TDARS News Letter

G3ZME G6ZME

Issue 324 Feb. 2026 to April 2026

NOTE CHANGES ANNOUNCED VIA TDARS 'GROUPS.IO/WHATSAPP'

Feb. 4 Committee Meeting & Hamfest 7.30pm (Webex) + 2m ragchew 7:30pm
Feb. 11 Radios in aviation Lily M1HPS
Feb. 18 Under a fiver construction competition
Feb. 25 Paul M0PLA - French BOTA Trip / Introduction to BOTA activation

Mar. 4 Committee Meeting & Hamfest 7.30pm (Webex) + 2m ragchew 7:30pm
Mar. 11 Main construction competition
Mar. 18 General Radio Construction - Nick The Vic M0NTV
Mar. 25 Club AGM 7:30 for 8pm start at Little Wenlock Village Hall

Apr. 1 Committee Meeting & Hamfest 7.30pm (Webex) + 2m ragchew 7:30pm
Apr. 8 Questions to the chair.
Apr. 22 TBA
Apr. 29 TBA

TDARS meets at Little Wenlock Village Hall, Wednesdays 7:30pm for 8 start.
See http://www.tdars.org.uk or @telfordhams on Facebook
Join in the FM club net on 144.6 $^{(+/- qrm)}$ 8pm Sunday evenings

Jared GW5JFJ/P
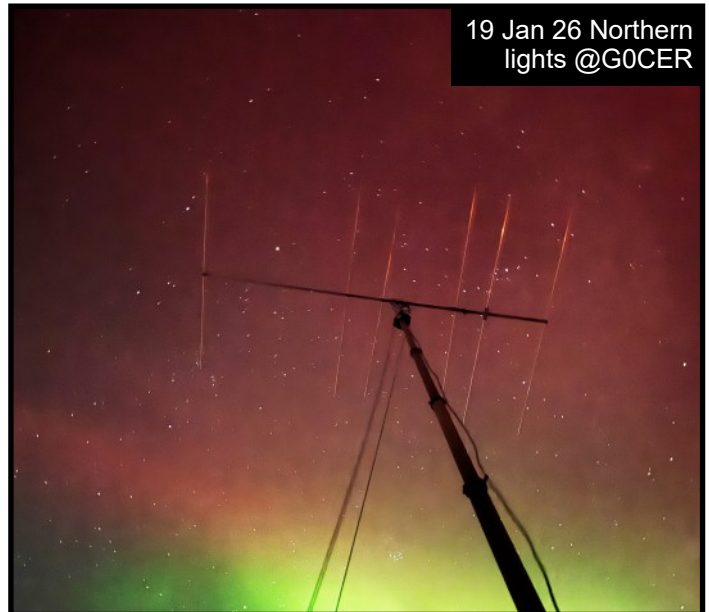QRV Waun Fach 3/2

Telford and District Amateur Radio Society

NOTE: The 2026 AGM is on March 25 and is everyone's chance vote on or offer to take part in the committee and help keep TDARS relevant and a success.

Happy new year for 2026

The new year is well underway—less than a month to Spring now! Soon time of year to start organising the Hamfest and also thinking about what TDARS is going to be doing this year.

We have some events usually done by default, our contests, the talks at the Village Hall and on the field. *If there anything members would like to see or do that isn't happening at the moment? Please let the committee know as soon as possible also the chairs questions evening in April.*

Linking into the above, soon it will be the AGM and a chance for everyone to vote and offer to be part of the committee to help make keep the club a success.

19 Jan 26 Northern lights @G0CER

What happens at monthly committee meetings?

