

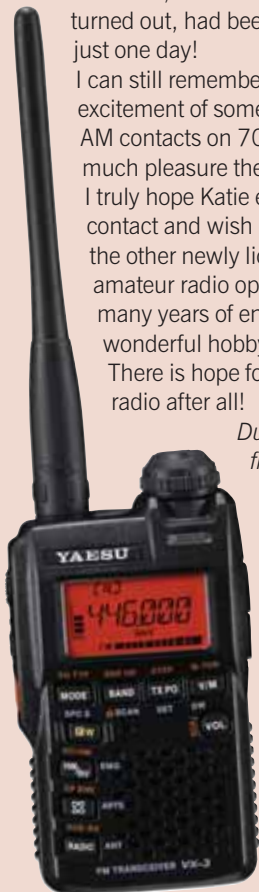
MEMORABLE QSO**Duncan Fisken, G3WZD**

During 36 years of operating as G8BDU, 9V1UG and G3WZD, I must have made literally thousands of QSOs, but one I made this week will remain memorable for a long time to come. Yesterday evening I heard a very young female voice make a rather tentative CQ call over my local 2 metre repeater. I returned her call and had a short but immensely enjoyable QSO with Katie, M6KTE. Katie, as it turned out, had been licensed for just one day!

I can still remember the excitement of some very early AM contacts on 70cm and how much pleasure they gave me. I truly hope Katie enjoyed our contact and wish her, and all the other newly licensed amateur radio operators, many years of enjoying this wonderful hobby.

There is hope for amateur radio after all!

Duncan is the first winner of a VX-3E hand-held radio, kindly donated by Yaesu UK. I hope he has many more 'first QSOs' with new licensees using the new radio. Ed.

**YAESU SPONSORSHIP****Keith, G0FEA**

I would like to congratulate Yaesu on making the bold move to sponsor a star letter each month in *RadCom*. As I am sure this entry will, I look forward to receiving my new handheld in the post soon!
Nice try Keith! Ed.

RSGB QSL BUREAU**Tom, GM4FDM**

Since taking over the GM4 series of callsigns for the Bureau, I have noticed a good number of incoming cards for GM4s that don't exist. Further checking reveals them to be actually G4s who have nipped across the Border for a contest or a holiday and have told their contacts, "please QSL via the Bureau"

forgetting the fact that they are operating from Scotland.

It would be a fair bet to suggest that lots more Gs visit GM during the summer months than vice versa.

To avoid Bureau work, would it be possible for UK amateurs operating from another call area for a holiday or a contest, to simply say, "QSL via my home call" then, of course, give your home call. Or if you do not intend to collect cards from the Bureau, just to say so at the time ... please!

HELP WITH BROADBAND INTERFERENCE**John G3UCQ**

I would like to record a word of thanks to Ken, G3SDW, a member of the EMC group. Ken was instrumental in helping clear up the following problem.

For sometime I had suspected that RF from my transceiver and Windom antenna was creating noise on my broadband line resulting in the line speed being reduced.

Using Routerstatslite from John Owen (www.vwlowen.co.uk/index.htm) I was able to establish that transmitting on 7MHz with my Windom antenna indeed produced a lot of noise that was causing the speed to drop. On G3SDW's recommendation, I bought six ferrite rings from the RSGB shop, strapped them into two groups of three and wound the cable from the router to the BT master socket around them. Problem solved.

Ken, G3SDW, answered my e-mails promptly and was pleased to discuss the problem over the phone. The members of the EMC group are the unsung heroes of the RSGB, so thank you to them and, especially, Ken.

PLANNING**Peter, 2E0BFZ and Carol Hinde, 2E0CJH**

We would like to thank Harold Scrivens, GOUGE and Keith Johnson, G1PQW for their recent assistance and guidance in obtaining permission from Sheffield Planning Dept to erect a small radio mast at our address. We followed the guidance offered in the downloaded booklet from the RSGB website. Out of seven immediate neighbours, we had only one objection. Many thanks.

