

Wythall Radio Club meets from 8pm every Tuesday 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

A Hog Roast with a Difference

Saturday 2nd December saw the annual Club trip to the Martin Lynch and Sons Hog Roast in Staines, Middlesex.

A hearty band of hams met in the dark and rain at the club at 7am. Mike G4VPD drove one car with Winston 2E0EGP, Phil 2E0WTH & Pete M5DUO on board. Chris G7DDN drove another car with Ian M0IDR, Terry 2E0XTV & David G7IBO as company. Sadly due to a misunderstanding, Ian M6LQY went to the wrong meeting place and ended up driving down all alone... Lesson learned though - we always meet at the Tennis Court Carpark! Still, nine Wythall Hams was a good number for a cold December morning.

After a uneventful drive down, we arrived around 8.30pm and tucked into the free Bacon Sandwiches. Yum!

It was great to catch up with old friends, both staff and customers at MLS and much hilarity ensued... It was especially good to meet some of the overseas visitors, notably Franco Milan, CEO of Elad, who make SDR Radios - he had flown in from Frankfurt just for the day before returning to Italy.

The Hog Roast these days, although called a Hog Roast, actually includes a number of other events, one of which is a lecture stream. MLS planned into their new store a special lecture thea-



tre which is used for training new hams, staff meetings and outside lectures.

Mark M0DXR from JVCKenwood started off by providing a fascinating history of the Trio-Kenwood brand for us and, having only recently got married, was presented at the end of his lecture with a bottle of celebratory Bollinger by Martin himself. He also let slip that there is something new coming from Kenwood in 2018 - we tried but couldn't elicit from him exactly what was coming but something SDR would be my guess! Watch out for an initial announcement at the Dayton Hamvention in the USA in May, apparently.

The guys from SDRplay provided a fascinating insight into the world of their little devices which can work standalone or connected to a traditional radio to prove a second receiver and/or a panadapter on one's computer screen. Needless to say there were a lot of their devices sold, just ask WTH!

Finally, Graham from bHi showed us the benefits of Digital Noise Reduction, though going last in the lecture stream, he didn't have quite as many folk to hear his excellent presentation.

Just before lunch, a small stage was provided (it was a large roll of co-ax really!) and Chris G7DDN took to his guitar and a couple of Christmas Carols were sung - the words however, were not traditional! In fact they were rather tongue-in-cheek versions about MLS, so provided much laughter from staff and customers alike.

After that, we all queued up for hot pork rolls - the queue was the largest we have seen in the years we have been going to this event, so clearly the lecture stream and free food is an excellent marketing tool.

On the day, all the Wythall Hams purchased something or other - some spent more money than they should have, no, actually, everyone spent more money than they should have!

The journey home was made somewhat more “interesting” by a junction closure near Gaydon and a 30 minute jam which slowed us down, but as usual we arrived safely back in the bar at Wythall House, and, as is traditional at WRC, finished the day with a pint or two.

Great fun with great company and, even if the credit cards were suffering a bit of a battering, we all had some goodies to make Christmas go just a little smoother! We will doubtless be back again next year.

Check out the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN7Ggp9Pyqs> and more photos here <https://www.hamradio.co.uk/hogroast.php>

Chris G7DDN



Fleetwood Globe Radio Faulty from New Perhaps?



Audio distortion can be difficult to trace but this is a relatively simple design using two transformers, one to feed the push-pull output transistors and another feeding the audio to the speaker.

An interesting radio from the early 1960's made in Japan for the American market. Made it was thought to satisfy a need for an inexpensive modern version of the famous 1933 Colonial Model 700, a valve superhet design although side by side there is little comparison apart from the globe shaped housing.

Looking at the ubiquitous auction site, I spotted recently a couple of these modern incarnations for over \$100 and so I thought I would fetch my part working one from my man cave to do a proper job. Bought cheaply from a large annual vintage communications event a few years ago, it was tried and put to one side. No results at all apart from some crackling noise when the on/off switch was

ing. Several small value electrolytic caps in the signal path so those were changed out and now there was audio, quite distorted on strong stations but OK on weak ones.

An AGC problem perhaps, but I hooked up my small bench amplifier to the radio part just to double check that the radio section was causing the distortion. Well it was to some extent but clearly there were issues with both the RF and AF sections of this 6 transistor MW only radio.

er. Any imbalance will cause distortion and so voltage checks were in order.

