



Wythall Radio Club meets from 8pm every Tuesday 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

Officers

Chairman: Vaughan M0VRR

Secretary: Colin M0GJM

Treasurer: Mel M0MAJ

Committee -

Martin G8VXX

Chris G6KMQ

Lee G0MTN

Chris G7DDN

Peter M5DUO .

David G0ICJ

Martin G7WBX

Stuart 2E0NYC

Neil M0YMM

Wythall Radio Club

Wythall Contest Group

G1WAC G4WAC G7WAC G0WRC M5W



g1wac@wythallradioclub.co.uk

<http://www.wythallradioclub.co.uk>

Newsletter

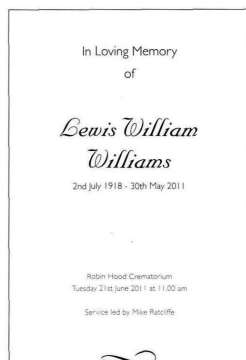
July - August 2011

Lew Williams

WRC President SK

In memoriam of Lew

A number of club members and ex members attended Lew's funeral at the Robin Hood Crematorium on June 21st and together with Lew's family and many friends we filled the chapel for a very moving and delightful service which concentrated on Lew's life and achievements, rather than the normal religious ceremony. We found out a number of things about Lew we never knew, such as his love for operetta and his keen interests in sport. How he came to meet his widow Cynthia who was a graphic artist at the place where Lew worked. We knew of his love of gardening and picking apples which, even into his 90's, he insisted on climbing a ladder to get them down. He was a remarkable man who led a remarkable life and he leaves Cynthia and his two daughters, Judy and Marion as a testament to his life as a loving and caring husband and father. We shall all miss him. RIP Lew



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our Club President, Lew Williams on Monday 30th May 2011. Lew was aged 92 and had been in poor health for some months. His funeral took place at the Robin Hood Crematorium on 21st June.

Lew leaves his widow Cynthia and two daughters, Judy and Marion.

Many of us will remember Lew for his wonderful reminiscences of his military experiences as a signaller during the war and his passion for cycling in the 1930 and 40's. Lew's memory was prodigious and he could recall people and incidents in great detail from 70 years ago.

Lew was introduced to the radio club in its early years by then secretary, Mike Goode G4SMA, because of his excellent morse skills which he willingly passed on to many club members with great patience, so that they could progress from their B license to their A license. Although never licensed himself, his contribution to the club, both as a teacher of morse, and a good companion to talk to over a drink or two on a Tuesday evening and for many years as club president, taking the chair at the AGM when we elected a new chairman, was valued very much by all that knew him.

Lew was brought up in Small Heath Birmingham and was an only child. He went into the printing profession as a typesetter apprentice and then



joined the army, before conscription started serving in Ireland, England and in Europe following the D day landings. He was a keen footballer having had an offer to join Birmingham City as a boy which his mother refused. Lew loved sports especially cycling an interest he shared with Cynthia his wife..

After the war, Lew returned to the print business and became self-employed. In his later years he ran a business making pattern cutters which he continued to do well into his 70's. Unfortunately in his 80's he was then struck down rather suddenly with the loss of his sight and could only make out rough shapes. This rather curtailed him, he could no longer drive his vintage Datsun he so lovingly cared for, nor could he read or watch TV. Lew started taking buses to get his shopping and because he lived on a busy road he would often take the bus from his house at Alcester

Lanes End to Kings Heath and to avoid having to cross the road on the return journey he would take the bus from Kings Heath to the Maypole, cross over the road at the level crossing and take the bus back to Alcester Lanes End (they do run every 5 mins).

Later on he succumbed to various cancers, the treatment of which he met with fortitude and courage but eventually the disease was to take his life.

Lew was a keen gardener and even into old age he would cut and scarify his large rear lawns, collecting apples from his trees that he brought to the club and willingly gave to members

We all have fond memories of some of Lew's stories. The one I remember was him telling me that he liked a little tippie of sherry in the evenings and that Safeways had a special offer of 3 bottles for some low price at Xmas time. Lew went in and bought his three. Came out, changed his hat and coat and went back and bought another three. We all had a good laugh at that one. And that is how we will remember him for his humorous stories, even his war experiences, though tragic at times, had a strange comedy to them. We shall miss you Lew. RIP old Chum. The club will make a donation to Lew's chosen charity St Dunstan's which looks after blind ex-servicemen who need respite care.

Chris G0EYO

4CX250B power supply

Another exciting project
from Barry's Bench

Described here is a power supply unit suitable for feeding linear amplifiers using 4CX250B's. Most of the components came from the junk box so there is plenty of scope for component substitution. Rails provided by this PSU are ;

1. 2100 Volts HT for the anodes
2. 300 Volts for the screen grids
3. Negative 120 Volts for control grid bias
4. 6.3 volts AC for heaters
5. 12 and 24 volts ancillaries

Interlock time delays are used on the HT and Screen supplies so these are only active once the heater supply has been present for 2 minutes. HT is derived from a 1.8 KW continuous duty transformer with a secondary voltage of 1600 VAC, more about this later as there are several other transformers that can be used without spending much money. The 1600VAC is full wave rectified and then fed through a pi filter, this arrangement is used as there were sufficient electrolytics' and a large smoothing choke in the junk box, however, a simple reservoir capacitor bank following the bridge rectifier would also be fine here although the HT would be slightly higher, a total capacitance of 20uF or greater will be ok for a linear using two 4CX250B's. A soft start circuit is also employed in the HT circuit, without this the mains fuse to HT transformer would often blow on switch on. Screen grid supply is derived from a separate transformer with a secondary voltage of 300 VAC approximately. Cold cathode regulator tubes are used to stabilise the screen supply and also caters for negative screen grid current which sometimes occurs, depending on how hard the valve is driven, conduction angle and its condition. Several regulator circuits have been tried over the years, both thermionic and solid state, but for me, the cold cathode regulator is my first choice mainly because most of the 4CX250B's I use are not new and can flash over from the anode to the other electrodes but this is rare (even new valves can do this), thus putting 2100 volts down the screen regulator rail. No solid state regulator circuits tried have ever survived this occurrence, but the cold cathode circuit has never failed - I guess sometimes simple is the best.

