

TDARS News Letter

TELFORD AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

www.TDARS.org.uk

FOUNDED 1969

www.TelfordHamfest.co.uk

Issue 267

Feb/March 2015

www.TDARS.org.uk

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

- February 11 Under-a-Fiver Construction Competition. Don't leave it to others . . .
- February 18 Bowls social evening in the Main Hall. Refreshments included
February 21 (Sat. evg.) Thinking Day on the Air (Girl guides). Telford Centre
- February 25 Railway Signalling. Brian G6UDX explains the mysteries
- March 4 Committee Meeting and GX3ZME on-the-air.
- March 11 Main Construction Competition. Don't forget: Beginners' Trophy too
- March 18 Contest & Portable 2015—including Tywyn/Marconi weekend prep.
- March 25 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 8pm. Agenda page 3
March 29(Sun) GX6ZME/P from Wappenshall—using new Comet antenna.
- April 1 Committee Meeting and GX3ZME on the air
- April 8 Oscilloscopes and their applications—bring one along. Brian G6UDX
- April 15 Wireless Communications in W W 1. RSGB presentation
- April 22 Small processors in radio. Eric M0KZB (Arduino, Raspberry Pi)
- April 24-26 (Fri-Sun) GB8MD Marconi Day at Tywyn, Gwynedd**
- April 29 'Transceivers for All' - bring, show and tell—incl. TDARS own rigs
- May 6 Committee Meeting (7:30pm) and GX3ZME on the air
- May 13 Surplus equipment sale
May 16-17(weekend) GX6ZME/P LW Village Field: 6m Station & computer logging

*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 John M0JZH or Don 2E0DSN
[Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html](http://www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html)*

VILLAGE HALL, MALTHOUSE BANK, LITTLE WENLOCK, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE. TF6 5BG

Qtc: News & Information



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

Please note: A current membership card must be shown to borrow TDARS equipment. Please return borrowed equipment promptly .

The **TDARS AGM** takes place on **WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH** at 8pm.

AGENDA :

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Minutes of AGM held 26 March 2014, and Matters Arising
- 3) Chairman's Report
- 4) Treasurer's Report & presentation of accounts. 2015/16 subscription rates
- 5) Appointment of Auditors 2015/16
- 6) Election of Society Officers and committee
- 7) Presentation of Awards and Trophies



The **Forum Meeting** (January 7) went ahead as planned with a good turnout of members and would-be/ex members (30+). Careful Minutes were taken by John 'JZH' as Secretary, and the outcomes were discussed at length the following week in Committee, and were distilled under 4 headings:

- 1) **Contests.** Set up sub group for contesting and portable activities (provis: G0CER, G0UFE, M0JZH); More HF; Support people unfamiliar with contesting and/or computer logging; Helps individuals improve their equipment, antennas and operating skills; More use of G3Z; Keep the group members informed (email etc), but mostly outside regular tdars meetings; Announce specific activities/contests at Wednesday meetings.
- 2) **Visiting Speakers.** Invite more, good outside speakers; Modest extra cost acceptable; Aim for a guest or 'special' event at least once a month; Members' suggestions more than welcome; Factory visits with elec. or radio connection if available—suggestions?
- 3) **Construction.** Hands on 'Lab.' workshop sessions (scopes, test gear etc); Positive show – of-hands for continued construction was noted; Guidance from experienced members welcome to encourage less-expert; Wide range of experience of those present; Use of micro-processors suggested—Arduino, Raspberry-Pi and PIC— support essential.
- 4) **Operating Modes.** Digital and digital-voice (eg DMR, FreeDV etc); Promote and support CW (morse) operating; Develop keyboard modes and logging skills and usage.

The forthcoming programme has been slightly amended to try and reflect these outcomes.

A **Vodafone 'Mi-Fi'** self-contained unit has been purchased by the club, so that several members should be able to log-on to the mobile Internet via Wi-Fi from the club premises simultaneously. This follows the decision by the LWVH committee not to install a broadband connection within the premises due to costs involved. It is an unlocked device, so any SIM card can be used to operate the unit. It has yet to be tried out, but should be an invaluable asset at future meetings.