However I spotted that one wire from the secondary of the transformer feeding the output transistors was trapped under the transformer itself and in fact was shorting to ground one half of the signal path. Effectively only one output transistor was working but why weak signals sounded fine was a mystery.



turned to on. So time to investigate this strange radio. A few minutes later with the radio on the bench it was obvious that someone had been there before. Not a good sign as I spotted all three wires to the volume control had been cut short. Connecting them back produced... yes you guessed no results!

Ok so time for some proper trouble shoot-



Digging deeper in the RF part, I found the alignment to be way out, so with that corrected reception was as expected through my bench amplifier.



Short cleared but results were still horribly distorted, so back to voltage checks. All voltages around the output transistors were too far off those on the circuit and therefore I deduced that both output devices were damaged. A couple of Mullard pnp types were popped in temporarily but would you believe it, still distorted audio.

Change the speaker! Yup that fixed it! One Radio now restored, just looking for a matched pair of 2S333 transistors to put things back to factory spec.

Ian M01DR

The Retevis RT95 - First Impressions

In our July newsletter there was a very comprehensive review of the TYT TH8600 mini dual band FM transceiver. Designed for mobile use, Chris G0EYO gave it a good write-up with just initial set up menu language and programming being a niggle.

In the world of Amateur Radio the market and products are fast moving and when a new kid on the block strutted its stuff, I thought for less than £100, I would send for one and here are my first impressions. Badge engineering is well and truly alive and this particular rig has at least 3 different incarnations at different price points.

Martin Lynch have their MyDel AT778VU at £89.95 which is exact same rig as the Retevis RT95 and in my view a real bargain. The RT95, costs a little bit more, but you generally get (at the time of writing) a programming lead which in my view you really need to swiftly input your favourite repeater details.

Bought from a UK dealer, who had to get additional stocks from Germany, delayed delivery by a few days, but today it arrived, neatly boxed and well packed. No polystyrene packing, all recycled cardboard which seems to have coped OK. You get all the bits you would expect to properly mount and connect up the Rig, the mic is of the keypad variety and fits nicely in one's hand.

Connectivity is via a SO239 for RF out and a standard network connector for mic and programming cable. Not my favourite



type of connector it has to be said especially where continual flexing is likely as for the fist mic during use, but par for the course on rigs at this price point. The DC lead in in two parts, connected via a standard two way spade coupler. A line fuse in the red lead of both halves is a bit odd and does seem to cause a slight voltage drop during transmit on full power.

Power output is stated at 25watts max on

both bands, but I feel this to be a bit generous and as stated in some adverts, 20w is about what you should expect from this rig.

The manual, a well written document of some 32 pages, details all the features and functions that are available to the user.

Out of the box, the rig powers up immediately in UK English and the colour screen some 1.5" square is busy but easily readable. The front panel is not removable but as the unit is only 6.5" x 5", it's small footprint makes for a neat installation.



The rig is single (main) channel, dual watch (sub channel). Transmit is on main channel only and therefore you would need to manually toggle to change around priorities. The front panel is dominated by the centrally placed screen with 6 user programmed buttons, a function button, a multifunction rotary and push control, on/off and mic connector. The programming software which is free from the Retevis website is simple to use and includes the USB programming connector software. Easy to use and installed with no issues whatsoever. Following the instructions in the manual, the programming lead was connected and drivers installed, again no issues.

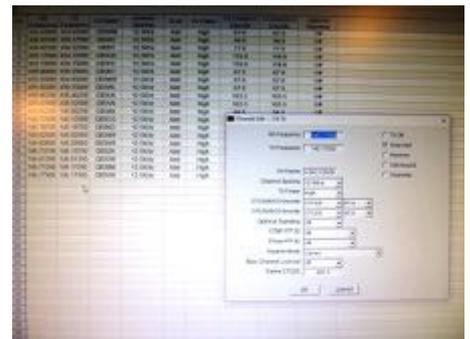


The programming software itself does the job easily without any fuss or mishaps. I did do so (more by habit than anything), but it seems not necessary to



"read" the radio before the first install of data. 200 channels are available to the user and all the usual functions are available within the software. Once the programming is done, the mic can be connected, button P2 toggled to Memory and off you go!