Transformers

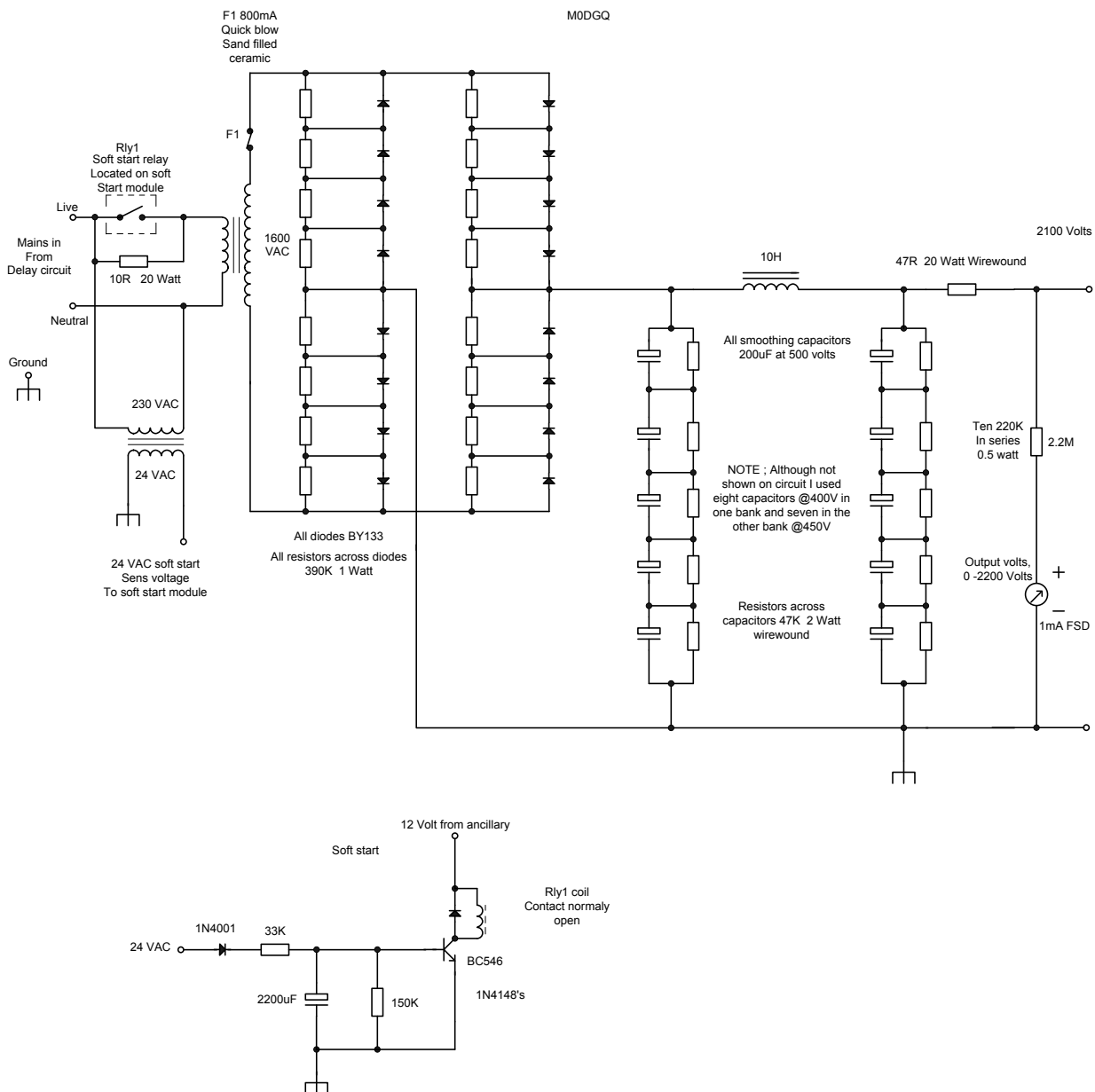
The HT transformer used here is very much over-rated for running a couple of 4CX250B's to 1KW DC input, however I do have a couple of 4CX1000's that one day I am hoping to use. Originally this transformer had a 30-0-30 VAC secondary for audio amplifier use, but as it was not being used for audio anymore the secondary was

rewound and the core restacked for a small change. It now has secondary taps at 1400,1500 and 1600 VAC. The enterprising amateur can glean useful transformers from old valve PMR base station equipment. The Pye T30AM, T30FM and T100FM all contain a very useful transformer and can be usually found at rallies very cheap. Three of these transformers with their multi-tapped secondary's in series were used with great success driving a pair of 4CX250B's to full output (600 Watts CW). Two of these transformers in series and a voltage doubler configuration will easily drive a pair of 4CX250B's to 450 Watts PEP or 400 watts

CW. Other suitable transformers can be found in most valve PMR base stations that use a QQQV06-40A for the final tube (as does the Pye range mentioned above), Marconi and GEC base stations are a couple. Large neon sign transformers can also be put to use providing the secondary's can be " unwound " to a suitable voltage, they are "potted" in a soft gel material which is easily poured out of the metal case once heated over a gas ring. Looking at the amount of iron in the core these should be good for 2KW or so. The wire used for the secondary (4KV -0 - 4KV) is thick enough



4CX250B power supply (cont)



for about 1 Amp to pass through it without over heating (once the secondary is unwound to a suitable lower voltage). Microwave oven transformers are not really suitable due to their very low primary inductance, with no load these transformers can draw a couple of amps from the mains - they will work but are very inefficient, not a good thing with today's energy prices. In fact, prior to the audio transformer now being used, every transformer used in this PSU came from old PMR base stations, so you really don't have to spend a fortune on HT and screen transformers, keep your eyes open at the rallies. Likewise, service pulled 4CX250B's can also be found very cheaply at rallies and sometimes on Ebay, I never

pay more than £5.00 for a used valve and no more than £10.00 for a new / unused one.

