

TDARS

Newsletter

Issue 235

May 2009

www.TDARS.org

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- May 13** Surplus sale with Jim G8UGL i/c. A lot for sale this time
- May 20** Amateur Television with Dave G8VZT, It's not that hard:
- May 27** TDARS /P in Little Wenlock Village Field (behind the pub). HF to uWaves
- June 3** First-in-the-Month @ the Huntsman (Committee & Open House)
- June 9 (Tues)** HamFest Committee Station Inn, Horsehay. 7:30 pm
- June 10** Cryptology & Enigma. Guest Speaker John G7GCK. A special night!
- June 17** Amateur Radio Licensing—past, present and abroad. Members' I/P
- June 20/21 (weekend)** Museums on the Air @ Enginuity. m/c Simon G0UFE
- June 20/21 (weekend)** "Relay for Life", Northwood Stadium, Stoke. M0RJS & M0FHM
- June 24** VHF NFD 2009 Planning
- July 1** Open House / Committee / Station on Air. LW Village Hall.
- July 4-5** VHF NFD Long Mynd, usual site. Set-up from 10:15 Sat. All Welcome !
- July 8** Bar-B-Que. Little Wenlock Parish Field. £3 food/drink donation please.
- July 14 (Tues)** HamFest Committee Station Inn, Horsehay 7:30 pm
- July 15** VHF NFD De-briefing.
- July 22** Foxhunt at Telford Town Park from 7:30 pm. 144.600 MHz (+/- QRM)
(on foot—starting from Southwater Way, back of old Do-it-All store)
- July 29** Digital Receivers at VHF. Talk by guest speaker Pat, G3YFK
(date to be confirmed)

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 Kevin G8UPF or Richard G0VXG

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

QJC? News & Information

John, G7GCK is coming up from the Milton Keynes area (June 10) to present some of his collection of cryptology machines, including the famous German Enigma. He says he is in the process of making additions to his collection, so it should be a very entertaining evening.

The **2009 Telford HamFest** preparations continue. The first table bookings have been received, and for the first time we are having a specialist presentation in an adjoining gallery. It will be by GEO (Group for Earth Observation, www.geo-web.org.uk) who are interested in satellites, space weather maps etc. As usual, please try to keep the HamFest weekend free to help with the event (October 3-4). We need all the assistance possible, especially on the Sun. Also we have secured a 30% admission reduction to Eginuity for people coming to our event, which is worth publicising widely!



As you know, TDARS has secured a fantastic **£5000 grant from the 'Grass Roots' fund**, primarily for training purposes, but with likely side benefits too. This means training for Intermediate and Advanced Licences will now be widely advertised locally. However, we do need candidates! The first Intermediate course which was to have taken place at our HQ has been cancelled, as there was only one applicant. However, wider advertising has not yet been sent out, so hopefully things will improve. The dates for the **Advanced Exams** are as follows: (deadline for applications in brackets): Thurs 4 Jun (Th. 14 May), Fri 7 Aug (Fri 17 July), October TBA (Sept. TBA), Mon 7 Dec (Mon 16 Nov), Tues 7 Feb 2010 (Tues 12 Jan), Wed. 7 Apr 2010 (Wed 17 March), Thurs 3 June 2010 (Th. 13 May). Please pass the word around as widely as possible.

On Wed. 29 April, **George G0FJI** of Oakengates passed away. Condolences to his partner and family. He was active on HF and 2 metres, although not a member of TDARS.



2 metre DF hunts have re-started this summer. Equipment used by participants varied from just a handheld to slightly more complex offset oscillator and steel rule mini yagis. All on foot in the Little Wenlock area. A couple more are planned. Note the one for 22nd July is going to return to the Telford Town Park, just to keep us on our toes. A trophy will be awarded later. The photo shows early arrivals at the April DF event. (L-R: Dave, Chris, Richard, Norman+ Dave with camera)

A request from Derek G0EYX for "**Relay for Life**" which takes place at the Northwood Stadium in Stoke on Trent (weekend June 20-21) "Don, FHM and Bob, RJS will be running a special event station for the charity, 'Relay for Life'. As a starter to this Don will be 'rattling the tin' at Wednesday club meetings. Please bring some pennies, pounds bills of the realm to donate to this cause."

Dave M6DTB, our newest Committee Member has volunteered to be a **Publicity Officer** for TDARS, mainly to keep the local community informed of our activities, via local newspapers etc. He would welcome any advice or contacts which will help him do the job.

A letter of thanks for our contribution to the Parish Council Public Meeting (20th April) in the Village Hall was sent to Martin 2E0TRO recently. "Please pass on our thanks to all at the Radio Club for all the hard work that they did during the evening and their excellent display".

