

TDARS



Newsletter



Issue 244
www.TDARS.org

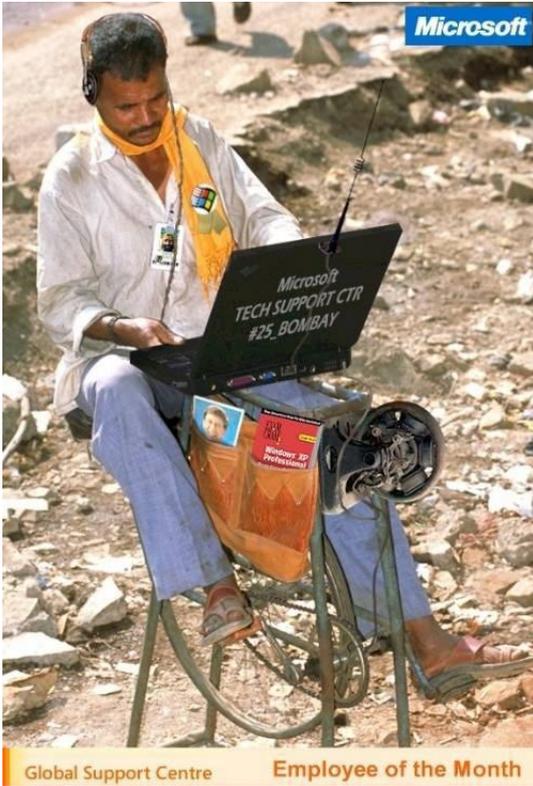
Programme

December 2010
www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- December 8** Echolink & Echolink Repeaters: Vaughan M0VRR, our new RSGB Regional Manager for the West Midlands. (RM5)
- December 15** Annual Christmas Dinner at The Duck in Allscott.
- December 22** Mince Pies & Mulled Wine @ HQ. Story telling !
- December 25 (Sat.)** TDARS nets at 0900 and/or 2100 hrs. 80m, 'TF and 144.600MHz
- December 29** On-the-Air and informal evening at LWWH HQ.
- January 1** Club Net— 0900 and/or 2100 hrs.80m, GB3TF, 144.6 MHz monitored.
- January 5, 2011** G3ZME on Air and Committee Meeting. LWWH
- January 12** Club Projects 'Show and Tell' progress evening.
- January 19** TDARS Portable in 2011 Planning evening.
- January 26** e-QSLs - and all that. Dave G0CER
- February 2** Committee meeting. /A venue: HQ closed
- February 9** "Under a Fiver" Construction Competition. Don't be shy !
- February 16** "Astronomy" by Martyn G0CZD (to be confirmed). Ex TDARS Member
- February 23** Pacific Ocean Dxpeditons. Illustrated talk by Derek Cox G3KHZ
For Amateur Radio Exam Training—enquiries to Mike G3JKX (01952 299677)
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.
For Equipment Loans & Returns contact Ricky M0RKY or Norman G0ASP

REMINDER: Paid up Members are welcome to borrow items of Club Equipment, so long as they're returned the following week and the usual "signing out" process is followed strictly. That's a privilege of TDARS Membership. If you can't return it on time, please find someone else who can, or don't borrow it that week! Curator: Ricky M0RKY

G3ZME *Telford & District Amateur Radio Society. Founded 1969* **G6ZME**
Village Hall, Malthouse Bank, Little Wenlock, Telford. Shropshire. TF6 5BG



Is this really Microsoft's top man in Bombay? If so, his top button is undone—a poor example to his subordinates. (Photo source: G3JKX)



Horwood House, near Milton Keynes, which Dave 'CER visited in October: New venue (but old photo ?) for the RSGB 2010 Annual Convention.

Packet in Shropshire – still?

Dig those Tiny 2s out.

Yes – the packet network still has life in Shropshire. A BBS in Newport and APRS all over and really busy.

People have a view on it, one way or another, this is just information, a taster.

GB7PMB BBS with a node SALOP RF connect 144.9375MHz (recently changed to avoid local QRN).

Also connect via Telnet on the internet, [contact Chris G0CNG—ex TDARS member (Ed.)]. Sited at QTH of Tony, G7BUG and also uses G7BUG-8



MAXPAK run this network, (using 2m, 70cm and some microwave trunk links). This includes GB7MAX & BLOX node, DUDLEY node (GB7DN) and GB7WAL in Walsall. The network is still connected to the global packet network, though most people inter-connect BBSs via the Internet now. RF links are fewer by far.

Maxpak will celebrate with the 100^h edition of their newsletter, **Digicom** in the coming month, and they still meet monthly. Their Website <http://www.maxpak.org.uk>.

For those who know John Wiseman G8BPQ, he re-started development of the BPQ software – search on Yahoo groups for support, search on BPQ32.

