

CHEPSTOW AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 2011

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Happy New Year to all our members, other clubs and radio amateurs from the CDARS committee - Wil, Steve, Rod, Jim, Dan, Roy and Paul.

In particular our best wishes go to Ben and Tony - club members who have both been in hospital recently. We hope they are both soon back to normal and look forward to seeing them again at club nights.

Diary dates for 2011

Tuesday 1st February Club night - talk on marine communications (GMDSS) by Steve Trott.

Tuesday 27th February – Swansea Rally

Tuesday 1st March Club night – talk on practical experience of magnetic loops for transmitting by Dan Taylor

Saturday 3rd April Thornbury Rally CDARS have booked a table at this rally to raise awareness of our club and for members to dispose of any surplus equipment. So start sorting through your boxes of unwanted spares (and go to the rally to buy some more - hi)

Ideas for future talks:

We have some other ideas for talks being followed up but if there is anything you would like to present on or hear about please let one of the committee members know. When the nights get lighter we hope to have some more practical activities as well as talks.

What about one of you professional electronics engineers giving us a talk on using test equipment, from a multimeter to an oscilloscope and what to look for if buying an oscilloscope?

Mini Talks: Not everyone feels comfortable giving a half an hour to an hour lecture on a topic, so how about mini talks 10 to 15 minutes long about a project you have been working on? We could have two or three of these in an evening.



Antennas

Dan's article in last month's newsletter on loop antennas for transmitting on HF has generated a lot of interest from other amateurs plagued with noise or constrained by space.

On the loop antenna theme the following project on the Worcester Radio Amateur Association web site <http://www.wraa.co.uk/> may also be of interest, go to the Projects tab/Project 2 - 40-80m Magnetic Loop Antenna.

Other articles regarding loop antennas can be found in the December 2010 issue of Practical Wireless and the September and December 2010 issues of RADCOM

Feeble Christmas cracker style joke – Two aerials meet on a roof, fall in love and get married. The ceremony wasn't much but the reception was brilliant!

Have you come across any interesting or bizarre antenna designs, have you experience of homebrew antennas you'd like to share, what worked and what didn't work, let me know paul.dekkers@tiscali.co.uk and I will publish them in future newsletters.

CDARS Club shack ongoing: Rod Hawkins, Jim Hewitt and Dan Taylor are still keen to get your input on the possibility of having a club shack at the Chepstow Athletic club. Please give them your views on what we would use it for and what sort of facilities we should try and include. This will help them work up a proposal for initial buy-off within the club and subsequent submission to the Athletic club.

Do you need to revalidate your licence?

From the Ofcom website: "Amateur licensees are reminded that their licence (now "lifetime") must be validated at least once every 5 years in accordance with the terms, conditions and limitations of their licence.

Due to the anticipated workload at the time of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, exceptionally, Ofcom has automatically validated Amateur licences which were issued from November 2006 to August 2007, extending by **one** year the latest date that these particular licences would need their first validation - i.e. November 2012 to August 2013 or 6 years from their respective dates of issue.

Licences issued after August 2007 will need validation as usual in the normal way - at least once every 5 years".

Although you are only required to validate your licence every 5 years there is no reason why you shouldn't do it more frequently. Personally I find it easier to remember if I do it at the start of every year so log on to the Ofcom website <https://services.ofcom.org.uk/>

TRAINING UPDATE

Steve has taken a straw poll of advanced licence trainees and the consensus appears to be that the majority of trainees don't feel ready for the February exam date but expect to be ready to take the Advanced Radio Licence exam in April (I assume they meant 2011!)

One issue that has come up is the different emission codes used in Amateur Radio. Examples from the Advance Training Manual are F1B, F2B and J2B etc. A more in depth explanation of the codes and how they are derived can be found on the Highfields Amateur Radio Club technical pages <http://highfields-arc.6te.net/beginner/modtype.htm>

Featured Website

This months featured web link (courtesy of Rod) is:

<http://www.mikeandsniffy.co.uk/UKQRM/>

This site highlights some of the key QRM issues affecting an increasing number of radio amateurs. Rod has asked does anyone know of a speaker who could give a talk on PLT?

Have you come across any other interesting radio related websites? Send me any appropriate radio links that you think people might find interesting. I will try and feature them each month and Roy can add the best to our website on the Links page.

News from the RSGB...

SOS Radio Week

In just under a week an exciting nine day fund-raising event will start. SOS Radio Week was created to raise money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Anyone can participate, be they clubs, individuals, adults or youths. Simply register on the event web site, download a sponsorship form and raise at least £5. As an encouragement there are over £700 worth of prizes from Icom, the SRC Young Persons award, a radio from Martin Lynch and four antennas from Sigma Euro-Comm to give away. There are currently 47 stations registered. In addition there is an award scheme for amateur radio operators that work registered SOS Radio Week stations during the event. The event starts at 00:00 on 22 January and concludes at 23:39 on the 30th. Further details can be found at www.sosradioweek.org.uk.

Mat Beasant G4RKY talk

At the December club meeting Mat Beasant gave an excellent talk on Internet Repeater Linking, what it is and what it can do.

The talk covered Echolink, IRLP – Internet Radio Linking Project, All Star Link, Internet links vs repeaters, Netiquette, and reflectors and conferences.

Mat is the repeater keeper for the GB3ZY repeater and closed with some images and a brief overview about some of the challenges in running a repeater.

I was left with the impression that we are very lucky to have such skilled and dedicated amateurs who enjoy the challenge and find the time to operate the repeaters for us all to enjoy. In particular their experience and network of contacts means we can use this facility far cheaper than the going commercial rate. Many thanks to Mat and his colleagues at the Frys Hill Repeater Group. Go to <http://www.gb3fh.org.uk/> for more information.