

Wythall Radio Club

Wythall Contest Group

G1WAC G4WAC G7WAC G0WRC M5W

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

Wythall Radio Club meets from 8pm every Tuesday evening at Wythall House, Wythall Park, Silver Street, Wythall, B47 6LB, near Birmingham.

Visitors are very welcome. **Wythall Radio Club** is affiliated to the Radio Society of Great Britain

Officers
Chairman: Martin G8VXX
Secretary: Chris G0EYO
Treasurer: David G0ICJ
Committee -
Chris G6KMQ
Vaughan M0VRR Web Site Team Leader and Child Protection officer
Lee G0MTN Contest Liaison
Peter M5DUO Antenna maintenance.
Mike G4VPD
Graham G7NJW
Jim M3JPP
Mel M3OFJ
Tim M3SDE QSL Manager

Chairman's Message

When is it appropriate to stop saying happy New Year to everyone you meet for the first time in the New Year? There seems to be no tradition with this greeting as to when it is too late. I have heard people saying it well into January. But none the less we find ourselves at the beginning of the year once again, with cold dark nights that make you want to sit at home by the fire. Well not me, I would much rather be out in the local in front of a roaring wood fire "chewing the cud" with a friend or two and a nice pint. Now that smoking ban is in place the traditional pub seems to be struggling. As I am now a non smoker, I don't have a problem with the smoking ban. But it is a tradition a pint and a fag or cigar gone forever. What has this got to do with radio? you may well ask. Well with the internet being more and prevalent in 21st century living, our hobby is somewhat "old hat" to some particularly, teenagers. As we now have a training program and the lottery grant to support it. Wythall Radio Club is in a very strong position to help bring radio and associated subjects out of the doldrums. So here's to 2008 and may it be prosperous for you all, and to the Club.

Martin G8VXX

Newsletter
January-February 2008

Wythall House registered as RAE Exam Centre

Since announcing our Awards for All Lottery grant in our last newsletter, we have produced a course schedule for 2008. You can download these from our website http://www.wythallradioclub.co.uk/Training.php but the courses are summarised at the end of this article.

We have registered Wythall House as a suitable place for conducting Intermediate and Advanced Examinations and a number of us are going through the process of registering as Instructors in order that we can support Chris G6KMQ who is our Lead Instructor. We have purchased new laptops and a projector, together with projector screen and flip chart easel and have made a booking with Wythall House to have use of the Dart Room on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the year to coincide with our course schedule.

Preparing the material for the practical work on the Intermediate course has involved purchasing items as diverse as a 13A plug, PL250 and BNC sockets, drawings pins, bits of wood and signal generator kits. We also purchased tool kits, soldering stands, and fume extractors as well as a cabinet to put it all in.

Part of the practical work involves calibrating a Variable Frequency Oscillator (VFO) this presented the most difficult item to procure but in the end I managed to get one I made about 15 years ago working and with suitable receiver and crystal calibrator we should be able to get the students to do the necessary work.

Our first course is the concentrated double weekend session for the existing M3 club members and we have 6 down for this course. We need to begin a marketing campaign for the other courses especially the advanced course as we are fixed by examination dates for this course.

AWARDS FOR ALL
LOTTERY FUNDED

Course Schedule for 2008

INTERMEDIATE COURSE 1
2 full weekends 12th/13th January and 19th/20th January 2008 with examination on Tuesday 22nd January.

ADVANCED COURSE
14 weeks commencing 19th of February on either a Tuesday or Friday evening and finishing on Tuesday 20th May with the examination on Thursday 22nd May. **We are actively looking for candidates for this course, if you know of anyone who may be interested, put them in contact with us**

FOUNDATION COURSE 1
Run on demand but there is a 6 week course scheduled to commence Tuesday 27th May 2008. Course runs Tuesday evenings on weeks 1,4 and 5 and Friday evenings on weeks 2,3 and 6.

INTERMEDIATE COURSE 2
10 weeks commencing 16th September on either a Tuesday or Friday evening and finishing on Friday 14th November with the examination on Tuesday 8th November.

Course Fees
Fees include examination costs, free study book, refreshments, room hire and other club costs. The intermediate course costs also cover use of tool kits and test equipment and materials for the various projects students are required to be assessed on.

