

T News Letter **TDARS**

G3ZME
G6ZME

TELFORD AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

www.TDARS.org.uk

FOUNDED 1969

www.TelfordHamfest.co.uk

Issue 285

Sept / October 2018

www.TDARS.org.uk

Programme

www.telfordhamfest.org.uk

August 29 *Final Telford G-QRP Buildathon & HamFest preparations and checks*

September 1 (Sat.) *G-QRP mini convention & Buildathon—Park Inn Hotel: opens 6pm*
September 2 (Sun.) *Telford HamFest. Enginuity, Coalbrookdale. Helpers from 7:30am*

September 5 *Committee Meeting 8:00pm. GX3ZME on-the-air (tbc)*

September 12 *HamFest Debrief*

September 19 *Baluns and Ununs for HF and VHF*

September 26 *Bring along and share a favourite shack item*

October 3 *Committee Meeting 8:00pm. GX3ZME on-the-air (tbc)*

October 10 *Winter Projects. Bring along your ideas and suggestions*

October 17 *Surplus Equipment Sale. There will be a lot of good stuff !*

October 24 *Callum McCormick M0MCX “DX Commander” - antenna expert! Guest speaker from Solihull. See his website and YouTube*

October 31 *Soup and Roll Hallowe'en night—spooky !*

November 7 *Committee Meeting 8:00pm. GX3ZME on-the-air*

November 14 *RSGB Video presentation from past Conventions*

November 21 *Ten Minute (or less) Talks by Members.*

For Amateur Radio Exam Training—enquiries to Mike G3JKX (01952 299677)
For Morse Training and Morse Proficiency Tests Martyn G3UKV or Eric M0KZB.
For Equipment Loans & Returns contact Don M0TBQ.

[Radio Amateur Exams- Latest: www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html](http://www.tdars.org.uk/html/training.html)

Editorial

As you might expect, my Editorial is about Jim, G8UGL who passed away peacefully in the Severn Hospice, just down the road from here in the Wellington area on Sunday 19th August. Since before last Christmas Jim had said he was feeling a bit low, but it was not until early July that his family were given the dreadful news that he had terminal cancer.

Jim joined the club in the late 1970s, shortly after moving into the Telford area. He joined the Fire Service until his retirement a few years ago. Jim was an active radio amateur from the outset, and Maz (my wife) recalls meeting him at Bridgnorth College in 1979 when they both sat the new 'multi choice' style of Radio Amateurs' Examination. They both passed (naturally) with the allocated callsigns G8UGL and G8UKV respectively.

Jim became Treasurer of TDARS as long ago as April 1983, and retained the post until he felt he could no longer cope just a few weeks ago. He always kept 'the Books' in good shape, and we always had a healthy balance in the bank—despite jokes from Members about subsidising his regular travels to Cyprus where his daughter Stacy and her family reside.

Jim loved the summer months, and when on holiday, always wore his shorts. More than almost any activity, Jim loved portable operating—whether from a wet and windy hilltop in Shropshire or Scotland or from sunny Guernsey; he built up a very creditable microwave station for 10 and 24 GHz, and was often the voice of G3ZME/P. Jim had a relaxed manner, but he also built up a reputation for destroying camping chairs and loungers when out portable. His family tells me the same also happened in Cyprus. After one trip to Kippure Mountain to the south of Dublin, some of us cut out a strip of material from a Jim destroyed lounger, and with a bit of ingenuity, formed it into a 'war medal' that was pinned to him at a club-night ceremony. He told me recently that he didn't know where it was, but if it turns up, Hazel, please let us know!

Going out portable through the summer months will never be quite the same without Jim, and I know all TDARS members will miss him for one reason or another. His dry sense of humour, his organisational abilities, his advice at committee meetings, his sometimes colourful language and turn-of-phrase, and more—much more.

Finally, I've rooted around my photo files, and come up with a few pictures that recall Jim's involvement in all matters TDARS. Rest in Peace, Jim.

Heartfelt condolences to Hazel, Stacy, Craig and their families here in the UK and in Cyprus.

Guernsey—
August 2011



Little Wenlock-
June 2014



Newark—
September
2016



Friedrichshafen—
June 2018

Qtc: News & Information



TDARS MEETINGS EVERY WEDNESDAY AT LITTLE WENLOCK VILLAGE HALL UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE ON THE FRONT PAGE PROGRAMME. ROOM BOOKED FROM 7PM - 10PM.

