



RAG CHEW

SUMMER 2016

From The Editor

Summer is here – and as I write this at the beginning of August it may well happen soon!! Hopefully the weather will settle and we can take the opportunity to enjoy our hobby outdoors operating portable. Ever since I was first licenced in 1969 I have always enjoyed combining holiday travels both here and abroad with a bit of amateur radio. For those unlucky to live in a poor VHF location the pleasure of operating from an elevated site is welcome and who can resist a bit of operating on the beach particularly with the advent of rigs such as the iconic Yaesu FT817. I recall in the early 1970s family holidays in Teignmouth and I would head to Haldon Hill in the evenings to operate on 2 metres amplitude modulation (AM) with a car full of equipment – an ex-Army R209 1-20MHz valve receiver which was used as a tunable IF for the 2 metre converter which gave an output of 4 – 6MHz corresponding to 144 – 146MHz, a home brew crystal controlled 2 watt transistor transmitter, a 12v battery, antenna mast and an 8 element yagi. Nowadays a complete HF/VHF station can be packed away in a small carrier bag.

For the HF enthusiast there is the opportunity to operate in a man-made-noise-free environment and of course being out in the fresh air. Most of you are aware that Leta and I regularly visit and operate from Lundy in the Bristol Channel. In recent years we have been using public transport by way of the train and buses to get to and from our port of departure – either Bideford or Ilfracombe – and this has meant that serious thought has been given to the transportability of my station. The antenna support – a fibre glass “roach pole” doubles as a walking stick and virtually all of the station (rig, antenna, feeder and power supply) fits into a brief-case style equipment case which I can carry as hand luggage on the ship. Any other miscellaneous items are tucked into the clothes hold-all. Conscious of the fact that there is no Maplin store on the island where those forgotten items can be purchased, I not only make a list of all the stuff required but also do a “dry-run” putting the station together on the lawn at home beforehand then carefully putting all that aside to pack. It's very frustrating to arrive at your destination and realise that you have forgotten that all-important adaptor!! I'm sure we've all done it!!!

Portable operating has been given a tremendous boost in recent years with activities such as Summits on the Air (SOTA), details of which can be found on their web site <http://www.sota.org.uk/> For current SOTA activity see <http://www.sotawatch.org/> Also the RSGB organise 2 metre “Backpackers” contests which last for 4 hours and coincide with longer 2 metre contests thus ensuring plenty of activity. Combine these with the Tuesday evening UK Activity Contests and there is plenty of scope for the newcomer to operate /P on the HF and VHF bands. The Worked All Britain (WAB) award is also an incentive to operate portable or mobile from remote locations – see <http://wab.intermip.net/>

So do give /P operating a try this Summer and let me know how you get on. The photo below was taken recently near Tirley – G4CIB/P on 70cm FM using a Moxon loop, the details of which appear later in this newsletter.

On the Social front, GARES members have once again been invited to a **SKITTLES AND BUFFET SOCIAL EVENING** at the Albion Social Club, Albion St, Cheltenham on **FRIDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO.**



How I Became Interested in Radio by Anne 2E1GKY

I first became interested in Radio at a very early age of about 10 when I used to visit my Grandfather who had a Cossor Model 470 1947 model. This had a walnut veneer plywood cabinet and cost £21-11-6d plus purchase tax (*Readers under the age of 40 see below for an explanation – Ed*). I would watch him with great interest tuning along the short, medium and long wave bands. My Father had a Roberts and a Bush DAC.90 in brown Bakelite.

My first purchase was the Ultra Coronation Twin Model R.786 made approx 1953 which was a very good radio but alas got smashed in 1961 when moving to Cheltenham. On a visit to the RSGB 1988 Vintage Show at the NEC I did spot this model, but as it was nearly one hundred pounds, I had to withdraw my attention.

In 1961 I worked in the Motor Trade and had dealings with radios and their parts for fitting and although only the basic FM/MW/LW sets, this helped in my learning.

