



RAGCHEW

JANUARY 2018

CONTEST ROUND-UP SPECIAL

FROM THE EDITOR - G4CIB

May I take this opportunity to wish all members of GARES a Happy New Year and a Healthy and Prosperous 2018.

I thought in this issue I would take the opportunity of giving a detailed appraisal of the GARES contest activities of the members - I hope you find the information interesting and that it may inspire some more members to participate in these activities and help to boost the scores in 2018.

Contests do not appeal to everyone but the monthly VHF/UHF UKAC series provide plenty of activity. Even if you don't take part there is an opportunity to evaluate new equipment and antennas on bands which can otherwise be very quiet.

As well as presenting and analysing the results I have also received inputs from some of the participants with their summaries of the past year and their plans for the coming year.

If you feel you would like to join in the fun, any of the members currently entering the various contests will be more than willing to share their knowledge with you be it operating technique, logging or anything else you are not sure of.

Next month's "Ragchew" will be featuring **amateur satellite operating** - let me have your experiences of any satellite QSOs or monitoring.

Looking ahead into Spring our thoughts will turn once again to operating outdoors and I hope to feature some interesting projects of interest to the /P operator.

Once again - the usual appeal - articles from members on any aspect of amateur radio are more than welcome! Email your article to me at g4cib@outlook.com

73 and good DX!

Brian G4CIB

JANUARY 144MHz UKAC

Storm Eleanor plays havoc with the opening UKAC contest of 2018

High winds and torrential rain marked the opening 144MHz UKAC event of 2018. Many of the usual /P stations opted to remain indoors and those that did venture out reported antenna difficulties and poor radio conditions. **G3PYE/P** (JO02) reported "wet and miserable outside", and **G8YMW/P** (IO93) "Jacked in at 21:45 as storm had arrived". Even some of the regular fixed stations reported antenna problems or running with antennas lowered. From **GD8EXI** (IO74) "Getting wind induced QSB and rotator close to stalling in 70 knot gusts." **G4ASR** (IO81) lost all the elements off his 17 element yagi and was reduced to driving the driven element as a dipole a couple of feet off the ground!

Your editor is at least spared this problem as I use a 5 element ZL Special on a rotator in the loft.

GARES members active were **M0XAC Gary** who clocked up 35 qsos (best dx GD8EXI), **G4CIB Brian** 24 qsos (best dx GD8EXI), **G4IZZ Mike** 25 qsos (best dx G4YXS), **G8CQZ Cliff** 19 qsos (best dx GD8EXI), **2E0MFH Matt** 13qsos (best dx GD8EXI) and Les **G0ULH Les** 11 qsos (best dx GM4AFF).

G8CQZ Cliff in only his second UKAC remarked "I'm still regarding myself as a "newbee" so I only got 19 QSOs last night (including yourself, Gary and Mike). By far the best DX was GD8EXI in Port St Mary at 291Km. Other than that it was M0WGF in Sheerness (220Km), M0DXR/P in West Malling (192Km), M0GAV in Sheffield (177Km) and G4TSQ in Arundel (140Km). I didn't think that conditions were as good as last month. My main problem is that I don't leap in quickly enough. I tend to wait until I'm sure I have the callsign absolutely correct and a number of potential contacts have disappeared before I had chance to call them. There was also quite a lot of QSB so some stations were 5&5 one minute and 2&1 the next".

From **G0ULH Les** "My best dx was GM4AFF in Montrose. The high winds were a problem and reduced the number of portable stations on the air. I did manage a contact with G4FZN/P in IO94 square but they are a rugged lot up there!!"