The **AGM (March 25th) was a bit special** as TDARS is 40 years young. (Founded Autumn 1969 as Wrekin ARS). The Press didn't make it, but we had an anniversary cake each and a glass of nice non-alcoholic plonk. Appropriately enough, over 40 turned up on the night, which itself is a record for a TDARS AGM! Derek 'EYX (Chairman) made a welcoming speech, subs. remained the same (£28, £22 or £14—Hint, Hint), a new addition to the Committee (welcome Dave M6DTB) and lots of trophies presented. Satisfaction all round.



A Happy Treasurer

G8UGL



Everyone had one !



Chairman at your service. (Many thanks Derek)



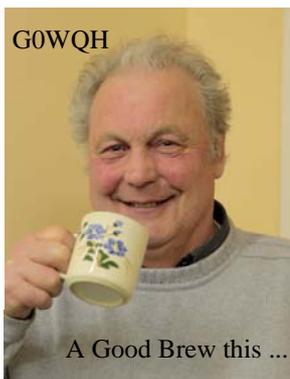
Main Construction

M0TAW



Under a Fiver Construction

G4EIX



G0WQH

A Good Brew this ...



Someone has to have the Kippure

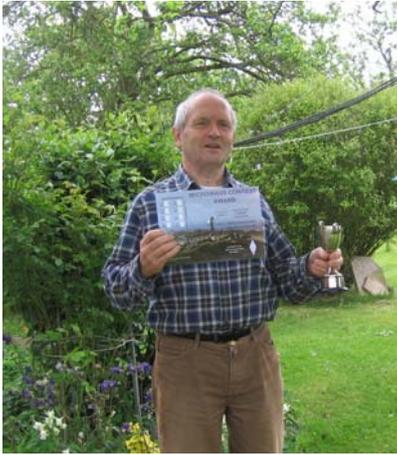
G3JKX



Well done Chris

M0EMM

**TDARS
AGM
2009**



That's twice the club has won the UK Microwave 24 GHz Trophy and Certificate, using Martyn's (G3UKV) equipment. G3ZME/P was top scorer in a short series of cumulative events in 2008, although activity was well down on previous years.

Once again, several members (usually G8UGL, G3UKV, G4NKC, G8VZT) are heading for the hills this summer to work various bands, including 1.3, 2.3, 3.4, 5.7, 10 and 24 GHz on different dates. All are welcome to join us; it's usually on a Sunday.

As it used to say on my staffroom wall, "You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps....."

Ted Cowling, plus Ken Ballantyne's talk based on the locally published book "The journey" was very well received in April. We received a thank-you phone call for all the generous donations and book purchases that were passed to the Severn Hospice—Telford. Ted is quite a gentleman, and his life story is remarkable. We never found out who sent the very complimentary letter to the Shropshire Star (April 18th) about his talk, but whoever you are, your letter is now in the TDARS archives!



The loft (sorry—**mezzanine extension floor**) work is almost complete. Thanks to hard work primarily by Simon G0UFE, Chris M0EMM, Dave M0ECM and Derek G0EYX, the more substantial entrance ladder has been installed, and the upstairs mains wiring totally upgraded. All that remains is to add a safety rail around the upstairs access, and to varnish the surrounding woodwork. You can see from the photo that Chris is a true craftsman, and don't give us that H & S ##### - #####

The order for **40th anniversary mugs** will be made shortly by Richard M1RKH. Over 30 orders have now been placed, but it may not be too late if you contact Richard immediately. Cost is £5.50 each, featuring full colour club Phoenix logo, and 'Telford & District Radio Society 1969-2009'. Whilst the exact date of the first meeting in 1969 is uncertain, we know it was some time in the late autumn. Several founder members were present at the recent AGM (G8DQQ, G4AUY and G8VZT at least.)

The RSGB have STILL not sorted out our request to be an official "Morse Competency Test Centre", although G3UKV, M0KZB and G3JKX have all requested to be registered examiners. The requests went in last February/March, and e-mails have been sent and received. However, never mind, our own Society "Proficiency Certificates" are still available, mainly for 5 wpm and 12 wpm. They look smarter too! Ray Bullock of Shrewsbury is seen here receiving his certificate for sending & receiving morse at 15 wpm.



All Subscriptions were due at the AGM in March. Jim 'UGL has received subs from: 2E0BDZ, 2E0CTG, 2E0GIV, 2E0RAY, 2E0TRO, 2E0ZSU, G0ASP, G0CER, G0EYX, G0UFE, G0VNO, G0VXJ, G1OOE, G3JKX, G3UKV, G4AUY, G4JOW, G6NWT, G8UGL, G8VZT, GM3YEW, M0FHM, M0KZB, M0RJS, M0TAW, M1AQS, M1FGN, M6DCT, M6DTB, M6TTB, Louise Bate. Omissions/Errors to Jim please. Normal Sub: £28, Non-earners £22, Full-time students £14



Taking a Trip To Tywyn. By Martyn G3UKV

Following the visit to Marconi's transmitting station at Waunfawr (nr Caernarfon) last year, and a exploratory visit to its sister receiving station site at Tywyn in February this year, all eyes were on the weather forecast for the period April 23-26th just gone.

