily transmit out of band. The segment you need to be

transmitting in falls between 5.354 and 5.358. However "out the box", JT65 will give you a dial frequency of 5.357. This means that all your transmissions can easily be out of band.

This has taken me a little while to get to grips with this because although the band-police are complaining - and the RSGB has also rightly warned users, nobody is giving a clear instruction on how to achieve staying completely within the band allocated to us in "English". In my opinion, the easiest method is to change the default frequency, down-shifting by 1 kHz to 5.356. If using the latest version of JT65-X, go to File > Settings and click the Frequency tab at the top and edit the frequency for the 5 MHz band so it reads 5.356.

File > Settings > Frequencies

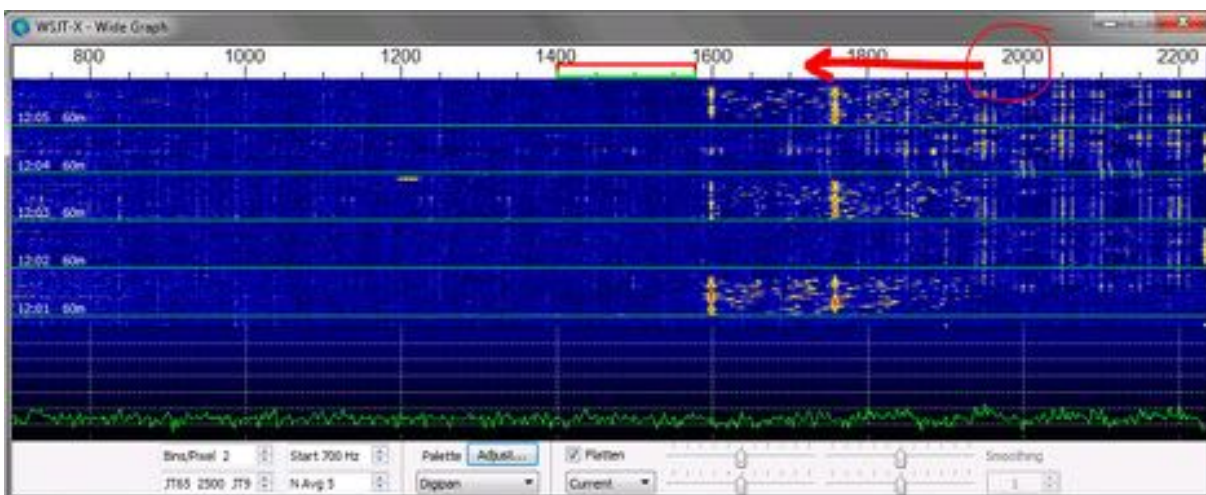
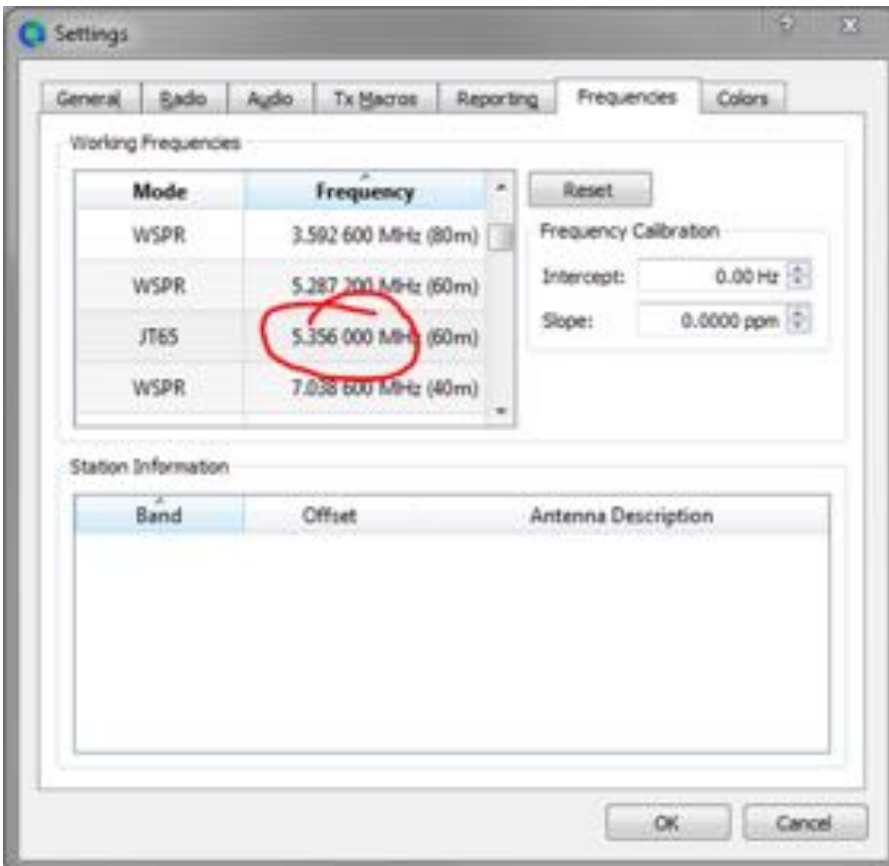
Double-click the frequency to edit. Click OK. Now change bands on JT65 and click on 60m. You will immediately see the frequency change appropriately. To stay within the band, just don't reply or call to any station above the 2000 marker on your waterfall display, as graphic.

