

WATERSIDE SHORTWAVE CLUB NEWSLETTER. No 5 JANUARY 1981

Another two months has flown by, and we find ourselves in another year. Is this going to be the year when we are able to put up that world shrinking aerial and find out what it's like to be at the receiving end of a pile-up? Ah, surely this is the stuff that dreams are made of

But back to reality, G3GHY reports hearing the woodpecker on 40m, which is probably a reliable indication that conditions on the HF bands are not too good at the moment. Still we do hear that G4KCM recently worked his first ZL - nice one Clive, and our congratulations also go to Peter, G8UDL, who is now G4LDK.

HF BAND REPORT. By Colin Smith G3GHY

Mid Winter can be a rather depressing time of the year - not because of the weather of course which is rarely severe in these sceptered isles - but because of the DX limitations imposed by the lack of daylight in the Northern hemisphere. Most of the DX I've heard in the past month or so on 10, 15 & 20 has been between 1600 and 1800 hrs. But in that brief spell each day conditions have been consistent and I have regularly worked or heard the American West coast, South Africa and South America, although noise levels have generally been high. No doubt there is a second slot of equal length around dawn, but I have been unable to take advantage of it. According to the predictions, the sunspot activity is still high, and rarer DX should be flushed out in the Spring...Tra La

For new countries on my list, I did manage to work 9Y4VT (Trinidad), 8P6J (Barbados) and RG6G (Armenia) in the CQ WW DX contest at the end of November. More recently FG0fol/FS (St Martin) and PY0ZZ & PY0CW both in Fernando de Noronha Islands.

I've just monitored a QSO between N8JC and UA2EC which are two rare stations masquerading as nonentities. N8JC is in West Virginia - a notoriously difficult state to get to get for the Worked all States award (I am still short of North Dakota); and UA2 has a most familiar ring but in fact is the prefix for the republic of Kaliningradsk on the Baltic coast. Only the size of Hampshire, but it counts as a country for DXCC and QSO's and QSL's are hard to come by.

In the second Newsletter I mentioned A4XE in Qatar as having two operators. In the current Rad Comm's Month. On The Air column, I now see that Willie (the first op I heard) has accused Ron (DK3GI when at home) of pirating the call although both used the same QSL manager and operated from the same town, Ras Abu Fontas. Apparently Willie has informed ARRL and so QSL's from Ron may not be eligible for DXCC accreditation. I have the QSL from the alleged pirate, so thats a pity.

USA licensing has become a bit of a shambles over the past few years, due perhaps to the strain on F.C.C caused by CB license applications. Hams now change state without getting a new callsign, so that the area identifying figure becomes meaningless: it's all a bit dissapointing to contact a W7 only to find out that hes in Florida. Also the constant change to 4 character callsigns as hams pass the Extra class license exam is a real nuisance, and makes the USA callbook instantly outdated.

Finally, you may have heard 1A0KM on over 17/18th January, on both SSB and CW. The location is Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and is in the process of claiming DXCC status. QSL via I0MGM. Also EC is the new Spanish prefix for novice operators, CW only.

73's Colin

ANOTHER MEMBER'S STATION.

This month we meet our man from the forest, Ralph Hodgson - G3TBT

Ralph can pinpoint his initiation into the world of wireless to the day back in 1937 when his family acquired their first valved broadcast receiver. This meant that their crystal set became redundant and it was passed on to Ralph and his younger brother. It wasn't long before it was realised that one crystal set between two was one crystal set too few, so the boys started out on that familiar constructional path in search of improved selectivity and sensitivity. The necessary funds for these receivers were obtained by working in the local radio repair shop, and it was the owner of that shop who told them that those rather casual conversations they had heard on the SW bands came not from the normal commercial stations but from radio amateurs. A visit to a local amateur was arranged and the sight of a room full of radio gear left them well and truly hooked.

The period from then until 1964 when Ralph actually got his licence was divided into two. Firstly he spent two years doing his National Service in the Middle East when the Air Force kindly gave him lots of broken radios to play with, and then followed a somewhat less productive period (from a radio point of view) when he got married and raised a family. However, getting back to the plot, Ralph was living in Ringwood when the licence arrived, and he was able to put up a full half wave dipole for Top Band at 55ft. Not surprisingly he was able to get out rather well, and he found little need to venture onto the other bands. However, SSB was becoming popular and in 1969 when he moved into his present house at Lyndhurst he put up an all band trap dipole (still at 55ft of course!) and fed it with an HW 101. This combination has served him very well over the years and it always gives him great pleasure to get to the head of a pile-up to prove that you don't need a couple of kilowatts and beam to get amongst the DX.

His QTH is not very suitable for the VHF bands, but he does have a 4m ground plane, and indeed his first QSO on four was with our Roy, G3OZT. Ralph's latest interest has been with RTTY - you may remember that he provided the gear to go with Roy's discussion in July - and he has just added a solid state memory to send automatic messages.

For the future, Ralph has almost completed the conversion of a Pye Westminster to 2m for both the shack and car and his next project is likely to take him into the world of QRP.

I HEAR A KING. By John Gay

On 16/12/80 at 1940 Hrs on 20m I chanced upon a QSO between a EA station and HM King Hussein of Jordan - JY1. The Spaniard was baffled by the absence of any suffix letters and several times asked why there were none. He seemed very dubious about the whole matter and I think he considered JY1 to be a pirate. The QSO ended without the EA station knowing just who Hussein of Amman was.

As for me, I hope I am lucky enough to get an acknowledgement of my 'earwiggling' from His Majesty.

FINALE. Just enough space to pass the editors thanks to the contributors, and can I have the material for the next newsletter by mid-March please. Also the answer to last month's quiz, plus details of how to apply for the prizes can be found on the next page. Bye Graham Walmsley.