My interest moved to shortwave and I joined the International Short Wave League becoming G.20126 and I bought a Sony 200ID which I have to this day and would not part with it. I also have other Sony models including the 7600 range. At one stage I did buy a Kenwood R.5000 Receiver and this was my first introduction to Waters and Stanton, when Jeff the Director actually let me bring it back from the NEC to try out and considering this particular model was almost a thousand pounds then I have always appreciated this.

A Pan Crusader I have also whetted my appetite for Amateur Radio, and although it has a good variety of Bands, it does have a slight drift.

I used to enjoy plotting Concorde leaving Heathrow on VHF and short wave calling in at various Oceanic Points for example 5.616MHz Air Shanwick which is still in use today.

The Tandy shops were a magnet with purchases of various Base and Handhelds, Scanners. My favourite CB Base Transceiver was the York 869 which was in a nice wooden surround. This rig helped me on my way for transmitting practice through which I made a very good friend Roger Provins, who also became a radio amateur (G0RGJ) and helped me with my learning.

My main CB antenna was the Delta Loop which looked like a sailing ship and just a bit noticeable. The heavy duty brackets to this day now support my 6metre antenna.

I decided in March 1997 to get cracking towards an Amateur Radio Licence, so plucked up courage to sign on the very last course which ran from September to May at Gloscat in the Park, Cheltenham. I did find it rather a long slog but went every week. The particular Tutor liked all board work taking up to 30 minutes explaining certain circuits. About nine of us attended this course and some at the back of me regularly fell asleep!! I prayed for some Practical work as there was an antenna on the roof but only one demonstration the entire term!! I did have one go at the Radio Amateurs Exam but found it too difficult. After a short gap I decided action was needed so I studied the RSGB Novice paperwork and noticed that it was “hands-on” for most of the course work.

I decided to take the plunge and I wrote to our club and here I must say Brian's (G4CIB) letter was most welcoming and everyone including Vernon G0HTO gave me some really marvellous help.

I took the very last Gloscat Novice Examination in a room all on my own and was successful and since then I have continued to enjoy my amateur Radio Licence to the full. I have been an RSGB member since 1985.

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Many thanks for the article Anne. For those under 40 years of age - in the days before decimalisation our currency consisted of pounds, shillings and pence. Twenty shillings in a pound, twelve pennies in a shilling. Oh – and until the early 1950s – four farthings in a penny. £21-11s-6d (twenty one pounds eleven shillings and sixpence) was a heck of a lot of money – average earnings in 1947 were in the region of £100 per annum so that represented nearly quarter of an annual average wage! And I haven't even started on Purchase Tax which was introduced in 1940 to dampen the demand for “luxury” goods. It started at thirty three and a third percent and in 1942 raised to sixty six and two thirds percent and reached the dizzy heights of **one hundred percent** in 1943 before reverting to the initial rate of thirty three and a third percent in 1946. So that radio was **a very expensive** luxury!!

I look forward to receiving more articles from GARES members on “How I Became Interested in Radio” - Ed



2E1GKY in operation

SPRING CHALLENGE

The Spring Challenge ended on 30th June and the leading participants received their certificates at the Club Meeting on Monday 18th July, the last meeting of the season.

In the overall table (including both 10m and 6m bands) the lead participant was Tom G3XMM, Gary M0XAC was second, and third place went to Barry M0HFY.

In the individual band tables the lead station on 10m was Tom G3XMM and Barry M0HFY on 6m. Many thanks to all the individuals who took part, and I know from exchanging emails with many of you that experience has been gained in the construction and trialling of new antennas, as well as venturing onto new modes such as JT65. Thanks also to those that sent in entries for portable, mobile and even maritime mobile operation from IO81 and other squares. Finally, thanks to Ron G3SZS for producing the splendid certificates.

We can now look forward to the Winter Challenge which will start on 1st October; look out for details in the Club Bulletin and announcements at the Club when we resume meetings in September.

