



North Bristol Amateur Radio Club

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G4GCT, M0NBC, G6PNB

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Covid-19 Edition

This month we have a bumper issue (well sort of). I have also I have decided to try it in letter format, I thought that it is a bit easier on the eye when reading it on a computer. Using columns is easy if that is what is required as all I have to do is select two columns and press the button and hey presto two columns. Please let me know what you think.

There is still no news on the opening of the club as yet, but it is best to be safe. Other clubs are also holding off opening even though some that meet in drinking clubs could open but haven't. Please read the Chairman's final word for more up-to-date report.

Continued from July edition of Q5, ref radios with a waterfall. It was said on one of our Nets "when calling CQ I don't need to ask if the frequency is in use I can see if it is". WRONG you may not hear or see a distant station but, a station mid way between you and the distant station may be listening to a QSO before his turn to have his over. Your waterfall cannot show a listening station.

Added Note:- Radcom arrived today and the same thing is written in readers letters spooky that.

Dave Roake and myself decided to play a bit of radio a few weeks ago John G4WOD came along to find out the finer points but alas there wasn't any. The report follows.

I am also introducing Letters to the Editor. Any non abusive letters welcome.

Dennis's Home QTH (Just the Beginning)

Building Satellite Station from scratch

My shack is intended for satellite communication so has the capability of working 2 M, 70 cm and 23 cm. I will be expanded to cover 13 cm and 3 cm. The station consists of three parts

1. Base station

2. Remote communication Unit some 10 meters away from the base station

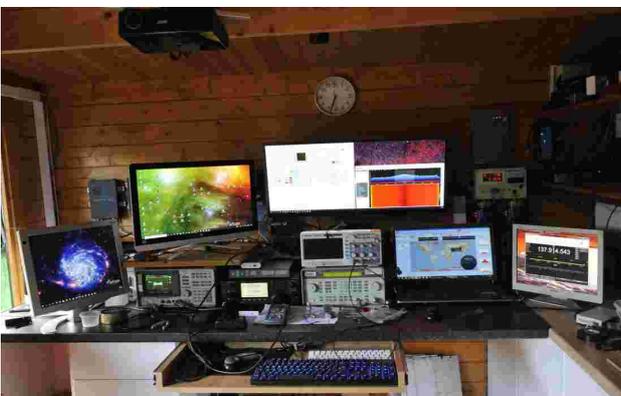
3. The antenna farm, including the LNA (Low Noise Amplifier) Unit, which is next to the Remote Communication Unit.

The station is still in construction, but the base station part is virtually done. The software has been completed for the PC and the three micro processors controlling the various functions.. MPU1 is in the base station, MPU2 in the remote communication Unit and MPU3 in the LNA unit which will sit on top of the Antenna mast.

The base station MPU1 controls the routing of all the RF signals, via couplers, to then measurement equipments (Spectrum Analyser and frequency meter). Remote Communication Unit MPU2 controls the winch for lifting and lowering of the antenna and controlling the polariser units for the 2 M and 70 cm. There is a hardware lockout to prevent the winch for over running in either direction.

LNA Block has MPU 3 which controls the relay switching for the three channels and switching and monitoring of the LNA currents.

Picture below shows the base station control area. The two screens to right are for NOAA weather capture.



With this setup I able to measure the spectrum of the transmission and check for inter-modulation products, spurious and harmonics being generated and the ability to measure the frequency of the carrier during transmission. The signal generator to the right

This is a brief summary of what I have been up to during lock down.

The Dave & Dave's Trip

We were going to setup at the Tog Hill Picnic spot but I had it on good authority that the car park was closed. I looked on the South Glos web site and it said car park unavailable. Ah well, the meet was then organised for Rodway Common. I knew it would be busy but I have used it before. After a bit of banter Siston Common was thrown in the mix Being only a mile farther down the road it seemed like a good choice.