APRS next month, if you're interested in finding out about packet radio, do shout up via the list server. **From Dave Harris G0CER**

[Dave has said that if there is sufficient interest shown in this item, he will include some information about local APRS next time in the Newsletter: - Sounds like a good topic for a talk at the club sometime, Dave ! Ed]



So you think you've got problems in the shack ? By Martyn G3UKV

Some while ago, Peter M1FGN lent me a book by Gavin Weightman "Signor Marconi's Magic Box". It gives a fascinating insight to some of the difficulties faced by the early pioneers of wireless. I particularly enjoyed reading a section that describes how de Forest needed to send to Guantanamo (part of the Caribbean island now known as Cuba—where a few guys are still locked up by the Yanks), someone to set up a radio station for the U.S. navy. The luckless 'volunteer' was a man named Frank Butler, and he landed in the Cuban jungle in the summer of 1905. He hired local labour, *"including a renegade Frenchman who acted as chef and general dogsbody. They were attacked by insects, scorpions, wild cats and snakes. Not long after the station house was built, the motto 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here, for verily this is hell' was nailed over the door."*



But these weren't his only discomforts. Butler kept a diary, and here are a few extracts:

June 5th. *Big 50 H.P. motor generator blew up.*

June 26th. *Killed an 8 foot Moha snake in back yard. This was the cause of so many of our chickens disappearing.*

July 13th. *Terrific storm 2.20am. Lightning struck station bursting an entire room full of condensers—just finished after two weeks of hard work—throwing oil and plate glass all over the room.*

August 21st. *Small cyclone struck us.*

August 31st. *Lightning struck the station at 4.15 pm blown up one set of condensers.*

September 5th. *No fresh water. Had to drink salt water all day.*

September 24th. *Another entire span of 15,000 feet antenna wire blown down.*

September 27th. *Touched off station again and blower motor blew up.*

October 8th. *Herd of horses from workmen's camp broke corral in night and demolished the guy wires on the entire aerial spans, twisting wires badly.*

October 15th. *Earthquake at 4.43 pm while eating supper.*

November 17th. *Heard Key West and Pensacola for the first time.*

December 15th. *Big two ton transformer blew up.*

When the station was eventually commissioned, the tropical climate generated such static at the low frequencies in use that it was difficult to read any signals at all.

De Forest actually wrote to encourage him, and as a consolation wrote *"You are the star martyr to the wireless cause at present and have our fullest sympathies....it is a tough problem....but will keep trying new stunts until it is solved."*

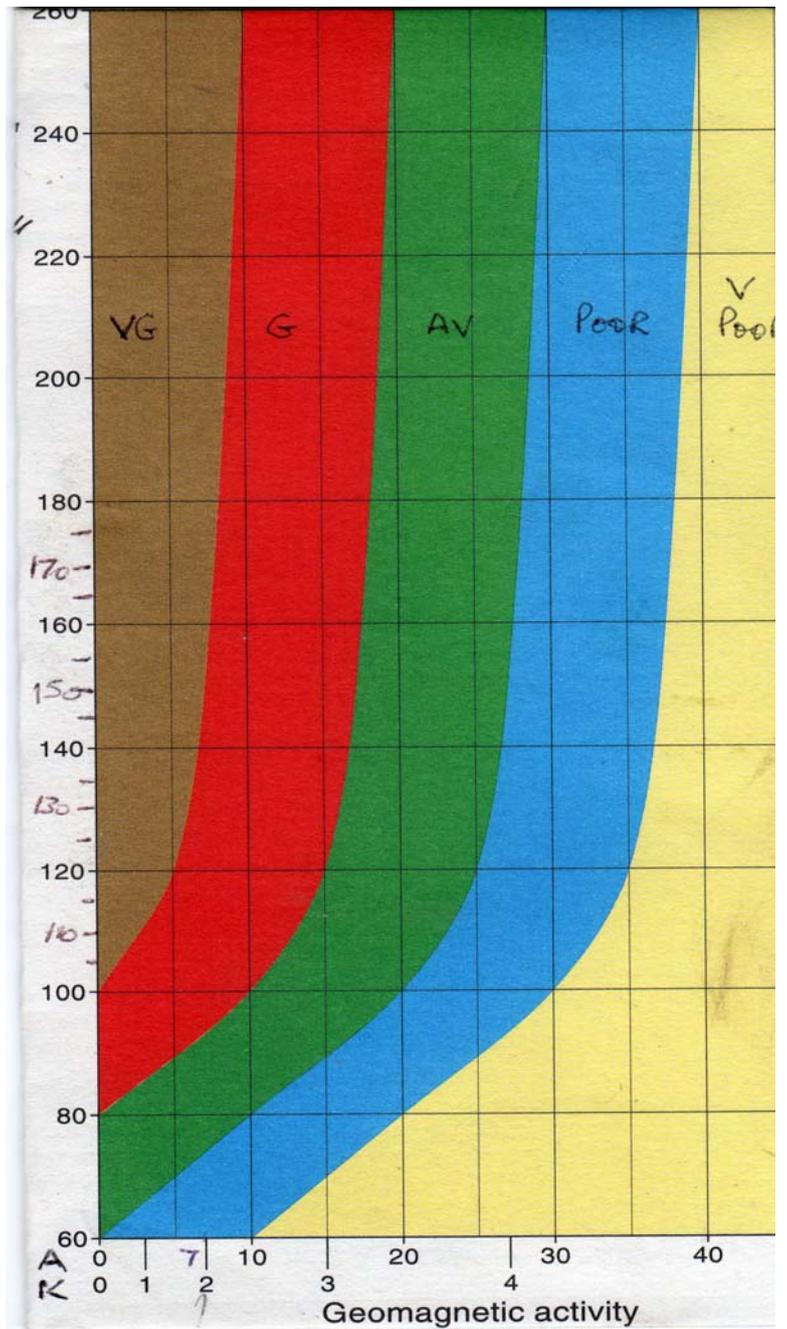
Setting up an International Marconi Day station next year across in Tywyn perhaps won't seem so difficult after all, although looking back thirty or more years to various TDARS expeditions, we certainly have had our moments. Here's 3 shots taken in October whilst trying to operate from the summit of Brown Clee during our own English type cyclone, 2010 style....