80m (3.5 MHz) Club Championship

This series of contests run from February through to July and each month offer participants the opportunity to use Data, CW and SSB. The contests, each of one and a half hours duration take place on the first Monday, second Wednesday and third Thursday of each month with the modes rotating in succession i.e. February first Monday SSB, second Wednesday Data, third Thursday CW, then in March, Data, CW then SSB, April CW, SSB then Data etc

In 2017, GARES amassed 12423 points, coming 13th out of 38 entries submitted in the Local Clubs section. The points contributed by members was as follows:-

M0NQN Bob submitted 11 entries and scored 7472 points on Data and CW

M0XAC Gary submitted 12 entries and scored 2954 points on Data, CW and SSB

G4IZZ Mike submitted 4 entries and scored 1147 points on CW and SSB

G4CIB Brian submitted 2 entries and scored 498 points on CW and SSB

2E0MFH Matt submitted 1 entry and scored 352 points on SSB

As you can see **M0NQN** contributed a huge amount to the total - many thanks Bob!

M0XAC Gary commented on his efforts:-

“On 80m I missed a few because of club nights but I like these contests especially SSB, naturally, but also found that I enjoyed the CW legs more than the data legs, although I still have some more setting up to do to make this work better. We kept our 13th place and the only thing that would improve our place would be to run a frequency more often and enter more legs. The CW operators, in the main, are very good at slowing down for me although there were a few that wouldn't! Also it's only an hour and a half which is plenty for me”.

From G4CIB Brian

“I must admit a lot of the dates just did not register with me so I hope to put more entries in during 2018 as we have an opportunity to considerably increase our score. It only needs just a couple or more members to submit a similar number of logs as **M0NQN** and **M0XAC**. Also **M0XAC** makes an interesting point regarding CW - it can be very daunting to hear some of the CW speeds being sent but most operators will slow down - don't be afraid to send “pse QRS”.

I also hope to enter the data modes section - watch this space!!”



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

achieved

13th in the Local Section of the

80m CC 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT

AFS (Affiliated Societies) 3.5-7MHz CW & SSB

The CW leg held in January 2017 had an entry from one member, **M0NQN Bob** putting GARES in 49th place out of 70 entries. Two members submitted entries in the SSB leg also in January 2017, namely **M0XAC Gary** and **G4CIB Brian**. GARES was placed 53rd out of 79 entries. These contests form part of the Affiliated Societies Super League - see below.

AFS (Affiliated Societies) Super League 2016-17

This quote is taken from the RSGB web site:-

“The Super League rewards societies who field teams operating both above and below 30MHz: the winning society will have consistently achieved high places in all of the events, without necessarily winning any one of them. A trophy, new in 2013, was donated by the Hadley Wood Contest Group for the winners of the Super League.

To encourage clubs to enter in all six contests, the Contest Committees award a Certificate of Achievement. This requires a certain amount of organisation in finding members with a variety of locations and skills, but is a reachable goal for an active club”

The scoring started in October 2016 and the AFS Super League combined the scores of the following contests - 50MHz AFS (October 2016), RSGB Club Calls 1.8MHz AFS (November 2016), 144MHz AFS (December 2016), 3.5-7MHz CW AFS (January 2017), 3.5-7MHz SSB AFS (January 2017) and the 432MHz AFS (February 2017).

Three club members submitted logs as follows:-

144MHz AFS December 2016 - **G4CIB Brian** submitted an entry. GARES placed 49th out of 61 entrants

3.5-7MHz SSB AFS January 2017 - **M0XAC Gary** and **G4CIB Brian** submitted entries. GARES placed 53rd out of 79 entries

3.5-7MHz CW AFS January 2017 - **M0NQN Bob** submitted an entry. GARES placed 49th out of 70 entries

432MHz AFS February 2017 - **G4CIB Brian** submitted an entry. GARES placed 44th out of 50 entries.

Overall GARES were placed 55th out of 104 entries in the AFS Super League.

Once again, our main opportunity of increasing our standing in the final table is to encourage more members to submit entries particularly in the contests where we have had no entries in the past.