On arrival we noticed that it was all set to wild grass, about two foot high. When I was a kid I used to play there and fly my model aircraft. And the grass was smooth enough for take off, a bit like a cricket pitch.

There is a tall beacon post with a fire basket on the top. It is set up there to commemorate the end of the first world war and to remember the fallen. This proved to be an ideal support for one end of the sloping Doublet, the other end was from a tree branch near the ground. You may remember the antenna, it is the one that we have used at the Avon Valley Railway for the last two years. I have made a new one for the club it is a bit longer but it is yet to be hung and tested. For those of you who don't know, a doublet is Dipole fed with ladder line and is non resonant. It looks like a G5RV but it isn't. The setup was fed by an auto-tuner attached to the balanced feeder not the coax. Not that it made any difference, the whole setup was quite rubbish. Facing East West we could hear plenty of Italians and nothing much else.



In the end we did manage two contacts. A station in the Netherlands and one in the Ukraine. How we managed that with a rubbish setup I will never know. T'other Dave (MORKE) learnt how we setup in the field and make the best of the kit we have available, or maybe not. We will try again, won't we Dave. I have some ideas for the next time, may use my old setup of a vertical roach pole antenna set on an under wheel stand.

I didn't use it this time as there are power lines very near by and as a matter of safety we had to stay away from them This may be a bit easier to setup keeping It simple may help but I think location is everything. This antenna is great at the railway but at Siston Common it was very poor.

Dave & Dave (Trip No.2)

Trip No.2 took place the following week on the Friday. This time we were accompanied by Rocky (M6VRL) at Tog Hill picnic spot.

Around the car park are wooden posts obviously to stop cars from driving onto the rough ground and getting stuck. This was too good an opportunity to miss. I used a strap to hold my Roach pole. This is a 10metre pole that I have used previously for Mills On The Air at Kingswood and Saltford.

A counterpoise was ran out to some nearby bushes this was so that other people using the area would not be presented with a trip hazard. Both counterpoise and the antenna wires were connected to my SGC auto tuner. Coax connected from this to the IC706 Mk2G old but nice and compact for portable use.



The tables, although some were found to have been vandalised made a useful base. The picture taken by Rocky shows Dave and Dave taking a rest from the action.

We found lots of Italian stations calling CQ using 1.5kw and working no one.

They were calling back to some stations but they couldn't hear them clearly as they reported too much QRM. I think they meant QRN as the noise T'other Dave found that they had, were Giant Thunder Storms. We would have been able to hear them if they were using just 100w. I think they should be improving their reception not their transmission. Will they ever learn.

Still, we did work several stations latter in the afternoon after the rain storm. Valencia in Spain was a very memorable one. We had a bit of a rag chew, the sort of station I like. We also had the "You are 5/9 Next". It takes all sorts.

It gave Rocky a chance to see a portable station and would we do it all again? Yes I think we will. Would you Dave?

Special Event News

Not a lot to list here at the moment. With Mills On The Air having been cancelled at the beginning of the season. Mat was in discussion with Avonmouth Community Association cancelling Lighthouses & Lightships On The Air. That left us with the two events for the end of the season. Churches & Chapels on the air and Railways on the air.

ROTA (Railways On The Air)

May be some good news from Avon Valley Railway Martyn (M7DOL)

Yes, during lock down Martyn from AVR has obtained his foundation licence. Congratulations Martyn. The 40's event may not be going ahead but we may be able to set up a low key event.

This photograph was taken from the Flickr web site. Courtesy of Dave M0HDJ



CCOTA (Churches & Chapels On The Air)

I hear that Tony G8CKK and Steve G8JUT maybe going ahead with CCOTA. This being a small event may not have any Covid problems. I will get more information from Tony. If you want to send in to Letters to the editor Tony.....

NBARC NETS

Our nets are going from strength to strength very often 8 or 9 stations. Alas not all are members but, we welcome all stations be it members or not.