500KHz BEACONS**John B Tuke, GM3BST**

Returning to 500kHz after 70 years (I was a 'sparker' at that time) and now living in a small flat, I am restricted to listening only. Last night, it took me more than 30 minutes to identify one call because the sender was using QRSS. As the signal faded out from time to time, it was a long time before a good signal corresponded with the part of the call I needed. (Murphy's Law again!)

If the callsign had been sent at 25 wpm over and over again, I would have completed

it in a few minutes.

QRSS no doubt has its place, but is it the best for beacons? I recall when trying to send a short message to a coast station under severe QSB conditions, the thing to do was send it quickly several times. If it worked then, it would work now.

ELECTRICKERY METERS AND GREEN THOUGHTS**Alan Betts, G0HIQ**

John makes some good points in the December edition of *RadCom*, but I thought I would add a couple.

In the winter, when the heating is on, virtually none of the power from the shack is wasted. Although the extra heat is usually modest, the room heating thermostat will react in having a shorter 'on' time. This does, of course, depend on its location but the extra heat does translate into comfort if not a fractionally lower heating cost.

Also, with outside shacks or unheated extensions, some heat is required to combat condensation. Such heat should be inside the equipment for maximum effect, exactly where it is in fact!

I still agree with John's comments regarding the Big Switch, but just pause a moment if the above circumstances are relevant to you.

POSITIVE VIEWS**Julian Moss, G4ILO**

I have often been moved to think that the only thing wrong with amateur radio is radio amateurs, and the December "Last Word" seems to be the proof of it. Letter after letter from amateurs complaining about others who, nevertheless, share a common interest in communication by radio. For what it's worth, many of the most enjoyable QSOs I have had have been with new M3 and 2x0 licensees. Perhaps that's because they still have a fascination for radio that appears to have become jaded in many old-timers?

I feel a little sorry for those who seem to need to regard holding an amateur radio licence as membership of an elite group to which others should not be admitted. Amateur radio is an incredibly diverse hobby and the only common factor is that we are given the privilege to transmit signals by radio. Some choose to use that privilege to compete in contests, others to try to work DX. Some are happy just to chat with locals, others to see how far they can get with a few watts or milliwatts of power. Some like CW. Some hate it. A few choose to use their privileges to develop software that assists in various ways to operate on the air. Others like to build equipment for which the trying-out on the air is just the final step before going on to a new project. There can be few other hobbies that encompass such diversity.

Most of us would be the poorer without the contributions to the hobby made by

others whose activities and specific interests are different from our own. So, as we enter a new year, would it be too much to ask fellow amateurs to resolve to show more tolerance towards fellow licence holders? And would it be too much to ask *RadCom* editors to desist from giving voice to those with chips on their shoulders, and to print more letters that give a more positive view of this fantastic hobby?

Mike Faulkner, G3IZJ

A hobby as diverse as amateur radio produces conflicting interests, which is reflected in 'Last Word' as folk defend or attack positions of their favourite facets of the hobby and sadly there is often intolerance for the other guy.

How about a series of letters with the theme My Great Moments In Ham Radio. Here are a some of mine to start the moments flooding in (I hope):

In the mid 50s, I operated from Port Lockroy Antarctica with the call VP8AZ, together with Brian 8BE and Arthur 8AA (later VP2VA). Between us, we stuck up a very real friendship with a local on 40 AM, LU5XE in Patagonia. Percy Masters was his name, born and bred in Argentina, he had a wonderful Hampshire accent as his parents had emigrated to Argentina in the early 1900s. They farmed sheep – the farm was at the Andes end of Lago and 50 miles from the nearest road. Sheep did that first part of the journey to market by barge. Percy had met all the great mountaineers of the day, went puma hunting when there was trouble with the sheep, seemed to have worked the world on 20 and was a natural gentleman in a very old fashioned way. We had a weekly sked and became very fond of a great guy.

Port Lockroy came to an end and, returning to UK, operation from digs was limited, certainly Patagonia could have been on the moon as far as my chances to hear or work. So for 10 years, DX was not possible. Then came marriage, SSB and a rotary dipole at 50 feet – in that order. DX was again possible and one magic day I heard the unmistakable voice of Percy on 10m and contact was made and continued until Percy became a silent key. He was a wonderful man and some of you will have worked him.