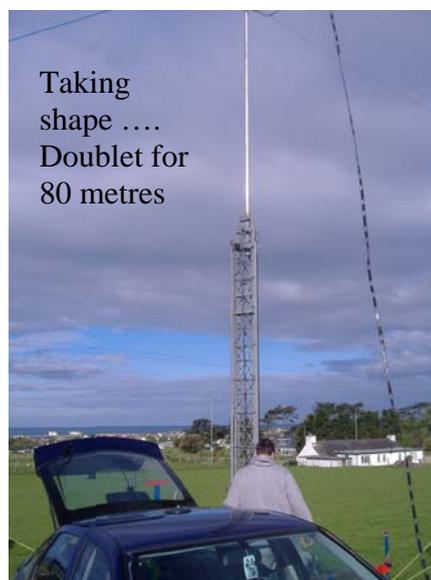
After a fairly early start on the Thursday, three vehicles initially set off—Don's motor home, my car, and Chris + Dave towing one of the Club's mobile towers. Phone calls earlier in the week reminded our hosts of our imminent arrival, but nonetheless, the land owner's Farm Manager expressed surprise as I drove into the farmyard. The previously agreed site field, adjoining the Marconi Bungalows, contained just sheep, and was quite firm and dry. The lambing season was finished. So, no problem—we were welcome.

Camp was quickly established, and Don's vehicle scraped through the battered field gateway. Within a few hours, tents were up, and to our surprise a white van and two blokes arrived at the entrance to replace the gate with a new one just purchased in our honour. Wow ! A chain saw cleared some overhanging branches, and two gateposts were unloaded. Noticing a nearby cattle trough, one of the guys got two bent metal dowsing rods from the van to ensure they did not fracture the water feed to the trough. Sure enough, the rods crossed over positively as we watched, and under the grass they uncovered an underground stop tap—exactly in line. Welsh technology at its finest. Dave and I both had a go, and they worked for us too, although perhaps less convincingly as we now knew where the water pipe lay anyway.

Richard M1RKH rolled up later that day, and a third tent blossomed. Masts were cranked up, wire un-rolled and stakes thumped into the ground, all following a pre-arranged location plan.

Our nearest neighbour, a lady by the name of Jean, plugged us into her mains power, as negotiated at the first visit, but when asked to fill up a water bottle or two, reminded us she was "on the meter", so to go sparingly with it. (Had she spotted our portable swimming pool, we wondered ? Or had our farm men previously damaged her water supply on the wrong side of the notorious meter before learning the ancient art of dowsing? We'll never know ...)

Field before we arrived - Jean's Marconi Bungalow and hill behind, which once had an array of 300' masts supporting VLF spark receiving aerials.



Taking shape
Doublet for
80 metres

"Just here"
(spot the dowsing rods)



How could we have managed ?
Time for a cuppa. (Thanks
Norma for/from numerous mugs)

Well, more arrivals and general clutter appear. Sixteen TDARS members and others arrive at the camp in total over the 4 days of our stay. A local Welsh language monthly magazine (“Dysynni”) author arrives on a pedal bike and takes interest and photographs, and is given our Information Sheet about Marconi and Tywyn. I guess we’ll never know what he wrote, but I hope it was complimentary. Another local amateur visitor also arrived for several hours chatter; apparently he spent much of the year in a nearby fixed mobile home, and had heard of our arrival via the local grapevine which is very active. At about 9:45pm, another surprise awaited us. Lights & power went off—who had tripped the power? We all dash out of our tents etc. Jean, our neighbour, was standing at her boundary fence holding out the mains cable and plug. In her view, she was doing us a favour. It might rain during the night and be dangerous. As she was going to bed, I had better place the cable safely under cover. I was so amazed that I thanked her for her gesture, and tucked it away, whilst also stumbling around to find my torch. For the next hour or so we all fell about laughing, and recalling that she was “on the meter”. Thursday night was a bit blowy, but no rain. Lots of rattling tent flaps to disturb our beauty sleep. More preparations Friday morning, and further callers (Dave ‘VZT & Patti, Rob 2E0RAV/ex M3RJW, Jim ‘UGL). A planned SOTA (Summits OTA) group (Richard, Chris, David, Martyn & Jim) set off for a local hilltop, that was a bit elusive to locate in the forest. After a fair trek, we got there, but it was not really a VHF site except westwards to Ireland. We proposed Richard ‘RKH as a possible recipient of the 2010 Kippure Trophy as his quite new Maplin 7 AH battery was flat on arrival at the summit, with no back-up power source.. But we bodged a way round the problem and had just 4 QSOs on 2 metres using the FT817 and 5 ele yagi.