These fees are currently being subsidized by the National Lottery Awards for All

Foundation course 6 weeks £60 or £50 if a current member of Wythall Radio Club

Intermediate course 10 weeks or two weekends £80 or £70 if a current member of Wythall Radio Club

Advanced course 14 weeks £90 or £80 if a current member of Wythall Radio Club

If you are interested in any of the above courses then please contact
Chris Pettitt G0EYO Training Co-ordinator Wythall Radio Club
g0eyo@wythallradioclub.co.uk
or 07710 412 819



See page 7 for Club Diary
What's in your Shack—see page 6

Building a new DF Antenna for 2m

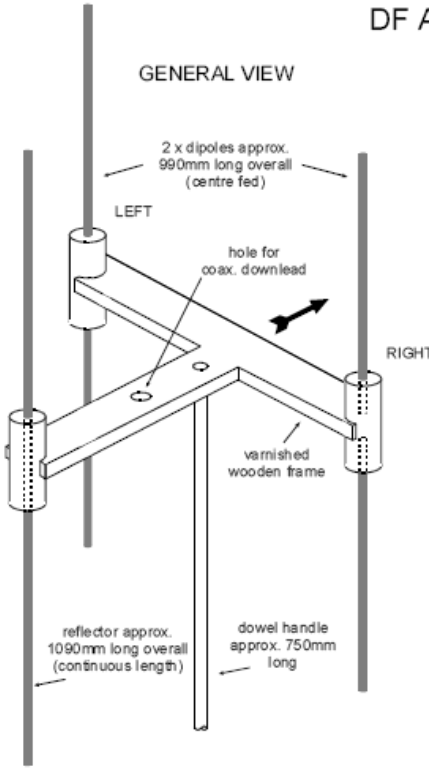
I have long been a fan of the club's fox hunts on 2m and have always wondered how one could get a technological advantage over the standard 2m 2element yagi that most of us use. For some years I have used a 3 element ZL special that I made and fed the output via and switched precision attenuator I managed to acquire many years ago. The attenuator helps reduce the received signal strength when you are in close proximity. Despite all this I have often found myself going completely in the wrong direction on more occasions than I care to remember.

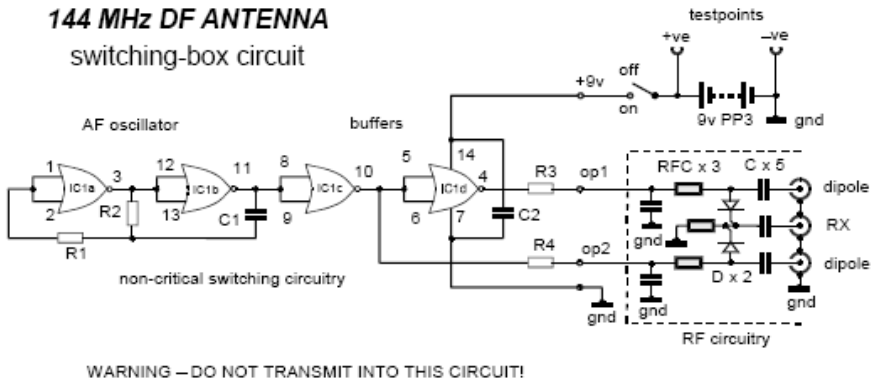
For Xmas 2007 I decided to revisit the antenna again and came across a design on the Wakefield and District Radio Club website http://www.wdrs.org.uk/club/links_downloads/DF_anten.pdf

This design used two vertical dipoles spaced about 320mm apart with a single shared reflector some 270mm behind them. The boom was made of hardwood and the dipoles where secured in 25mm dia. wooden rods some 50mm long. (These I was able to turn down from some hardwood in my garage – knew that lathe would come in handy one day!). Having the wood and elements I got on and made up the antenna (see photo).

The principle of operation of this antenna is that each dipole is switched in turn to the receiver input. The switching is done at around 900 times per sec (900Hz). When the antenna dipole are broadside on to the direction of transmission, the signal from each dipole as received on the receiver is at same amplitude and phase, therefore the signal is strongest, audible and interference free. As you go off bearing so the 900Hz switching becomes noticeable and interferes with the signal strength. That is the theory anyway.

