

TDARS

Newsletter

Issue 241
www.TDARS.org

Programme

May 2010
www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- May 19** Quiz and Curry Night. M0TAW & G3JKX
- May 26** Our Sun and propagation. Eventual Dawn of Solar Cycle 24 ? G3UKV
- June 2** Committee meeting. HQ not available. (Heath Hill venue)
- June 9** 6m Trophy Contest G3Z Prep. + social & sandwiches. (G0UFE/G0EYX)
- June 16** QRP/P— Radio stuff in the Village Field (next to The Huntsman)
- June 17(Thurs.)** Visit to RAF Shawbury. Meet 12:25 in car park opposite entrance.
Note: Meal included (£2.50 to pay). Pse arrive on time—else no entry!
- June 19/20 (weekend)** 6m Trophy Contest—G3Z on Long Mynd—G0UFE i/c.
Note: This will replace the Museums on the Air activity (GB3IBG).
- June 23** VHF NFD prep. Also “Guess What It Is” oddity night. Bring something odd with you for others to identify !
- June 30** BBQ in the Park + 3cm (G4HJW kits) receiver test night. (Village Field)
- July 3/4(weekend)** VHF NFD from Long Mynd, near Pole Bank summit. Arrive 10:15 >
- July 7** Open House / HF OTA / Committee at LW village hall.
- July 14** Calibration & testing evening. Bring along your TX/RX or whatever...
- July 21** Second (local, on foot) 2m Fox Hunt. +/- 144.6 MHz FM 7:30 start.
- July 28** ‘Hafren’ boat Trip. R. Severn; board at Dale End, Ironbridge (so long as river levels OK. Cost: £5 per person on the night)
- August 4** Committee Meeting @ Heath Hill (unless Huntsman open ?) HQ closed.
- August 11** T.B.A.

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

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

Editorial

How often have you heard the phrase “It’s only a hobby

” ? Well, I’ve been playing at radio now for 50 years, and I like to keep it at that hobby level. It all started when our next door neighbour who was a radio & TV shop owner, gave me, a keen 12 year old, an old 1930’s Pye wireless that covered some short waves, including the 40m amateur band, and I went on to discover radio amateurs who then nearly all used AM (or CW) - almost no SSB at that time.

Over the years I’ve dabbled in most aspects of the hobby, and thoroughly enjoyed a wide range of experiences over 5 decades, almost without exception.

However, events of the last two years have marred this rosy picture in one area. Over the 40 years I’ve been a member of TDARS, I’ve seen the club grow and undertake numerous initiatives, such as our voice repeater GB3TF (licensed Dec. 1991). In June 2001 our first microwave propagation beacon got on the air on 24 GHz, and has operated continuously. This was followed by two others—Dec. 2002 with a 3.4 GHz unit and then in May 2004 with the 5.7 GHz beacon. The fourth, and final microwave beacon was planned some time in 2008 for operation on the 2.3 GHz band (13cm band). The catalyst for action was the decision by the group responsible for the GB3PYS beacon near Newtown in Powys to close down. I offered to take the hardware and use it as a midlands based beacon with much wider coverage. Some obsolescent firmware was replaced, and the unit re-aligned, with a PA to increase the power from the previous 0.4 W output to 10 watts, plus some aerial gain.

Well, the application went ahead on behalf of TDARS, and a formal proposal was sent to RSGB in Feb. 2009. Suddenly, mayhem. A certain local radio amateur, who has a bee in his bonnet about switch-mode power supplies, went ballistic. He expressed his opposition in no uncertain terms, telling anyone who would listen (particularly on the UK Microwave Group committee), that we were a disreputable group, who ignored his expert advice, and that I was the devil incarnate who organised ‘dirty beacons’, specifically on 3.4GHz and now possibly in future on 2.3 GHz. Actually, we made no secret of the fact we used a professionally made SM PSU on the PA section of our 3.4 GHz unit, which was perfectly OK according to all other reports and tests, as well as on my spectrum analyser and receiver at close range.