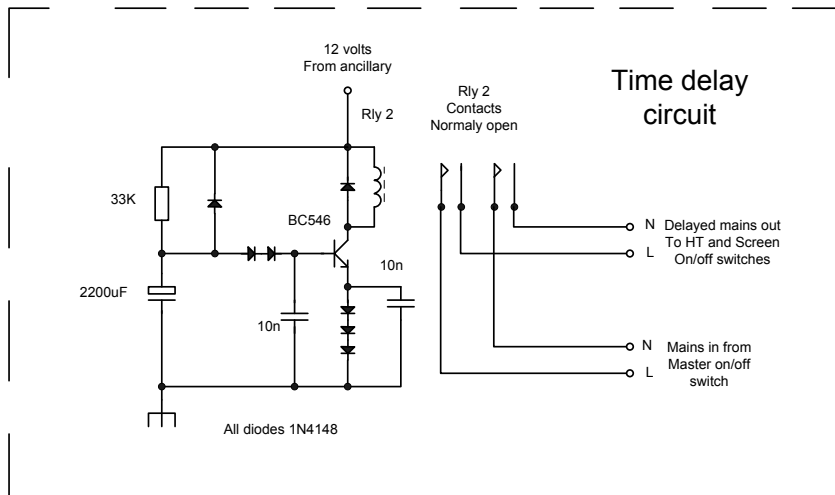
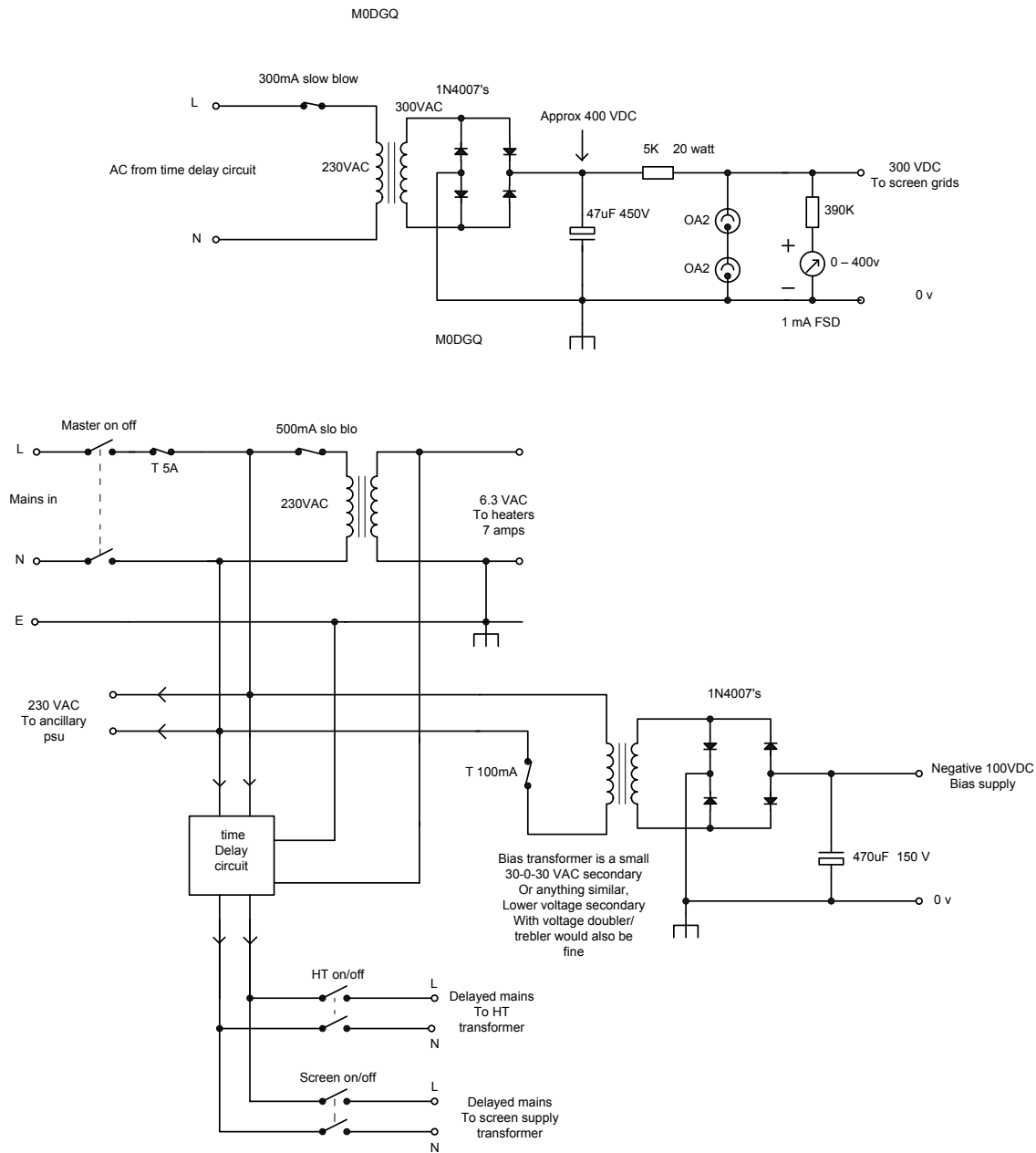
The circuit

Looking at the circuit diagram you will see it is very simple. R/C time constants are used for generating the HT and screen supply time delays and HT soft start. HT soft start is achieved by placing a 10R resistor in series with the HT transformer primary, this is removed from circuit by a relay contact closure after approximately 4 seconds. Originally the sensing voltage for the soft start circuit was taken from the 26 VAC winding on one of the three Pye transformers, now as there are no low voltage windings on the present HT transformer a small 10 Watt 12 VAC transformer is used which