Right: Propagation predictor as used by Mike G3JKX.

The vertical axis is solar flux (sun's activity output level, currently around 87 units), and the horizontal axis shows both 'A' and 'K' indices. (A is 24hr average of magnetic activity on earth, whilst K is the same, but updated every 3 hours on a zero to 9 scale). Look on the TDARS website homepage for the latest data, and then transfer the figures to this graph to see how the solar data relates to HF propagation predictions.

[Source: Mike believes it came from Ham Radio Today some time in the 1990s.]



'The Codes'

LETTERS				PUNCTUATION MARKS		
Morse	Continental	†Navy	*Bain	Morse	Continental	Phillips
A	•—	A	A	Period	•••••	•••••
B	••••	B	B	Colon	•••••	•••••
C	••••	C	C	Colon Dash	•••••	•••••
D	••••	D	D	Semi-colon	•••••	•••••
E	•	E	E	Comma	•••••	•••••
F	••••	F	F	Interrogation	•••••	•••••
G	••••	G	G	Exclamation	•••••	•••••
H	••••	H	H	Fraction Line	•••••	•••••
I	••	I	I	Dash	•••••	•••••
J	••••	J	J	Hyphen	•••••	•••••
K	••••	K	K	Apostrophe	•••••	•••••
L	••••	L	L	Dollar Mark	•••••	•••••
M	••••	M	M	Pound Sterling	•••••	•••••
N	••••	N	N	Shilling Mark	•••••	•••••
O	••••	O	O	Pence Mark	•••••	•••••
P	••••	P	P	Capital Letter	•••••	•••••
Q	••••	Q	Q	Colon Followed	•••••	•••••
R	••••	R	R	by Quotation	•••••	•••••
S	••••	S	S	Cents	•••••	•••••
T	••••	T	T	Decimal Point	•••••	•••••
U	••••	U	U	Paragraph	•••••	•••••
V	••••	V	V	Italics or Under	•••••	•••••
W	••••	W	W	line	•••••	•••••
X	••••	X	X	Parenthesis	•••••	•••••
Y	••••	Y	Y	Brackets	•••••	•••••
Z	••••	Z	Z	Quotation	•••••	•••••
&	••••	&	&	Quotation in	•••••	•••••
				Quotation	•••••	•••••
				Per Cent	•••••	•••••

NUMBERS			
1	••••	1	••••
2	••••	2	••••
3	••••	3	••••
4	••••	4	••••
5	••••	5	••••
6	••••	6	••••
7	••••	7	••••
8	••••	8	••••
9	••••	9	••••
0	••••	0	••••

Learning a Code.—The student should first thoroughly commit to memory the groups of signs representing the letters of the alphabet, the numerals and the principal punctuation points, viz. the period, comma, and point of interrogation; the remaining characters can be learned afterwards, as they will be little needed by the beginner. By constant drill the habit of making dots with regularity, uniformity, and precision must first be acquired; then dashes, and lastly in order, group of dots and dashes, letters and words. If possible for the student to obtain a register, he should by all means employ it in his practice, for he will then be more easily enabled to observe and correct the faults in his own manipulation. The student should learn to form the conventional characters accurately and perfectly; speed will come in good time, but only as the result of constant and persistent practice.

†NOTE.—The Bain code was at one time in use in parts of America and Europe in connection with the Bain chemical telegraph system, but is now obsolete, though of historical interest.

Left: Some morse Characters NOT worth learning. If you look closely, the morse we use today is one of 4 flavours that have been used in bygone years, and is called 'continental'. The punctuation marks are quite extensive too, although we only use a handful today. There is a possibility TDARS may enter HF CW (morse) Field Day next June, so start practising !