1. Events the next 3 months of meetings & events are planned / discussed /long term list made
2. Minutes, last months minutes are discussed, what actions members took, or need more work
3. Officers report on relevant items to their position (example: treasurer report club finances).
4. Any Other Business. Each member is asked if they have any points they need to mention
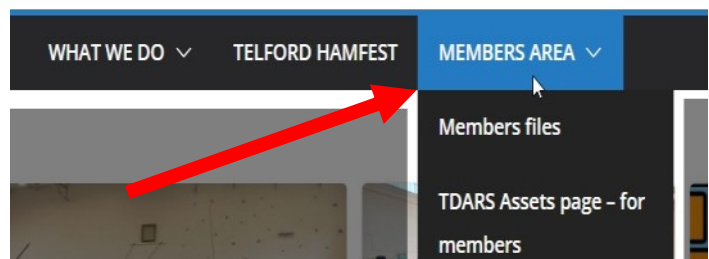
Two new areas on TDARS website

Look for "members area" link on right of horizontal black bar on tdars.org.uk.

1. Assets system developed by Lily M1HPS
This is a booking system for members to use club assets (rigs, aerials etc. To use it you need to have your email address registered with Don M0TBQ

2. Club documents - policies etc
This is also for members only and there will be a password given to members to access when the documents are uploaded to the page.

WHAT WE DO ∨   TELFORD HAMFEST   MEMBERS AREA ∨

Members files

TDARS Assets page - for members

October 2025 to March 2026 Committee (following Oct 29 EGM)
For committee contacts please go via secretary Graham G7LFM on secretary@tdars.org.uk

G0UFE - Simon Bird – Chairman
M0TZM - Tony Menzies – Vice Chairman
G7LMF - Graham Cowan – Secretary
M0PLA - Paul Athersmith – Treasurer
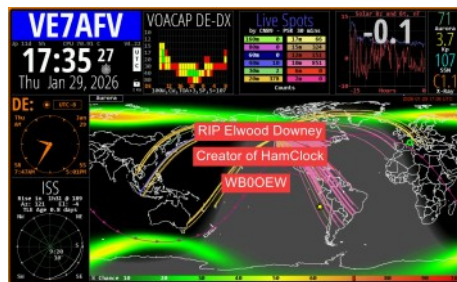**M0TBQ** - Don Nicholls – Curator

M0XJA - John Alexander - Training
G0CER - Dave Harris - Newsletter, web & PR
M8TRO - Martin Tromans – LWVH Liaison
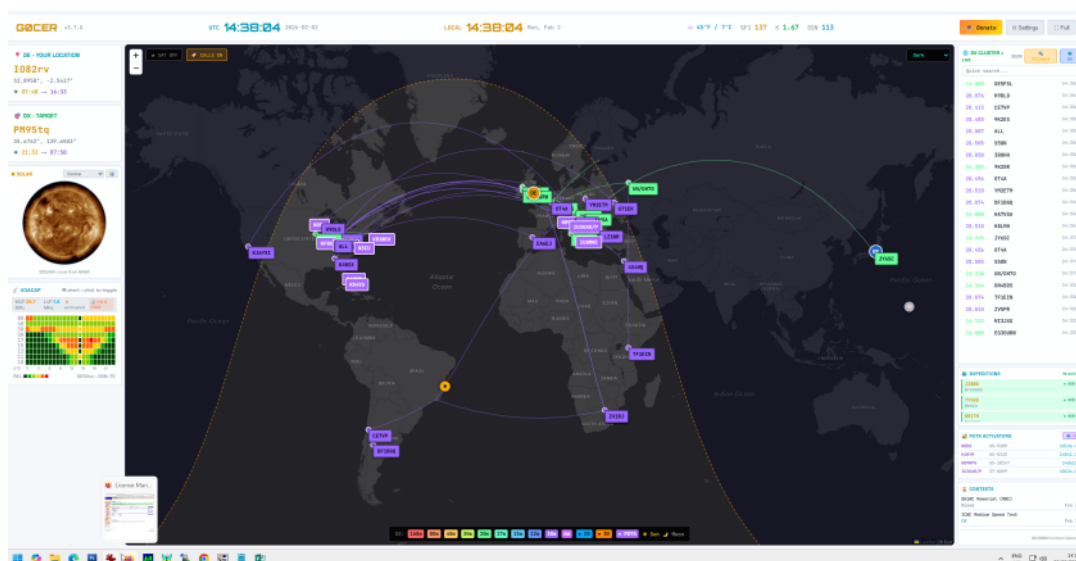
Qtc: News & Information

Hamclock ending - What future?