I wrongly assumed that I would have all the electronic bits in my garage junkboxes. But in then end apart from some veroboard, resistors, capacitors and BNC sockets I was able to acquire them from a local component supplier (Mode Components – Chris Treadwell in the Jewellry Quarter (www.modecomponents.co.uk)). The most unusual component was the switching PIN diodes. In the end Chris was able to supply an SMD dual PIN switching diodes did the same job, if your eyesight is good enough – don't sneeze when handling them, or it will be the last you see of it. When a voltage is applied to such a diode it conducts the RF through it. So by switching alternative voltages to each of the diodes (see circuit below) the RF path from each dipole is connected to the receiver. The voltage required is around 5V and this is provided by a dual input NAND or NOR gate CMOS IC.





WARNING – DO NOT TRANSMIT INTO THIS CIRCUIT!

I built up the circuit on Veroboard as shown in the instructions from W&DRS. My first attempt was little short of a disaster due to misreading the layout and cutting tracks on the veroboard that should not have been cut. But by far my biggest problem was that I was either using too big a soldering iron which resulted in solder crossing tracks and shorting them out or it was the lead free solder that I was using. In the end I abandoned my first attempt and started again with a new piece of Veroboard. This time I marked the tracks on the board layout in the W&DRS article and checked it against the circuit. I then marked the tracks to be cut with a felt tip marker and again checked it against the layout. Then I put the wire links in, then the IC holder and finally the other components. Now it was time to test the board. Without the IC in place the instructions tell you to check for current drawn – should be 0mA. Then insert the IC and you should be reading about 5mA drawn. No current drawn with the IC inserted. I measured the various points of the circuit with the voltmeter on DC setting. I got 4.2V at pins 1,2,3 ,12,13 and 11, which I thought was ok. However at the outputs I got 8V on pin 10 and 0V on pin 4.

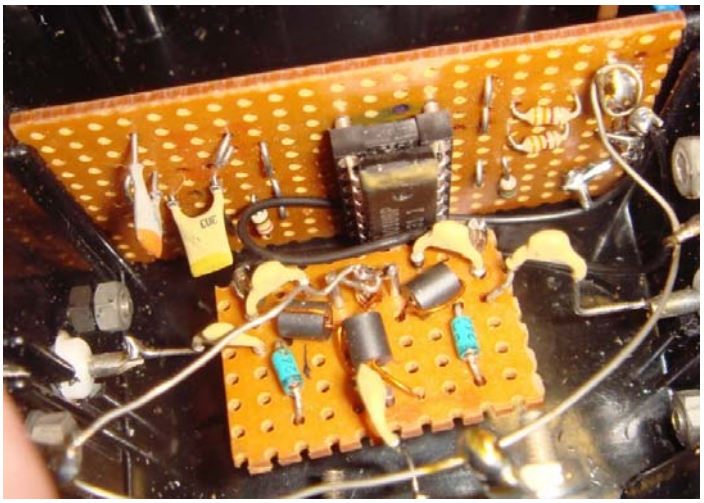
I then sought the assistance of the club's ace home builder, M0DGQ or Barry as most of us know him. Barry explained how the circuit worked.

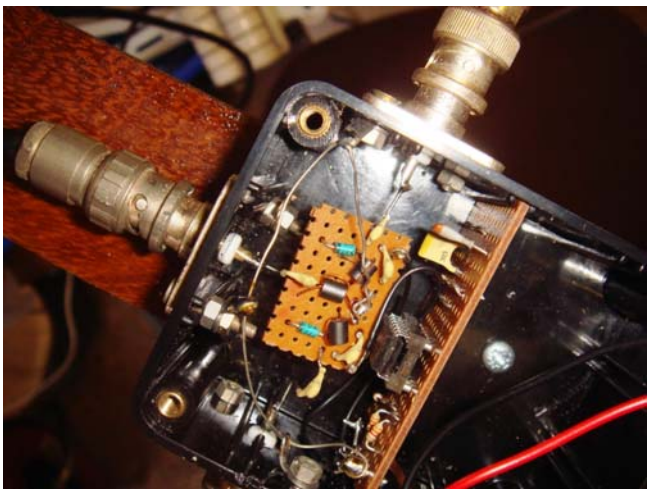
On pins 10 and 4, i would expect to read 4.5 volts DC approx. (there should be a square-wave of 9 volts peak to peak 1:1 mark space ratio here, thus your DVM or avo etc. will show the average of 4.5 DC). Most dvm's AC ranges will show frequency and average and rms etc., so, if you measure at the oscillator output (pin 11), you should read about 4 volts rms AC (using the meter AC range) at a frequency of 900Hz, the exact frequency depending on R1, R2, C1 tolerance. Alternatively and preferably, you could use a scope to measure the oscillator output at pin 11.
Once you are satisfied the oscillator is running ok, you can move on to the next stage, Ic1c and Ic1d. The sole purpose of these two gates which are configured as invertors is to produce two square-waves with a phase shift of 180 degrees between the two , each square-wave turns on and off its own diode. So, when pin 10 is high, output 2 diode will be switched in allowing signal to pass through it, at the same time pin 4 will be low and output 1 diode