Dave G4BCA

Operating on Lundy

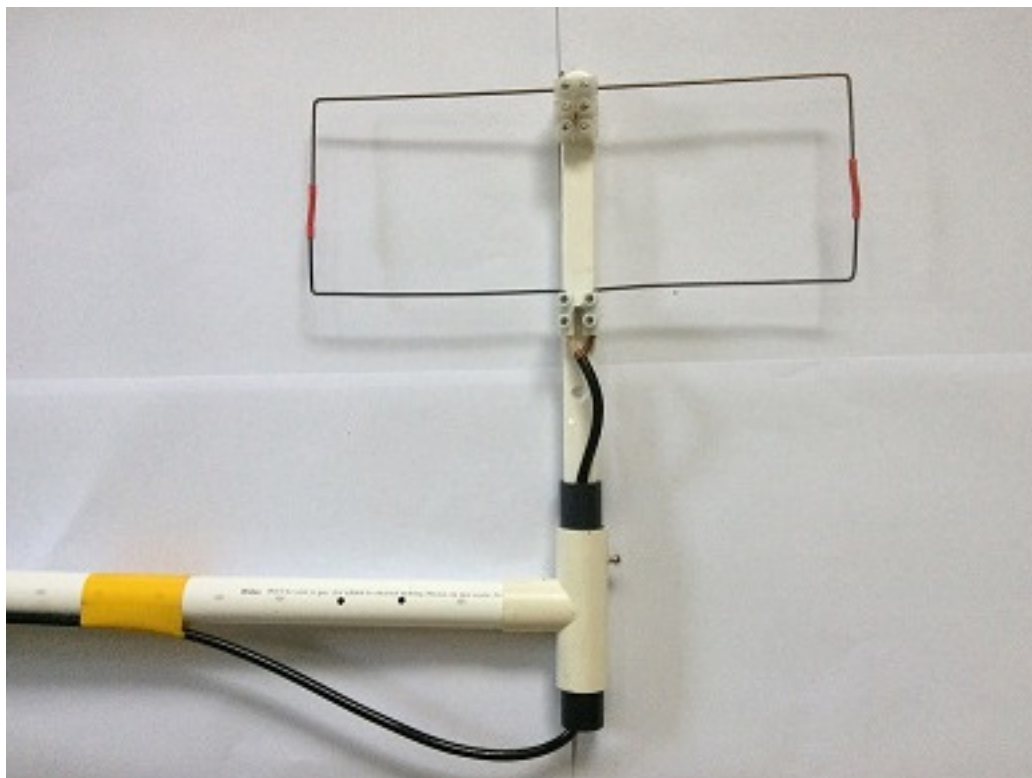
For the past twenty years or so Leta and I have visited Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel. During that time we have seen many improvements on the island, not least the construction of the jetty in 2000 which made landing on the island much easier. Prior to that, arriving passengers were offloaded from the "Oldenberg", the island supply ship, on to small boats which plied to-and-fro to the shore not only to offload the passengers but of course take on board returning passengers. Imagine how long this took to transfer upwards of 200 passengers! The luggage was craned into an amphibious landing craft usually resulting in damp clothes when unpacking!! Arriving at Lundy now is a very speedy affair – the ship ties up at the jetty, the passengers make their way up the steep track to the village and if staying on the Island, check-in at Reception. By the time you have settled into your chosen property, the luggage is delivered by quad-bike towing a trailer.

But some things don't change on the island – including the mains generator which operates between 06.00 and midnight. So if you want to operate between these hours you will need to use battery power. Several of the properties lend themselves to amateur radio namely Government House (regularly used by the South Bristol Amateur Radio Club), and Stoneycroft (regularly used by G4CIB and G4RHK and within the last few months the Virtual Amateur Radio Club). The latter property boasts an adjacent paddock where a full size 80 metre dipole will easily fit. It is also fairly well elevated making for a good VHF site.

For the record Leta and I are on Lundy from Saturday 3rd September – Tuesday 13th September which takes in HF SSB Field Day and the 2m Trophy Contest on the first weekend we are there.