Brian **G6UDX** has made a **bending widget** for forming the correct folded driven element radius on the 2 metre yagi club-project design using 6mm alum. Available to loan.

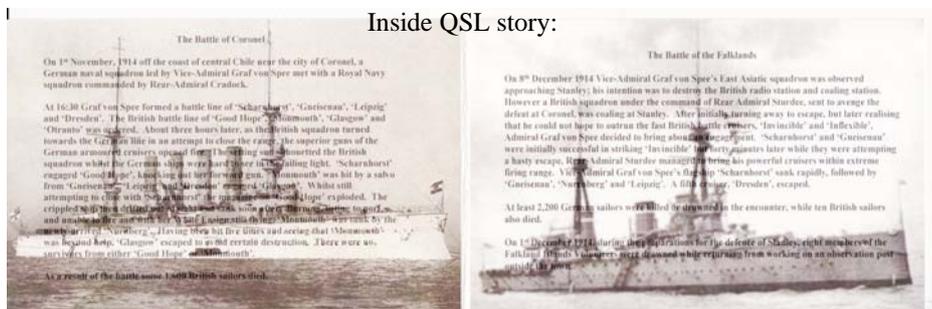
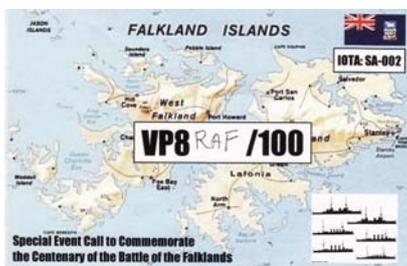
John Rawson G4ZJY, past member of TDARS, became SK on 30th December. At one time he was very active on HF, VHF and Amateur TV—with a 10 GHz ATV Repeater located at his QTH in St Georges. A number of club Members attended his funeral on 21 January. RIP

Paul, M0PNN participated in the American ARRL (US equivalent of RSGB) Centenary HF operating Award Program throughout 2014. He managed 1500 QSOs with W1AW HQ station, plus all officers and volunteers associated with the ARRL Award (nice idea—Ed) who gave points to all who QSOd them. Thus Paul scored an amazing 17000 points with QSOs in all 50 U.S. States. In due course, he will receive an appropriate award for this outstanding achievement. Congratulations, Paul.

John M0JZH has provided details of portable events between now and August, with more to follow for the rest of 2015. John hopes members will really support him in using the Club callsigns on all bands—equally HF and VHF. There is so much more to setting up a station than just plugging in a radio and raising an antenna—so he needs plenty of support.!

- 29th March - GX6ZME/p from Wappenshall - using the new Comet HF Antenna
- 24-26th April - GB8MD Marconi Day from Tywyn
- 16-17th May - 6m from LWVH field
- 20-21st June - 6m Trophy Contest
- 5-7th July - VHF NFD - Long Mynd
- 12th July - Lions Day on Wheels, Demonstration Station, possible Special Callsign.

As most of you know, **Mike G3JKX** took a fantastic opportunity to visit the **Falkland Isles** at the end of last year with his ex-RAF credentials. It was part of the island's Centenary commemoration of the Battle of the Falklands in 1914. Two articles from Mike follow in this Newsletter, the first written on his return at the end of last year, and a previous article he wrote in 1987 (for RAFARS ?) when he last visited the islands. Both articles are included here as they cover different aspects of his visits, and of course were written 28 years apart! He was one of several operators for VP8RAF/100. G3UKV & M0PNN were fortunate enough to catch the station on 10 metres CW, operated by 'Roger' at the now-famous Mount Pleasant location. Nice QSL card.