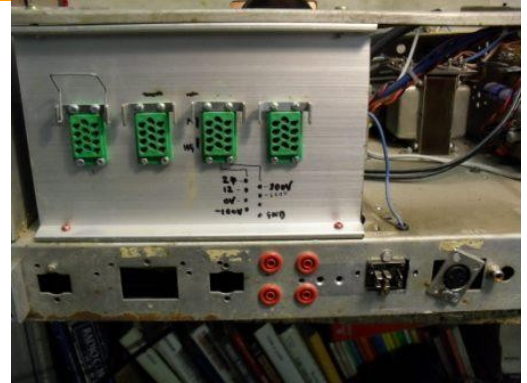
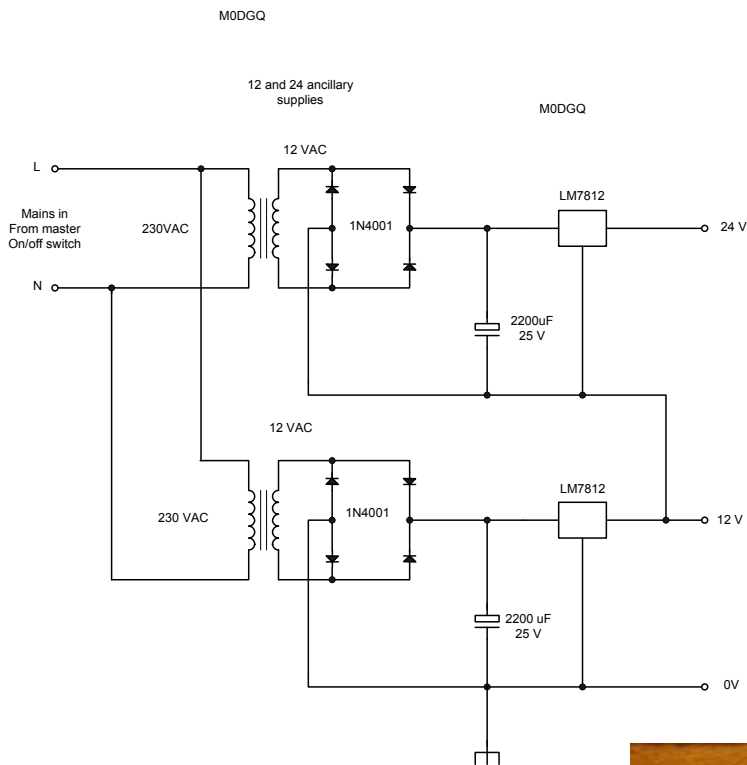
sits on top of the HT transformer. HT and Screen supplies are inhibited for 2 minutes from heater switch on to avoid tube damage. It is very important that the 47 ohm wire wound resistor in series with the HT output is not omitted, its purpose is to limit any surge current due to a valve flash over or short, without it much damage will occur to both PSU / linear and a new set of underpants will be required. As an aside, in order to protect anode current meters in linear amplifiers, a 1N4007 forward biased diode across the meter and its shunt will normally keep the meter movement safe during a flash over.

Continued on page 4/5

4CX250B power supply (cont)



4CX250B power supply (cont)



Construction

Special care should be given to the 2100 volts HT part of the PSU. Note the smoothing capacitor bank is well insulated from the metal chassis by use of rubber foot matt material and a perspex board (do not rely on the thin plastic film around the capacitors). The wires carrying HT is the inner conductor from RG58 coax. The HT sockets used on rear of the PSU are only rated for 1500 volts DC, these will be fine if first mounted on a perspex panel which is then mounted on to the chassis with a chassis cut out for the panel leaving at least a 1cm gap between the chassis and the sockets. An old PMR base station case is used to house the PSU, unfortunately the now larger HT transformer does not fit in the case so is left on the shack floor with RG58 inner conductor for the connecting wires. Apart from the multiple HT outlets, all other supplies are available on several Jones type sockets (one for each linear in the shack) mounted on the rear of the chassis. If you are experimenting with these high voltages, please be very careful, these are lethal voltages.

<http://www.m0dgq.co.uk/4CX250B%20psu.html>

Barry M0DGQ



Training Notes

Our Foundation class which finished with an exam on May 7th, saw the three candidates, Howard (now M6AUL), Stephen (now M6AUV) and Mark (callsign not known) all pass. We started an Intermediate class in mid June with two candidates, Paul M3XEV, Tony M3ZQN and they will take their Intermediate examination on the 8th of August. We wish them well with their studies. We plan to run an advanced course from early September for an examination on December 5th. We have a number of 2E0's in the club who we hope will sign up for this course so that can reach the final goal of having a full licence.

The foundation licence syllabus changes in July 2011 to include another question (now making it 26 on the exam paper) about good operating practise particularly on etiquette and dealing with operator abuse. (see guide to good operating practise below)

The club have been gifted a rather fine 20MHz dual channel oscilloscope for training use by Ian M0IDR and we thank him for his most generous donation. Using test equipment can be a bit daunting for all but the most experienced techies, so the little experience we can impart to our students on the courses can only be a good thing and perhaps we ought to consider some demonstrations as part of the weekly club sessions on a free night for those that are interested.

GOOD OPERATING PRACTISES

Showing consideration for others

1. Remember that radio contacts are not private – the amateur radio community is a public place
2. Use language that is clear and will not offend
3. Leave music to the broadcast operators
4. Use amateur codes and abbreviations on amateur bands when they are appropriate (e.g. Two Echo Zero, QSY, 73, 5&9) and avoid codes or jargon from other radio users (e.g. CB, PMR, military, marine)
5. Keep overs short as you would in a conversation – new friends might want to join in or conditions might change such that your signals fade away
6. If you find another station on 'your' frequency politely ask them to move, or move your QSO to a clear frequency – propagation may have changed and they may have been there all the time
7. Find a clear frequency to tune up on



Mark, Howard and Stephen, now M6s

8. Reduce power to minimum whilst tuning – it's safer for your radio and less interference to others

Calling other stations

1. Listen carefully to the CQ call – is it a general call to all or a specific call to one continent or country?
2. Only call if the CQ is general or for *your* area (e.g. 'CQ UK' or 'CQ Europe') or *your* callsign group (e.g. 'calls with zero only') your turn will come - be patient
3. Always give your callsign in full and remember to send the other station's call first (e.g. 'Delta Six Eight Charlie from Golf Zero Alpha Brave Charlie')
4. Answer CQ calls once then listen; only call again if no other station has been identified – be patient
5. If the station you are calling is not working anyone near you wait a while and try again later – be patient
6. If other station is working 'split' only call where they say to (e.g. 10kHz up)
7. 'Tail ending' is very effective – call one of the stations at the end of an existing QSO
8. If you would like to join an existing QSO wait for a pause and politely say 'Break please from [your callsign]' – respect the fact that they may not want others to join in

Calling CQ yourself

1. Always check that the frequency is not in use – listen and ask to confirm
2. Use '3 by 2' calling – CQ 3 times and your full callsign twice, repeat once at most and finish with 'waiting for a call' or 'and listening'
3. Listen between CQ calls – there may be a weak DX station answering you
4. If using a calling frequency, QSY to a clear frequency when answered
5. Try calling CQ on bands that sound dead – others may be waiting for a call