If you don't have JT65 already, get it here: <http://jt65-hf.com/downloads/>. Run the installer and interface your rig as you would any other piece of software that connects to your radio & computer.

* EIRP notes: The current regulations say that although we're allowed 100 Watts, the effective radiated power should be no more than 200 Watts. This means that if your antenna has a gain of more than 3dB in any direction, you're technically breaking the rules. However,

assume all other things being equal, as long as you are not using a Yagi at 100 feet, you're probably good to go. Have fun!

**Callum
M0MCX**



Training Report

We started a Foundation Course in the classroom at Wythall on January 16th with four students and they took their exam on February 27th. I am pleased to report that three passed with high scores but one missed the pass mark by 1 point. So congratulations to Barry, Stuart and Maz and commiserations to Ed who no doubt will do a retake at the next opportunity.

Online Foundation Course

We will be starting an online Foundation course on 13th March and have had 15 students sign up for it, together with 3 observers from other clubs who want to see how we do it. This will be the fifth online foundation course we have held. All 15 students are Midlands based so there is a good prospect that we could encourage some of them to become club members and Lee GOMTN has offered to come to the practical assessment days to give a talk on the benefits our club could offer. Because of the numbers signed up we will be splitting them into two groups with one group doing their practical assessments on Saturday 29th April and the exam on the Sunday. The second group will do their assessments on Saturday May 13th and the exam on the 14th.

In the last newsletter I described the role the club had played in helping the RSGB with their proof of concept exercise for an internet based Advanced examination. Since the initial press release the RSGB have published their plans which I summarise below;

Online Advanced Examinations

The online examinations will be provided by a company called TestReach, who are located in Ireland, have been working closely with the RSGB to explore how to provide online exam capabilities to the existing system.

TestReach offers a total solution for online assessment, providing both comprehensive test authoring and rollout

capabilities, as well as the option for those tests to be supervised remotely in real-time over the internet. This next phase of the project is a pilot phase based on providing an online Advanced Examination.

As of Monday 20 February 2017 Exam Secretaries have, in addition to paper-based exams for Advanced candidates, the option to provide candidates with an online Advanced exam. The same four-week notice period applies, so the first opportunity to sit an Advanced examination online will be Monday 20 March 2017.

This is a major step forward and, while it might not be suitable for every exam venue, we at Wythall have geared up to provide this facility in our classroom. We are not sure how many internet connections our Wifi set up will cope with but it worked fine with 5 laptops during our tests with RSGB.

In order to sit an on-line examinations, candidates will, via the exam secretary and the RSGB, register with TestReach who will give each candidate a user name i.e. their email address on the TestReach system, together with a unique password. Candidates can then download and launch the TestReach Application and are

recommended to complete the online tutorial prior to taking their Advanced exam.

Once they've done that, the RSGB will make the booking, similar to today, for a particular date and time and candidates will receive an email confirmation. They will also receive email reminders before the actual exam and again the day before the exam.

There is a useful FAQ page on the RSGB website about on-line examinations and we expect to hold our first examination sometime in July

Chris G0EYO

Left to right: Ed, Barry, Maz and Stuart



The next issue of the Wythall Radio Club Newsletter will be published at the beginning of May 2017