Friday night was even windier, with vicious gusts and squalls funnelling their way around the hills behind our camp. Several of us got up during the night to check masts, guys and stakes and to try and reduce the sheer racket of it all. Dave (and presumably Patti) slept through it all quite undisturbed in their comfortable B & B house nearby. As one end of the Club tent threatened to take off, with pegs becoming detached, I held on grimly to the side of the tent by its entrance, and a further gust simply tore the outer nylon layer in a 13ft R-III-PPPP out of my hands. A second gash had already appeared on the back of the tent. Nothing more could be done. Back to camp-bed, now placed on the end of the tent that wanted to become airborne, and survey the damage at day-break. It was terminal, but still habitable until break of camp on Sunday. Thank goodness there wasn’t much rain about throughout our stay.

Further arrivals on Saturday were Richard 2E0UDE /ex M6RLB, Ray 2E1HTU (first time ever visit to one of our portable events—well done Ray), Martyn 2E0CTG/ ex M3YDE, Robin M1MHU and his friend Chris (can’t remember his callsign) from Yorkshire. Once the camp and all its parts were made as secure as possible, we started using GB8MD (Marconi Day) on 3 bands—80m 40m and 20m—simultaneously.



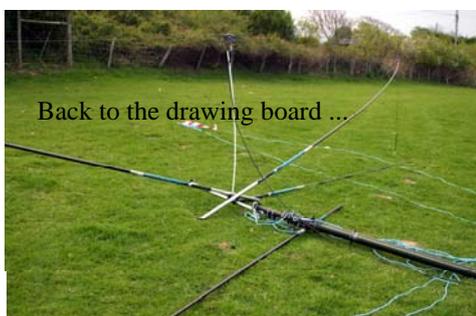
Moxon for 20 metres



GB8MD Ready to go!



Martyn & Robin arrive On 40m.



Back to the drawing board ...



SOTA site in trees ...



Novel 1918 mast construction, easily shown with tea-bags

I was amazed at how little co-interference we suffered. We had to avoid direct harmonic transmissions, of course (eg 7.1 and 14.2 MHz), but generally we were quite unaware of one another, and the coax filters I had carefully made at home went back unused into the spares box. We kept to 100 watts max on each band, which probably helped. The 40m loop could not really be raised high enough to work properly, so we reverted to a 40m dipole instead, linked to the Icom IC756 Pro rig in Don's motor-home awning station. On 20m, Chris and David used their Moxon (2 ele) rotatable beam, until it crashed to the ground during another squall on Saturday afternoon, and that also was replaced with a dipole that did the business. On 80m, I used a 135ft. Doublet, fed with 450 ohm twin. The idea was that if any other band opened (eg 10 or 15 metres, or even 160m), the Palstar ATU could match it to the IC 756 safely. As the day proceeded, operators swapped round, and most of those present had a go on one band or another. Most QSOs were on SSB, but CW was used for an hour or so, just to let Marconi know (if he was watching from above) that morse isn't dead yet. On the 3 bands, we had nearly 400 QSOs using the special call GB8MD, and some QSLs have started to arrive by post in the past week or so. A special commemorative QSL has been designed and printed.

By Saturday evening, we were well pleased. Apart from the tent mishap, and the mast that collapsed with the Moxon beam on top (thank goodness the wind took it AWAY from our parked vehicles !!), it was a highly successful Special Event station. We slept well the last night, and the stars shine down on us peacefully.

Sunday morning was calm and sunny. Time to break camp, lower aerials, find my missing socks and the toilet tent which had separated from its porta-potti in the gales and lay in a heap. Time to stack all the kit in our vehicles. As we prepared to leave, Richard 'RKH had a second encounter with a battery—this time the one attached to his starter motor. (Actually, we think there is a connection (?) between discharged batteries and his beer cooling arrangements....). Dave 'VZT to the rescue with his Honda genny. As you can see from the photo below, Chris is trying to help...



We'll think about Next Year (around April 24th), but we've already been told we are welcome to return. How about 500 kHz next time? The Tywyn locals seem genuinely pleased for a group of radio amateurs from Shropshire to recognise their special bit of history, as the major trans-Atlantic receive station for the pioneering wireless men (and women operators) of the early 20th Century.

My thanks to Dave 'VZT, Richard 'RKH, Richard 'UDE for accompanying photos, and to everyone who took time out to join us or call us, and who made the whole trip so enjoyable and worthwhile.