Following the passing Elwood Downey WB0OBW, the free application Hamclock that pulls together propagation information, solar news, DX news and much more for some years now will not be developed by anyone else. Hamclock's data is supplied by proprietry code on servers which will no longer be paid-for or updated so the Hamclock clients will stop working in June 2026. Keep eye out for developments

There are pay-for alternatives which some of the club use (Geochron) but there is a project in honour of Elwood and it's called OpenHamClock.
Below is a screenshot of OpenHamClock—there is a web demo of it to try out here

You can set your call, locator, dx cluster bands, propagation information and lots of other things and once the web settings are remembered via cookies—next time it will be the same. This is an ongoing story, developments are constantly happening.

You can download the server and run it yourself—another new project here

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TDARS Membership
A reminder that membership was due, please contact Paul M0PLA to pay and please, preference is for bank transfer
Paul will provide details Cost £30 annually (£25 non-earners)
- refer to AGM 2026 for any changes.

TDARS Social media - a reminder
TDARS members can access **Whatsapp** for general chat and DX spotting.
It's very useful for immediate information
[TDARS General—members only]

<<<< TDARS General & TDARS Spots & Alerts
Also Facebook look for **Telfordhams** >>>>

Qtc: News & Information 2

TDARS MEET WEDNESDAY EVENING Normally at
Little Wenlock Village Hall and Online (Webex) where possible.
Members will be sent a link for the online service.

Please note: A current membership is required to borrow TDARS equipment and returning equipment promptly
The online booking system is via members area on website

THE G3UKV UKAC AWARD In memory of Martyn Vincent G3UKV

This award is presented to the club member with the highest score in the UKAC competitions and is the combined total points achieved on the 2m &70cm bands.

The Rules
1 This award is called the **G3UKV UKAC Award**
2 This competition runs between January and December each year.
3 This competition is for TDARS members only.
4 Only two bands can be used. 2m & 70cm.
5 Modes FM, SSB and CW.
6 Members can enter either the **OPEN, LOW POWER or RESTRICTED** power section.
See UKAC rules.
7 The winner will be the member with the highest
number of points at the end of the year.
8 Members points will be taken from the results issued by the RSGB contest committee.
9 This award will be given to the winner at the AGM to hold for one year.

Join in with the online operating forum, Mick M1CKD

On the first Thursday evening of the month Mike M1CKD invites all club members for a discussion about operating procedures.

Each month has a theme and the discussion. While guided, follows a path of interest to those there at the time. If you have a question or a suggestion for the evening come along. Look out for information on next one from Mike.

February 5 Tony M0TZM will lead on CQWW RTTY contest operating.

Mike sends Webex links ready for next forum February 5 @ 7:30pm for 8pm start

Qtc: News & Information 3

Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker Rally 15 March

Militaria & Radio Sale plus the first South Cheshire Harriers Road Race

The popular militaria and radio sale held in the bunker grounds again this March. Doors open 10am

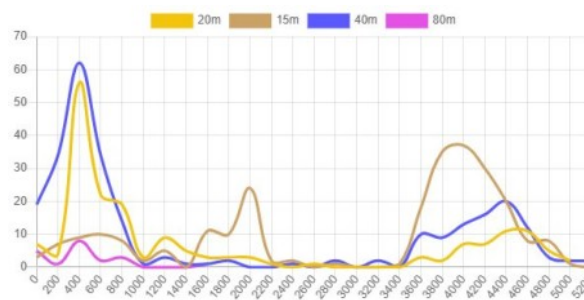Secret Bunker website link

World Wide Award January 2026

I hope I've not missed anyone, here are a couple of entries who made enough points to get an award. Its not universally popular but certainly boosts activity for the whole month of January.