Reports, made by couple of simplex contacts, received good reports of audio quality and signal clarity which pleased me, showing the stock keypad mic suits the rig well. From my home QTH I need more power than this little rig can muster to reach some repeaters, but those I could access reliably including our own WL, worked fine and



again reports were good.

The downward facing loudspeaker gives ample clear audio, volume being accessed via a function menu setting. Squelch is managed in a similar fashion. Specification wise, I note that this rig covers 144-146Mhz and 430-440Mhz which makes coverage more restricted than the TYT reviewed by Chris, but all the other functions are there and so far it performed very well. Overall a well-made rig, easy to use and programme. You may have to factor in the additional cost of a suitable programming lead if one is not supplied, but this is pretty well standard even with the "big players". "Does what It says on the tin"-as the saying goes.

Ian M0IDR

My first PICAXE project!

One of my recent projects has been a linear amplifier for the 136 and 472kHz bands. I wanted it to be reliable enough to leave running over-night for WSPR tests and the like, so it was going to need good protection circuitry.

I decided that the protection circuit should monitor the reflected power and the PA current and cut the supply if either went too high. As I intended to leave it going over-night it would be a shame if it tripped just after I'd gone to bed, maybe because a gust of wind had blown the aerial about, and I lost the whole night's transmissions. I therefore decided to have a "three strikes and you're out" regime whereby the PA could trip twice during a transmission, but if it did it a third time it would lock out and need a button-press to reset it.

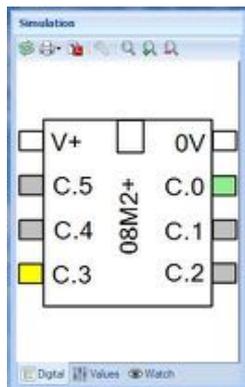


At first I considered a bit of logic with comparators, counters and timers but that pretty quickly started to look very complicated. A friend, who is good with PICAXE processors (in fact he designed GB3WL's logic using one) told me in no uncertain terms that it was time to get to grips with PICs!

The initials P.I.C. stand for "Peripheral Interface Controller" and these are small computer chips which can include many features but are sometimes complex to master. They are used in washing machines, process controllers and the like. The PICAXE is a simplified version originally made for schools and is programmed in BASIC, it also comes with some easy to use free software to help you design your project.

I was going to need two voltage-measuring analogue inputs - one for the reverse power and one for the current, a digital (on/off) input for the TX instruction, and a couple of digital outputs - one for the TX relay and one for the trip light. Inside the chip it would need A/D converters, timers etc. Surprisingly all this and more is available in the most basic PICAXE chip, the 8-pin 08M2. It costs £1.88 + VAT, amazing!

Of course there's always a catch, you need a programming lead to connect your PICAXE to a PC so that you can blow your program onto the chip. I bought a PICAXE-08M Starter Pack for £24 which includes a prototyping board, a USB programming lead, a battery pack and the chip. Now all I had to do was write my first program!



The software to do this is free from picaxe.com and is available for Windows, Mac and Linux. I used the Windows program called, unsurprisingly, "PICAXE Editor". You have an editing pane where you write your BASIC instructions, paying great attention to precise "syntax". My program eventually looked like this: (the green parts are just explanatory notes, they don't do anything)

```
main:
  let b3 = 0
  low B.0
  if pinC.3 = 1 then
    goto oper
  else
    goto main
  endif

oper:
  high B.0 ;turn on TX relay
  readadc C.1,b1 ;SWR
  readadc C.2,b2 ;CURRENT
  pause 100
  if pinC.3 = 0 then
    goto main
  endif
  if b1 < 150 and b2 < 200 then
    goto oper
  else
    goto erra
  endif
```

```
erra:
  low B.0 ;turn off tx
  inc b3
  if b3 >= 3 then
    goto trip ;try three
  times
  else
    pause 3000
    goto oper
  endif

trip:
  high B.4 ;turn on trip light
  stop
```

If any of you are any good at programming you'll probably be able to tell me I should have done it another way! But for a first go at BASIC programming since the days of the Sinclair Spectrum I'm pretty happy.