If Junior Hamsters group meeting, please do not enter before 7:45pm MEETINGS USUALLY COMMENCE AT 8PM

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

VHF NFD took place over the weekend July 7-8. G3ZME/P from the Long Mynd. The results came out recently, and G3ZME/P came 4th overall in the Mix 'n Match section, down from runners-up last year. On the 4 bands (6m,2m,70cm,23cm) entered, we came 4th, 5th, 2nd and 2nd respectively. Thanks to all who participated—about 16 in all. It really is a team effort event involving lots of preparation, assembling 4 competitive stations and enjoyment for all concerned. The surface vegetation was not as dry as expected, but the contingency plans were thought through and there were no incidents. No NT wardens appeared, but they knew we were there, and quite a few hikers called by to see what we were doing.

Apart from Jim 'UGL, there have been two other ex-members of TDARS who have passed on recently. John Ward M0ARP (11 Aug.) and Bill Taylor G6NWT (10 July).

About 6 members of our club attended Bill's funeral in Coalbrookdale church, wearing tdars 'tops'. Bill was a club member and active on an almost daily basis mostly on 2 metres FM, until he moved into a care home about 18 months ago. He was aged 91, but it was fascinating to see him pictured with his late wife from earlier times printed on the funeral Service sheet. >>>>> Sympathies are extended to all families and friends concerned as we remember them.



The third and final **DF (Fox) Hunt** took place in late July. Martin had tucked himself away in the village cemetery, and was sussed out by a small number of searchers. Support for the DF hunts has not been great this year—we'll need a re-think perhaps for 2019.

Following a couple of meetings, it looks likely we shall face a modest increase in weekly **electricity charges** by LWVH committee. After an early inadequate explanation, a more thoughtful paper was discussed in committee and accepted. However, the current **Broadband business contract** connection has also expired, and unless an improved new contract can be agreed, it seems possible that we shall seriously consider dropping out of the agreement, which would mainly affect the Fusion (repeater) 24/7 Internet operation, which is under-used.

REMEMBER THE TELFORD HAMFEST & G-QRP BUILDATHON EVENTS ARE IMMINENT (Sept. 1/2). PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND THE HAMFEST AND OFFER MARTIN 'TRO AT LEAST 2 SLOTS IN THE STEWARDING ARRANGEMENTS.

TELFORD & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY : 2018-19

CHAIRMAN: Eric Arkinstall M0KZB (01743 240286)

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

SECRETARY: John Humphreys M0JZH (07824 737716)

TREASURER: Paul Athersmith M0PLA (07966 969230)

CURATOR : Don Nicholls M0TBQ (01952 411680)



telfordhams

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Martyn Vincent G3UKV (01952 255416)

PUBLICITY/WEBMASTER : Dave G0CER (01630 638699 or 07971 416940, leave msg)

Committee: Simon G0UFE; Brian G6UDX; Graham G7LMF; Village Hall Committee Liaison officer Martin 2E0TRO. QSL Manager Paul M0PNN; Assist Curator: Chris 2E0EOH; Trophies/Certs: Martyn G3UKV.

Receiving SAQ —by Heather M0HMO

It isn't portable (it weighs 50 tons), it isn't low voltage (2.2kV) and it isn't QRP (80kW on reduced power, 200kW full power). What is it? It is the **SAQ VLF transmitter** at Grimetown, Sweden.. Operating on 17.2 kHz CW. Here is the tale of how Paul and I finally managed to receive it on 1st July 2018.

Every year, or at least most years, around Alexanderson day and on Christmas Eve, the Alexanderson transmitter, SAQ, powers up for a celebratory message. Being VLF it is somewhat different to most radio stations and receiving it is a bit more of a challenge than some, despite it being hugely powerful.

We first tried to receive it on Christmas Eve 2016. We were in Kent at the time and headed up to the nearest hilltop armed with a modified E-Field probe, a copper earth rod, a roach pole and a PC all packed into my old Rover 75. It didn't go very well. It was pitch dark as we headed down a rough track that had "no entry" signs on it. It was still pitch black when the track turned into a collection of deep potholes and overgrown verges, and yes, it was still pitch black when I tried to reverse back down it, with no reversing lights and ended up in a ditch with the wheels spinning.

It was well into daylight when we finally managed to get the car back to the main road using our earth rod as an anchor with luggage straps tied round it then wrapped around the wheels so the car basically wound itself up the straps and back onto solid ground.

A quick dash to a more sensible spot and hurried setting up of the receiver revealed that there was nothing to be heard apart from lots of QRM and the ping of my cellphone telling me I had a message. The message, of course, read something like **"From :SAQ, We have just finished transmitting our message, hope you all received it OK, happy Christmas"**.

Undeterred by this minor setback we regrouped for the Summer 2017 event. We decided to have a look at the QRM issue that had dogged our first try and discovered that the QRM seemed to happen for brief periods of time, maybe 5 seconds long, and then vanished ... long story short – the Rover 75 uses PWM to control its cabin lights and this was coming out all over the range 1KHz to 48KHz that we were monitoring. Easily fixed with a decent second battery we were ready to go only to find they had blown up the transmitter and had to cancel the summer 2017 event.

