newsletter

"having fun with rf"

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wythall radio club

wythall contest group

Sept-Oct 2017

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

Is there a Messiah in the house?

Lee G0MTN conducted an on-line survey of club members for 4 days in July. The purpose of the survey was;

To help ensure the club programme has a good fit with what the members actually want to do.
Make planning the programme easier for organisers and the committee.
Reduce disappointments and frustrations when some events have been poorly supported.

Of some 80+ club members on the books, only 19 responded. This indicates that we have a large "silent majority", who either don't have a view as to what the club should do for its members or didn't get around to completing the survey in the few days it ran for. (Several members found the survey in their spam box after the survey date) Strangely enough the number 19-20 is about the number of people (not always the same ones, but generally so) who attend organised events be it lectures, plug and play, socials, fun run etc. Possibly only the club rally gets more members out helping over that weekend.

The survey asked members to comment on 24 defined club radio and social activities with a rating between 1 (low) and 10 (high). Averaging out the individual results showed that all activities had scored between 3.5 (Friday night socials) and 7 (Visiting Lecturers). *Should we be surprised by these* results, probably not? Lee's summary of the survey makes interesting reading and he should be congratulated on his expertise and efforts in undertaking such a task.

Do they help the committee plan and organise things for the future? They might do but don't forget that members participate in activities because they want to and all activities attract some support from some members so if we were to cancel less supported activities we would possibly annoy someone,



somewhere. What did not come across in the survey was what new activities could the club run which would attract more support. That may become apparent if members offer suggestions post survey and a meeting has been planned for mid-September to discuss this.

The problem facing our club is not unique. In some ways it reflects the fact that amateur radio is mostly an individualistic hobby, the majority of people enjoy it without the need to associate or even socialise with other radio amateurs. The RSGB has a membership is 22,600. It represents supposedly 80,000 licenced amateurs in the UK (doubtful). Very few, (less than 10%?). RSGB members participate in elections and even less act as volunteers to deliver the services that we all take for granted. And so it is in clubs. Wythall Radio Club is *a successful amateur radio club. We have* our own shack, lots of assets; provide lots of opportunity to socialise; run CW classes and train at all three licence levels and Wythall House is an approved examination centre. We run an up-to-date website which is considered to be amongst the best in the country and we have a bi-monthly newsletter. We also involve ourselves in community activities like the Wythall Fun Run, the Carnival and Bonfire Night. What we are doing less of is actually playing *radio although the Plug and Play days* have a definite following. But it is a fact that the radio equipment in the shack does not get used very much. These resources all cost money to maintain and insure. Also it is a fact that fewer members are attending Tuesday and Friday night meetings, whether they are natter nights, lectures or committee meetings.

I know Lee is concerned about the lack of support some of our activities are attracting and that this could cause those currently working hard to provide them lose heart and leave the club. This is a real problem as it usually the same people who organise and support these activities and we cannot expect them to keep doing this for any longer than they are able. Many of the club's activists are getting older, and perhaps have less time and physical ability to devote to club activities. One possibility would be to downsize the assets and simplify our activities to just radio related ones. This would be a shame but given that Anita and other committee members have indicated that they will be standing down this year this might become a reality. It has been a couple of years since the club had a secretary. We struggled to fill officer and committee posts at last year's AGM and there are concerns it may be as difficult this year.

Those of us who joined in the 1980's were young and enthusiastic enough to see what we could do with a permanent shack at Wythall Park. In those days we had the vision to see what we might be possible with commitment and hard work. *Surely there must be others amongst* our 80+ members who have the enthusiasm, communication and administration skills to inspire others and ensure that the future of this great club is assured? We have built something we can be really proud of at Wythall please don't let apathy be the melody to our swansong.

Chris G0EYO - President

N.B. Club AGM is on 14th November at 8pm

Memorable QSOs

What are your most memorable QSO's? This question has crossed my mind many times, it doesn't have to be the longest distance or the rarest DXCC or IOTA, it can be the first QSO you made after becoming licensed or the new home made antenna that worked better than you could of imagined, but for whatever reason it is a "memorable QSO"

So what are my most memorable QSOs? I have a few that come to mind, as a DX'er I put much effort into working DX and also trying to study the phenomenon of propagation at different times of the solar cycle.