Interesting use of pskreporter from a Facebook post by Garrison Davis

PSK Reporter can show you the antenna's take-off. Zero degrees = 2100 miles. If you see peaks at 2000, 4000, .. etc. you have low take off. But an antenna might not be 100 percent efficient if a short and vertical.

To access this you will need to have worked a few stations over the last 12 or 24 hours.and then the Distance link will show to get a graph.

How to access files for TDARS members on Groups.io

You may have signed up groups.io for TDARS and others and never realised there is a whole system and not just a 'reflector' group messages. Mick M1CKD has been creating folders for and uploading support files for contests, forums and general information.

- To access this is to go to: https://groups.io/g/TDARS/messages
- Log in with your groups.io ID and password and look on the left column for **Files** (*click it*)

**The next 145-Alive is Saturday 7th February 2026 from 12 noon to 3pm
if you wish to run a net contact Mark M0XIC or John M0XJA**

**Report from the last 145 Alive Event on the 11th October
2025 as organised by members Mark M0XIC & John
M0XJA**

We had **719 QSO's** during the event from **19 logs** out of a
possible **21** (a few logs were unusable due to logging/
recording errors or no maidenhead locators listed).

Join in next one on 7th February 12:00 to 15:00
There will be FM and SSB stations to work

Other 145-Alive Dates for 2026
         18 April, 12 July, 13 September & 10 Oct. RSGB special event.

Some Club inside activities

November 2025 - "Modern
QRP: Small Signals, Big Possi-
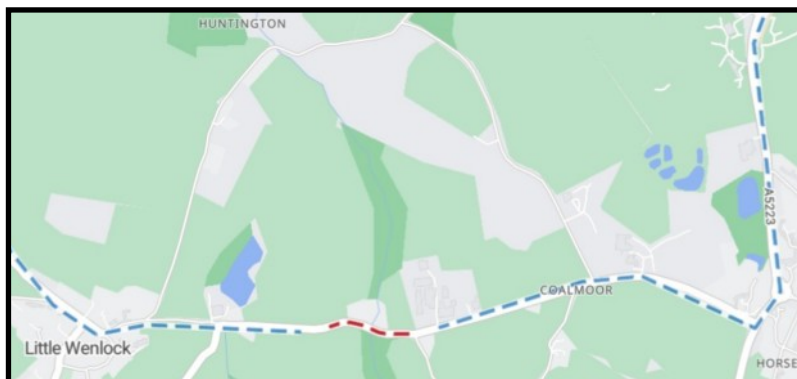bilities" talk by Martin Clarke,
M0HKG GQRP Secretary.

January annual bowls match
TDARS vs Little Wenlock
Village hall committee

**The diversion across
Coalmoor**

"maximum duration up to
18 months" but expect road
re-open by 22/2/26

Link to the Official note
Follow diversion carefully
it's narrow!

Paul M0PLA France Holiday / FBOTA trip September 2025

13th September 2025 Michelle and myself Paul (M0PLA) went to France for a holiday, but I decided to turn it into a BOTA trip as well. Michelle was happy with my discussion (I think).

We have had 3 – 4 trips to France Normandy area now over the last 3 years of having the motorhome as it makes holidays in Europe very easy.

I found out that any FBOTA activations have to be uploaded to their activators database and not the UK database, this was very easy as I had already contacted the French Award's Manager Patrick (F1LPT).
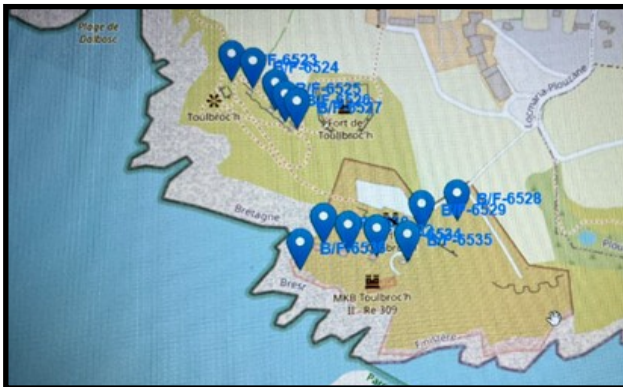

All I had to do was upload my ADI Log files that I had completed from my iPad using is Ham2K, I am doing a talk at the club 25th February, this will be the basics of UKBOTA and WWBOTA, Gear that I use, i.e. radios, antennas and software. Come along if you are interested in activating a BOTA UK or Europe for some ideas.