Eventually, last summer an experienced and well-respected microwaver from Yorkshire came down and checked the new beacon unit, as well as **all** the other microwave beacons at Little Wenlock. He made notes and took photographs of his spectrum analyser screen at various settings. His findings were all well within spec, which confirmed what I already knew. They were sent to the UK uwave group and forwarded with a full report to OfCOM in London. Our local radio amateur would have none of it, despite clearly having a receiver problem, but decided to sell his 3.4G equipment anyway, and pitch further into our 2.3 GHz application. He talked of radiation risks, excessive transmitter outputs, wi-fi going haywire in Little Wenlock, poor technology, poor band planning and so on and on —constantly moving the goalposts in his attempts to block our application, and dreaming up new objections.

The UK microwave group’s attempts to meet his demands only seemed to fuel the flames, and recently, in desperation, they offered to build an entirely new oscillator section (although the old one was perfectly adequate) which would be the ‘perfect’ beacon, using a new technique called reverse DDS, which is not really proven for beacon usage. They also agreed to change the national beacon application rules at his insistence. I stuck to my guns regarding the original unit, but agreed to let someone else take up the task of rebuilding this section of the beacon if this would conclude the matter. Eventually, a settlement appears to have been reached, but who knows? - I’m not holding my breath.

QTC? News & Information



TDARS AGM—Subs 2010-11 UNCHANGED—Full £28, or £22 non-earners, £14 full time student. Thank you to all who have paid already. Jim G8UGL as usual collects the loot.

Special Contest Callsign G3Z plans have progressed, with entries for the March BARTG data-modes sent in (G0CER) and the May Microwave entry forwarded to RSGB (G3UKV). The next two G3Z planned events are the 50 MHz Trophy over the weekend June 19/20 from 1400 UTC (G0UFE) and the Islands on the Air event July 24/25 (G8UGL) which runs from midday to midday UTC. Simon and Jim welcome all offers of help and support for these weekend events. Any other offers for airing G3Z will be very welcome by myself; how about the CQ WW RTTY (Sept 25/26) or the WAE (Europe) SSB (Sept.11/12) contests ?

Dave had a commendable 304 HF QSOs in the **RTTY event** in March, and at the start of May, G8UGL, G4NKC, G3UKV, M0EMM, M0ECM and G8UPF all helped to make possible a 7 band entry into a RSGB **microwave event**, with a total of 98 QSO, best DX being PA6NL at 463Km.

The **new GB3TF logic** has been successfully installed by Jim 'UGL. Both CTCSS (103.5 Hz) and 1750 Hz toneburst are now recognised by the box, although some minor tweaks are still planned. The audio is a bit 'toppier', but this is no bad thing when you're mobile. Dylan M1IHM has also started to test a re-vamped version of echo-link for DX evening usage via 'TF. An awful lot of CTCSS bursts keep opening it up, but presumably this will quieten down when the novelty of such easy access to 'TF has worn off. Let's hear human voices, not just carriers !

The committee, advised by Richy M0RKY, has now undertaken a **complete audit of all TDARS equipment**. Various 'missing' returns from the past have been traced. If there are any requests or problems, Richy (curator) is easily contacted by phone, text or e-mail (details Pg 3). Most items can be borrowed on a week-by-week basis, although there are restrictions on certain transmitting items, and conversely, some items can be borrowed for a longer period (eg an antenna). The committee are keen to see equipment borrowed, but rely VERY heavily on members taking responsibility for the items, returning them promptly and reporting any faults. If you have an accident—please tell someone. You will not be charged or even shot at dawn !

Following a request by Derek G0EYX, a **TDARS Publicity Officer** has volunteered and been appointed for the Society. It's Dave G0CER who is the ideal fella, with a CV of several years working for the Shrops. Star and also the various local area Journals before he ended up at TCAT. He has already submitted an article, and has suggested a trial 'proforma' for Members to use whenever they organise or take part in a Club event. This will give him the chance to forward items to the local press or radio organisations with the necessary what-where-when-why and how information, plus any good quality photos. Dave's details are also on Pg. 3

The old (but little used) **Club TV / VHS player has been donated** to a charity—the SSAFA Forces Help, via Mike G3JKX. Happily, there were no injuries lowering it from the loft area !