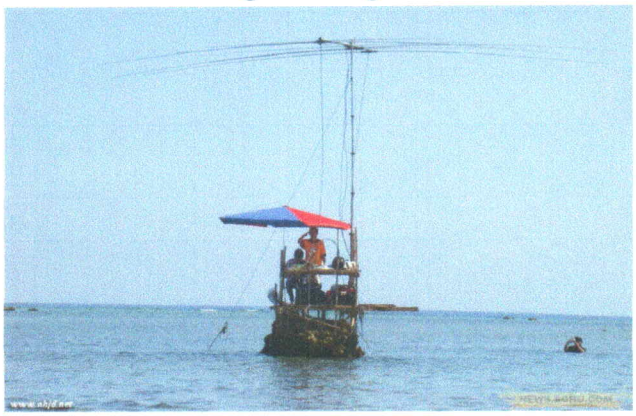


K7C Kure Atoll 29/09/2005 0904z 20m – **Kure Atoll** lies 1,200 miles from Honolulu and is the westernmost island in the Hawaiian chain but is also a DXCC of its own. This was a large DXpedition by the Cordell Expedition team and I was listening in awe to the DXpedition, but hadn't got the firepower in antenna or amplifier back then. I had some time off work, it was coming to the end of Solar Cycle 23 but still managing to get some decent sunspots, I remember I had been up for 14 hours overnight trying to find a path open either on 40m or 20m, some good signals for many hours but it wasn't until the op on 20m said, "I need a toilet break, back in 2 minutes" that 2 minutes felt like eternity..... after 1 minute 56 seconds I chanced my luck and called 5up.... And amazingly he came straight back to me on a first call.... That was memorable!



NH7O 27/03/2011 0833 10m **Hawaii** Ten metres is my favourite band and I have always dreamed of working to the other side of the world, but on 10m that hasn't happened too many times recently. It was morning and on my second cup of coffee of the day, 10m sounded promising I had worked a couple of South African stations, we are pretty close to the Spring Equinox and getting close to the peak of Solar cycle 24, I called CQ a few times and then bingo..... *"M0URX this is NH7O beaming long path from Hawaii Aloha"* WOW DX doesn't come better than that, more to the point it never comes to me like that. 17,710 miles, another memorable QSO.

P5/4L4FN 08/11/2002 0859 15m **North Korea** I was on Aitutaki Island in the South Cook Islands using the call **ZK1SDE.** I had been working DX on 15m for over an hour when out of the speaker I heard ***"P5/4L4FN"*** I questioned what I thought I heard and said *"Papa 5 again?"* back came the call *"Papa Five / Four Lima Four Fox November"* wow.... Somehow I managed to get the words out *"P5/4L4FN 59, thank you for North Korea"* He called me and there was nobody else he wanted to work, that was awesome. I have yet to work North Korea from home in Coventry, so that was just special.



ZL9A 10/01/2016 0915 20m **Antipodes Island, New Zealand Sub Antarctic Islands.** I had always wanted to work the antipode from the UK, the nearest we can get to that, is the aptly named Antipodes Island, located 750 km East of New Zealand's South Island. So when Cezar VE3LYC and his team set out in 2016 I thought this was my chance. A solar storm had caused a black out on the bands at our latitude, and the disturbance K index had risen to 7, I felt that this was not going to happen, but remember we are talking about the antipode, it is well known of course that on your antipode no matter where you beam your signal will arrive at the antipode given SOME kind of path being open, I patiently waited and at 0915z I heard the call ZL9A, quite easy as it seemed very few stations in Europe were hearing them, so even though the K index is as high as 7 don't right off the bands. You never know who is out there. Another special one for the log.

BS7H 03/05/2007 2217 20m **Scarborough Reef South China Sea** Scarborough Reef is so small that a DXpedition has to build a platform on the reef to hold the stations, 3 stations on 3 rocks and is one of the most difficult DXCCs to hold a DXpedition. Pile ups were huge and all day every day, I really stood no chance of working this one, late on in the expedition and still no QSO, well, I had to be up for work early so I had gone to bed, I was sound asleep when the phone went, *"Tim, get up quick, BS7H on 14185.0 up 5 but beam long path"* Not really knowing what the time was or what day it was, I got out of bed turned the antenna and there I heard it ... "BS7H beaming over SA QRZ" nobody was answering them, the band was quiet and no pile up... Wow one call and I was in the log, who would have thought it? BS7H long path late at night. Amazing!