OK, we waited, and they cancelled the Christmas Eve event as well, so it was with some delight that I got an email from them saying that they were on for the 2018 Summer transmission.

The modifications we had made to the E-Field probe (a nice little bit of kit from HUPRF which we built as part of the RSGB conventions "learn to do SMD soldering" course) were to extend the range down from a few hundred kHz down to 10kHz or so. We initially decided to try 10uF SMD capacitors mounted piggy back on the two main bypass caps on the RF amp chain. It certainly helped but when we had it all set up in the scorching heat of 1st July, 10am, in one of the fields of our farm, we found that we weren't getting anything of any interest. Back indoors for a bit of investigation and we found the culprit, the Bias T was acting as an attenuator at this frequency and getting rid of everything we wanted in the way of input signal. Off came the remaining 1uF caps and 470uH inductors and on went 10uF tants and 4.7mH chokes. Back on the test bench it came to life and we were getting signals all over the spectrum (all QRM from the shack of course). Back into the heat, roach pole up at 8 metres, co-ax down from the Probe to the bias T, a small car battery lugged out into the field and there it was, Morse beeping out at us. The cows in the nearby field had come to see what was going on but I don't think they could read the CW any more than I could. Eventually I did get the "VVV"s that they were sending but the clincher was when Paul got the **"DE SAQ"** so between us we decided that we had finally got it nailed. 10 minutes later we hit record and listened to the rather noisy but occasionally readable CW for 5 minutes until they finally came to a close.

During the "testing" phase they repeatedly sent:

VVV VVV VVV DE SAQ SAQ SAQ

Then they had a short pause before starting, at the appointed time of 12:45 UTC, with:

CQ CQ CQ DE SAQ SAQ SAQ ...

This was the third of 3 transmissions of the day so it was 3rd time lucky for us.

At the end of the transmission (around 5 minutes), there was a short pause and then a few seconds of tone, another pause, another few seconds of tone and then the tone ran down in frequency before dropping off the end of my decoder. Presumably this was the 50 ton motor slowing down and reducing the frequency of the transmitter as it did so. Quite a cool way to turn off your transmitter!

We packed up the kit, waved to the now bored cows, and retired to the house for a well-earned bowl of ice cream, cold drinks and the odd "high five" .



**Thanks for Newsletter input this time:
Heather M0HMO, Paul M0PLA, Robin G1MHU,
Martin G4VZO, Paul M0PNN, Brian G0HCT, John Alexander**

**Next edition Oct/Nov :
Please keep it coming-contributors make the difference!**



GB1MEX was the special event station (SES) of the “Grindley Brook Military Extravaganza”, held near Whitchurch alongside the Shropshire Union Canal. A number of members were leading this event over the weekend Aug. 18/19th, including Paul ‘PLA, Simon ‘UFE and Martin ‘TRO, Simon 2E0MRS plus others. Lots more GB1MEX photos and videos can be seen at QRZ.COM. There were up to 40 military vehicles on the site. They made 98 QSOs on the first day, but felt public attendance was a bit disappointing at that stage.



Interesting displays



GB1MEX Location



Martin 2E0TRO



A couple of shots from the **B-B-Q** held at LWVH Field and Barn on Wed. 26th June. (photos: John Alexander)



Portsdown DATV
‘UKV style TX

At very short notice, Noel G8GTZ, Chairman of the British Amateur Television Club (BATC) suggested that some TDARS members may be interested in an organised **Amateur TV workshop** (‘Academy’) somewhere in Shropshire. John G7ACD kindly offered his premises at Eaton Manor near Wenlock Edge. Perfect location. Quite a few members went along to this event held over the weekend of 4-5 August, including John himself, David M0YDH, Dave G8VZT, Martyn G3UKV, Heather M0HMO, Paul G8AQA and John M6JAX.

The weekend started with two shortish presentations by Noel (G8GTZ) and Dave (G8GKQ), outlining some current developments in the world of Amateur Television. The rest of Saturday focused on getting members equipment working and tested—almost entirely successfully!

The following day, attendees drove up the Long Mynd to our favourite Field Day site (IO82NN), and played ‘television’ for most of the time. Mini-tiune TV receivers, Portsdown multiband TV transmitters and 5.6GHz analogue TV transceivers were all in action, with several good one-way and two-way contacts completed, and even more equipment “fixed”. Good weather too ! Our thanks to Noel and Dave who organised this exceptional event, and of course to John ‘ACD for the use of his premises on Saturday.

Dave G8GKQ opening the occasion...



G8GKQ—G8VZT—G8GTZ

“All Go” on top of the Long Mynd