The program is divided into 4 parts: "main" just runs until the TX instruction arrives (pin C.3 going to 5V) then we flip into "oper" where it turns the PA on and monitors the SWR and Current. If either rises above the preset thresholds then we flip over to "erra" which can happen three times but on the third time (variable $b3 \geq 3$) we go to "trip" and program stops, the PA is muted and the red light comes on. Simple!

The reset button just interrupts the supply to the PICAXE chip and it restarts itself when released.

The great thing about the PICAXE Editor software is that you can test the program before you blow it onto the chip. It has a simulation mode in which you can change the status of various inputs and see what happens to the outputs - and in the program itself - as yellow highlighting runs down the program lines so you can tell where it bombs out. This makes it very easy to debug a simple program like mine. Even so, there was quiet a bit of head scratching before it ran smoothly! If you do find an error once you've blown the program onto the chip don't worry, it's not a disaster, just correct the problem and re-program the chip. Why not try wielding your own PICAXE?

I'm sure it's good for the brain cells...

Dave G3YXM

Tytera DM380 DMR Handie

As an introduction to the world of DMR, the Tytera or it's equivalent under a different Manufacturers name, is hard to beat.



For around £80 or less you get a good solid feeling handheld with good battery life, a desk charger. In my case a World Wide "code plug" and programming lead was a option for an additional £20, making the total outlay all in and ready to go for £100.

Code Plugs are available from various web sites and can be installed into the supplied programming software, but I opted to have my code plug tailored to my needs with an additional simplex function to access DMR via my DV4 mini and Raspberry Pi setup.

Because of my location, I need a "hot spot" to access DStar and Fusion and it was very easy to set the DMR parameters into the DV4 mini control panel and get up and running.

In an earlier article I showed the DV4 mini working with system fusion (Yaesu) and DMR function is just an additional built in mode the DV4 mini handles well. One drawback to the DM380 (and other similar rigs) is its lack of contact information on its screen and pretty well since it was introduced, Radio Hams have been "hacking" the firmware and finding ways of adding functions and information to the user. Most rigs nowadays can be firmware upgraded and a few months ago I saw an upgrade that would provide additional caller information which was exactly what I wanted. Having backed up the existing Code

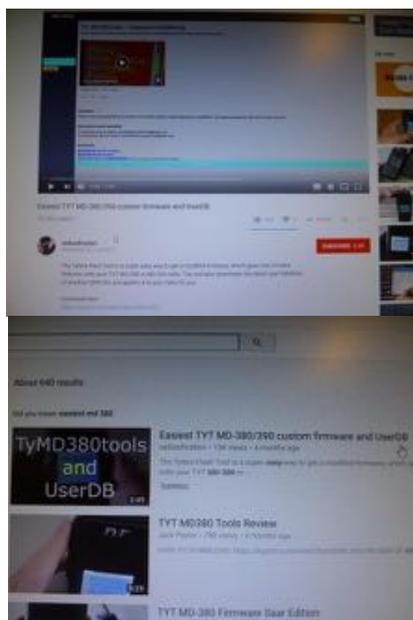
Plug to a memory card, I gave it a go, followed the rather complex instructions and it failed to install properly and rendered the handie useless.

Turning to the well written bespoke booklet supplied by my Dealer, I did a manufacturers reset which brought the rig back to life, I then had to send the code Plug file to the rig which thankfully went without hitch.

Having seen a demo at Martin Lynch of a new firmware upgrade, I thought I would give it another try.

Google is our friend and find this YouTube video:- *Easiest TYT MD-380/390 custom firmware and UserDB* or by following the link:- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cA1GkqgO_oQ

Viewing the video it seemed so quick



and dare I say-easy.

A small but vital bit of software is downloaded and installed on your Windows PC which handles the update. Download here: <https://kg5rki.com/new2/tymd380.html>

There is an 8 page online guide to this process for those who would like (like myself) the comfort of being able to follow through each step of the process. The update procedure was in two parts, firstly the firmware, followed by the DMR users database. The database is the source that the firmware interrogates for

the additional information which is displayed.

I won't take up valuable space by repeating the process which is very well described, but it is important that you are familiar with the process of "flashing" the rig and you are able to backup and re-install your codeplug.