The trip was over a two-week period and we had a great time, Our motorhome is a 4 birth van with plenty of room for holidays and playing radios I also received an email from Patrick (F1LPT) informing me that he held the French record for the most bunkers activated in a month period, as some of you know that was straight away a red flag to a bull!

I like little challenges; I spoke with Mark (M0XIC) before my holiday saying I was going to activate at least 50 bunkers during our trip. Well, when someone says the record is 105, I thought maybe Michelle might let me play a little more radio I can only ask and try to beat the record.

The good thing with France is there are a lot of bunkers very close together (WW1 & WW2) saw to that, here's a couple of images to show what I mean.
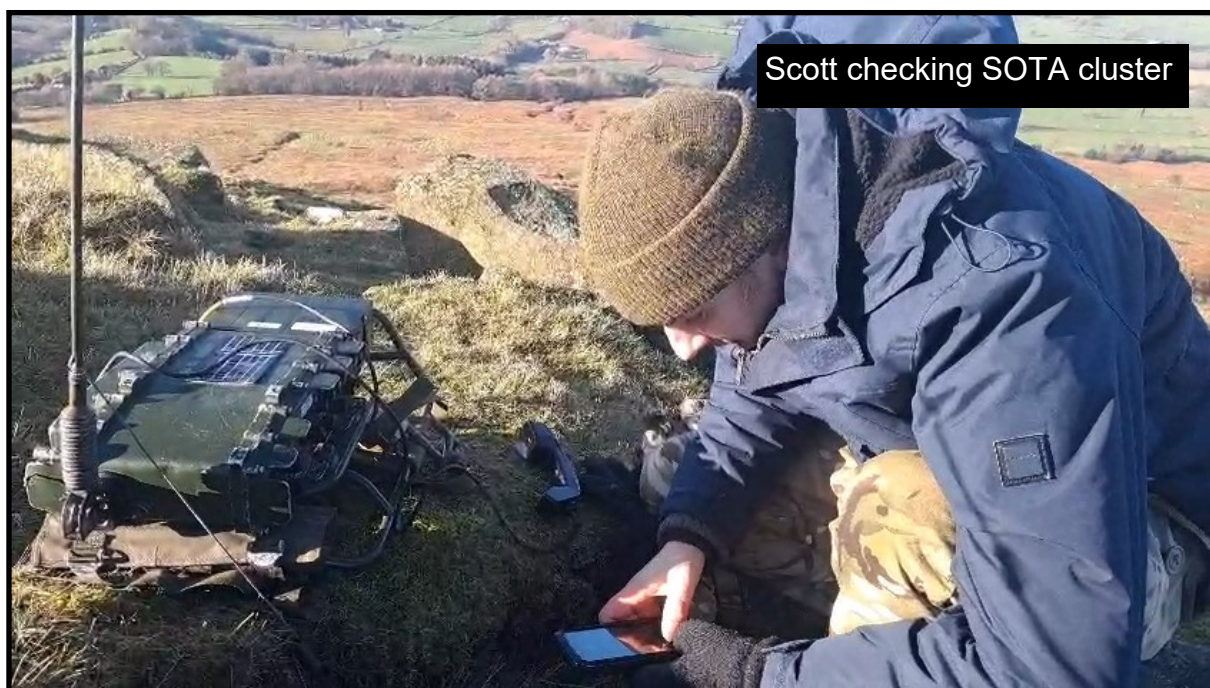
John and Scott go green!