will be switched out so no signal can pass through it. When pin 10 goes low, the opposite occurs, output 2 diode will be switched out and output 1 will be switched in, i.e. you are alternating between the two diodes. So, using your dvm on DC range, you should see approx. 4.5 volts on pin 10 and pin 4. Using your dvm on AC you should see approx 4 volts rms at 900Hz on these pins. Once again a scope would be better. The voltage / waveform measured at R4 and the junction of the RFC (labeled as op2 in the circuit) will be considerably less than this (you should read about 0.5 to 1volt) as the diode will be forward biased on positive half cycles.

I decided to dust off my old oscilloscope and fire it up. Fortunately it powered up and I checked it using the internal calibrator to see that it worked ok. I then tried to measure the output of the oscillator as Barry had suggested. No oscillation!. I checked the timing circuit R2/C1. The components were as the circuit instructed and they were wired in correctly and the joints were good. So why no oscillation?. Well again Barry came to my rescue. On the Saturday before Xmas he actually came around with a circuit he had made up himself based on my description and this oscillated at around 800Hz. He used what he called bug construction. Whilst he was here it seemed silly not to show him my efforts. He spent about 5 minutes looking at my veroboard, asked to use the voltmeter as a continuity tester and told me that one of my tracks which should have been cut still had a slight whisker making a shorting contact. He scraped the whisker away and I then tested the circuit again. No problem, the oscillator was roaring away and the inverters where doing their job. So the next job was to make up a little veroboard with the RF components on it. This was not so difficult although I find working with enameled copper wire problematical when it comes to scraping the wire away to leave bare copper that can be soldered. As you can see everything went together and fitted in the same ABS box with a PP9 battery and connected the dipoles to the BNC connectors on the box using some cable that already had BNC plugs on the end (BNC connectors are not the easiest to make up)





With some trepidation I connected the antenna to a 2m rig tuned to 145.225MHz and switched the switcher ON hoping to hear the 900Hz tone in the receiver output. Nothing. Disconnected the antenna from the rig and measured to see that I was getting the 4.5V bias voltage on each of the diodes. Seemed to be ok. Connected the output from a signal generator at 98MHz to one of the dipole input BNC's and the Rx output connector to a frequency counter. Nothing measured on the counter. Turned the signal generator output voltage up to 2V and there was the 98MHz frequency registering on the counter. Same with the other dipole. However was it really working or was the 2V output from the generator finding its way to the frequency counter anyway?. Connected it back up to a rig tuned to GB3DX and hoped to hear the station ID come through but nothing was heard. At this point I gave up for the day and reconciled myself to using my normal 3 el ZL special for the DF which was no only two days away.

The next day the Wythall Radio Club Reg Brown G7OJO contest was in full swing so I got out the FT817 and connected up the DF antenna and I could hear Jim M3JPP about 3-4 miles away and Peter M5UO in Redditch, some 9 miles away. Unfortunately there wasn't enough time to conduct any real tests and I still could not hear this 900Hz tone that I should be hearing when the beam is off the correct heading. It works as an antenna and it has directivity but without hearing the tone when it is off beam I still don't know whether it is working correctly or not.

Anyway I will continue to work on it and if anyone wants to have a go themselves I do have some kits of the basic electronics such as the IC, pin diodes, capacitors and resistors, ferrite beads, veroboard and plastic boxes, which I can let anyone have at cost price.

QSL Manager's Report



During December I received back from the printer several more QSL designs for the Hams that I am QSL Manager for. One of the QSL cards was of course for MW5W, the CQWW Contest station from October. Some direct QSL cards have been received but the bulk of the QSL cards are expected to arrive Via the Bureau during 2008.