You will need the DM380 programming lead which will have its drivers ready installed its function tested with the rig. Visit:

<https://kg5rki.com/new2/tymd380.html>

View the video and read or download the 8 page document. Scroll to below the document and go to Downloads Select and install **Tytera Flash Tool v1.05** (this is the software utility that updates the firmware and installs the user database) Run this software programme.

Put the rig into "Flash" mode and Update the firmware

Turn the rig off.

Turn the rig back on (still with the programming lead attached)

Download the database.

When complete, turn off the rig and disconnect the programming lead.

You now have to configure the screen info: Turn on the rig, press the green button, go to



tools, utilities, MD380 Toolz, Show Calls and select TA & User DB

Enjoy the additional caller information available.

My thanks must go to the folk who compiled this update/upgrade and made a basic DMR rig much more usable.

Ian M0IDR

50 years on; reminiscences by John M6KET

I don't understand electricity. Never have and probably never will ; which explains the sheer sense of astonishment when my dad built /created a crystal set in a little wooden box with a toggle switch on the top and I was able to lie in bed listening to Radio 4 long wave courtesy of a wire that hung out of the bedroom window: just where were the magic voices coming from? I suppose I was about 9 or 10 at the time and he must, as an ex- wireless operator with the RAF during the war, have sensed an interest. Various knackered valve radios followed into the bedroom, all with a distinctive smell as the valves warmed up and Radio Luxembourg ("you're right on time with Everright") drifted from 208 on medium wave to somewhere close by – but never stable.

Sometime later we built (or he did) a one valve short wave receiver on the kitchen table. Metal base was hammered and bent into shape, holes drilled ,resistors and capacitors soldered in. Oh the heavenly smell of hot solder as it melted on the tip of the soldering iron. The whole thing worked quite well, although I was never quite sure which frequency we were on . Broadcast stations boomed in (Voice of America etc.) a two valve version was added with the same results but I was truly hooked.

Some of you will remember 'The Short Wave Magazine available in the 1960's with its blue and white front cover. Here was a regular column for the SWL and I used to read the list of DX heard by various SWL's with fascination. There was a DXCC list of countries heard , headed I seem to remember by one Laurie Margolis who I believe now works (or did) for the BBC. Anyway inspired by this and the adverts at the back of the magazine for mostly ex WW2 radios I wanted something bigger and better so off we went to Altrincham in our Ford Prefect for an Eddystone S640 with its semi-circular dial on the front and lots of knobs to play with. This was a definite step up and I probably enrolled with the RSGB as SWL A3738 around this time so I could send out my cards and reports. I was on my way with Amateur Radio.

The Big beast; the AR88D, followed a couple of years later, carried up the stairs by at least three people and placed

on a groaning and reinforced table. If you want a flavour of this have a go at lifting the AR88 that sits at the back of the teaching room. This remarkable receiver glowed in the dark like no other- especially on winter afternoons. The hundreds of valves slowly burned off the dust as they warmed up (another distinctive smell!) and a BFO button allowed me into the newly- discovered world of Single Sideband radio. Donald Duck voices from around the world. This was controversial at the time, not proper radio; AM and CW were the traditional modes used.

I had cards from Aden and Singapore – British army stations both. But SSB was the new rage and if my memory is correct the early 1960's was a sunspot peak so it was a good time to be listening.

I gave most of these cards away a few years back but I do remember hearing stations from VU/JA/VK/KW6 (Okinawa island?). The world seemed larger and more exotic then. Huge distances and of course this added to the excitement and romance of it all. There were the same complaints back then, bad operators or LIDS as they were known, bad manners, and some absolutely hideous signals on the band. Many kHz's wide with operators obviously trapped in tin boxes and shouting and blotting out all who came near, often blamed on stations from behind the Iron Curtain.

40 metres was joke, shared with loud broadcast stations with amateur stations squeezed in between. I couldn't believe the difference and the band-space when I returned to radio in 2013.

Ah but no mention of CW I hear you say. Well there was an early interest, an RAF straight key, a substantial battery, a buzzer of sorts (tried a light bulb!) and away we went. I wanted to be a drummer anyway and this was the 60's. I learned the letters from the dots and dashes on the page (don't do it!) I never mastered the numbers (too difficult for some reason) and I did have a go at copying CW on air. Of course there were no computers to help the sound; only learning and so I floundered and the lure and sim-

plicity of SSB reception was too great.