John M0XJA and Scott M7WUK have a collection of ex-forces radios. They had a trek up to north to buy some gear including an interesting ex-SAS one.

Scott says "I got a Tacbe, been after one for many years, ubiquitous piece of SAS equipment famously used by the Bravo two zero mission during the Gulf war 1991. Totally useless but a nice piece for the collection"

They took the radios Clansman PRC-320 & Anytone 878 operating SOTA qrp up onto Titterstone Clee and made some contacts. Operating HF adding a counterpoise really made a difference.. Looks a cold wind on a nice day.

Scott checking SOTA cluster

Comparing the PRC320 with the FT817

Paul M0PLA Thoughts on his experience of 3d printing

Brief history of 3D printing
- 1981 but not commercial
- 1984 first practical printer first practical 3-D printing process using STL files
- 2008 was around the first time 3-D printer came to the public
- 2010 rapid advancements making printers cheaper faster, printing complex objects to print something.

Since then development in quality, accuracy, cost and ability for home users to buy 'off the shelf' and libraries of free and paid for models to download, use and modify.

To print something now you need a 3-D model (mesh file). Complex 3-D models save as an STL file. An STL file type goes into slicer software and basically takes the model apart from top down to bottom and turns into layers. This turns the file into a Gcode. This is a sliced file converted to a computer language the 3-D printer understands.

Paul has 3 types of printers Monoprice MP10 Reality, CR6SE a Creality K2 combo between £290 and £500. Prices will vary.
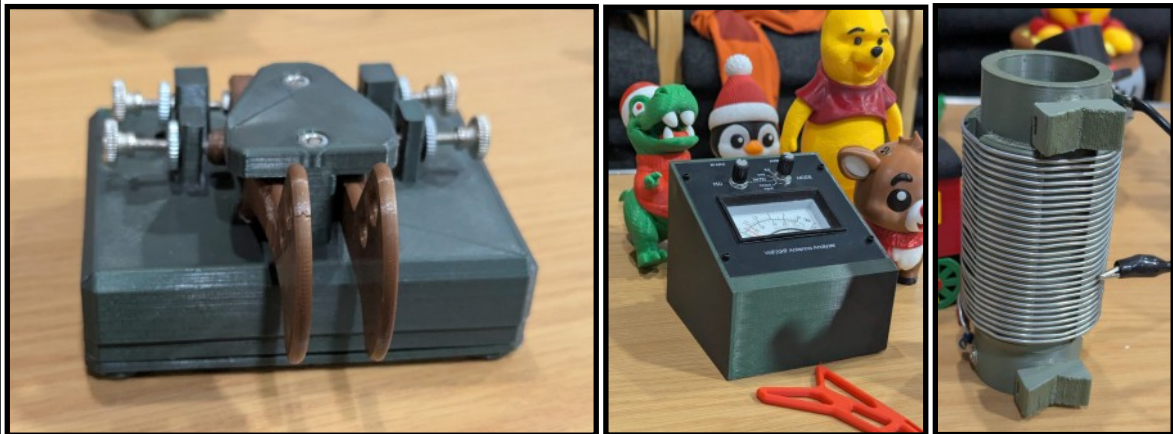
Notes and tips:
- Paul uses Creality online model software the model is designed on a flat plate.
- Slicing software imports stl files and this tells you how long and how much filament is needed—you can adjust side to suit your needs. (Smaller = quicker)

Some important notes:
- Temps important - print in a warm room
- Get to know codes for materials
- Latest printers will cope with blockages
- Bed levelling is very important (bed can be metal or glass—both have issues)
- You will have failure - learn why it happened.
- The Importance of infill - and not to do 100% (I goes brittle)
- Also learn importance of appropriate type of Supports (software will suggest—you can take the choice)
- Fusion 360 software—a great free piece of software for the hobbyist, you can purchase it but it's (expensive to pay for!)
- Replacing a Printer Belt—they are all slightly different per maker and model
- Printing speed—Fast simple or slow for delicate
- Bamboo makerworld free files, modify or design own (can be 50p or more expensive £15)
- Clean washing bed up liquid water maybe once a week
- Learn use of glue to stop prints moving

Some prints Paul brought along to the club to show potential within our hobby

Another band, don't we already have enough!

