

HARCNEWS

The Journal of

Horsham Amateur Radio Club

Est. 1938



G4HRS

August 2007

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Notes From The Editor

Welcome to the half year of 2007, doesn't time go fast! It seems like only recently I started producing HARCNEWS! The updated membership list has been sent along with this journal and do let me know if there are any omissions or errors that have occurred.

Several club members are believed to be busy producing articles for this magazine on subjects such as DRM, how I got into the hobby and operating techniques which I am sure will prove interesting reading. If you have something to write about please do so and if possible send any photographs or diagrams along too.

As I have mentioned before I am producing some more articles but hope to be able to print some from the club members in the meantime. Following on from last month's review on DAB radio perhaps you went and bought a receiver for this platform; if so tell us about it. If you don't send any articles in I cannot print them if you see what I mean!

David G4JHI

Please send contributions for the September edition of HARCNEWS to the editor by 18th August. Items received after the deadline will be held over until a later edition.

All input is subject to suitability and available space.

For items sent by email please send to this address:

harc.news@g4jhi.co.uk

July Meeting Review:

The Peter 1st Island dx-спедиition

by

Bryn G3SWC



The talk was about 3Y0X, operating from Peter 1st Island in February 2006. The island's callsign is one of the rarest on the planet for reasons that will soon become obvious! The island is in the Antarctic: it is covered in snow, has steep sides so no animals can land there, there is no vegetation, and more people have been in space than visited the island.

It was discovered by the

Russians during the reign of Peter the Great, hence the name, but claimed by the Norwegians later. It is uninhabited. The whole expedition from planning onward was filmed and a very professional DVD produced from some of the material.

Planning started in Atlanta, Georgia and took 3 years. Twenty-two people went on the trip. Part of the planning was to make a chart to see how many stations could operate simultaneously without too much interference, and the result was 9.

Therefore there were 9 people operating, 9 sleeping and 4 cooking etc. at any

one time. Charles A Varley was part of the contingent; his claim to fame is that he has set foot on 618 out of the World's 673 countries. A 40-foot container was obtained to ship all the equipment. Everything they would need had to be brought, and returned, because no trace could be left on the island. They flew to Chile and took a Dash-7 flight to King George Island.

From there it was a charter vessel, the DAP Mares, with the final leg by helicopter. The weather turned nasty before all the equipment could be transferred, so the operators had to eat with their fingers as cutlery, plates etc were still on the vessel. Eventually, 3 days later, they were able to get all the kit landed and set up 3 pre-fabricated huts: op A, op B and meet/greet/eat.

As to the weather, it was summer there and temperatures were -10c to 0c. Previous expeditions were in 1987 and 1994. It was noticeable that the island was much warmer this time. The snow was deep and crisp and even in 1994, but now it was almost melting and the operators became wet and uncomfortable. Operating was on CW, RTTY, SSB and FM. The ISS was contacted, and 83 contacts made by E-M-E (moonbounce).

Switched vertical 2-element dipoles were used for CW and beams for SSB. On 160m, a Battle Creek Special was used, with a backup ground-mounted 3 element wire beam. Of course there were no trees to help! Some CW operators used PCs to send but we saw one using a bug key. As the weather was unpredictable, it was decided that one of the operating cabins should be dismantled and flown back to the vessel.

At the end of the two weeks, the rest of the station was taken down. However before all the equipment could be removed, the weather changed and the chopper was grounded, or whatever term should be used for not being able to fly!

Three people were left on

the island and had to make their own temporary shelter. An emergency supply of food had been left. Everyone was quite worried at the time as to whether they could survive before the weather cleared up. Luckily they all made it.

There was a short 'out-takes' section at the end of the DVD, which caused some amusement which cannot adequately be written up. Finally Bryn showed a breakdown of the QSO data: how many contacts were made to various regions in different modes on the available bands.

This is easily obtainable on the Internet, and is worth a look at. This DVD was shown at the last RSGB HF convention. They were aiming at 8-10 thousand QSOs per day. Ultimately 86,888 QSOs were made.

G3ZBU

For Sale

I have just 'saved' 50 new unused Yuasa 12v 12a batteries from the scrap man..

£5 each for club funds...

Let me know if you want some, otherwise Junk Sale beckons...

Cheers de G4LRP

Club Nets by Tony G3NPF

HARC runs two weekly nets, one on 2m and the other on 80m. The 2m net is run by Ron G3PYC and starts at 2130 hrs, clock time, on 144.725MHz every Saturday evening. The 80m net is run by Tony G3NPF and starts at 1000 hrs, clock time, on 3722kHz (+/- QRM) every Sunday morning and also on Christmas morning. This net is called the BADNET (Billingshurst and District Net) because it was originally started over 50 years ago by a group of operators who all lived in and around Billingshurst.

We have kept the name for historical and nostalgic reasons. Full details and histories of HARC and the BADNET can be found in the "Odds and Ends" section of Tony's web-site at URL <http://homepages.tesco.net/~a.wadsworth> or URL www.qsl.net/g3npf. Attendance on both HARC nets is becoming more and more sparse and it would be great if more club members put in an appearance. Where are all the newly licenced M3s?

Having got your licences, why not use them? For that matter, where are the 30 or so other licenced members? Both HARC nets are very different from many that can be heard on the air where conversation is limited to the prevailing weather and the ailments of the participants. On our nets, topics are many and varied, ranging from the highly technical to the trivial and banal.

Don't be afraid that operating inexperience, age, gender, technical knowledge or any other factor will be held against you; all are welcome to join in. The "Station Masters" appreciate that nets are not everybody's cup of tea, but it is only once a week at most. Even if you come on once a month, it would be better than nothing.