The Marconi Activity IMD event (April 24) went ahead as planned, with 15 members (incl family) being on site next to the Marconi Cottages at Tywyn and many others contacting us from here in Shropshire. The antenna set up looked quite impressive, and Dave 'CER plus Richard 'RKH put GB8MD on the data-modes map for the first time. Activity was shared between 20, 40 and 80 metres, and frequently all stations were active simultaneously, resulting in 451 QSOs—about 55 more than last year. The weather was kind to us, and all equipment worked well. Seven members and family of the Meirion (Dollgellau) Radio Society were made welcome

when they turned up on site—and even did a bit of operating. They included Simon MW0GSR, Elizabeth MW6BOZ, Chris MW6CRS, John MW0VTK, Jim 2E0RMI, Ann and Simon SWLs. They would like to visit us some time at Little Wenlock, and extend a welcome at their club which meets the first Thursday of each month in the Royal Ship Hotel, Dolgellau.



Refreshments at the Station



VISITORS

The A.G.M. went smoothly, with a couple of new (or not so new....) faces on the Committee. Richy (M0RKY) is the Society's Curator now, with Norman (G0ASP) covering as his assistant. As soon as possible, the HF and VHF/UHF station will be available on those evenings when the committee are in session at LWVH, which take place on the first Wednesday of June, August, October and December. Rob, 2E0RAV, Dave G8VZT and Eric M0KZB are the other new faces (??). The formal AGM business was followed by the awarding of trophies and certificates. The Jack Hassall shield went to Trevor 2E0TTB for all he has done for the benefit of members in such a short time as a club Member. The operating 'in the spirit of amateur radio' trophy went to Eric M0KZB, with special note of the countless morse practice sessions he has held on 2 metres. Mike G3JKX was handed a special certificate in recognition of his 15 years as TDARS Secretary and Bob M0RJS was given a certificate as his swan song after 18 years administration of the exhibitors at our annual HamFest & Radio Rally. Finally the Kippure Trophy was 'won' by Jim, for fitting the 433.2 MHz RX filter of 'TF on the transmit port of the repeater. The other trophy winners were recorded in the last Newsletter. An urgent e-mail from Bob M0RJS the day after the AGM expressed the thanks of the membership for all the previous committee had done in 2009-10. Amen.



GB8MD: TYWYN

The first **2 metre foxhunt** took place at the end of April. For whatever reason, the fox, Mike 'JKX, chose to lie on the ground under a bush at the edge of the village field. We were rather short of hounds, but nonetheless, some of us tracked him down, barely surviving the nettle patch which flourished on one access side. Mike smiled sweetly and said there were no nettles on the side from which he got to the bush. Ummm. We shall have our revenge