A35RK 07/02/2005 20m **Tonga** Have you ever wondered why we have Field Day? Well let me tell you this story and you will know why! There have been times when to hear someone at the other end of the radio was also a relief for both sides of the QSO, while I was **ZK1SDE** in **Aitutaki** in 2005 I had gone through some seriously bad weather, a category 5 **Cyclone Meena,** constant wind speeds of 150 mph sustained for over 3 hours on a

Memorable QSOs cont'd

night time in a wooden holiday lodge *close to the sea... it can't get much worse* than this! and I survived. During the Cyclone I had been talking on 20m to **A35RK Paul** in **Tonga** using an inverted V wire rigged up as emergency communication, this is where the Field Day activities that we do at Wythall DO actually make a difference when it comes to a real life emergency situation. I spoke to Paul for as long as I could before the inevitable happened, we lost power at about 1am and was in total darkness for the night as the cyclone raged outside. Paul knew how serious this storm was and said that he would monitor the frequency to keep us safe. By 6am, dawn was breaking and outside was like Armageddon, debris everywhere, it took 2 hours to chainsaw our way to the road, it was about 8 hours later when power was finally restored and I was able to get the radio operational, there, still on 20m was Paul, *"ZK1SDE this is A35RK do you read me over."* I cannot tell you how relieved we both were to be able to make that QSO. One I will never forget. I asked Paul to telephone my family to let them know I was safe as the local telephone company had taken down the phone satellite dish for safety, and with another cyclone approaching we had no comms other than the radio.... So the next time you are at Wythall Field Day, take note of everything that you might need in an emergency, after all that is what Field Day is set up to achieve and you never know when you might need those skills. Field Day gives you some life skills that we hope we never need.

R1ANC 16/09/2006 0742 20m **Vostock Base, East Antarctic Plateau, Antarctica** I have always had a fascination with working stations in Antarctica, the adventure, the remoteness and just the thrill of the extreme. Operated by Alex UA1ZCK, the one thing that makes this QSO stand out to me was when Alex *explained that he had finished erecting* his 2 element Cubical quad and was doing some tests with the antenna, he recorded that it had been cold doing the antenna work in fact as low as -75c. Now I can't begin to imagine doing antenna work in anything below zero so Spasiba Alex!

This is why I enjoy Amateur Radio DX'ing, you never know who and where you may be talking to, and what they may be doing or going through at their end. So get in that shack and turn that dial until you hear someone and say hello. It may just be that very memorable QSO!

Tim M0URX

IARU contest operating GR2HQ

My main radio activity over the summer was the preparation for and the operating in the Headquarters category of the IARU HF Championship contest in mid-July. As well as being a traditional HF contest, there is also a section for national radio societies to compete against each other. These "HQ" stations act as multipliers for everyone and so are in demand. Special rules allow the HQ stations to transmit on each band/mode simultaneously, i.e. up to 12 stations at once on SSB and CW from 160m to 10m.



In recent years the HQ section has become something of an arms race, perhaps to the detriment of the contest as a whole as more operators and bigger and bigger HQ stations occupied the bands. The focus on the category has been dampened down in the results in an attempt to balance this out, but there remains a lot of work and effort put in by the national teams, and a lot of pride in reaching the top placings.

Finding competitive stations around the country can be difficult, especially considering the UK does not have (m)any permanent contest club stations similar to that found in Germany, the Balkans etc. In fact more than 12 stations might be advantageous, as 10m can provide spotlight openings that might appear in the North, whilst the South West remains closed (or open to somewhere else completely.) Stations in the South East might be too close to much of Western Europe. There's a lot of planning, although sometimes the available options and choices are limited.

For the RSGB UK entry using the special GR2HQ callsign, a large team of dozens of operators came together, with many operators travelling some distance to take part in the event. For this year I travelled to Simon M0VKY's QTH at his family's farm outside Wolverhampton to operate on 20m SSB, and Jamie M0SDV went to near Sheffield to operate 40m CW at the QTH of Nick G4FAL. The other stations were active all over the UK – from north Scotland to Jersey. Training sessions were held and lots of talk about strategy and options.