6. Remember, there is no need for 'CQ' on a repeater just 'M6XYZ listening through GB3UB' is enough

Learning more

1. Familiarise yourself with your own radio equipment (e.g. Know how to work 'split')
2. Read through the whole of your Licence – the training doesn't cover all of it but you must comply with the parts that apply to you
3. Read up on topics of interest (the RSGB operating manual is a mine of information)
4. Experiment with different antennas, bands, modes – learn by doing
5. Try new ways of operating (e.g. backpacking, data modes, satellites, gaining awards, taking part in contests)
6. If you don't know something, try to find the answer, search the web, read some books or ask for help
7. Set yourself some goals (e.g. To upgrade your licence by the end of the year, to work 100 countries in a year/month/weekend, to learn Morse and get a proficiency certificate)

Helping others

1. Keep the hobby growing and help newcomers to get started
2. Offer friendly advice to help others improve their skills
3. If someone needs help (e.g. with putting up an antenna) lend a hand – you may need help next time
4. If you can hear someone calling CQ and no one is answering, give them a call, even if it is just to let them know their signals are getting out
5. Always give accurate signal reports – if you need 3 repeats, they cannot be 5&9
6. Inspire others to be good operators by being one yourself

Being active

1. Use the bands without abusing the privileges that your Licence gives you
2. Keep a copy of the band plans to hand and follow them
3. Join in club activities (local, national or both) – they provide an excellent opportunity to help others and to learn more about the hobby.

Chris G0EYO

FOXX-3 Transceiver Kit

One of my Christmas presents last year was a FOXX-3 QRP CW Transceiver kit for the 20m band. The FOXX kit is produced by Kanga products, now relaunched in the UK by Dennis G6YBC. Dennis was at the Wythall Rally this year, and Darren GW7HOC bought another FOXX kit for his son Phillip MW6YDP to build. Darren himself had already constructed two of these in the past. Chris G7DDN is another club member part way through the construction, so they're certainly popular within the Wythall community.

The kit itself came with all of the parts, split into separate plastic bags to denote the different stages of construction e.g. audio amplifier, keying circuit. The instructions are very clear, and each section of the transceiver can be tested before moving on to the next stage. The transceiver PCB has been designed to fit snugly inside an Altoids mint tin, which are themselves easily found for a few pounds on Ebay.

I had a couple of problems with the construction, but fortunately Dennis was on hand with advice, suggestions, and a replacement part or two where needed. The kit is aimed at the beginner and could be completed in just a handful of evenings if you were keen. It was very exciting to power up the transceiver and hear the receiver working, the relay clicking over when I pressed my key into action, and to see some power being produced and radiated.

The radio is crystal controlled, and centred on QRP activity frequencies. A few kHz

tuning is available. Up to 1 watt output may be achieved, and adventure radio enthusiasts have used FOXX-3 transceivers to make many contacts with a PP3 battery from mountaintops.

Whilst to date I've not made a contact, the ReverseBeaconNetwork, a collection of software defined radios with wideband receivers around the globe, has been used to see who has picked up my QRP CW whilst I've been calling CQ.

de dx freq cq/dx
snr speed time

OH6BG G0MTN 14061.0 CQ
[LoTW] 7 dB 30 wpm 2019z 16 May
HA6PX G0MTN 14061.0 CQ
[LoTW] 4 dB 28 wpm 2019z 16 May
S50ARX G0MTN 14061.0 CQ
[LoTW] 4 dB 31 wpm 2019z 16 May
OL5Q G0MTN 14061.0 CQ
[LoTW] 6 dB 26 wpm 2019z 16 May
S50ARX G0MTN 14060.5 CQ
[LoTW] 7 dB 22 wpm 1938z 16 May
OH6BG G0MTN 14060.5 CQ
[LoTW] 9 dB 22 wpm 1938z 16 May

The FOXX-3 range (80m, 40m, 30m, 20m) are available for £30 from <http://www.kanga-products.co.uk>

Try calling CQ on CW on HF, and see where you are heard here:
<http://www.reversebeacon.net/>

Lee G0MTN



Easter Contest Results

An excellent turnout for the first Easter Contest, especially given the unseasonably hot sunny weather. Some of these scores would have won the Christmas Contest just a few years ago! Congratulations to all winners and thanks to all for taking part. Let us know if you want to do it again next year.

Section 2FM

| POS | CALL | NAME | QSOs | BEST | MLTS | PTS | SCT |
|-----|---------|---------|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2E0NYC* | Stuart | 58 | 39 | 20 | 780 | 2FM |
| 2 | G0EYO* | Chris | 44 | 28 | 16 | 448 | 2FM |
| 3 | M0GJM* | Colin | 41 | 29 | 15 | 435 | 2FM |
| 4 | M0IDR | Ian | 29 | 23 | 12 | 276 | 2FM |
| 5 | M6FAB* | Lynne | 26 | 20 | 11 | 220 | 2FM |
| 6 | M0JMM | Jon | 9 | 9 | 9 | 81 | 2FM |
| 7 | 2E0XTV | Terry | 10 | 10 | 7 | 70 | 2FM |
| 8 | M0VRR | Vaughan | 7 | 7 | 5 | 35 | 2FM |
| 9 | M0AEJ | Vic | 6 | 6 | 5 | 30 | 2FM |
| 10 | G0ICJ | David | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 2FM |

Section ALL

| POS | CALL | NAME | QSOs | BEST | MLTS | PTS | SCT |
|-----|---------|--------|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2E0BLP* | Jim | 52 | 39 | 19 | 741 | ALL |
| 2 | G7DDN* | Chris | 46 | 32 | 19 | 608 | ALL |
| 3 | G6KMQ* | Chris | 29 | 25 | 14 | 350 | ALL |
| 4 | G7WBX | Martin | 17 | 17 | 11 | 187 | ALL |
| 5 | 2E0EJW | Eric | 17 | 17 | 10 | 170 | ALL |
| 6 | 2E0WTH | Philip | 16 | 16 | 10 | 160 | ALL |
| 7 | M0COP | Pete | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | ALL |

Composite Table

| POS | CALL | NAME | QSOs | BEST | MLTS | PTS | SCT |
|-----|--------|---------|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2E0NYC | Stuart | 58 | 39 | 20 | 780 | 2FM |
| 2 | 2E0BLP | Jim | 52 | 39 | 19 | 741 | ALL |
| 3 | G7DDN | Chris | 46 | 32 | 19 | 608 | ALL |
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| 8 | M6FAB | Lynne | 26 | 20 | 11 | 220 | 2FM |
| 9 | G7WBX | Martin | 17 | 17 | 11 | 187 | ALL |
| 10 | 2E0EJW | Eric | 17 | 17 | 10 | 170 | ALL |
| 11 | 2E0WTH | Philip | 16 | 16 | 10 | 160 | ALL |
| 12 | M0JMM | Jon | 9 | 9 | 9 | 81 | 2FM |
| 13 | 2E0XTV | Terry | 10 | 10 | 7 | 70 | 2FM |
| 14 | M0VRR | Vaughan | 7 | 7 | 5 | 35 | 2FM |
| 15 | M0AEJ | Vic | 6 | 6 | 5 | 30 | 2FM |
| 16 | M0COP | Pete | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | ALL |
| 17 | G0ICJ | David | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 2FM |

*denotes Certificate and/or Egg Winners.
25 stations in total were active.