For me, interest was started when I heard the Irish (IRTS) authorities gave amateurs there everything between 30 and 49MHz on secondary basis.

The IARU suggested member clubs push their countries authorities for access in anyway they can get. This country, OFCOM when pressurised gave a firm no. However there are ways.

I watched what was happening, I worked cross-band to a legal amateur on a legal amateur band of 40MHz cross band in S5, I was on 50MHZ in 2021. I was interested in the potential of it. **NOTE: don't work crossband to a UK 40MHz station, they are not acting under amateur licences here so you would be breaking your amateur radio regs.**

Why 40MHz? I'll get to the point;
1. I am a fan of 50MHz and 40MHz is very similar propagation, but nearer to HF so more chance of F2 and an early warning as MUF increases.
2. I began listening in the summers using a wire-dipole in the loft. I heard DX from South Africa (ZS) and Caribbean stations. Considering the aerial is very poor it made me consider getting on there.
__Latest news on 2nd Feb. 2026 I worked ZS6WAB on 40.68MHz FT8__

How? legal and practical
OFCOM offer a licence called **"Innovation and Trial licence Ofw225"** the name speaks for itself. You define what you want, tell them what you are going to do with it email or post application form. Then 6 weeks later if they agreed, you get a PDF offering you licence and you pay £50 online for 1 year use. Re-applying/paying annually. A link to the application is on next page, contact me if you want to talk through it.

What to ask for?
That was the big unknown, but I happened to mention this problem to G8VER op. of Verulam club who had applied and kindly sent me his application form to help me ask to enough and not too much—if they reject it, you have to re-apply and wait another 6 weeks for consideration. Basic form errors are return within one day.

Typically the need to know, where you are, what frequencies, mode, when and what you are using to transmit and the purpose. Using someone else's help optimize your chance of success. The most I've heard is someone asking for 40-42MHz and 1KW. I have asked for 40.66 to 40.74MHz 100W using digital modes (J3D)

What do people do on there?
Mainly FT8 but there is WSPR, even ssb and locally we may try digital voice (FreeDV). John M0XJA recently got a permit for 8 meters as well.

- continued

Hardware to get on air—some examples

- In the past there has been software mod for the Yaesu FT8xx radios, this was usurped by the **nd** series to a hardware mod. My FT897nd bought 2005 was modified by the shop as-new because we had just got 7.1-7.2MHz so the only way to access it was a couple of PCB tabs desoldered. I got them to do it to keep warrantee. The FT817 is similar and I expect the FT857 is too.   There are many have seen many a site or video Google and do *at your own risk!*
- *A friend checked their FT-450 and noted that the 40Mhz is routed by firmware through the filter that is used on 30MHz - but there are people who use them. Yaesu are not doing any firmware updates for this.*
- Pierre ON4PS says his Icom 7300 mk2 is very sensitive and had many contacts on 8m.
- Robbie KI7QCF has built a WSPR beacon using an si5351 driving an IXDD614PI and then finally into a irfp520, class D
- You can use an SDR to monitor 8meters