At the time the idea of becoming a licensed amateur was impossible and ridiculous. The RAE exam was a written paper of great difficulty, or so I believed, and the Morse test a rigorous 12 wpm examination. I had no hope of either but nevertheless read and re-read my substantial RSGB handbook (a wonderful tome) in the vague hope that something might stick.

And that was it really, my early amateur radio experiences. I was sent away to school (borstal or remand for all I know). The simple wire dipole in the garden fell down. I failed O level maths first time round and took Physics with Chemistry for the dunces so there was no future in things electrical and technical.

Until the day in early 2013, some 50 years later, when I visited Bletchley Park luckily on a Thursday when the RSGB station was open to visitors. The station was operating, a kindly old gentleman explained how a morse key worked and someone else explained that it was possible to gain amateur status on 3 different levels .

Wythall Radio Club provided the link and the training and on the 22nd July 2013 at 12.55 I was in turn scared and delighted when LY8OY came back to my call on 20 metres and I somehow with a shaking hand and very dry



50 years on; reminiscences cont'd

mouth got through my first CW QSO. So on my return to radio some 50 years later with a Yaesu FT980 (which had seen some service at the club I believe) what did I find? The amateur bands had expanded: the WARC bands added: 30/17/12. The hardware on offer was staggering with flashing lights, strange waterfall features, digital displays. Lots of new buttons and things called memories but there were some recognisable features. Aerials were much the same-wires, dipoles, beams, verticals so in some respects not much had changed. Call-signs had adapted as empires collapsed and many now started with numbers not letters to reflect this. 40 metres was a paradise with n'eer a Broadcast station to be heard. I was astonished that CW could be delivered by keyboard and even more astonished that 'translations' could be read off a screen-just imagine!

Four years on from there and over 2000 QSO's later (just two on SSB) then I'm beginning to feel part of the Amateur radio community albeit a bit on the fringe because of my strange devotion to CW. Like all amateur radio users I have formed my opinions and views. Computers I have mixed feelings about. I hate discovering a remote station I might have a chance of working knowing that within seconds the hoards will descend like vultures and drown out my pathetic S3 signal. Why can't they do the hard work and search and listen? On the other hand I just love Reverse Beacons. Enlarging the world map to put Redditch at the centre of the universe. And, when feeling lonely on the bands (or believing the G5RV has fallen down), I can call CQ mindlessly and be assured that somewhere out there some machine can hear me. All those lovely coloured lines centring in on Astwood Bank!!

QRZ.com gets a bit of a work over too, as it's often interesting to read something of the station just worked, particularly on CW when the rag-chew is less common. Radcom is mostly incomprehensible to my simple mind, my fault not Radcom's. I turn first to the angry letter pages on the back page mainly because there always strong letters about CW there. Then it's on to the HF page and the list of DX worked that month from the same loyal correspondents each

month. This month's seemed to be entirely data based (J2O?) so I'm none the wiser. I enjoy reading the antenna articles and of course Dave Pick's LF page!

So why CW? Well 10 watts max; so turn necessity into a virtue and see how far you can get. I like the simplicity of it. A the fascination of signals from distant (still distant to my imagination) parts of the world received on a simple wire aerial and the relative power of a CW signal with its narrow band-width and purity of signal to penetrate. My SSB can barely reach Pontypryth!

I have been lucky with my sunspot cycles and my first few months on the air from July 2013 saw the so-called peak of the cycle this time round; my 10 watts was able to work up to 100 DXCC stations quite quickly with the highlight of ZM9ODX (New Zealand) being worked on 17 metres in September 2014. (Incidentally 17 metres does seem to be the band that throws up the most incidental DX for me despite the G5RV not supposed to work particularly well on the band?)

The KX3 helps enormously (thank you Chris G7DDN); what a fabulous bit of radio. I have yet to go mobile, but indoors it is capable of all kinds of magic. Digging out weaker signals from the noise and making them intelligible. My only complaint is the radio room of my dreams, based on those photographs on QRZ, looks very sparse indeed. It's lacking in flashing lights and stacks of expensive looking kit. Just a modest PSU and a brick-sized radio, with a couple of straight keys in attendance.