Callsigns logged other than those above included
G3PQP, G3YXM, G4VPD, M0DGQ,
M0MSW, M3PMP, M3YXM, & M5DUO

Chris G7DDN

Reeve's Shorts—the Beginner's Short Wave Two

(The Beginners Short Wave Two A Practical Wireless feature by F G Rayer providing for World-Wide reception.)

Designed to take advantage of the high frequency properties of the "Acorn" valves, this regenerative receiver could cover a wide span of frequencies from below 4MHz up to over 100MHz depending on the choice of coil used.

For example

6.75MHz to 22MHz: 16 turns 30swg tapped at $\frac{3}{4}$ turn. Antenna coupling 5 turns

2.5MHz to 7.5MHz: 50 turns 32swg tapped at $1\frac{1}{2}$ turns. Antenna coupling 15 turns

40MHz to 100MHz: 21/2 double spaced turns tapped at $\frac{1}{2}$ turn. Antenna coupling 1 turn

RF good practice was essential to provide stability, sturdy solid core wires, shortest possible route from A to B. To aid stability and enable easy band changes, the popular 4pin Eddystone coil formers were used with the base being permanently wired in place and the coils being wound with the same pin configuration.

900MHz. The Acorn was used extensively during WW2 by the American

Forces and large quantities of Acorns were released into the marketplace during the early 60's. There were several types but generally the following three were used as they were really easy to obtain:

954 Sharp cut-off pentode (linear gain)

955 Triode

956 Remote cut off pentode for AGC circuits (non linear gain)

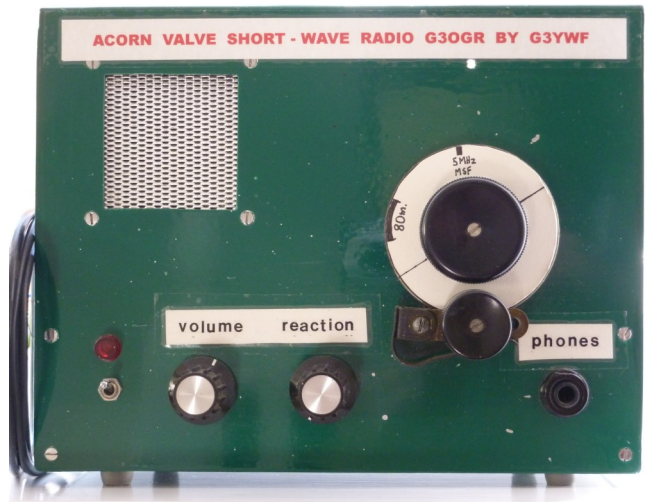
They worked happily with 90v HT and had 6.3v heaters at 0.15A The battery Acorn equivalents which are rarely seen are

957 Triode

958 Triode

959 Sharp cut off pentode

These latter three used 67.5v/90v HT and 1.4v heaters

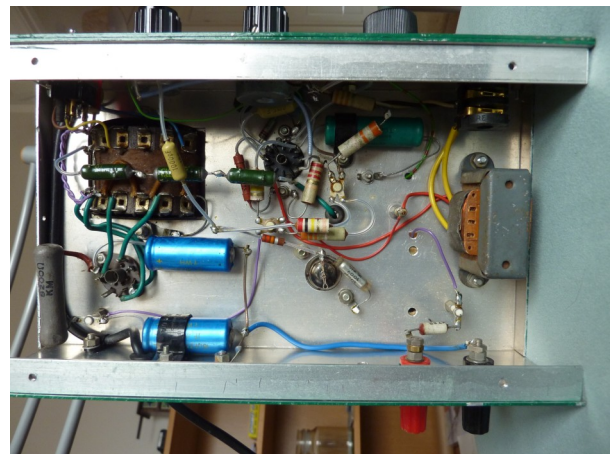


Receiver set up to receive 80 metres



The Short Wave Two is a simple regenerative receiver using a 954 Pentode as detector and two stage audio amplification and output using a 12AT7 or ECC81 in our money.

The receiver in question was spotted at the last National Vintage Comms Fair and came with a photocopy of the original Circuit of the complete receiver

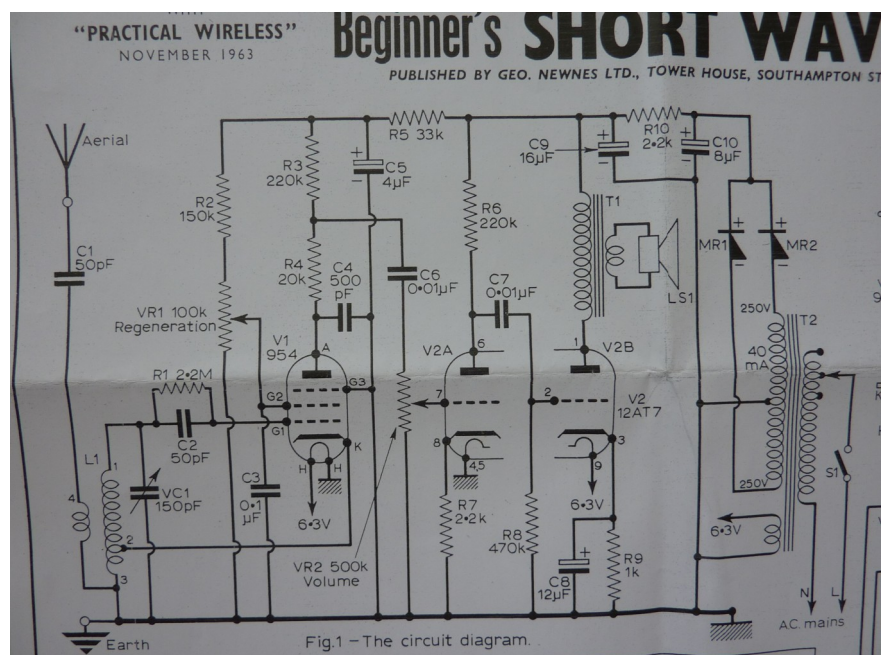


Size does not matter

I do recall having built one of these to exactly the design RF wise but re-configuring the audio side to deliver more power by using a triode/pentode valve ECL82 and using a bigger speaker. I most probably got my parts from Norman H Field in Hurst Street and RSC in Great Western Arcade. I had