Eric M0KZB and Paul M0PNN have circulated the following E-mail:

“Hi all,
 Paul M0PNN and myself, Eric M0KZB are about to start our **Morse Practising on the air**, anyone wishing to learn Morse is invited.
 I will require your call sign, telephone number and email address if you have one. We will meet on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings on two meters 144.600 MHz 20.00Hrs(8.00) (club frequency). If you are interested in building QRP(low power) rigs then you will benefit greatly by knowing how to communicate using Morse code. As usual there will be two groups, a starter group(those with little or no Morse knowledge, and advance group(those who are Morse proficient but need to improve or brush-up). Everyone is sent the coming evenings lessons beforehand so that everyone will be able to hit the road running. We run tongue in cheek lessons and have a laugh along the way. We have about 5-6 new members, I will publish a list, if you are not on the list then please do not hesitate to get back to me a.s.a.p.
 hpe cul, (hope see you later)
 73, (best wishes) (Presumably not too late to join in: contact Eric or Paul –Ed.)

Eric M0KZB es Paul M0PNN.” (January 21) .

VP8RAF/100 by Mike G3JKX

“Did I want to go on a DxPedition to the Falkland Islands with a RAFARS team to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Falklands? What a daft question! Of course I would. But hang onwhat battle of the Falklands 100 years ago?

Yes this DxPed would cost me, but then all such expeditions cost a bomb. Martyn and I paid out £5K each to go to the Papua New Guinea islands. Remember this when asking for direct QSLs But I digress.

Apparently we lost a sea battle to the Germans at Coronel off the coast of Chile but made up for it by sinking all their best ships bar one, outside Port Stanley Harbour. All this happened in late 1914.

I was glad not to be organizing the trip. All I had to do was to get to RAF Brize Norton by 9pm on Dec 4th with a passport and get a boarding pass. We were allowed 50lbs of luggage but we could have had a ton as the beautiful new A330 Voyager was half empty, so we all had two seats each. Brill! And the food was to die for on board. (see later)

I took my IC7000 with all the bits as we were unsure what rigs were available down there. Speedy had given me a lovely length of decent aerial wire which was to come in very useful. The journey was very, very long and v v tiring. 8 hrs plus to Ascension, where it was raining. A two hour crew swop, refuel, re-victual and then another 8 hours odd.

The team were met at the airport with the 4 x 4 we had ordered, complete with cracked wind-screen. I have never seen so many of these anywhere else. The terrain is rough and new wind-screens cost 2 arms and a leg...if you can find one. No MOTs here. And so to the mess for food and bed. That was a long way from anywhere. The campus is basically a mile long corridor with accommodation spurs off. Ours was the furthest away. At least walking is good for you and it was all under cover. Boy, does it rain down there, usually horizontal as the huge winds whip round South America. So there are almost no trees or hedges on FI as a consequence.

Down to Port Stanley on the only bright sunny day to get our licences, which we had ordered in advance. £5 for one year, £10 for a lifetime. At my age 1 year will do. VP8BNW, renewed from my 4 months down there in 1987/8 whilst in the RAF. Not much has changed really. A lot more houses and 4 x 4s and land Rovers.



Someone moved the Radio Club! The suitably kitted out container was still there but no aerial mast, no furniture. no nothing. It was all now off site in another but less salubrious container. Damp, but the rig inside worked - but no aerials. So I made an executive decision to let the gang get all that sorted out whilst I set to, put up a pole found under the old club and had a 80 foot wire up in no time. But oh the noises coming out of the rig. With a mile or so of fluorescent lights and all those in the accommodation plus a myriad of military gear all going at once . Yuck.

bits. After some tentative prodding, discovered a whacking dry joint on the carrier injection crystal. A swift solder job and we were really in business. Well, almost. The RIT was working - just, but only a few hundred cycles. Enough swing to sort out a pile-up? Re-assemble and back to the shack - the portacabin with the 3-element tribander over it, down near the Sergeants' Mess (very convenient).

The Shack - Mount Pleasant

(The piles of earth are not due to giant moles - they are mounds of top soil for spreading before seeding. Note the covered walkway between the buildings)

Call "CQ" - wow, wish I hadn't. All of the USA at once isn't funny.

