

Issue 313 July-Sept. 2023

www.TDARS.org.uk

## Programme

www.telfordhamfest.co.uk

July 19 Visit to Criggion Radio Station—thanks to Robert GW6GBY (SY5 9BE)

July 26 Walking Foxhunt: (final) 7:30pm start LWVH. 144.600MHz FM

August 2 Committee meeting (Webex) + 2m net (144.600 MHz FM) 8pm.

August 9 HamFest preparation at LWVH: Please volunteer to Martin 2E0TRO

August 16 "My portable Operating" - Talks by Mark MOXIC and Martyn G3UKV

August 23 'On the 'Air' Contact Paul M0PLA on Euro SOTA trip from LW Village Field

August 30 Telford HamFest — Final meeting for arrangements. Collect items LWVH.

September 2-3 TELFORD HAMFEST AT HARPER ADAMS UNI. Shared with G-QRP Buildathon, Buffet and Convention (two day event)

September 6 Committee Meeting (Webex) + 2 metre ragchew (8pm, 144.6MHz-FM)

September 13 HamFest de-briefing—LWVH, 8pm

September 20 'The NanoVNA' - by John M0XJA explains all. LWVH + Webex online

September 27 'The Rig Expert Antenna Analyser' - by Paul M0PLA (+Webex)

October 4 Committee Meeting (Webex) + 2 metre ragchew (8pm, 144.6MHz-FM)

October 11 John G4IRN Presentation. Topic TBA (+ Webex)

October 18 JOTA (Scout Jamboree on-the-air) Preparation. LWVH.

For Equipment Loans & Returns contact John M0XJA
For "RSGB Brickworks" scheme (Club or Individual) —enquiries to Graham G7LMF
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.

Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: Contact Graham G7LMF training@tdars.org.uk

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

## Editorial

What an incredible varied hobby we have in Amateur Radio, and at TDARS in particular. VHF Field Day brought out about a quarter of Members to the Long Mynd, to prepare and operate 4 stations over a 24 hour period—more photos etc to follow herein. Quite an undertaking, and at times a little controversial. Other activities include DF(fox) hunts in Little Wenlock, UKAC contests, technical presentations, BBQs and other social centred evenings, outside visits- such as Criggion radio station, JOTA (scouts Jamboree on the Air), microwave beacons and voice repeater at LWVH, SOTA and WAB involvement, construction projects—and not forgetting the annual Telford HamFest. What have I forgotten to mention?

Individual members support TDARS, using their own particular skills and interests. In fact, every member has something to offer, which makes our Society what it is. I could try and list individual contributions, but I know I would omit so many of you, so I shall avoid that route! But, suffice to say, a big THANK YOU—and long may it continue.

MIV

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#### Another Snippet from Mike G6DFD:-

Everyone is talking about Ofcom's proposed wide ranging changes to our Licences, see the Ofcom 100 page document on their web site. But when did it all start?

The first UK Amateur Radio licences were issued in early 1905 after several people started experimenting with radios and were entitled "Licence to use Wireless Telegraphy Equipment for Experimental Purposes." A list of those who had been issued with these experimental licences was compiled in June 1906 and includes the details of sixty eight people.

One of the most famous with a licence on the list was Ambrose Fleming the inventor of the diode valve and consultant to Marconi.It is also possible to see that stations were being set up in many parts of the country.

Today Slovenia has the most licensed radio hams per head of population. Why ham radio is so popular in that country with only a little over two million people I don't know.

There are now over 101,000 (Ofcom) UK licences issued, but this includes repeaters, club licences, special events, NoV, duplicate operators so the actual number of UK radio hams is much less.

But did you know that Amateur Radio is the only hobby governed by international treaty?

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<u>Committee</u>: Village Hall Committee Liaison Martin 2E0TRO; QSL Manager Paul M0PNN; Trophies/Certs: Martyn G3UKV; Committee: Tony M0TZM, Mike G6DFD. Contest co-ordinator: Paul G8AQA.









# Qtc: News & Information



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING HELD NORMALLY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL WITH SOME ONLINE (Webex) STREAMING OF APPROPRIATE PRESENTATIONS: PLEASE CHECK FRONT PAGE LISTING FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS.

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

A small update re <u>visit to Criggion</u> radio station. Minor correction to the Postcode in the last Newsletter. It is SY5 9BE (thanks Robert)

Results from the *RSGB 50MHz Trophy* have been published. Despite the 3+hours lost due to the genny problem and its replacement, G3Z came 6th in the Open section with 3.7 million points from 117 QSOs. Simon 'UFE sends 'well done' to all the 6 metre team. On the same theme, TDARS is currently in *9th place overall in the UKAC* series of VHF weekly contests—with several clubs very close above and below on the score table (as of 5th July). 6m 5th// 4m 8th h //2m10th//70cm 8th//23cm 15th and SHF 7th. The series continues until late December. A good place to learn contest skills in a non-pressure environment — and every entrant's scoring QSO counts.