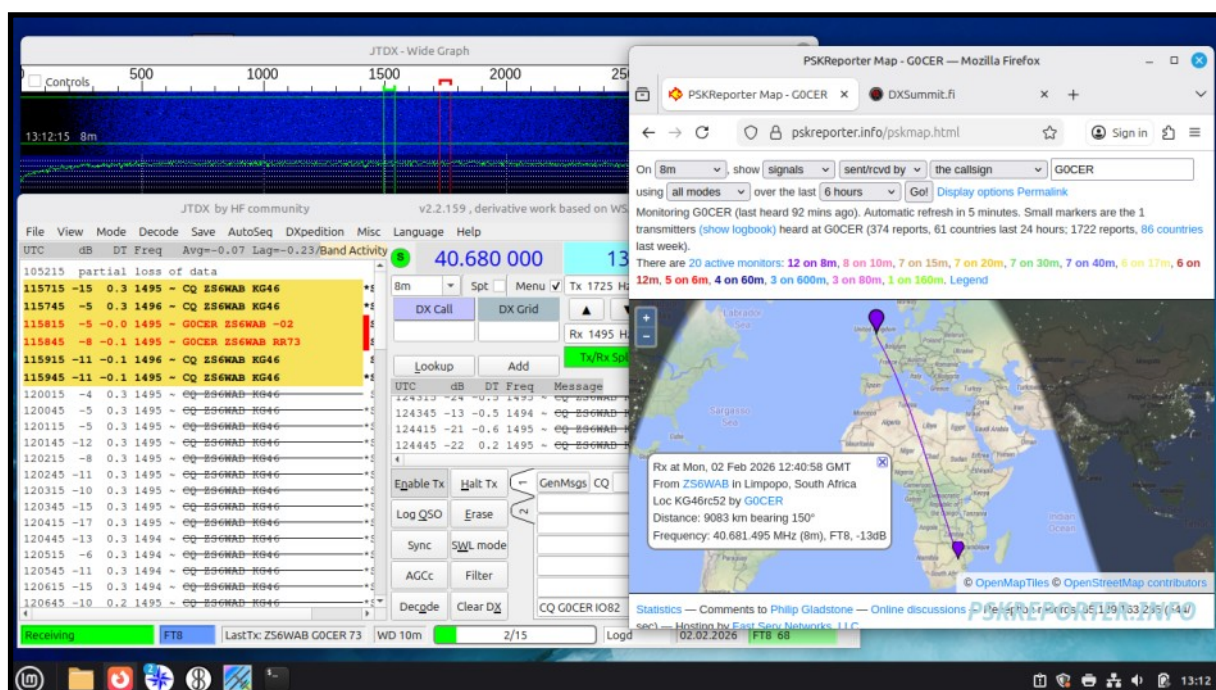**Beacons & notes about other countries on 8m**

- GB3MCB on 40.05 & 60.3Mhz
- 2026 Spain now has access to 40.65-40.75MHz for a year.
- Sadly Italy lost access on 31/12/25.
- Prefixes on 8m: 9K2, EI, G, HI, ZS, VK, ZL, N, W, K, VA, R, PJ4, HA, OZ, SO1, 4X & others.

Useful links

OFCOM OFW 225 trial and innovation licence link
Beacons info   40& 60MHz Facebook group
40—60MHz page by G8BCG

QSK: Worthwhile Interruptions

Linux on your old PC? Part 2: Putting Linux on a PC or laptop

I want to keep Windows and have Linux

Don't worry—this is possible
If you have working Windows install you want to keep, then as part of Linux install you can choose to make it 'share' the drive and 'dual boot' eg a menus appears when you power-up offering a choice of either.

Before you start:

Backup Data: Save important files from your current system.
Choose a Distribution: Ubuntu or Linux Mint great for beginners.
Storage get a USB 8gb. It will be erased

Example of old laptop install link

If you have set up a Raspberry Pi this will be obvious
To install Linux, you'll back up your data, download a Linux ISO file (like Ubuntu or Mint), use a tool like Balena Etcher or Rufus to create a bootable USB drive (8GB+), You can also create a DVD)

Then restart your laptop, enter the BIOS/UEFI to boot from the USB, and follow the on-screen installer to either replace Windows or set up a dual-boot.
Simple as that—there are many many videos on Youtube and because computers vary so much I would recommend following

If there is an option for 'live' try that first, because you will run the linux off the USB drive and find out if all the hardware works ok. Search on your computer and linux.

A list of pick-your-own Linuxs with varous levels of skills

Interested? Next time I'll go through some amateur radio software.
Don't forget that friendly bunch of rebels Shropshire Linux Users Group