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This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

achieved

49th in the

**RSGB AFS 80m-40m Contests
CW 2017**

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

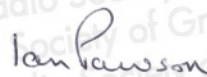
Gloucester AR&ES

G4CIB M0XAC

achieved

53rd in the

**RSGB AFS 80m-40m Contests
Phone 2017**



Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

achieved

55th in the

AFS Super League 2016-17

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



Overall UKAC

Over 4 bands (50MHz, 70MHz, 144MHz and 432MHz), nine GARES members have submitted logs for the UKAC series of contests, and we came in at 24th position out of 35 entries in the Local Club results table. It is difficult to compare with 2016 as last year there was only one table (Club scores) - we came 40th out of 78 entries - and this year (2017) the entries were split between General Clubs (essentially clubs who recruit members over a wide geographic area) and Local Clubs.

The number of points achieved overall was 21212 and the contribution by individual members to this total was as follows:

M0XAC 7305 points total comprising 1623 (50MHz) 2479 (144MHz) 3203 (432MHz)

G4CIB 5701 points total comprising 2056 (50MHz), 2899 (144MHz) 746 (432MHz)

2E0MFH 1951 points total comprising 53 (50MHz) 1523 (144MHz) 375 (432MHz)

G4IZZ 1907 points total comprising 379 (50MHz) 870 (144MHz) 658 (432MHz)

G4BCA 1806 points total comprising 1380 (50MHz) 177 (70MHz) 19 (144MHz) 230 (432MHz)

G0ULH 1746 points total comprising 319 (50MHz) 269 (70MHz) 360 (144MHz) 798 (432MHz)

M0HFX 517 points total comprising 85 (50MHz) 16 (70MHz), 198 (144MHz) 218 (432MHz)

G8CQZ 230 points total (144MHz)

2E0SFQ 49 points total (144MHz)

50MHz UKAC

Seven GARES members submitted logs for the 50MHz UKAC series of contests, and we came in at 17th position out of 29 entries in the Local Club results table. It is difficult to compare with 2016 as last year there was only one table (Club scores) - we came 40th out of 78 entries - and this year (2017) the entries were split between General Clubs Local Clubs.

For the record the statistics for the GARES members is as follows:-

A total of 5893 points were scored made up by the following

G4CIB Brian 2056 points (6 entries - January, March, May, July, August, September)

M0XAC Gary 1623 points (11 entries - every month except November)

G4BCA Dave 1380 points (7 entries - January, February, April, May, June, July, November)

G4IZZ Mike 379 points (4 entries) - January, February, June, August)

G0ULH Les 319 points (1 entry - September)

M0HFX Barry 85 points (1 entry - September)

2E0MFH Matt 53 points (1 entry - March)

The highest scoring QSOs by GARES members in the series were by **G4IZZ** who worked **OM7LW** (1604kms) and **G4BCA** who worked **HA5JI** (1584km), both in the June UKAC and **G4CIB** who worked **EI3KD** (412km) in the January UKAC.



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This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

achieved

24th in the Local Club Section of the

Overall UKAC 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

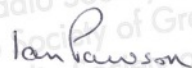
Gloucester AR&ES

2E0MFH G0ULH G4BCA G4CIB G4IZZ M0HFX M0XAC

achieved

17th in the Local Section of the

50MHz UKAC 2017



Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

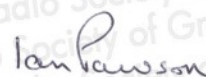
GOULH G4BCA M0HFY

achieved

24th in the Local Section of the

70MHz UKAC 2017

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee



Ian Pawson, G0FCT

70MHz UKAC

Three GARES stalwarts on this band, namely **G0ULH Les**, **G4BCA Dave** and **M0HFX Barry**. We came in at 24th place out of 26 entries. In 2016 we came in at 36th place out of 59 entries but in that year the 70MHz UKACs were quarterly (March, May, August and November) and this year the calendar was rearranged as a monthly event. Also last year the results was a single table (Club scores) as opposed to this year - two tables - General Clubs and Local Clubs.