I have been in regular contact with Trygvi OY4TN from the Faroe Islands and he has reported some good Tropo conditions during December on 2m and also some good Sporadic E on 20m. If you need Faroe Islands on VHF then listen out for Trygvi, he is mostly active in the evenings or weekends. Trygvi has also been working on a project to operate remotely from home with the mast located on Sornfelli Mountain which is 650m ASL. He says, "It is not possible to set up large antennas up here because of the winter wind and ice storms" he goes on to say that "on December 10th at 20.20 UTC there was a beautiful Aurora where the Northern Lights were visible over the Islands" Here is a photograph that was taken by Olavur OY1OF. Olavur is a professional photographer on the Faroe Islands and you view more of his work on his website:
http://www.faroephoto.com

I am here to assist any members who need QSL cards designed and printed, I have many samples of QSL card designs here that I can send to you or just ask me to bring them to a club night and I can show you then. If you do require any help then please email me at m3sde@btinternet.com With new digital cameras on the market giving ever better quality images it is now easier than ever to design a perfect QSL card. Again if you need to borrow a camera for this just email me.



I have also been busy with the RSGB Bureau, as I am Sub Manager for the G4D's and G4R's. I usually receive a box from the Bureau every 8 – 10 weeks weighing up to 20kg it can take several days to sort the cards and get them posted to the radio hams across the country. I get a lot out of the hobby and I feel it is up to each of us to put something back into the hobby for others to enjoy. Chris G1VDP was a volunteer Sub QSL Manager for the expedition 3B7C St Brandon Island and has been busy confirming about 500 direct QSL cards as part of the QSL team of the 5 Star DX'ers Association.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very prosperous 2008,

73' de Tim Beaumont M3SDE

Club Diary

February
Tuesday 5th 2m Club Championship from Shack
Tuesday 12th Committee Meeting (open to all)
Tuesday 19th ADVANCED LICENCE course starts for next 14 weeks
Tuesday 26th Talk on Direction Finding by Martin G8VXX
March
Tuesday 4th 2m Club Championship from Shack
Sunday 9th WYTHALL RADIO RALLY
Tuesday 11th Committee Meeting (open to all)
Tuesday 18th Talk on Antennas and Feeders by Peter G4LWF
Sat/Sun/Mon 22/23/24th March
Evesham Vintage Easter Fair
Tuesday 25th Natter Night
April
Tuesday 1st 2m Club Championship from Shack
Tuesday 8th Committee Meeting (open to all)
Tuesday 15th Talk on Antenna Modelling by Chris G0EYO
Tuesday 22nd Natter Night
Tuesday 29th Quiz Night General Knowledge and Radio
May
Tuesday 6th 2m Club Championship from Shack
Tuesday 13th Committee Meeting (open to all)
Tuesday 20th Vaughan on Web Site Design
Thursday 22nd ADVANCED LICENCE EX-AMINATION
Tuesday 27th FOUNDATION LICENCE course starts for next 6 weeks

Make sure you know what is happening at the Club by signing up for the club's e mail message reflector. Contact Vaughan M0VRR on shack@m0vrr.co.uk to get on the list

VHF Contests (from page 8)

Every 1st Tuesday	2000-2230 (Local)	144MHz UK Activity Contest and Club Championship
Every 2nd Tuesday	2000-2230 (Local)	432MHz UKAC
Every 4th Tuesday	2000-2230 (Local)	50MHz UKAC
3 Feb.	0900-1300	432MHz Affiliated Societies Contest
1-2 Mar.	1400-1400	March 144/432MHz

Club's Xmas Social

Held on November 30th, it didn't quite have the feel of a Xmas Social. But at least we did not clash with other works do's by having it so early. We changed the format this year from a skittles evening to a quiz evening plus the usual stand-up bingo and raffle. We had around 40 people attend comprising 13 members and families. As usual members were very generous with their contributions to the raffle prizes and in the end most members or their families won something (sorry Neil). We collected around £100 in raffle and bingo fees and this pretty much paid for the club's costs in holding the event. The stand-up bingo was jointly won by Sherryn M3SVR and Chris G6KMQ who shared £12 between them.

The main attraction this year was a six round quiz covering, general knowledge, history, science, geography, tv and film and sports. Some of the team names were quite clever but I won't embarrass anyone by saying who was in each team. In addition to six round quiz there was also a 3 page picture/connections/ dingbats quiz which had quite an effect on the final scores. Each round was scored out of 10

Chris G6KMQ claimed the quiz prize of 6 bottles of wine on behalf of the Dragon's Den team.



As is usual for the club's Xmas Social we had an American supper and is also usual, far too much food was brought, so everyone had plenty to eat and some even got to take some away for later. Many thanks to all who came, we hope everyone had an enjoyable evening. A special thanks to Martin and Steve for organising the very professional sound systems and Anita for laying out the food and Jackie and Wendy for selling the raffle and bingo tickets. See you all next year.