Still with contests in mind:- <u>TDARS took part in VHF NFD</u>, despite some tricky station problems this year. A new 5 element 4 metre beam

was only made in the days before the event, and several members were not available for various reasons, leaving us short of operators. On <u>claimed scores</u> in the relevant Restricted and Low Power sections, G3ZME/P is 3rd on 6m, 1st on 4m, 2nd on 2m and 2nd on 23cm. But of course, these scores have yet to be checked, and some clubs may not have provided a 'claimed score'. More comments & photos to follow . . . . (Page 8)





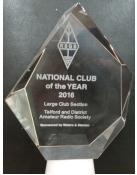






Photo: G6DFD

Photos: G7LMF, G3UKV



The Club has operated for scores of years from tents whilst operating portable, from the Outer Hebrides, Northern Ireland down to the Isle of Guernsey. *Two usable tents are available for sale* to a member of tdars. They are a Wynnster Shrike 6 and a Khyam XL Classic.

Contact Martyn G3UKV for more details.



Also 'For Sale' are some unique, attractive "Station LED Plaques" from Paul M0PLA at £16 each,



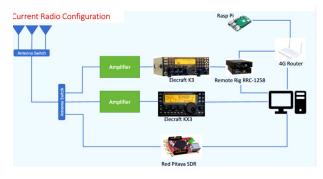


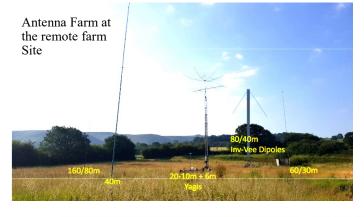
including £1 for TDARS funds.

Not forgetting the polo shirts are staying at the same price: £10.99 + vat for shirt with TDARS logo, and £3.50 + vat to add name and callsign. The black baseball caps with the TDARS Logo + your name and call sign is going to be £7.70 + vat.

Contact Paul for any orders.

John G4IRN gave an excellent presentation (June 21) describing in detail how he has spent the past two years or more <u>building a Remote Operated Station</u> some distance from his home QTH on rented farmland in south Shropshire. Some slides from John's presentation:-









Remote Desktop from control site (home!)







#### **Thanks for Newsletter input this time:**

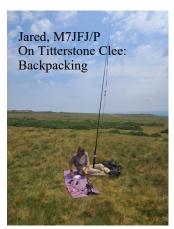
Peter G4URT, John G4IRN, John M0XJA, Paul M0PLA, Jared M7JFJ, Mike G6DFD, Graham G7LMF, Kevin G8UPF, Mick 2E1FQO

Next edition September / October 2023
Can YOU contribute something?— Results in a better Newsletter!

#### More /Portable news from John M0XJA:-

"Myself John (M0XJA) David (M0YDH) and newly qualified Jared(M7JFJ) having a great day operating portable on the Clee Hills, near Ludlow Shropshire. (Mid June—Ed)

Myself and Jared had an attempt at the Backpackers 2 metre contest despite some technical issues as well as having a good time picking up general FM traffic around about. David (M0YDH) was up on the hill entering the IARU ATV contest with his home constructed equipment shown. Jared picked up several contacts from 50 miles around, including M7 stations taking the hobby seriously, giving excellent reports from afar as Bath! "(photos:M0XJA)







Yet another <u>e-mail from John 'XJA</u>—sent to groups.io 6th July:-

"Firstly thanks to John Cariss G7ACD for organising this for us FOC!!

All invited to "PLAY RADIO" @Eaton Manor Sat 5th August 09:30 'til late! (Postcode SY6 7DH- Ed) Reply to this thread to declare interest!!

What's on ?? You are on....largely free format bring your gear or stuff you want testing. Too much QRM/QRN at your QTH? or just not enough QTH;-)? try out your HF/VHF/ Microwave ideas

Full size (60ft!!) tower available for use as well as a selection of antennas and even a Satellite base station!

Facilities AWESOME!! Large Car Parking area right next to area Outdoor Shelter for Radio activities Indoor area (subject to availability!) Tea/ Coffee

Self service BBQ (Bring your own grub) "



#### Whilst on microwave portable G6ZME/P on Brown Clee (IO82QL) in June," Kevin G8UPF freehand wrote these lines . . . .

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"The widespread availability of high-alcohol hand-gel had got me thinking: BASIC EMERGENCY STOVE -by G8UPF

Take a 200g tin of beans, decant beans for testing finished stove (or for later). Re-cycle lid. Rinse out tin, dry it, remove label, and if necessary file off any rough edges. Drill (or punch with a nail) a ring or two of small holes near the rim, over an arc of about 120-180 deg., and down to about a third of the depth.