Wednesday net

GB3BS 20:00 to 21:00 Local

Friday net

GB3AC 19:00 to 19:30

Then QSY to

GB3BS 19:30 to 20:00

Other Nets

Saturday

19:00 – 20:00 DMR on GB7BS

Time Slot 2 Talk Group 950 (South West Cluster)

Sunday

80m (3.650Mhz) Net ran by Dave M0HDJ. I asked the question in the last Q5 if this net was still in operation. Dave got back to me. He informed me this is still going strong. It starts at 08:30 and ends Prompt at 09:00 for the 80m news.

Dave started this net to keep the frequency clear for the Sunday morning RSGB News as it was always hogged by stations in main land Europe.

Note for the time being the Sunday evening net as run by G7BYN is on hold as Summer time dictate other demands (from the shack manager). Don't let that stop you from running the net yourself. Give it a go just call in the repeater. With that, Dave (Yes another one) this time M0HDJ put forwards another idea. That is, why not use the GB3AA repeater for a net. This is a 2m repeater and may be more accessible for some members. Why not give the repeater a try and see if you can access it. It is on 145.6625Tone 94.8 with the normal shift of -600kHz. Please reply to Letters to the Editor.

Dave G7BYN

A Word From Our Chairman

Dear Members

Since my last Chairman's report things have been very busy in London keeping the railway going against the financial crises. I see this as challenging times ahead for the next few years which will also affect the club in many ways with a reduction of income against expenditure. I am sure that we will all rally together in some way to regenerate the funds.

I recently dealt with an outage on GB3AC and took the opportunity to review how the SHE7 internal refurbishment was coming along. Our shack upstairs is underway with a new kitchen and hall refurbishments along with the roof and toilets. Whilst many of you will be wanting to know every detail it would be impossible to cover at this stage, but I don't think anyone will be disappointed when we finally get back. It is envisaged that the majority of the work will be completed sometime in September 2020 but don't hold your breath!!

The downstairs basement has fully dried out and is looking relatively clean after myself and Peter 2E0PGS spent several visits ensuring that any further floods were mitigated. It will require the new carpet tiles to be laid which we have plus sorting of equipment but in all it will look the same as you remember.

In order for us to get the Club reopened we still have to wait for Government rules and guidelines to be formally announced. However, to ensure we make an expedient return we must complete risks assessments for SHE 7 along with creating our own NBARC risk assessment. These will take a bit of time but I need to ensure everyone is safe and we are compliant before we can reopen. In the meantime, whilst we may be feeling frustrated about the situation, we must think about the lives of so many people who have been affected by the virus.

So be safe, be patient and keep focused.

73 Paul G8YMM

Miscellaneous

For Sale

Under Wheel antenna stand £15

Kettle plug type moulded mains leads
with fused at 7A £1 each

Contact Dave g7byn@blueyonder.co.uk

The next Q5

This will be Mid September
Aprox 4-5 weeks time

Letters To The Editor

Well, there are none yet but
Please feel free to write to me

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Bletchley Park Deposits

All deposits paid by bank transfer had been paid back months ago but, there are a few of you who paid by cash may still be waiting. This will be returned as soon as we open. I can however return deposits via bank transfer if you wish. Please email me with your request I know times are hard and I can't do any more as GDPR stops me knowing any email, phone numbers or email contact details.

Signing Off

I hope you enjoyed this episode of Q5. I thank Dennis for his contribution this month It is difficult trying to fill the pages as there is not a lot happening in the world of the NBARC. One important thing Is that we are all safe.

As soon as the club gets going again we must get ready for the AGM and the Constitution for all clubs, not just ours is in need of adjusting to take into consideration events that may close the club for prolonged periods. A question is, should we hold an election by email? Just a thought. This may not need to be implemented as it looks like the club may open soon as the Government has announced the opening of some more venues. Our Chairman is regularly in contact with SHE7 so we must be patient.

Stay safe and we will all be back soon.

8