many happy hours listening to all sorts of broadcasts but eventually this little set made way for a short wave double conversion Lafayette receiver with band-spread and a BFO, and I expect it was dismantled and re-cycled. I do still have the Acorn valve though!

The Acorn valve, named after the fruit of the Oak Tree it closely resembles, was initially developed by RCA in the 1930's to operate at high frequencies, typically up to 600MHz although through careful selection and circuit design useful gain could still be achieved at



Reeve's Shorts .. cont

Neatly wired-note the ceramic standoff tags

article and blueprint. As luck would have it, a quick rummage through a couple of piles of

magazines brought forth a good copy of the

complete issue together with original blueprint.

The receiver was soundly constructed but sadly did not use the Eddystone plug in coils, instead the builder had opted for coverage of a single band and a hard wired coil on a cardboard former. A search will eventually trace some of the coil formers I am sure and I can then make the set multi band- or should I keep it as originally constructed? It works well enough to be honest, the little Acorn valve working its socks off to dig out the DX! RF wiring runs were too long for my liking but hey it worked.

A comparison of the actual receiver against the circuit does show several changes have been made, no doubt to accommodate the mains transformer. The one on this set is over large and does not have a second 6.3v winding for the Acorn and 12AT7 which are supplied by from 8.5v winding, the excess voltage being dropped by 3 series connected resistors. Unfortunately, the heaters are being given 6.9v which is too high and so at present the radio is being run via a variac set to achieve the 6.3 heater volts. Strangely the builder opted for a valve HT rectifier-a 6X4 thereby using the only available winding. To gain the most from any regenerative receiver, the sensitivity control has to be advanced just short of oscillation and it is surprising how many stations can be heard. Selectivity is not too good in today's crowded bands but it should be remembered that the world of Ham Radio then was more than just radiating power measured in kW.

A nice little find that does what it says on the tin and is easy to build. Nearly 50 years on, both the coil formers and the ceramic Acorn valve base can be difficult (or should I say expensive) to obtain but a cardboard tube will do for the coil former and it not uncommon to find the connections to the valve soldered directly to the pins. I would not personally do that but using a plenty of heat and making the connection quickly should not compromise the glass to pin seal!

I did see at the recent Stockwood Park (Luton) rally both Acorn valves and the ceramic bases but sadly no Eddystone 4pin coil formers.

Ian
M0IDR

Visit to J28 Rally

Chris G7DDN and myself decided to go to this semi-local rally as neither of us had ever been before. The rally was held on June 12th in the Alfreton Sports Centre in Derbyshire and, as the name implies, it's within easy reach of junction 28 on the M1. We actually travelled up the A38 as it's a dual-carriageway all the way from Birmingham to Alfreton, even through Derby. The journey took about an hour and we arrived before the 10am opening time (despite Chris's TomTom trying to take us through a park) and we arrived to find that the Sports Centre car park was already full. We had called the talk-in station after the park incident, and he talked us in, but even though he was operating from the car park he didn't seem to realise that it was full and was no help in finding somewhere else for us to park.

We managed to find a place round the corner, parked and walked back to the Sports Centre (past a swimming pool full of women) to find that a queue had formed at the entrance. We knew rain was on the way and the queue was quite long so we decided to take a look at the two junk stalls outside the rally before going in. These were selling all manner of reclaimed radio parts, old broadcast radios, valves etc and they were getting quite a lot of interest from keen hagglers. By the time we'd had a good poke around the queue had dissipated and we paid our two pounds fifties and went in to the rally itself. The ticket entitled us to enter a raffle, we don't know what the

also had a few non-radio stalls selling jewellery and crafts which were of interest to those who had been dragged along by their partners. One busy trader that we don't see at Wythall, P R Hall Embroidery Specialists, had a computer-driven sewing machine and was embroidering call-signs onto polo shirts and hats. Chris bought a shirt (see picture) and did the heavy sell on the Wythall rally, so we hope to see them down here next year. The GQRP club stall was in the centre of the hall and they were doing good business.

Chris bought himself a CD full of Sprat magazines. Although the name of the event and the presence of the GQRP club might lead you to think otherwise, there was no shortage of QRO amplifiers and components on the stalls. In fact the range of stuff on sale was typical with lots of "shack clearance" and "silent key" disposals to rummage through. I ended up with several rolls of wide gaffer tape, some self-amalgamating tape and some single hole-fixing SO239 sockets.

One thing that this venue had which Woodrush doesn't, was a licensed bar and seating area near the entrance. As well as booze and soft drinks, rally-goers could buy teas, coffees, filled rolls and confectionery and it was a popular place to meet and chat. For serious lunchtime drinkers the Waggon and Horses looked quite good and is only a couple of hundred yards away in the town centre. Here you could also find almost every kind of bank in case the wallet needed replenishing. It's also worth noting that Matlock and the Peak District are within easy reach by road if the rest of the family aren't rally enthusiasts.

All in all it was a good event, spacious and easy to get around with a nice selection of bits and pieces on sale. The entrance price of £2.50 was reasonable and the catering was adequate. It's a pity about the car parking problems but I suppose that's the trouble with sharing with the swimming ladies! We'll be going next year.



prizes were because we didn't win.