Aside from the usual radio and antenna equipment, computer networking of the logging software enabled all of the stations to contribute to a common log file, and be able to chat to each other. Where both speed and accuracy are important, having a second pair of ears listening to your calling frequency can be useful. This second operator might be at a different location, and the distance and different antennas can help pull additional callsigns quickly out of the noise. During the 24 hours of the contest itself, band conditions were not great, and there's always a desire for more, bigger, and higher antennas to counteract the lack of solar activity. Despite a few operational hiccups with networking now and again, and a failure on the linear amplifier I brought along for the weekend, the 20m SSB team comprising Simon M0VKY, young contester Kieran 2E0NCN and myself enjoyed ourselves, and the overall claimed score is in line with expectations. With barely a chance to close my eyes I was a little weary after the 24 hours – maybe I'm getting old! Jamie also returned safely and I'm told suffered no permanent damage after facing the 40m CW pileups!

Lee G0MTN

RSGB Consultation on Proposed Syllabus changes

The RSGB published on behalf of the Examinations Committee (EC) a consultation document for the draft syllabus proposed to use from 2019 onwards. This is an 80+ page document covering Foundation, Intermediate and Final licence requirements. It is a major piece of work and tutors were invited to complete a survey with their findings and views. The survey was not really geared to close consideration of each clause and the whole exercise would have been easier, shorter and more inclusive if the authors had thought to highlight changes to each syllabus.


Radio Society of Great Britain
Advancing amateur radio since 1913

Radio Amateur Examinations

Specification

For Examinations held after 1 July 2018

Draft for consultation

Issue 1
Publication date: June 2017

Document EX 60X

Composite syllabus - final for consultation

June 2017

The objectives of the review were stated as being quite wide, namely

To bring the old syllabus' up to date
To ensure the compete syllabus is HAREC compliant
To ensure the Intermediate exam reflects the privileges offered
To seek to equalise the steps between the exams
To plan for a consistent and progressive pattern of learning

I think that the authors of the consultation document have made an honest attempt to satisfy these requirements although I and many other tutors will challenge some of their recommendations. I can't argue with these objectives, certainly not the one about bringing it up to date, but I do fear the consequences.

I feel that the current existing structure has allowed the many to get into the hobby with a relatively easy introductory examination and this has been good. Some, but not all, will go onto the next levels. Ofcom feel that there should be a clearer progression and are unhappy that people don't go all the way to a Full licence.

To demonstrate some of the changes proposed, I am grateful to Peter M0PSX of Essex Ham for permission to use much of his analysis of the changes at Foundation level. These are;

A new section added called **Prior Knowledge** that explicitly states required knowledge of basics maths, fractions & decimals, units and basic algebra (e.g. V=IxR). Plus the addition of "micro" and "Giga" to the units and decimal and exponent notation and conversion of numbers from 10^{-6} to 10^{9} to/from decimal.

Licensing Conditions

No significant changes here – just some tidying up. Additions to this section include stuff which was in the Intermediate syllabus i.e. recall the optional /A, /P, /M and /MM suffixes; recall "Vessel at Sea" and Aircraft conditions plus that station tests are required "from time to time"

Technical Aspects

Significant changes here including many items that were in the Intermediate syllabus. Introduces parallel and series circuits and requires candidates to understand that current in all parts of a series circuit has the same value and that the potential differences across items in parallel are the same. Also wants candidate to recall that when resistors are connected in series, the total resistance is equal to the sum of the values of the individual resistors, but recall that when two resistors of equal value are connected in parallel, the total resistance is equal to 1/2 the value of each individual resistor. More knowledge required on DC theory, batteries and sine waves. Includes Analogue to Digital Convertor (ADC) and Digital to Analogue Convertor (DAC), plus definition of digital signals, and sampling rates

Transmitters and Receivers

Introduces Sidebands ("amplitude modulated signals contain two sidebands and the carrier"), and concept of SSB and more on loads and matching. Also introduces Software Defined Radio receivers and transmitters and introduces Digital Voice and that different DV (incompatible) systems exist. Adds two new block diagrams for an SDR receiver and transmitter to remember

Feeders and Antennas

Some significant additions here, including the addition of "Waveguide" as the third type of feeder together with more on feeder, including loss, 50Ω impedance, RF energy being converted to heat, and greater loss at higher frequency. Adds antenna radiation patterns as candidates need to be able to identify the polar diagrams for the half wave dipole and Yagi, and identify the directions of maximum and minimum radiation. There is more on antenna gain and ERP and "feed point" impedance, mismatch and reflection. Adds N and SMA plugs (in addition to BNC and PL259), plus the SO239 socket.