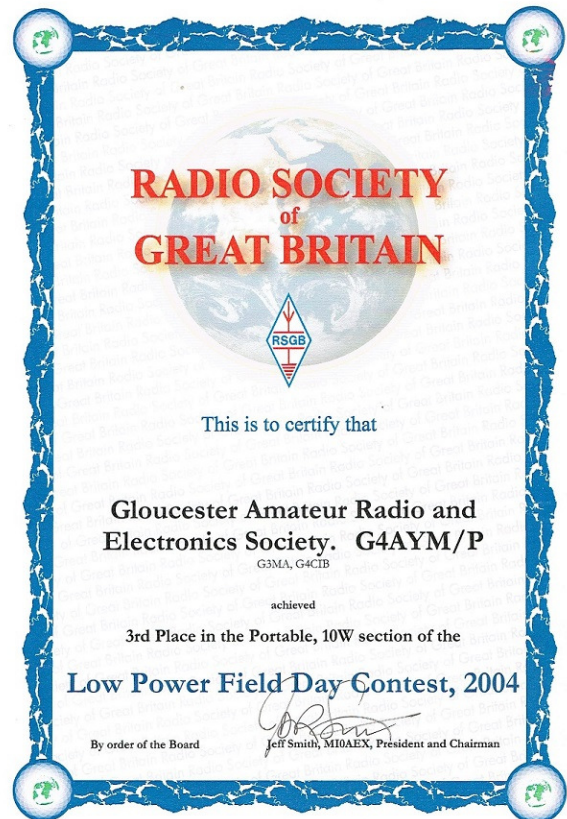
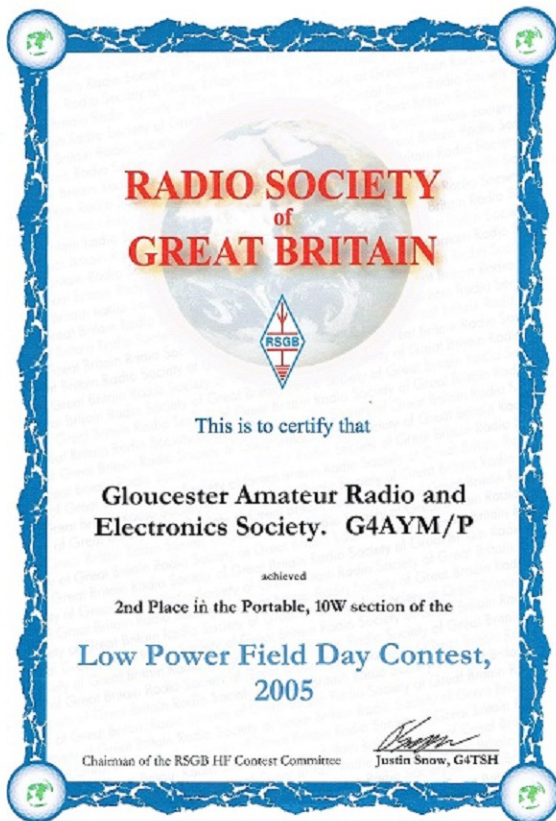
Cheap and Cheerful Moxon Loop for 70cm

I was inspired to build this antenna after reading an article in Practical Wireless also browsing the web for ideas for a simple, compact and easily transportable antenna for 70cm. In particular G3XBM's QRP web site at https://sites.google.com/site/g3xbmqrp3/antennas/70cm_moxon provided all the information required to build this antenna. All the materials are readily available from hardware stores and I have a good supply of the dark plastic cylinders – empty till roll formers from our shop! During a recent 70cm UKAC evening I went out /P with this antenna and a 7 element ZL Special. Everything I could hear on the 7 element antenna was copyable on the Moxon loop.



From The Contest Archives

The Society has entered many contests over the years and recently there has been renewed interest in the RSGB QRP Contest. In the next issue I hope to publish a write-up of this year's event. In the meantime, here are a couple of certificates which were awarded to the club in 2004 and 2005.



The following two photos were taken in the early 1980s when we held DF Hunts in the Forest of Dean

G4CIB Brian and G4HBV Tony take the initial bearings



The Post Mortem



Well - that's about it for this month. Do send me your articles to g4cib@outlook.com

73 and good DX de Brian G4CIB