Chris G0EYO



Name of Team	General Knowledge	Geography	Sports	Science and Nature	History	TV and Films	Famous People	Connections	Dingbats	TOTALS
And the winning team is	4	4	5	6	4	4	6	4	4	41
Wacky Jacks	3	7	4	8	5	7	6	5	4	49
Gold Diggers	4	5	6	8	6	3	6	4	1	43
Dimwits	7	5	6	7	6	8	8	3	2	52
Ravens Roost	4	3	4	7	3	5	6	3	5	40
Dragons Den	6	5	7	8	7	7	6	7	5	58

Member's Shacks

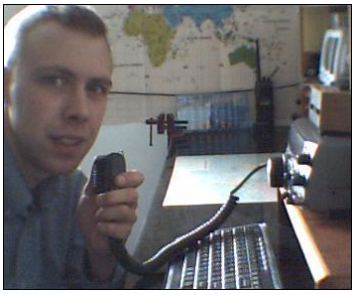


Member's shacks.
Left: G0MTN
Below : M0VRR
Below right: EI2GYB
Right: M5DUO



Some years ago, I remember being amused by pictures of the untidiest ham shacks published in a radio magazine. A comment by Darren MW5HOC during the Xmas Contest that his shack was so bad he and Carol M3YKL could not both occupy it at the same time, made me ask members to submit pictures of their own shacks. Thanks for the submissions but it must be said everyone is far too tidy for their own good. There must be some real horrors out there so if you dare send us a picture to include in the next newsletter. You never know, we might even give a prize to the scruffiest shack.





Now this is the sort of thing we are looking for: No it's not G0EYO's garage but is the QTH of W4EGK, Joe Batchelor, SK



Make a note for your diary

The 23rd Wythall Radio Rally will be held on Sunday 9th March at Woodrush Sports Centre Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood

We will need your help that weekend so please keep this weekend free

Paid your subs yet?

This year our subs are £12 per person or £6 for retired (65 or over), or unemployed or at school or college. Members who fail to pay by end of March 2008 will be taken off the mailing list

Please send your subs to our Treasurer, David Dawkes G0ICJ at 95 Houndsfield Lane, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6LX

A reward of 500 microfarads is offered for information leading to the arrest of this desperate criminal. HOP-A-LONG CAPACITY. This unrectified criminal escaped from a western primary cell where he had been clamped in ions awaiting the gauss chamber. He was charged with the induction of an 18 turn coil named MILLIHENRY who was found choked and robbed of valuable joules. He is armed with a carbon rod and is a potential killer. Capacity is also charged with driving dc motor over a Wheatstone bridge and refusing to let the band-pass. If encountered, he may offer series of resistance. The electromotive force spent the night searching for him in a magnetic field, where he had gone to earth. They had no success and believed he had returned ohm via a short circuit. He was last seen riding a kilocycle with his friend eddy current who was playing a harmonic.
Sent in by Steve EI2GYB

Xmas Fox Hunt

And so it was after several days of merriment and feasting, some of us decided that what was needed was a day of exercise and fasting and so we decided to go hunting the fox. Fortunately common sense prevailed and we decided to do it from the luxury of our motor vehicles and on Wednesday the 27th of December we congregated at the Barley Mow Public House in Studley to set off on a great adventure. We made three teams;

Team 1: Sherryn M3SVR and Vaughan M0VRR and their two youngsters
Team 2: Chris G6KMQ and Martin G8VXX
Team 3: David G0ICJ, Peter M5DUO and Chris G0EYO.

As you can see we had a fine arrangement of DF antennas and Team 2 volunteered to be the first fox. DF Fox hunting requires the fox to transmit on 2m (usually 145.225MHz) for 2 minutes every 10 minutes. By a stroke of luck Team 3 decided to go off in a direction which actually took them quite close to the fox as their first reading was off the scale and needed lots of attenuation to get any kind of direction. Thus Team 2 where found quite quickly by Team 3. Team 3 went off to be the fox and after driving down some long country lane which seemed to go on for miles they found themselves in Spernal Lane and drove past Team 1 who seemed to be having technical difficulties. Team 3 drove on and parked up in a slip road in the middle of Great Alne village and proceeded to transmit. However due to an unfortunate error they had got a repeater shift on their transmission so were transmitting 600kHz low. This was apparent



when after speaking for two minutes Team 3 heard someone ask if they had heard the fox. The error was quickly found and Team 3 transmitted again. Unfortunately they were soon found by Team 1 who had spotted whizzing past them some 15 minutes earlier.