Propagation

Largely unchanged, but some material on the Ionosphere brought down from Intermediate:

Electro Magnetic Compatibility (EMC)

Largely unchanged, but lots of EMC material added for radios fitted to cars,

Operating Practices and Procedures

Largely unchanged and some tidying, but a few extra bits for candidates to remember, notably codes previously in Intermediate, plus compatibility of digital voice (DV) and digital data (DD) modes. Also adds that users of Digital Voice (DV) should check that the channel is not in use by other modes. Adds the requirement to know that Special Event Stations have call signs starting with "GB".

Safety

A considerable increase here, with material largely being moved from Intermediate. Voltages over 33V AC and 70V DC are hazardous but that an electric shock may be experienced at lower voltages. More on and RCD protection and the risks associated with rechargeable batteries (high current, lithium batteries can cause fire and explode) and charging requirements. Includes extra material on tool safety, soldering risks, use of ladders and exposure to RF radiation and safety at field/temporary events

>>>p5

Consultation on Proposed Syllabus changes cont'd

Practical Assessments

The main practical's are unchanged. There is an alternative to the Morse practical. Candidates must either do the existing "Morse appreciation or a data mode using an SDR.

In Conclusion

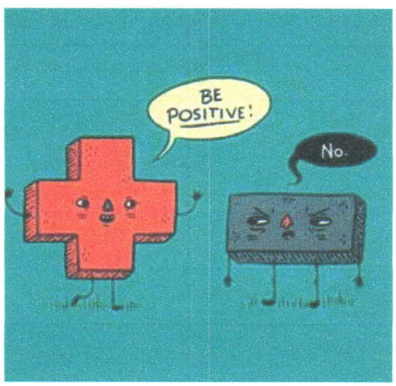
So a lot more work for students taking the Foundation level; clearly making it harder but for what reason. No doubt Ofcom driven but sadly they refuse to recognise the benefits to the hobby that we get from those who stick at Foundation level. The Foundation level has been instrumental in getting people into the hobby and because for some it satisfies a social need, and requires only basic skills and competency to participate. Accordingly it does not exclude those with social, age related, learning or mobility issues. It has encouraged family members to be able to participate in the hobby without them having to advance their technical knowledge. This has in turn helped radio clubs be more inclusive with more potential volunteers and create a social cohesion which has enabled clubs to survive and even grow.
The changes proposed at all levels of the syllabus are significant and if they are approved, they will require active tutors to do a lot of work changing their teaching materials. Unfortunately advancing years and poor health will cause some not to bother and drop out. This is a real shame as we are hardly overflowing with training capacity in this country. I have been arguing for years that the real problem we face is the lack of training venues and tutors, I am not sure this is going to help that.
The extra maths and technical requirements at Foundation and Intermediate levels will deter people from joining courses so fewer people will be encouraged to come into the hobby. This cannot be what the clubs and RSGB want to happen. I don't believe Ofcom care whether the hobby grows or diminishes. Given the size of their kingdom it is hardly going to be a priority issue for them. I think we may be about to kill the Golden Goose. Let's hope that the powers that be listen to those who currently deliver the courses.

Chris G0EYO

Training Report

Even though formal training finished with the Intermediate examination on 3rd July the training team have been busy. We held an advanced examination for two external candidates who I am pleased to say passed. We have also been planning the next advance course which will start on 4th Sept and run for 15 weeks with the exam on Sat 9th of December. Most of the guys that passed the intermediate have put their name down for this. Following our change of training presentation we have had to generate some 22 individual summary notes of the lecture presentations in PDF format for the advanced course.

We have also been working on the next on-line Foundation Course which will start on 2nd October with the exam on Sunday 19th November. There has been a lot of interest in this course and we may have to schedule two practical assessments and exams to accommodate everyone.



We contributed to the RSGB Exam Syllabus Draft Consultation Review (see page 4)

One of the aids we tutors recommend to our students is to sign up to the HamTests Website ww.hamtests.co.uk/ which for nearly 10 years, has provided a free range of resources that will help students prepare for their Amateur Radio exams. Sadly there was an announcement at the end of July to say that on the 1st of September Hamtests will be closing. Paul (M0TZO) & Peter (2M0SQL) have been running the service supporting over 20,000 users develop their skills within amateur radio. I am told that Peter does not enjoy the best of health and has recently moved to Scotland. Fortunately since that announcement, which was met with much dismay in the training community, there has been a change of heart and Paul M0TZQ has agreed with Peter to save the site and they have come up with a new plan where Peter will step away from day to day admin of site, but will still sort any technical issues. Paul will be be gathering and working with a team of Volunteers. There have been many people offering various types of assistance, so they will gather those interested in helping and working to getting the site up to date. More info will follow soon, as they have started testing a platform for volunteers.