At the moment it has to be a straight key. I like the bounce and rhythm and the human side of the sending. Some days good, many days bad but it's a skill and, like a musical instrument, you can get better until the wrist gives out.(You can always tell the bad days when the other station complains of QSB or QRM and curtails the QSO quickly!!) And the same with reading CW. Fascinated as I am by the stories of operators who were so good that they heard and understood not just words but sentences and paragraphs without writing down a single word (and were probably doing a crossword at the same time) now that's something special.

And the future plans?

Get the mic back in the box quickly before the dark side takes hold. Try to find out why 30 metres is so vacant when lying between 20 and 40 metres and with sunspots in decline (or just not there) then it ought to be awash with CW signals, I know, I'm deluded! The CW needs constant practice in receiving and sending and despite John OJIL's urging I shall stick with the straight key until the wrist gives out.

So there it is. 4 years of really keen Short wave listening in the 60's coinciding with a sunspot peak.A 50 year gap and then a sort of dream realised by becoming a licensed amateur.

Thank you for reading this, but to finish some random thoughts that might be helpful to the budding CW operator:

1. Listen more than you call (I try)
2. Use headphones
3. Always check the frequency is clear and leave a gap for someone to reply!
4. 10 watts/ 5 watts- there's not a lot of difference in the reports received.
5. Turn the computer off a and try without a dependence on it
6. Keep practising to improve skills- both sending and receiving.

Oh... and... Have fun!

John M6KET



CQWW CW SOAB HP G9Y @ M0SDV

For those that are confused by the headline, it stands for CQ World Wide Contest CW Single Operator All Bands High Power. Jamie M0SDV operated as G9Y from home and this is his story. ED

About a month or so ago I started to build/fix my station up for CQWW CW, and with the limited time I have around college and work, it was right up to the wire. Pre contest everything was going well. I had all but one antenna up. All extra coax runs laid out and I was in high spirits.

However, about 6 hours before the contest, me and two others were lifting up the 80m 1/4 wave, when it slipped beyond saving. This vertical is made from 10m of Scaffolding and a 10m fishing type pole. (ala M0MCX-Ed) It's safe to say the top half is now in close to a million pieces across the garden. Luckily no one was hurt!

Trying to find another way, I came to the conclusion that nothing would get done in the dark on my own, so the first night I spent on 40m alone. Then in the morning between 40m going quiet and 20m getting busy I quickly chucked up a spider pole 1/4 wave for 80.

Anyway, this year on 20,15 and 10 I had two antennas running via a stack match. First time I have done this, and I have to say I was pleased with the re-

sults. With a 200-300 QSO total increase on 20m compared to other big contests. and a significant number more USA on 15m. Not a dickie bird on 10m.

40m gave some reasonable runs on the first night, and 20m was good to Europe for the whole time. However I seemed to lack a number of NA Q's on 20m. Not sure weather conditions or something I wasn't doing but they just weren't there.

The only real Run into the US was 110 Q's on 15m in around an hour when I got going.

The second night I had 80m too. So off I went. High noise is a problem on 80m. Not as high as most but I have S5 noise on that band, whereas on others the S meter doesn't move at all. So I made about 300 Q's total on that band. The second day of the contest was much the same. With no real runs to the US and 15m didn't open as well as the Saturday but was workable for European mults.



In the end my score was as follows:

Band	QSO	CQ	DXC
160	0	0	0
80	304	13	60
40	482	21	79
20	720	26	77
15	156	14	37
10	0	0	0

Total 1662 74 253

Score: 855 759 (A tad disappointed with the score and Multi total, but happy with the Q total)

Jamie M0SDV

Let's hope Jamie has done enough to get a leading UK certificate this year – Ed

New Ofcom Guidance Document

Ofcom have updated their guidance notes relating to the UK Amateur Radio Licence. The new edition dated July 2017, replaces the previous April 2016 version and includes changes associated with the introduction of the new Ofcom online licensing system last summer. The document should be read in conjunction with the licence, and is intended to help licensees understand and comply with the licence terms and conditions. The document can be downloaded from the Ofcom website at

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/82637/amateur_radio_licence_guidance_for_licensees.pdf

There has been some debate recently on one of the tutor forums about whether it is possible to obtain a call sign of a relative who has passed away. In the past it

has been possible to do this with written approval of direct family members or evidence that the SK wanted it. There now seems to be some uncertainty as to whether they would continue to do so but I think it may be possible given a very strong case and perhaps with the help of the RSGB. These are the relevant clauses in the Guidance Document. They do, however, confirm that it is possible to recover an old callsign that you may have let lapse

Reusing old call signs

1.16 As a matter of conventional practice, we do not normally recycle call signs that have been used in the past. However, this is not to say that we would not do so.