A total of 462 points were scored made up by the following:

G0ULH Les 269 points (4 entries - March, June, August, December)

G4BCA Dave 177 points (3 entries - April, October, December)

M0HFX Barry 16 points (1 entry - December)

144MHz UKAC

Nine GARES members submitted logs for the 144MHz UKAC series of contests, and we came in at 19th position out of 34 entries in the Local Club results table. Once again, it is difficult to compare with 2016 as last year there was only one table (Club scores) when we came 53rd out of 105 entries. For the record the statistics for the GARES members who submitted logs is as follows:-

A total of 8626 points were scored made up by the following

G4CIB Brian 2899 points (8 entries - January, March, April, May, July, August, September, December)

M0XAC Gary 2479 points (12 entries - every month - well done Gary!)

2E0MFH Matt 1523 points (6 entries - March, April, June, September, November, December)

G4IZZ Mike 870 points (6 entries - March, April, May, August, September, November)

G0ULH Les 360 points (2 entries - April, September)

G8CQZ Cliff 230 points (1 entry - December)

M0HFX Barry 198 points (2 entries - February, August)

2E0SFQ Sean 49 points (2 entries - September, October)

G4BCA, Dave 19 points (1 entry - March)

The highest scoring QSOs by GARES members in the series were all with the same station namely **MM0GPZ/P**, by M0XAC (415km) in the September UKAC and **2E0MFH** (412km) in the September and November UKAC, and **G4CIB** (402km) in the April UKAC.

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This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

2E0MFH 2E0SFQ G0ULH G4BCA G4CIB G4IZZ G8CQZ M0HFY M0XAC

achieved

19th in the Local Section of the

144MHz UKAC 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT

432MHz UKAC

Seven GARES members submitted logs for the 432MHz UKAC series of contests, and we came in at 21st position out of 32 entries in the Local Club results table. Once again, it is difficult to compare with 2016 as that year there was only one table (Club scores) - we came 44th out of 79 entries then - and this year (2017) the entries were split between General Clubs and Local Clubs.

For the record the statistics for the GARES members who submitted logs is as follows:-

A total of 6231 points were scored made up by the following

M0XAC 3203 points (12 entries - every month - well done Gary!)

G0ULH 798 points (4 entries - March, May, June, August)

G4CIB 746 points (5 entries - May, June, July, September, November)

G4IZZ 658 points (6 entries - March, April, May, July, August, November)

2E0MFH 375 points (3 entries - March, April, June)

G4BCA 230 points (2 entries - July, August)

M0HFX 218 points (3 entries - March, May, August)

The highest scoring QSOs by GARES members in the series were by **M0XAC** who worked **GI4SNA** (392km) in the July UKAC and **GI6ATZ** (378km) in the November UKAC. **M0XAC**, **G0ULH**, and **2E0MFH** all worked **GD8EXI** (301km), **M0XAC** almost every month, **G0ULH** in the May and June UKAC, and **2E0MFH** in the June UKAC. **G4CIB** also managed to contact **GD8EXI** in the June and November UKAC but being in a different square the distance comes in at 290km.

I think all members will agree that **M0XAC** has put in a very consistent effort into this band and obviously has a good path to GI from his location!

2017 UKAC Comments

Gary M0XAC commented "More stamina is required for the VHF contests and I have to say that 70cms is probably my favourite . Low noise helps a lot. Earlier in the year I splashed out on a rotator and a small dual band yagi which has made a tremendous difference on 70cm and 2m. I only have a halo for 6m which is fine in the ES season but hopeless for tropo propagation but it doesn't stop me working what I can hear. I plan to get a Moxon for 6m later in the year but it won't be rotated for a while so I will point it NE as that is where most of my contacts come from and see how it goes. I don't have anything for 4m yet, possibly a transverter later. As for logging software, as far as I am concerned, you can't beat N1MM+. There is a bit of a learning curve but once there it's very good. During 2017 my secret weapon so far has been consistency but we didn't do too badly this year so I suppose the goal for next year is to try and improve on it. Lastly, the only way to get a good score is to run a frequency. I think it will be more important next year as the scoring is changing, the down side is that it requires more effort than search and pounce but I plan to do it some more so we will see how that goes!"