Arthur, VP8AA vanished without trace from the time we parted from the Base, some 20 years later going through a packet of received QSLs found I had a card from his manager for the new call of VP2VA, I had worked him in a pile up and a letter produced a sked, another great moment and that friendship lasted until illness removed a very skilled CW operator.

We all remember our first QSO, mine after several days of trying with my 10 watts to a crystal oscillator with an 1155 Rx with nil bandspread raised Phil, GW3IEQ for that first heart stopping moment in the hobby that has given so much joy over the years.

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Finally, if Brian Weeks, VP8BE, last heard of in Australia is out there somewhere perhaps another great moment will happen while I can still stand it!

PODCASTING

Alan Lovegreen, GM4FLX

On a visit to the Crianlarich Rally earlier this year with colleagues from the Paisley Club and while browsing the RSGB Book Stall, I noticed the book *The Greatest Podcasting Tips in the World* that you advertise in *RadCom* and, being curious to know what Podcasting is, I bought one. Having read the book, I thought that perhaps our Radio Amateur and Invalid Blind Club might use a Podcasting Station as a means of keeping in touch with members around the World. So, I read it aloud into my PC in MP3 form so that the RAIBC committee could listen and think about this.

With the recordings all safely made, I discussed the work with Steve Brookes, the Editor of the Greatest Tips series and e-mailed him a sample. Steve responded by saying that from now on all their books will be made into audio recordings and followed that by giving me permission to provide copies of my readings to any blind ham anywhere.

Within RAIBC, we are working out how to do this for our members but should any blind operator like a copy on CD, I will send one. Perhaps the best way to go about this would be for the application to be made through the operator's national society to me by e-mail to alan.lovegreen@ic24.net using the subject Podcasting.

To our sighted members, I would say that the book is a very good read that has led me to suggesting that our village might like to have an FM Community Radio Station that in turn might have a Podcasting Radio Station for the benefit of villagers who have moved away or who cannot listen at broadcast times. I have been amazed at the response I have had from neighbours with experience of public broadcasting here and overseas, from script writers and interviewers, players and musicians and the older generation who would like their broadcast radio to be closely associated with their day to day lives.

MENTOR PROGRAMME

Charles Wilkie, GOCBM

Further to Keith Castley's letter last month, our new Foundation Licensees at the Eagle

Radio Group face the same difficulties.

Richard, MORJP, suggested a mentor programme that begins with his, "Getting started for new Licences" booklet. Before they receive their new licence, Richard pops round to their home to advise on suitable radios, antennas, safe station layout and where to buy or scrounge these items. When their Licence arrives (excitement), he helps them connect up the radio, erect and tune the antenna and gives a first demonstration CQ call, using their new station.

He has found this programme very successful because it bridges the gap between the training course and the time when the new licensees are able to ask for advice on the air.

The "Getting started for new Licences" booklet can be found on www.eagleradiogroup.com website, please feel free to use it. I hope it is helpful to any new callsigns.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Richard Dimmock, G1HIJ

Reading Dave Harris' Guest Editorial and his comments on RAYNET and yellow Jackets (Health & Safety are a must in certain circumstances). Could I suggest the words like 'COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS' 'Amateur Radio Helping Others' be written on the jackets. Or wording in a similar vein.

That would take the (his words) 'I'm important' bit out. Yet it would get a message across to others. And, seeing a radio being used may even capture someone's imagination to want to learn more about amateur radio.

TEMPORARY AMATEUR RADIO LICENCES

Peter Cook, 9V1PC

The Singapore Amateur Radio Transmitting Society (SARTS) are pleased to advise that the Singapore licensing authority, the Infocommunications Development Authority (IDA), have recently announced that temporary Amateur licences are now available to radio hams visiting Singapore.

The application should be made three weeks before arrival in Singapore and the license is typically valid for a three months period using the callsign 9V1/Homecall. A fee of 50 Singapore dollars will apply. The application process and forms are posted on the IDA website www.ida.gov.sg (use this shortcut: <http://tinyurl.com/4e99na>).