And finally Barry M6VOK who did the Intermediate Course with us but couldn't take the exam due to holiday plans, eventually took it on 19th August and I am glad to say he passed. Well done Barry now on to the Full Licence so don't put them books away just yet.

Chris G0EYO



Why VDSL can be the death of amateur radio

ADSL, VDSL and VDSL2 are all clever technologies which allow broadband internet to be sent to your home using the existing copper wire in the system. The ideal delivery method would be fibre but there are no plans to get fibre to everyone's home anytime soon, although there is a chance that it will get to a cabinet in your street. The problem for the internet user with copper wire is that it is bandwidth and speed restricted. The further away you are from the fibre the slower the speed. The problem for the radio amateur is two-fold. Digital technology generates interfering signals on HF and VHF bands and ham transmissions can disrupt other internet users in the vicinity.

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) enables existing copper telephone lines to send and receive data at speeds that far exceed the old dial-up modems. ADSL can reach maximum speeds of 8Mbit/s download and 1mbps for upload. Very High Digital Subscriber Line VDSL is a further development of ADSL and offers speeds of up to 52Mbit/s download and 16 Mbit/s upload, over a single flat untwisted or twisted pair of copper wires using the frequency band from 25 kHz to 12 MHz Second generation systems VDSL2 use frequencies of up to 30 MHz to provide data rates exceeding 100 Mbit/s simultaneously in both the upstream and downstream directions. The maximum available bit rate is achieved at a range of about 300 meters; performance degrades as the local loop attenuation increases. The VDSL technology works on the basis of dividing the signals into separate channels 4 kHz wide. This technology is known as Discrete Multi- Tone (DMT).

Each channel is monitored and, if the quality is too impaired, the signal is shifted to another channel. This system constantly shifts signals, searching for the best channels for transmission and reception. This is known as re-training. Monitoring and sorting out the information and keeping up with the quality of all channels, make DMT more complex to implement than other carrier technologies, but also gives it more flexibility on lines of differing quality.

There has been a lot of correspondence about VDSL lately on the RSGB Tech Forum following a post from a radio ham. He had no problems receiving or transmitting from his QTH until BT came along and fitted a fibre cabinet at the end of his street (about 1km away). Some people gradually migrated to VDSL, including our ham (he only ever got about 3Mbit/sec from ADSL, because he is 5km from the telephone exchange). Now the locals have turned into a pitchfork-carrying horde, out to get him. When he transmits on 80m, some of their routers immediately fall over. Unfortunately, rather than speak to him they have:

1. Complained to BT, who blamed him.
2. Contacted Ofcom, who weren't interested.
3. Contacted the RSGB, who confirmed the activity was licensed.
4. Wrote to their MP.
5. Complained about his aerials to the local council.

The last was definitely the worst thing they could have done because now the council are after him for planning permission for his aerials.

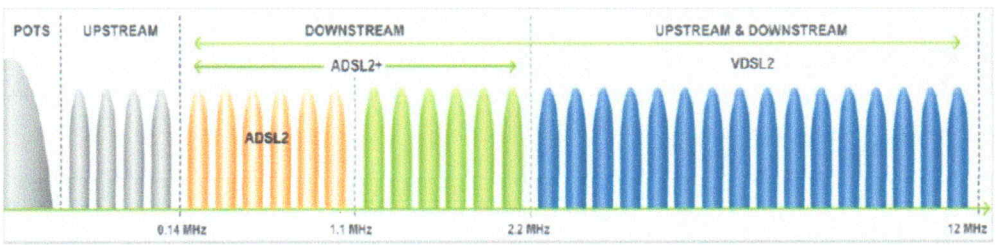
The phone lines where he lives are mainly overhead and quite long, because the houses are well spaced. The cabling from the exchange to the area is known to be old and not in good condition, but apparently BT don't want to replace anything. Strangely enough the ham's high speed internet carries on regardless when he transmits. His phone line is much closer to his 80m dipole than any of the neighbours that are affected. Following that cry from the heart, came a long series of posts from all over the country about the technology involved and what BT/Ofcom were doing (or more accurately not doing) about immunity of this technology to RF transmissions and the RF emissions from these wide spectrum of 4kHz signals right across all of our HF amateur bands.