1.17 If the holder of an Amateur Radio Licence were to die, we would not nor-

mally consider making the associated call sign available for reassignment to a new licensee, until a reasonable period of time had elapsed. This is because the identity would remain linked with the former station for some time.

1.18 If the holder of an Amateur Radio Licence were to take a break from the hobby (surrendering his or her licence) but subsequently reapplied for an Amateur Radio Licence, they should resume use of the old call sign, if it remains available. They must therefore be able to show that they previously held the call sign, perhaps by producing an old licence document.

Chris G0EYO

Training Report 2017

A new syllabus is expected to be published early in 2018 and this will require a major revision of all of our teaching materials as well as new editions of the RSGB Training books. It is said that examinations based on the new syllabus will be available from early 2019. No firm timetable of events has been published. At the same time as revising our teaching materials, Roger and I will be reviewing our teaching methods and course timetables to make them more interesting, interactive and capable of podcasting for those students who cannot attend classes.

Our plans based on the current syllabus are limited by the timetable for the above but given that the current on-line Foundation course has been so successful for our students in 2017 we will run another online course early in 2018. At the same time we have a number of students who wish to self-study for the Intermediate course and we will be prepar-

ing study materials to help them do this. It will not be an on-line course as such but one delivered by e mail or Edmodo. Hopefully with visual/audio presentations via YouTube. Both courses will require practical assessment and examination days in the club class room.

2017 was a very busy year for us. We added to our course materials with course notes for each lecture which made it easier to revise and achieved the following passes. As you can see there was only one month (August) when we were not teaching: Foundation Classroom course; Jan – Feb; 3 passes
Foundation On-line G4WAC17-01; Mar-Apr; 8 passes
Foundation On-line G4WAC 17-02; Oct-Nov; 8 passes
Intermediate Classroom course; May – Jul; 6 passes
Advanced Classroom course; Sept-Dec; 2 passes

I would like to thank all the club members who have helped us this year. Particularly Roger M0GWM for his constant support on classroom preparation, tutoring, invigilating, as well as giving me good sound advice and keeping me focussed. Peter G4LWF, Dave G3YXM and John G3VRF for lecturing duties; John G4OJL for morse appreciation sessions for our Foundation students; David G0ICJ and Ian M0IDR for acting as invigilators; Lee G0MTN for promoting club activities. And Ian M0IDR also for looking after our financial requirements, encouraging students to become members and generally being a good friend to training on the committee.

Chris G0EYO

Bands too quiet? Try Internet SDR SWL DX

With the HF bands often very quiet, what else can we do to at least hear some DX? One solution is to use the large number of SRD receivers available via the Internet. Located around the world, these enable you to hear what DX locations hear and also listen in to 'locals' in countries outside (as well as within) Europe. The other benefit of an online SDR receiver is that it gives those of us without SDR at home a chance to see what it can offer, as the screen shot illustrates! A list of SDR sites is available at <http://www.websdr.org/>

The SDR receiver at [Hack Green, Cheshire](#), is used by a number of Wythall members. Like many sites, it enables multiple users. It covers 160M-17m, but also has a receiver for 10, 4, 2m and 70cm.

[KFS in California](#) often has lots of activity from stations on the West coast, including their 75m AM nets (a bit old school, but fun!). The logbook this shows that people have heard stations across the

Pacific on 20m and 40m.

Some receivers are in parts of the world where amateurs are few and far between, for example [VK2MB in Sydney](#). Stations like this are useful for checking out DX paths. Given how crowded the bands are in Europe, it's sometimes easier to hear

Europe via, for example, a VK SDR receiver than to hear VK using your own station. So along with the propagation predictions and DX cluster, SDR receivers in DX parts of the world provide a tool for establishing whether paths might be open.

Chris G3YHF



The next issue of the Wythall Radio Club Newsletter will be published at the beginning of Mar 2018