From **G4CIB Brian** "I've missed quite a few of the UKAC events particularly in the first four months of the year because of other commitments but I'm looking forward to getting a better antenna for 6m also I hope to do more /P operating for these events. My huge disappointment was the September 50MHz and 432MHz events whilst we were on Lundy. The wind was so fierce on the evening of the 432MHz UKAC that I had to make do with an indoor antenna and worked just one station - the only one I could hear - and I didn't come last! A few days later for the 50MHz UKAC the wind had subsided sufficiently to erect an outdoor antenna but after only one QSO proceedings were halted by a massive thunderstorm. Another way of improving our overall standing in the results table would be having the ability to have entries in the 1296MHz and SHF bands"

2017 UKAC Comments (continued)

G4IZZ Mike commented “Probably the worst thing I did when taking part in one of the UKAC VHF contests was to call CQ, and immediately afterwards, take a bite of carrot cake. There was nothing wrong with the cake, you understand, but when someone responds to your call as soon as you’ve taken a bite, the garbled, spitting, choking reply doesn’t do much for what one assumed was a slick operating style. However, once I’d wiped the sticky bits of cake off the mic’, and more or less recovered, I was able to get on with it - albeit, with a bit of a red glow about my face.

But that was the worst mess I got myself into. Other than that, I’m happy to report that the UKAC contests are good fun, easy to operate in, and a great way of helping our club enhance its position on the RSGB ladder.

It seems to me that, in order to do reasonably well in these contests, you don’t need high gain beams atop huge masts, nor do you need to be camping out on a windy hilltop with your helmet torch penetrating the clouds as you crouch beside your car. In fact, I’ve been entering them using a vertically polarized ‘white stick’, and still managed a good few points, though mostly from contacts with fairly local amateurs. But now I’ve borrowed a horizontally polarized 9-element yagi (thanks **Matt – 2E0MFH**) so I’ll be hoping for some DX contacts in 2018, and the extra points that go with it”.

From **G8CQZ Cliff** “Well I finally did it. I’d been looking at doing it for some time now but every time I tried, it never worked out. I mean, it just doesn’t seem worth entering the UKAC with fewer than five fairly local contacts. But then I realised that my 5 element 2m ZL special was useless so I replaced it with a home made 4 element Yagi and “hey presto”, I could hear beacons that I couldn’t hear before. So, in December 2017, I tried. I took it very slowly and steadily, only calling others rather than sitting and calling CQ, but I had 16 contacts in the 2m UKAC, four of them over 100 miles away, and came 58th out of 76 entries in my class. Not too bad for my first entry and less than 10 watts. I can’t wait for the next one!

G4BCA Dave commented “Have been trying to come up with something inspiring but have failed miserably. My only thoughts are G4BCA – must try harder to get out portable”.

PRACTICAL WIRELESS 70MHz CONTEST

Well done to the `operators of **G2HX/P** in the Practical Wireless 70MHz Contest held in September. We came in at 5th place out of 25 entries in the Low Power Section with 53 qsos and 14 squares worked. For the record, in 2016 we came in at 7th place with 53 qsos with 15 squares worked.

HINTS FOR HAMS by G0EEA

Slug and Snail Tape

Slug And Snail tape can be bought for a few pounds in garden centres, it is self-adhesive copper tape to stick around your flowerpots, etc, giving some protection because slugs and snails don't like to cross it. Be careful where you place the flowerpot, as a small snail can climb an adjacent tall blade of grass until it bends over giving access to the protected area, a snail's equivalent of abseiling in !