It is likely that the cause of these problems will come from a variety of causes;

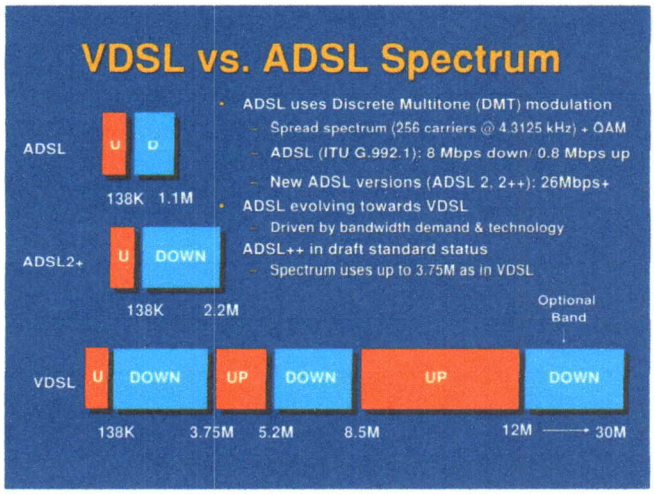
1. BT not enabling the VDSL technology to attenuate the signals in the amateur bands which their equipment is designed to do
2. Overhead lines to the subscriber being unbalanced wires rather than twisted pairs
3. Equipment in the master sockets
4. Street cabinets not installed correctly
5. Some modems and routers are better EMC protected than others
6. Solving these problems is likely to be beyond the ability of most Open Reach engineers and BT's more professional engineers need to be involved.
7. Old or poor or unused flat pair internal house telephone wiring still connected to the master socket. (nice long aerials)
8. Open Reach/BT not fitting the correct Mk4 VDSL plate and NTE5c socket when migrating from ADSL to VDSL where the phone line enters the property.

The VDSL technology has provision for notching the amateur bands to avoid RF emission from the VDSL equipment, but apparently it has not been automatically activated by Open Reach. This is probably because it has some impact on download speeds. The RSGB have formally requested that this be introduced. Ofcom have not supported them 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".

The RSGB did their own tests at three VDSL sites, the results of which were rejected by Ofcom. After further persuasion Ofcom carried out their own tests and published a report which came to the conclusion that no electromagnetic disturbance capable of causing harmful interference was found at the sites tested. The RSGB EMC Committee analysed in detail the results obtained by Ofcom and converted them to standard units for this type of measurement.



VDSL cont'd



Ofcom results were then found to be within a few dB of RSGB's earlier measurements at these sites. The RSGB believe these do constitute harmful interference and presented these results at a meeting with Ofcom in June 2017. Ofcom now propose to conduct further tests at other sites using a different test setup and the RSGB are discussing with them test methods that will find what is and what is not receivable because of the VDSL RFI. Currently Ofcom propose to measure only what is receivable despite the RFI.

I don't wish to be a pessimist but when I think of the impact on the amateur of the ever increasing demands for a faster internet, power line transmission, solar panel and electric car transverters generating all sorts of spurious RF, I think we amateurs are in for a tough time with very little chance of those in authority respecting our right to exist and practise our hobby. Couple that with the fact that council planners are further restricting the rules which allow us to erect a reasonable antenna system having removed the acknowledgement of our right to exist in the latest version of Planning Policy Guidance No 8, then we all should be concerned for the future of our hobby.

Chris G0EYO

PS On his web site **Martin G8JNJ** says about 50% of his amateur radio friends are currently suffering severe interference from Broadband internet VDSL services that are carried by conventional copper phone lines . He describes the VDSL 'Drive-By' interference monitoring system that he's developed and provides videos of the interference he has encountered.

Martin notes levels of up to 77dBuV/m (>40dB above system noise floor) have regularly been observed (antenna approximately 3m below overhead lines).