Team 1 went off to be the fox and Team 3, being of an older generation decided that they needed to go and find some public toilets to make themselves more comfortable, so their first reading was taken in the public car park near to Somerfields outside the public loos in Alcester. Got some funny looks from the locals going in to do their shopping. A chase quickly developed between Team 2 and Team 3 as to who could be first to find Team 1. Team 2 just beat Team 3 by about 30 seconds. Team 3 had identified some of clues that Team 1 gave out on their second over.

Team 2 went off again as the fox and Team 3 got completely lost and found themselves off the map and heading towards Stratford. Team 1 seemed to be in better control and found the fox up near Coughton Court. At that point it was after 12 noon so we all drove back to the Barley Mow for a well deserved lunch and a beer.

Having fun is what Wythall Radio Club do so well. Our next fox hunt will be in the summer. Why not come and join us.

Oh and by the way G0EYO's super DF antenna never got used.



Club has Broadband

After two years of deliberations, the club has been given the opportunity to connect its shack computers to broadband using the new 3G broadband package that Chris G6KMQ has purchased for his own use but is generously making it available for club and training nights and VHF NFD in the park. We have tried it down the shack and it works a treat. No wires, no telephones just a signal from the mast which so happens to be on the corner of Silver Street. Thanks Chris this will be a help when we need to download material and connect to the cluster . The cost of the modem is around £100 to buy plus a monthly charge depending upon how much you download, £10/month gets you 1Gb, £15 gets you 3Gb and £25 gets you 7Gb. These will also work on the new laptops.



M3JRR Winner of Reg Brown Trophy?

Results are not finalised for the Contest this Xmas but we have what appears to be a decisive winner. About 25 members appeared to have taken part, either regularly working other members or coming up perhaps only once to give a rare multiplier. Neil M3POV came on for the last 5 minutes of the contest and managed to work three members. Others were able to work distant members through GB3DX, although the new access requirement using CTCSS tones caught a couple of members out with their old equipment being unable to generate the tones. A regular 80m schedule was held in the mornings and this enabled us to work M0COP most days. Many thanks to all who took part. It was great fun and got members speaking to one another. The following scores are very provisional with others yet to come in but I reckon the top three will be as shown. So an early well done to Jim M3JRR and lets hope his win is confirmed and we will record the presentation of the trophy in time for the next newsletter



		QSO	best 5	Mults	Score
M3JPP	Jim	72	46	20	920
G0EYO	Chris	58	43	20	860
G0ICJ	David				612
M3OFW	Colin		34	15	510
M0COP	Pete	44	33	12	396
G0NES	Don				338
M0AEJ	Vic				330
G0MTN	Lee				234
GW7HOC	Darren	6	6	6	36
M0KQU/ EI2GYB	Steve	6	6	6	36
MW3YKL	Carol	5	5	5	25

Contest Group Report

Happy New Year to all club members from me. Whilst the club's main retrospective look at the year gone by happens at the AGM, the start of the year is the popular time to look back at activities of the last 12 months, and being planning for the new year.

Whilst VHF contests are a little thin on the ground until the spring time for obvious reasons, we are in the middle of the HF contest season with many popular events in the springtime. Domestically the RSGB VHF UK Activity Contests take place throughout the whole year, and the HF 80m Club Championships start in February.

The last year has seen some activity from the club shack on VHF and HF. We've had several activations of G1WAC in the 2m UKAC, and G4WAC made a good mid table placing in the recent Club Calls contest on 160 metres.

Whilst the club's own Christmas Contest was widely supported by the members, it does remain difficult to entice more members to take part in contests – even if it is just making a few contacts of VHF or HF and giving away some points. It's not hard. Rumour has it that it can also be fun!

Diary of a Serial Contester
During 2007 I added up I took part in 121 contacts, making over 23,000 contacts. Despite pledging to slow down this year (and any changes in domestic arrangements will likely make that a certainty!) this is what January 1st 2008 looked like.

00:00 Happy New Year. I popped into the club for a brief visit to the New Year's Party to see Sylwia who was working. Return home for some sleep.

07:30 Climb out of bed blearily eyed. It's cold, dark, and too early to be up on a holiday day.