In use, face holes away from wind (ideally no wind...). Fill tin to bottom of holes with alcohol gel (70% or higher alcohol). Light stove, use to boil a kettle or small pan (see 'beans' above . . . ).

Will burn for 10-20 minutes, not very well possibly, sooty; may leave a mushy residue . . . .but it will work.

P.S. Stove will also work with meths or solid-fuel tablets. " 73 Kevin

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[ Whatever next ?—Ed ]

## The Taylor Model 88B Multi-Range Meter by Peter G4URT

OK. Hands up. Has anyone ever heard of the AVO range of multi-meters?

Now hands up who has heard of the Taylor range of multi-meters!

I had never heard of the Taylor range until I was tasked with clearing out my father-in-law's flat after he had gone into a retirement home. Peter (yes, another one) not only is a G4 but he spent his working life as a TV repairman for such companies like Radio-Rentals. This was in the days when if you couldn't get your B & W set from rolling by giving it a smart bash with your hand on the top you called in an engineer who would turn up at your house in a Ford Escort estate (other makes are available) with a supply of valves and other non SMD components.

Anyway, amongst all his equipment was a small home made wooden box with one of these meters inside. And – oh joy of joys — it also had a full set of AVO test leads that are now as rare as rocking horse droppings and just as expensive. And a decent instruction manual with a circuit diagram and component listings.

As can be seen by the photographs there is an extreme similarity at least externally with the AVO 8 range. Not surprising really as AVO took Taylor over in 1958, reputedly for their moving coil design (ain't Google useful sometimes?). There is no indication that I can see that dates my one. Range wise both types are the same including a 2.5 KV AC terminal. Well, it was in the days of old valve tellies. And just like the AVO range it needed 2 different batteries – a 15v BLR121 and 2.5v D type.





I already had an AVO 8, but it was no contest as to which one I was going to keep, so the AVO went to the club that he had belonged to in Eastbourne along with other stuff for club funds. After all, this one looked brand new, had the instructions, all the leads and a box that he had made himself – no contest!

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### 'Snippet' # 2 from Mike G6DFD . . .

Big changes proposed to your call sign. Would you change?

Ofcom would encourage existing Intermediate licensees to opt to change to a call sign with the new prefix. To facilitate those who wish to move to the new format they propose that where a call sign is on issue in the current format we would reserve the corresponding call sign suffix in the new format, and it would be available only to the current Intermediate licensee for three years.

For example, the call sign 'M8ASD' would be available only to the current holder of call sign '20ASD'; the call sign 'M9DSA' would be available only to the current holder of '21DSA'. We believe that this should give adequate time for existing Intermediate licensees to change. After three years, these call signs in the new format would be available to any applicant for an Intermediate Licence.

If preferred, an Intermediate licensee could choose a new call sign with a different suffix from their existing call sign. They are also proposing to allow licensees to change their call sign and to do so online. If that were implemented, changing to the new format of Intermediate call sign would be available with minimum fuss.

The <u>UK Microwave Group</u> with hundreds of members, has been without a <u>Chairman</u> for a couple of years. Earlier this year, <u>Paul G8AQA</u> volunteered to take on the job, adding to Heather's M0HMO involvement as their Trophies manager. Congratulations to both.

At a recent uWave Roundtable event near Oxford, Paul took on his Chairman's role in presenting 16 trophies handed to him by Heather!

At the same meeting, Martyn G3UKV/P received a personal trophy for winning the 2022 24GHz Cumulative Contest (R/H photo —"the *G0RRJ Memorial Trophy*"), as well as bringing home the



"G3KEU Memorial Trophy" for the 2022 5.7GHz Cumulative Contest series, under the club call sign G6ZME/P. The summit of the Brown Clee hill (IO82QL83) was the location for all these Cumulative Contests.

Incidentally, Paul, Heather and Ken (G3YKI) narrowly missed collecting the 10GHz Cumulative Contest Trophy for 10GHz last year, from the same site. G3ZME/P just beaten to the post by John G4ZTR in JO01 locator square.

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### The World Radio Team Championships — WRTC — by John G4IRN

[ Some observations made by John who has just returned from Italy, having become involved in the latest WRTC championships in that country — This e-mail sent out 10th July. — Editor ]

"Sorry for being a 'keyboard warrior' but I am passionate about what I do. You can delete this if you are not interested.

"I've been in Italy for the last week at the <u>WRTC event</u> and was a referee for one of the teams. There have been about 600 people in attendance from all over the world. Each of the 58 two-man teams were randomly allocated a geographically similar site within 100km or so from Bologna, each site having exactly the same antenna set up. Referees were also randomly allocated, I ended up with S53MM and S57K - both great guys, we had a lot of laughs together.