Hams can use this tape, which is about an inch wide, to:-

1. Screen a plastic box
2. Add to a braid, eg in a connector-less coax join.
3. Repair a broken pcb track.

Crossword Answers (December 2017)

Across 2. Repeater, 7 Foundation, 8 Diode

Down 1. Marconi, 2 Rugby, 3 Electrons, 4 Resistor, 5 Hancock, 6 Earth, 7 Filter



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

2E0MFH G0ULH G4BCA G4CIB G4IZZ M0HFX M0XAC

achieved

21st in the Local Section of the

432MHz UKAC 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT

VHF Championship

The VHF Contests' Championship aims to provide an overall result for the year - based on a representative selection of contests. The contests that counted towards the 2017 Championship were as follows: March 2m/70cm (the overall 2 band normalised score), 432MHz Trophy, May 144MHz, 50MHz Trophy, 144MHz Low Power, 432MHz Low Power, 144MHz Trophy, 70MHz Trophy, 1.3GHz Trophy & 2.3GHz Trophy (combined score)

GARES had entries in every one of these contests except the UHF Trophies (1.3GHz and 2.3GHz) and came **50th** out of 93 entries in the AFS (Affiliated Societies) Section.

The contributors to this score was as follows:

50MHz Trophy: **G4CIB Brian** came 29th out of 59 entries in the 6 hour Single Operator Fixed Section and **M0XAC** came 35th in the same Section.

70MHz Trophy: **M0HFX Barry** came 42nd out of 48 entries in the Single Operator Fixed Section

144MHz Trophy: **G4CIB Brian** came 31st out of 36 entries in the 6 hour Single Operator Fixed Section

144MHz Low Power: **G4CIB Brian** came 26th out of 40 entries in the Single Operator Fixed Section and **M0XAC Gary** came 34th in the same Section.

432MHz Open: **G4CIB Brian** came 32nd out of 37 entries in the Single Operator Fixed Section.

432MHz Low Power: **G4CIB/P Brian** came 6th out of 6 entries in the Open Section(1 qso from almost a hole in the ground!!!)

March 144/432MHz: **G4CIB Brian** came 18th out of 23 in the Single Operator Fixed Section and **M0XAC** came 20th in the same Section.

May 144MHz: **G4CIB Brian** came 37th out of 46 entries in the 6 hour Single Operator Fixed Section.

G4CIB, Brian commented "On the whole I have enjoyed taking part in these events. The most frustrating was the 432MHz Low Power where I operated as **G4CIB/P** from Prescott Hill Climb (the date coincided with Vintage Prescott) - at the bottom of the hill though, and with a poor take off. I managed one QSO - it was the only station I could hear, and on returning home found that the PA in my rig had died! Once again it would only need a few more members to submit entries in any of these contests to dramatically improve our overall standing in the VHF Championship. From my own point of view I hope to do more /P contest operating during 2018. Also it would be good to see the club entering more contests using the **G2HX** call sign."

Low Power Contest (80m, 40m and 20m)

This was held at the QTH of **G8CQZ** using the call sign **G2HX/P** and although conditions were not particularly good, GARES achieved **3rd** place. All participants agreed it was an enjoyable event and hopefully we can do better in 2018! For the record we came **7th** out of 7 entries in the 3W section in **2000**, **3rd** out of 14 entries in the 10W section in **2001**, **4th** out of 4 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2002**, **2nd** out of 8 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2003**, **3rd** out of 7 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2004**, **2nd** out of 7 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2005**, **4th** out of 13 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2006**, **5th** out of 11 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2007**, **7th** out of 12 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2008**. Between **2009** and **2014** the club did not field an entry and our participation was revived in **2015** when we came **2nd** out of 6 entries in the 10W Portable section, and **4th** out of 8 entries in the 10W Portable section in **2016**.



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

Gloucester AR&ES

G4CIB M0HFY M0XAC

achieved

50th in the AFS Section of the

VHF Championship 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT



RADIO SOCIETY of GREAT BRITAIN



This is to certify that

G2HX/P

G4BCA G4CIB G4IZZ M0NQN

achieved

3rd in the 10W Portable Section of the

Low Power Contest 2017

Ian Pawson

Chairman of the RSGB Contest Committee

Ian Pawson, G0FCT