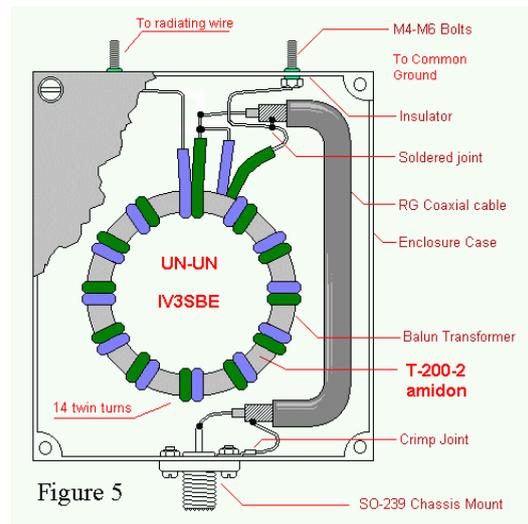
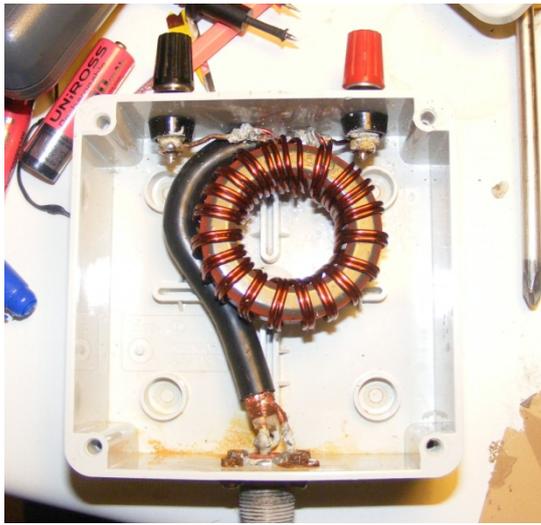
The **River Severn Trip** on the 'Hafren' has been booked for Wed. 28 July, meeting at the Dale End Park wharf (at the lower end of Coalbrookdale valley) at 7:30pm. However, river levels are critical. In the event of the boat being unable to sail, I suggest we still meet in the park, and undertake other suitable activities. (fishing ? Wading ? Radio-ing ? Pub-ing? Ice-cream eating?). The cost per head is £5 (children £4) and the trip lasts about 45 minutes. Bring your camera; pay on the boat. Disabled access assured. The boat holds up to about 35 passengers.



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE FRONT PAGE PROGRAMME. ROOM BOOKED FROM 7PM - 10PM. MEETINGS USUALLY COMMENCE AT 8PM

Top Band Dx Antenna For a Small Garden by Paul M0PNN

You need a large garden or piece of ground for top band and in the main this is true. Even a dipole is going to be many times the length of my small garden which is 30ft by 20ft. The antenna I use for top band started life as a 128ft ($\frac{1}{4}$ wave) inverted L with a helically wound section on a 10 meter SOTA pole brought from the HamFest. About 70ft was wound around the plastic leg of children's goal posts set which slid over the SOTA pole nicely each turn is 2 cm apart. The horizontal section with the rest of the SOTA pole made up the total to 128ft. The Antenna is fed with coax into a un-un. See below.



Unun link ----- <http://www.iv3sbe.webfundis.net/html/UNUN.htm>

The problem I had was the horizontal section was not horizontal and there was no way I could reasonably argue with the station manager about other antenna bracket. I had promised no more than 2 antennas—the count at this time was already five. The horizontal section came down at 45 degrees from the top of the SOTA Pole this was definitely having a cancelling effect. Upon removing the horizontal section signal strengths increased. The other side of the un-un was attached to a small copper rod.

Performance

Performance was poor it could receive well enough, but few stations could hear me.

Version 2



My antenna rotator failed and after fitting a new one, I threw my tools off the roof into the garden thinking there's nothing important in the way. One of the spanners landed on the bottom of my SOTA pole and broke the bottom section. A serious rethink was needed.

The antenna had to be $\frac{1}{4}$ wave in length helically wound and no more than 20ft in length when taken down for the summer. The SOTA pole could not take any more weight. The leg of the goal post was enough. My solution was to increase the length of the SOTA pole this was achieved by adding 10ft of 2 inch plastic waste pipe to its bottom. The difference in diameter was made up with duct tape gluing with solvent cement and a couple of jubilee clips on the outside just to be sure.





Jack Hassall Trophy to Eric MOKZB



Mike G3JKX gets a longevity award cert. as Hon Sec.



Bob MORJS gets a cert. for Trader Liaison @ Hamfest for umpteen years.



Under £5 Construction to Rob, 2E0RAV



Ron M0EAK earns his 12 wpm morse cert.



Norman G0ASP receives the 2009 DF Trophy

The 2010 AGM of T.D.A.R.S.



Dave G4EIX and his Constructors' Trophy



Beginner's Construction Trophy for Paul M0PNN.



Trev, 2E0TTB (new boy on the block) receives the Jack Hassall award.



Kippure Trophy. Proud or what ? Jim G8UGL



New signing out files if you borrow something.