Read his post at
http://g8jnj.net/vdsl

Fun Run Award

Wythall Radio Club are celebrating today. That's because we are a little better off than we were a few days ago!
On August 29th at the Club, we were presented with a rather fulsome cheque for £1000 – this was in recognition of our assistance at the recent Wythall Fun Run.Several local charities also benefitted and the Fun Run Committee allocate money according to the help given to the community and the number of volunteers who help them out. WRC managed well over 20 folk helping with marshalling and radio communications around the 10km course and it seems the Fun Run folk are very grateful for our help, though it has to be said we enjoy doing it too!
Thank you to all members who helped out in any way and thanks too to the Fun Run organisers for putting on what is a great local event.
We are ready looking forward to next year's!
Chris G7DDN



Norman Howarth MBE, WCA President RIP

It is with great sadness that we have to record the passing of Wythall Community Association President, Norman Howarth age 91. Norman was instrumental in setting up Wythall Park 50 years ago was made an MBE in the 2009 New Year's Honours list for voluntary service to the village community, and particularly for his work with Wythall Community Association and its development of Wythall Park.

Howard moved to Wythall in 1953 and has worked with Wythall Ratepayers and Residents Association, Woodrush Youth Club and Wythall Parish Council but it is his tireless dedication to Wythall Park since 1969 that stood out. Norman served on the association's management committee for over 40 years and was chairman for many years and finally President of the WCA. His aim was to make the park's facilities more available to everyone. He was a very popular man and a good friend to the Radio Club. RIP Norman.

Norman's funeral will be held at the Redditch Crematorium on Tuesday, 26th September at 2pm and I'm fairly sure that it was will be then back to Wythall House *but this is to be confirmed.*



Chris G0EYO

Jamie M0SDV goes to Friedrichshafen Hamfest

July had me off on my travels once more. I went to Germany for the famous Friedrichshafen Ham radio show. Before this however, I made a stop off to meet some YOTA friends and their families in Munich. After being made very welcome and invited to a local club station I made around 100 QSO's as DL/M0SDV on the day that I arrived. Then we had a BBQ, German style.



The next day, we left Munich for the long 3 hour drive down to Friedrichshafen where we arrived on Thursday. I was sleeping in the Ham camp on site. Ham camp is organised by the DARC to accommodate young Hams under 26 who maybe can't afford the price of the local hotels (which are pricey at the best of times). But for 50€ I was given bed and breakfast every day.





Come Friday the doors were open and we were first to get in to get the good stuff at the flea market . The size of the flea market was astonishing. Imagine our club rally. Now squeeze two of those into 1 exhibition hall, then have 3 of those halls in a row. It was huge and all filled with amazing things. From Old valves for small radios to the most high tech SDR equipment. Even a nice collection of Amplifiers and Masts. I purchased a good handful of bits a pieces to keep me going for a while.



I was surprised at the small size of the commercial presence. There was one exhibition hall dedicated to member societies and big companies. It was nice to see so many companies in one area. But it would have been good to see some smaller companies there. Something aside from Kenwood, Yaesu and Icom, but this is really my only criticism.

The evening took us to Lake Constance, with the beautiful scenery where three countries meet; Germany, Austria and Switzerland. An amazing atmosphere and friendly YOTA colleagues made a pleasant and enjoyable evening.

The next days of the show were a blast. I had the chance to have a look around all of the stalls a couple of times (it took a long time) and buy some goodies. During this day the YOTA team decided on having a youth sked on the Sunday morning. This is where DA0YOTA is activated for a few hours on air. This is great advertisement for YOTA and gives people the chance to join in.

So four of us split up to find some equipment. I spoke with Kenwood, who lent us a TS590. A friend, DK6SP spoke to the WRTC committee who kindly allowed us to use their demo antennas and Tent. That along with some video equipment and laptops created a very successful YOTA Youth sked which we live streamed on Facebook. Facebook.com/Ham-YOTA

That evening, after I had figured out how to carry everything home, it was time for the journey back to Munich, where we had a quick trip to the contest station DL1A. The owner Toffy let us up on the roof to see the antennas. DL1A is a huge station located in the middle of Munich city on the roof of a furniture shop. (See pictures)

Again were made to feel very welcome back at the home of my host, DK6SP, where we had yet another German style BBQ and gathering with some of the YOTA participants from Team Austria. It was brilliant to meet, and make friends with all of these youngsters in the hobby and create friendships that will last for many years to come.

And that's a quick over view of my trip to Germany and Friedrichshafen. A short but enjoyable weekend. And something that I would recommend to any and all club members who can make it.

Friedrichshafen is a brilliant location, perfect for a holiday weekend whilst visiting the Ham radio show. Of course there are certain people that made my trip so much fun. Including those who had welcomed me into their home and helped me throughout the entire trip.

Jamie M0SDV

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