08:00 **SARTG Happy New Year Contest** starts. This is a short three hour contest on 80m and 40m. I've had a go at this for a few years, so I've got a good idea of what to expect. My target is 100 QSOs. I know I must spend the first hour on 80m before the sun comes up and I lose propagation to Europe. This is a friendly contest, with the exchange including the operator's name, and a "Happy New Year" greeting in the local language. I make 28 QSOs on 80m, better than last year's total, and QSY to 40m. 40m is very crowded, so it's easy to search for new stations, but I struggle to find anywhere to call CQ. Very rarely, I'm running my linear on RTTY – just to about the 200 – 250 watt level so it won't get too hot even with the extra fan installed. Near the end of the contest I work K4GMH on 40m, and my last QSO is at 1058 with QSO number 100. That was fun, but I'm far behind the leaders in Scandinavia and central Europe. I'm not even sure if I'm the top G station so I'll wait for the results.

11:00 **AGCW Happy New Year Contest** Immediately I switch over to CW, and start working CW stations on 40m. The AGCW is a German CW enthusiasts group, and the band is wall to wall with stations to work. The rules of their HNY contest say that all keying must be done by a manual key or paddle – no computer controlled sending. I soon realised it was still too cold in the house as my hand was too cold to send accurate CW. The contest has already been running a few hours, and I'm joining in for the last hour. I stay mostly on 40m, although the contest runs over several HF bands, switching between calling CQ and looking for others. For the final few minutes I go to 20 metres, but it's quiet there and I only make a couple more contacts. Final tally is 52 QSOs in the hour.

12:00 **Wythall Christmas Contest** I remember the world's premiere contest is still underway, and I work 9 club members on 2 metres FM simplex, via GB3DX, and also on 80m SSB. It was great fun to work Darren and Carol in Cardiff, and Steve in Eire via GB3DX in Internet linked mode. Good to see the club support again.

13:00 A very brief lunch and shopping trip – the clock is still ticking !

14:00 **IRTS Counties Contest** This is a relatively new contest on 80m, where stations in Ireland (EI and GI) work each other, and everyone else. All 'DX' entrants can work only EI and GI. In one of the first runnings of this event, Wythall members made up the majority of the 'rest of world' entries, and won both SSB and Mixed Mode sections. I work 20 stations on SSB in 30 minutes, not finding any on CW, before leaving to see my family for New Year's celebrations.

22:18 **144 MHz UKAC** The monthly 2m contest started at 8pm. Pete M0COP/P is out portable trying a new site, and Vic M0AEJ was also active. I was 2 hours late for the start by the time I returned home – and I guess many entrants have already closed down for the night. I work 9 stations in 7 locator squares in the final 12 minutes of the contest. Not a contest winning score, but still a reasonable number of squares were worked considering I'm using a colinear in my loft!

22:30 Time for bed and a well deserved rest.

Not every contest day / weekend is quite so hectic, but hopefully this is given you an idea of the variety of events in the calendar.
Lee G0MTN
Rules & Info:
HF: **http://www.rsgbhfcc.org**
http://www.sk3be.se/contest

Jan 5 – 6	Sat 1800 – Sun 2400	ARRL RTTY Roundup	HF, RTTY, PSK
Jan 26 – 27	Sat 1200 – Sun 1200	BARTG RTTY Sprint	
Jan 26 – 27	Sat 1300 – Sun 1300	UBA SSB	
Jan 13	1400-1800.	Affiliated Societies Team Contest	3510-3590kHz, RST+Serial (CW)
Jan 19	1400-1800.	Affiliated Societies Team Contest	3600-3750kHz, RS+Serial. (SSB)
February	2000-2130.	80m Club Championships	4th – SSB; 13th – Data; 21rd - CW.
Feb 9/10	2100-0100.	1st 1.8Mhz Contest	1820-1870kHz, RST+Serial+District.
Feb 9/10	Sat 0000 – Sun 2400	RTTY WPX	RTTY
Feb 9/10	Sat 1200 – Sun 1200	PACC Contest	SSB / CW
March	2000-2130.	80m Club Championships	3rd – Data; 12th – CW; 20th - SSB.
Mar 8/9	1000-1000.	Commonwealth Contest	3.5-28MHz, RST+Serial.

HF Contests (VHF Contests on page 5)

The next issue of the Wythall Radio Club Newsletter will be published at the beginning of March 2008

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