

# CHEPSTOW AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



June 2011

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**CDARS are planning two field days this year:**

**HF SSB on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> September**

**Railways On The Air (ROTA) September 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Dan is co-ordinating the HF SSB Field Day and is looking for volunteers to help with the preparation and also get an idea of how many people can come along on the field day weekend to help setup, operate and support. Please speak to him if you can help in any way.**

## Diary dates for 2011

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June** Club night - practical evening on antenna erection & feeder construction (preparing for HF field day)

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June** Newbury radio rally (see article for more info)

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June** Informal club night – Bring some kit and play

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June** West of England Radio Rally

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July** Talk - Communication and Electronics for Health

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August** Talk – Caving & cave rescue (TBC)

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September** Talk – Optical Communications (TBC)

In addition we will continue with the “bring some kit and play” evenings on the third Tuesday of each month

## **CDARS outings:**

*We are investigating the possibility of club outings but we need to know the level of interest from members.*

*Currently being investigated are:*

*HMS Belfast (London)*

*Radio transmitting station Wooferton (Ludlow)*

*Coastguard Station (Swansea)*

*The last one is the most advanced - we just need to firm up on a date and time.*

*Please get in touch with Jim Hewitt if you are interested.*



## Great “come and play radio” evening in May:



Roy's 2 metre set up. (The defunct power supply in the background is only a heavy weight anchor for the mag mount!)

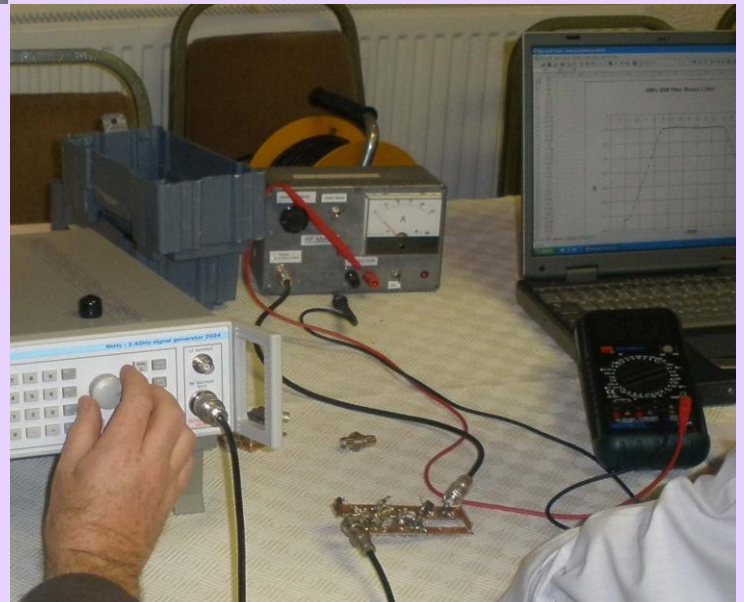
In addition to all of these activities Steve was running a Foundation training course. Jim had brought along a load of surplus gear to sell to try and fund a new rig (and keep his XYL happy) and Paul tried his new fishing pole vertical antenna, so there was lots going on.

Dave showing Dan how to drive the Marconi Instruments 2024 signal generator.



Dan and Nick measuring the characteristics of the filters Dan has built for a home brew transceiver.

The actual filter test setup. Centre foreground is the filter under test, to the left the signal generator, in the background the RF meter and to the right a digital voltmeter to measure the output from the RF meter. The data was manually entered into an Excel spreadsheet on the laptop to produce the filter characteristic curve. Dan was very pleased with the results. An article on building the power meter can be found here: <http://rfplus.jonwright.org/data/qst200106.pdf> with an update here: <http://w7zoi.net/Power%20meter%20updates.pdf>



## **Quiz question (Summits On The Air related)...**

Many of you will know that the Munros are the highest of Scotland's mountains, 283 discrete mountain tops over 3000ft high. They are named after the man who first catalogued them, Sir Hugh Munro. The Corbetts are the equivalent mountains with altitudes between 2500ft and 3000ft and the Grahams between 2000ft and 2500ft.