These nets form part of general club activities and, who knows, you might actually get to enjoy talking to other club members about subjects of mutual interest.

HARC Summer Evening 2m Foxhunt

On the evening of Thursday 12th July the HARC Summer Evening Foxhunt took place, I use the word summer here to indicate mid year as the summer has not really got going yet this year; well at least it was not raining. The hunters gathered at the usual starting location in Mannings Heath ready for the first of my 2 minute transmissions at 10 minute intervals.

I had taken a chance that the first transmission from my lair would be received at a usable strength at the start point. A few minutes after the first 7:30pm transmission ended Paul G4TMC came on the air to advise me that there were 6 hunters out there looking for me.

They were G4TMC, G3OGP, G4EFO, G3SWC and Eva,

(Below) The winner Mick G4EFO



G3ZBU and a team from Mid Sussex (Bob G0BUX and Roger G7VBR). From my lair on the Southdowns Way just to the west of the northbound carriageway of the A24 south of the Washington roundabout, I was happy that all was well.

After the first hour I was still on my own and only had two cars, 5 bicycles and 1 horse passed me, I was beginning to wonder where they had all got to, but just before the 8:40 transmission, a very out of breath Mick G4EFO came jogging up the hill towards me.



(Above) The first round!

Just before the next transmission Alister G3ZBU came jogging up the hill as well. Smart move here, both Mick and Alister had left their cars in the small car park on the southbound carriageway and had taken their life in their hands and crossed the A24 to reach me.

Joint third on the scene were both Robin G3OGP and Bryn G3SWC at 8:56pm. Paul G4TMC then came in at 20:59 unfortunately Bob G0BUX and Roger G7VBR just failed to

reach me in time. After the evenings proceedings we all adjourned to the Frankland Arms in the village of Washington and were joined by our friends from Mid Sussex and Tony G3NPF and Anne for a swift half or two.



(Above) Round two!

1st Mick G4EFO at 8:40pm

2nd Alister G3ZBU at 8:49pm

=3rd Robin G3OGP, Bryn G3SWC and Eva at 8:56pm

5th Paul G4TMC ay 8:59pm

DNF Bob G0BUX and Roger G7VBR

73 until next time, G4LRP alias the fox!



(Left)
The Jogger!

Web Trawl

Many computer users will be familiar with the popular compression software 'Winzip' but this is not a free program and is in fact shareware. After the evaluation period you are expected to pay and register to continue using it although it will still function with some annoyances. There is an alternative which is free called Zipcentral. This works in a similar way to Winzip and includes a facility to make self extracting files.

<http://zipcentral.iscool.net>

You may like to find an old version of Winzip particularly if you have a slow pc in the shack and you can by visiting

www.oldversion.com/program.php?n=winzip

A Buyers Guide to Low Cost Two Way Radios on the Internet

Unfamiliar names to the radio scene are arriving at cheap prices in the form of Jington, Puxing, Wouxun, Linton and Weierwei and Abell and are doing their best to get the western radio amateur interested in their products. Although not "household" names we endeavour to find out if they are as good as Icom and Yaesu or perhaps a piece of junk!

A search on eBay will find these two way radios and might appeal to those just starting off on the air or on a limited budget. There are a number of radios on sale that model themselves around the big brand name equivalent and The Abell company even reuses the old Kenwood instruction booklet!

Some of these radios on sale are clones of popular commercial two way radios but why buy the clone radios when you could have the original brand name, the answer being the price difference. So is the quality any good? Again, decide for yourself although several different brands have been put through their paces and all have been surprisingly good!

Some of the radios are sold as cheap as £25 including postage for a fully functional 2m or 70cm radio! A number of guides point out that these radios do not comply with FCC and CE approvals, meaning that they cannot legally be used on a commercial PMR system in the UK or elsewhere in Europe.

Whilst this is true the vast majority of purchasers are radio amateurs who can legally use non-type approved equipment (with the exception of M3 foundation class licence holders). The sound, audio quality and signal strength in most cases has been as good if not better than some ham gear.

It is worth noting that whilst illegal, many users are

buying these cheap radios and using them on the Euro licence free band, PMR-446. It is worth scanning the main frequency ranges that these radios cover because it is a bit of an eye opener to see how many people are breaking the law, some without even knowing! Generally two types of radio are sold; VHF and UHF. So far none have been any dual band variants but given time it is sure they will appear.

Some of the older models from a couple of years ago only had limited coverage of certain bands so it is important that you do not buy these as coverage starts too high for the 70cm ham radio band, assuming that is what you are going to use the radio for. The VHF radios usually cover 136-174 MHz and the UHF ones 400-480 MHz although there are some that go even higher than this but remember that the TV broadcast band is above 470 MHz in the UK so you definitely want to stay away from there!

Further details can be found on this website:

www.transmission1.co.uk

Submitted by G3ZBU

SSB Field Day 1st/2nd September 2007

If you would like to take part and have not already volunteered come along to our August club meeting and let David G4FQR or Alister G3ZBU know. Even if you are only available for a short period that doesn't matter. Set up, operate or just log! Contest runs from 1400 Saturday to 1400 Sunday clock time.

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Radio Diary

Aug 2nd, Club Night: The Mechanics of Orbits - Ron Polley
G3PYC

Aug 9th, Committee Meeting - QTH of G3ZBU

Aug 12th, Flight Refuelling Hamfest - Near Wimborne

Aug 16th, Social Evening - The Windmill - Littleworth, Partridge
Green

Aug 26th, Milton Keynes Rally - Bletchley

All above times are BST

Committee/Club Meetings and Socials start at 8pm