How does one sort them out? Oh yes - W1 QRZ? God bless US amateurs. They listen and, lo and behold, just two or three W1's. Knock them off. W2? etc, etc. Naturally, a "local" LU or PY who is 5 and 9, plus burnt-out meter, has to be worked or life becomes unbearable. Around forty stations that first hour. Thank you, Mrs Street, for my early Christmas present - a new bug key. 21 MHz closing? Down to 14 MHz, where even more American stations. Where is Europe? Ah, must remember that three hours difference in time.

I tried very early sessions, 0400 local - masses of Japanese, but still no Europeans. Where were they? No, not on 28 MHz, even though it was open when the DX forecast said it wouldn't be. 21? The odd DL and F but, now a solitary GW. An ON, how nice. How odd, for looking at our great circle map and the position of the Falklands, we are almost surrounded by the USSR - but, where are they? Maybe it's me, and I'm listening in the wrong place. No, there's another G - just one, very weak. Ah, there's another, RST 4.1.9, and another. So, it was me. G's ARE on, but weaker than the W's. Lower power, almost certainly, smaller aeralis, probably (and, not so high, either). Hmm, how do you dig out 5 and 1 signals from a pile-up? RIT - yes, the clever ones have tried calling on channel, but are now sliding up and down a bit so their note changes in your headphones, or might just slip into your crystal filter bandwidth. Clever. It's no good asking QRO stations to CL for a bit. A W with 250 watts is QRP to some. No, it's simple. Listen more, and off frequency. And, for those on the "desperate to work DX end", move frequency slightly, move a bit more between calls, up then down. DX stations listen for R1 signals. There's no point in sending the DX station call first, either - he knows it. Sometimes, the last two letters only will be sufficient. Keep at it. Move, listen, call two letters, listen, move, call two letters, listen I used the ruse of requesting, "dwn 2 QRZ?". Those that listen, heard, and were eventually worked, regardless of signal strength.

So, there you have it. I learned a lot, and I hope that you can also. Oh, before I forget, do call CQ on an apparently dead band. I put up a dipole for 24 MHz, and did just that. What happened? Well, not a pile-up, but, nevertheless, steady QSO's at R5 and S1. Once the frequency is in use, keep it going, for others will hear and join in. Have fun.



VP8BNW/G3JKX at RAF Mount Pleasant, December 1987

Working on the BC611's —By Richard G0VXG

Martin(2E0TRO) asked if I could have a look at one of his faulty 1940's Walkie Talkie's.

Each unit has 4 valves and each one is used in the Tx and Rx operations of the radio. They operate anywhere from 3.5 to 6.5MHz and are crystal controlled. There is a large slider switch that runs the whole length on the unit and that is the PTT switch.

The valves require 90volts HT and 1.5volts LT and this is provided by a bespoke 90v battery and a standard D cell. All the circuitry is "Tropicalized" which means that every wire and soldered connection has several layers of thick varnish applied, so trying to get a voltage reading is not trivial and it is very easy to think that the voltage on a pin is 0 volts when it is actually 90volts !



The faulty WT radio would not transmit but was reasonable on receive. I could see that the crystal was running OK, but the signal was not getting to the output stage. Eventually I could see the signal at the bottom of a pile-wound coil (radio frequency choke) but it never got any further. I took the coil out and found that despite the "Tropicalization", one end had corroded. Luckily there was just enough spare enamelled wire to make another connection.

The radio then burst into life, much to my relief. I thought that was the end of the project, but Martin asked if I could make three new 90volt batteries. The HT batteries are long and thin.

After some measuring I calculated that ten 9volt PP3 batteries would fit in the unit. I made a U shaped box from thin aluminium and fitted 2 plastic ends with round connectors. I bought 30 Duracell PP3 batteries off eBay along with some good quality connectors.

I soldered them together and fitted them into the U shaped boxes. Martin bought some heat shrink tubing that covered the batteries and the tube. They worked well, but you soon learnt not to pick them up by their ends for fear of getting a jolt !