In England (and elsewhere in the UK) there is an equivalent list which refers to discrete mountains or hills with a relative height of at least 492 feet (150 metres). I guess this is because we are limited in the number of high peaks!

What is the collective name for this latter group of peaks? If you went to the SOTA talk at FoDARG you may know the answer – it made me smile.

## **Training update:**



**Many congratulations to CDARS member Robin Gripp M6AVK who recently passed his Foundation Licence exam and has joined the fold of licensed radio amateurs**

**Latest from the RSGB: The syllabus of the Foundation examination changes on 1 July this year. A new question on etiquette and dealing with abuse will be added, making 26 questions in total on each paper. The pass mark is 19 correct answers.**

**Details are on the RCF examinations website at**

**[www.commsfoundation.org/rce/pdf/foundationssyllabus\\_july\\_2011.pdf](http://www.commsfoundation.org/rce/pdf/foundationssyllabus_july_2011.pdf)**

## **This months featured website:**

**<http://www.nadars.org.uk/index.asp>**

**Newbury and District Amateur Radio Society - NADARS have their 24<sup>th</sup> annual rally at the Newbury showground (next to junction 13 of the M4) on Sunday the 19th of June from 9am onwards, parking is free and admission is only £2.**

**CDARS members Rod and Dave will be there selling more from their vast range of “bargains - must buy” equipment. More information can be found here in the comprehensive rally newsletter:**

**<http://nadars.org.uk/RallyNewsletter2011.pdf>**

## Our radio heritage:



Some of you will know Steve and Nick served their amateur radio apprenticeship with the Shirehampton club. The picture above shows the Shirehampton RAE class of 1979 and Steve and Nick are in it, can you pick them out? Steve was 16 at the time.

## Summits on the Air talk at FoDARG:

Recently Tom Read M1EYP and his son Jimmy M3EYP visited the Forest of Dean Amateur Radio Group. they transmitted from (activated in SOTA speak) Ruardean Hill summit code G/WB-021, at 951 feet the highest point in the Forest of Dean which is just across the road from the sports club where FoDARG meet.



Tom Read M1EYP activating SOTA summit Ruardean Hill



Tom, assisted by his son Jimmy showing how easy it is to set up his portable station. Jimmy is holding the 2 metre SOTA beam

Tom was operating on 40 metres with an inverted V dipole and Jimmy was on 2 metres FM with a 3 element SOTA beam. Following the activation they did an entertaining talk covering an overview of Summits On The Air and an explanation of how to become involved either as an Activator or a Chaser, the latter you can do from home, so you don't even have to climb hills if you don't want to!

## News from the RSGB... Power Line Adaptors interference saga continues:

The Information Commissioner has forced Ofcom to release a test report that it commissioned on Comtrend PLT devices, as used in BT Vision systems.

See the RSGB website for full details of the report, the Ofcom explanation and the RSGB response to Ofcom. <http://www.rsgb.org/news/articlelinks.php?id=0124>

### Ideas for future talks:

Henry Higgins will be giving a talk on Communication and Electronics for Health in July. However there are still gaps in our schedule, if there is anything you would like to present on or hear about please let one of the committee members know. Even if you only feel you could support a mini talk say 15-20 minutes we could have a few of these together to make up an evening. There doesn't have to be a slide show either.

### Solar Activity picking up:

Back in 2008, the solar cycle plunged into the deepest minimum in nearly a century. Sunspots all but vanished, solar flares subsided, and the sun was eerily quiet. This particular solar minimum, however, was lasting longer than usual, prompting some researchers to wonder if it would ever end. As 2011 unfolds, sunspots have returned and they are crackling with activity. On February 15th and again on March 9th, Earth orbiting satellites detected a pair of "X-class" solar flares--the most powerful kind of x-ray flare. The last such eruption occurred back in December 2006. Another eruption on March 7th hurled a **billion-ton** cloud of plasma away from the sun at **five million mph (2200 km/s)**. The rapidly expanding cloud wasn't aimed directly at Earth, but it did deliver a glancing blow to our planet's magnetic field. (*Newsletter editors comment - I always find the numbers in astronomy absolutely mind boggling!*)

Info gleaned from NASA website [http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2011/14apr\\_thewatchedpot/](http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2011/14apr_thewatchedpot/)