Each team was issued a random call-sign from an allocated block 15 minutes ahead of the contest. My team was allocated I42D - I was given the envelope containing the call sign 24 in advance and gave it to them on cue.

Being a referee isn't as much fun as participating! Sitting listening for a solid 24 hours to two guys, one in each ear, is very tiring. I nodded off on a couple of occasions, but as a contester myself it was great fun listening. Of course you mentally tune in to what they're hearing and want to tell them when they don't hear a multiplier in the pile-up or when they have made a logging error... but you stay quiet.

My guys made around 4,100 QSOs in the 24hrs of the contest, approx. two thirds of that was on CW. They ended up 41st position, the leading guys didn't have many more QSOs, but had a better multiplier count.

The big announcement at the closing dinner was that the next WRTC event will be held in the UK. I asked for volunteers on this reflector (TDARS groups.io – Ed) about 12 months ago.. those connections will be re-established in the near future.

After a week of pasta literally every day, I'm looking forward to getting back home tomorrow and the diet starts straight away. "

73 John i4/G4IRN

#### VHF NFD 2/3 July 2023, G3ZME/P — further comments & photos

"Last year, and now this year, Paul and I made a list of things that can be improved for next time (on the 23cm station). As with many such list of things to do, we did a few of last year's tasks in the first couple of weeks after the contest (2022), forgot about the list for 11 months and then did some more things in the week before this year's contest (2023). As a result we never really



144.215.00

tested out the changes we made and, inevitably, some things never got done at all. Consequently on this year's list is a task "do better with the 'to do better' list " —Heather M0HMO

- " Criticism is always welcome. It is a good way to improve. We should always try to improve. " Paul  $\mathsf{G8AQA}$
- "If you want a decent key, the large ex RAF one I use is the biz. Great big contacts and heavy enough so it won't move about when being used. More to the point, they are easy to adjust and a joy to use. "—Mike G3JKX
- "Others may disagree, but I would advise anyone setting out to learn CW to do so from the get-go with a twin paddle iambic keyer if you're serious about CW you'll drop the up/down key when you get to higher speeds, so you might as well learn Iambic CW from the start. As I say, it's a very subjective area. " John G4IRN
- "I'll follow and say generally the setup was great, without a parrot (problem parrot on 23cm Ed) was a bit more challenging but we made do.

For enthusiasm, I'd say maybe having a map of GB/Ireland and putting pins on as contacts come through might be a bit inspiring, and keeps up morale.

Also might be worth working in pairs (good for company), with agreed shifts (e.g. 2h on 2h off) with at least one person proficient in Morse if the need arises, and the pair feel comfortable working the equipment (both PC and radio)." — Jared M7JFJ

- "My real point is that there are station and operating automations that are really easy to implement and learn which are widely used in HF, but rarely adopted in VHF contesting, at least in the UK. Whether you're making 2 Qs/Hr or 250Qs/Hr they are just as appropriate and useful, provide a more user friendly interface than Minos or paper and help increase accuracy and rate. "

  John G4IRN
- "There are some MINOS features that are useful: Partial lookups, either by callsign or locator, Bandscope shows where stations are that you have already worked, Memories so you can go back and see if conditions have improved to work a station that you heard calling CQ earlier, Past log lookups, QRZ lookups, Automatic logging of the rig's frequency via CAT control also stores 2 Run frequencies so you can quickly return to your run frequency after a session of hunt and pouncing, Voice recording so you can record the entire contest and review any contacts that you think may be incorrectly logged. Rotator control automatically steering the rotator to the correct location and rotator pre-sets, DX Cluster, KST chat "— Robin M1MHU

#### One of the final contributions came from Mick, 2E1FQO:

"While I appreciate there will always be aspects of an event which could be improved on and reflection is key to improvement, from my experience of this year's VHF NFD there is one factor which doesn't appear to have been discussed in as much detail as "what I would have done had I been there" or "why do we do this when we should be doing that"..... and that's bums on seats!! Just to clarify, some points raised I feel have been very informative and I've enjoyed reading and learning from the posts in this thread, but the simple fact remains..... without people to operate, log, help set-up and dismantle the station then most of the points raised here are quite irrelevant (in my personal opinion).

So, to try and put a positive comment in the mix during the dissection of this years VHF NFD, rather than seeing so many of the posts bitch and moan about this - that and the other, I'd like to give credit and praise those who were able to give their time to plan, prepare and attend the event to get TDARS on the scoreboard – regardless of the results, the club made the effort to put on a number of great stations and I wholeheartedly enjoyed the weekend – even if I was knackered at the end. "— Jared 2E1FQO