The Sports Centre looks fairly new and the hall is large bright and airy with tables laid out in the usual manner. We estimated that the number of traders was perhaps slightly smaller than our rally but, because of the single large hall it gave the impression of a big event. There was one major trader, LAM Communications, plus a lot of familiar faces such as Jabdog, Snowdonia Radio, Kanga Kits and Bowood Electronics. They



Contest Corner

July 2011

Following VHF Field Day in the early part of the month, Worked All Britain (WAB) have a VHF SSB QRO contest on 2m on 24th; four hours of high-powered fun! The end of the month sees the RSGB's flagship HF contest "Islands On The Air", the largest contest our National Society runs. The UK counts as an island so people will want to work us! Hurrah!

August 2011

With most people on holiday this month, August could be thought of as a quiet time on the contest front, but not so on VHF. Activity Contests, Low Power Contests and Backpacker Events all presume a little good weather and some getting out of the shack to high spots for some late summer fun! On HF the RSGB Club Sprints begin – a very friendly set of events which continue through to November along similar lines to the Club Championships. A good event to try out for beginners.

September 2011

With the schools returning and most people back from holidays, we all hope for an Indian summer and good conditions for some late outdoor activity. No surprise then that the first weekend of the month sees HF SSB Field Day running concurrently with the 2m Trophy Contest. I wonder if this might be a better time of year than July to do a big club event from the Wythall Park Field? VHF and HF at the same time? Could be fun! Other highlights in September include the Worked All Europe DX Contest on 10/11 September and the first of the Worldwide events from CQ Magazine for the Autumn, CQ WW RTTY. A great opportunity to work rare stations from the four corners of the globe all weekend on Radio Teletype..

| Start Date | Organisers | VHF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------|
| 02 Jul | RSGB | VHF Field Day | Mixed | 15:00 | 24 hrs |
| 03 Jul | RSGB | 2m Backpackers - Leg 3 | Mixed | 12:00 | 4 hrs |
| 05 Jul | RSGB | 2m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 12 Jul | RSGB | 70cms UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 17 Jul | RSGB | 4m Trophy | Mixed | 11:00 | 6 hrs |
| 24 Jul | WAB | WAB 144 MHz QRO Contest | SSB | 11:00 | 4 hrs |
| 26 Jul | RSGB | 6m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| Start Date | Organisers | HF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
| 01 Jul | RAC | Canada Day Contest | MIXED | 1:00 | 24 hrs |
| 04 Jul | RSGB | 80m Club Championships (CC) | CW | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 13 Jul | RSGB | 80m Club Championships (CC) | SSB | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 17 Jul | RSGB | Low Power Contest | CW | 10:00 | 7 hrs |
| 21 Jul | RSGB | 80m Club Championships (CC) | DATA | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 30 Jul | RSGB | Islands On The Air (IOTA) | MIXED | 13:00 | 24 hrs |

| Start Date | Organisers | VHF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------|
| 02 Aug | RSGB | 2m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 06 Aug | RSGB | 2m Backpackers - Leg 4 | Mixed | 14:00 | 4 hrs |
| 06 Aug | RSGB | 2m Low Power Contest | Mixed | 15:00 | 6 hrs |
| 07 Aug | RSGB | 70cms Low Power Contest | Mixed | 9:00 | 4 hrs |
| 09 Aug | RSGB | 70cms UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 14 Aug | RSGB | 4m Cumulatives - Leg 5 | Mixed | 15:00 | 2 hrs |
| 23 Aug | RSGB | 6m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 30 Aug | RSGB | 4m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| Start Date | Organisers | HF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
| 06 Aug | SCC | European HF Championship | Mixed | 01:00 | 24 hrs |
| 07 Aug | RSGB | RoPoCo | CW | 08:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 10 Aug | RSGB | 80m Club Sprint CW | CW | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 25 Aug | RSGB | 80m Club Sprint SSB | SSB | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 27 Aug | FRR | YO (Romania) DX Contest | Mixed | 13:00 | 12 hrs |

| Start Date | Organisers | VHF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| 03 Sep | RSGB | 2m Trophy Contest | Mixed | 15:00 | 24 hrs |
| 04 Sep | RSGB | 2m Backpackers - Leg 5 | Mixed | 12:00 | 4 hrs |
| 06 Sep | RSGB | 2m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 11 Sep | RSGB | Second 4m Contest | Mixed | 10:00 | 3 hrs |
| 13 Sep | RSGB | 70cms UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| 27 Sep | RSGB | 6m UK Activity Contest (UKAC) | Mixed | 20:00 | 2.5 hrs |
| Start Date | Organisers | HF Contests | Mode | Start (Local) | Length |
| 03 Sep | RSGB | HF SSB Field Day | SSB | 14:00 | 24 hrs |
| 04 Sep | DARC | 10m Digital Contest | Digimodes | 12:00 | 6 hrs |
| 10 Sep | DARC | Worked All Europe DX Contest | Mixed | 1:00 | 48 hrs |
| 14 Sep | RSGB | 80m Club Sprint SSB | SSB | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |
| 18 Sep | WAB | 2m QRP Phone Contest | SSB | 11:00 | 4 hrs |
| 24 Sep | CQ Magazine | CQ World Wide (CQWW) RTTY | RTTY | 1:00 | 48 hrs |
| 29 Sep | RSGB | 80m Club Sprint CW | CW | 20:00 | 1.5 hrs |

VHF Field Day

As I write this, we are still as a club deciding what it is we might or might not attempt at VHF Field Day this year. On that note, it has been interesting to hear of activity on the UK Contest reflectors as to what Field Days are actually for. Whatever they started out as in the 1930s, it seems obvious to this writer at least, that a primary element of any Field Day is to see how well radio communications can hold up without mains power. Extrapolating that on a bit, and we could even go as far as to say how far communications can hold up without mains power, mobile phones and the internet. It's a sobering thought, but if the mains went down nationwide here in the UK for whatever reason, batteries (and perhaps petrol/diesel generators) may be all people would have for their power requirements for some considerable time. In the USA there is a whole industry in the Ham World seemingly built around emergency communications. When an earthquake, tornado or hurricane hits, often it is the QRP Ham operator who is first to establish communication links with the outside world, either on VHF or for longer distances HF. No-one wants to see an event of cataclysmic proportions hit our shores, but if it did, would you and I be ready, equipment wise and in our ability to pass short sharp "to-the-point" messages to and between the authorities? Maybe this is where Field Days can be seen to be at their most useful.

Chris G7DDN

The next issue of the Wythall Radio Club Newsletter will be published at the beginning of Sept 2011

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