

HORSHAM AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

# *HARCNEWS*

## *Coming Shortly*

May 2nd Club Evening The Best Thing Since Breadboard  
by David Jones G4FQR

May 16th Social Evening The Fountain Ashurst

Jun 1/2nd Club Event HF (CW) NFD contest

## *May 2002*

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# *CQ Contest*

It's contest time again, well not quite but it's getting close for HF NFD on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. HARC has secured our usual site for HF NFD courtesy of G3OGP.

This year we will be entering with a single antenna and in true field day style will be operating the station from batteries (no generator noise to keep the site owners awake at night!).

We hope to put the station together during the Saturday morning ready for the contest start at 15:00 UTC. So if you want to lend a hand and operate (yes this is CW only contest!) or put the station together and log for the CW ops, contact Adrian G4LRP on 01403 733087 or e-mail [adrianboyd@avaya.com](mailto:adrianboyd@avaya.com)

If you could respond sooner rather than later this would help us to arrange an operating rota.

On the subject HF contest HARC are intending to operate HF SSB Field Day on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September.

We are some way off September but if you want to try your hand at

operating a high power HF station from the middle of a field (no QRM problems) then again let the committee know, we would be glad of your support. You will get a reminder in the July edition of HARC news complete with the usual operator/logger time request sheet.

On 16<sup>th</sup> June it's the Practical Wireless 2m Low Power contest. Unfortunately this contest clashes with the new Epsom Rally on the same date. So we are unsure if HARC will be putting in an entry. If you want to have a go please contact Adrian (as above) before the end of April and we will try and locate a local site and have a go. This is an excellent contest to dip your toe into and get the feel of contest operating, and during the summer months you can work some very respectable 2m DX with modest power.

Don't forget we can only take part in contests if we have the operators and loggers, if we can't muster the support we can't run the contests.

73's from the HARC Committee.

## *April Meeting: Homebrew*

As usual, there were plenty of home-brewed items. Tony, G3NPF started by showing a germanium power supply that he built more than a few years ago as an apprentice.

The design was published in RadCom ( or was it the RSGB Bulletin ??? ) and needed a specially wound transformer which the relevant department at work managed to wind after the usual banter of “you young apprentices think you own the place, want stuff made for home projects; it will be ready tomorrow!”.

Tony won first prize in a homebrew competition at the Southend Club, as it was superbly built; each component being clearly marked.

Tony’s second item was a small box with two slide switches inside and audio connectors on the outside to connect either packet/rtty or psk31 interfaces to his hf or vhf rigs.

A cunning mechanical link in the form of a glass fibre board con-

nects the toggle bit of one switch to the semi-sawn-off toggle of the other. Two switches were found necessary after mains hum was found to be caused on transmit by the ground leads being connected together. This was solved by switching both audio signals AND grounds, hence two switches.

David, G4FQR brought along quite a few items. First was a selection of watercolours he painted at evening classes. They were very good indeed, however the teacher complained that the roofs in one picture were of the wrong colour to match the sky!

We then saw an audio attenuator constructed so that his pc soundcard could be accurately calibrated and subsequently used as an audio spectrum analyser.

David’s third method hf transceiver now has the addition of a narrow i.f. strip with a crystal filter for cw use. The third method suffers from a notch in the middle of the audio passband, so as

the bandwidth is reduced, your received CW falls into the notch which is no good. (Some people think this is the best place for CW!)

David's last item was the discovery that some library books, such as books about radio, have a small tuned circuit embedded in a label. However books about painting do not seem to have these circuits. The circuit appears to resonate at 8MHz. David made a small tuned circuit using a blown 13A ceramic fuse as a coil former.

This also resonates at 8MHz but the Q is not particularly high so maybe fuses may be lossy at hf? We hope that David will not get arrested at the library if he accidentally leaves the fuse in his pocket!

Adrian, G4LRP brought along his automatic ATU. This kit came from the US and is more convenient to buy than sourcing all the different components, building capacitors, modifying relays etc as per the PICATUNE. Instead of a long coil, there were about 10 toroidal inductors relay switched.

To remember settings, the unit needs a permanent supply of volts. It has a manual mode which was found useful on Top Band. A remote front panel can be connected. The box looked very smart and was

completed by a two needle SWR meter. Adrian has modified the aerial connectors to get a better match on end fed aerials.

Alister, G3ZBU built the iambic morse keyer from a design in the current issue of RadCom. Apart from one resistor change in series with the low battery LED, it was built as described and worked first time. The software needed a small tweak but this was probably due to different versions of assembler software. Standby current is so low that an on/off switch is not required.

Another item was an LCD screen with white LED backlight. Normally LCD screens of quarter VGA size have a small fluorescent tube running on 700 volts or so, but they have the disadvantages of limited life, fragile and not dimmable.

Finally he had been experimenting with Compact Flash memory cards, and had obtained an IDE hard disc bus interface card from the Tucson Amateur Radio Packet Group. An Olivetti 486 pc ( from a previous junk sale ) had its hard disc replaced by the CF card.

To prove it was indestructable, the PC was violently dropped on the desk while running. Please do not try this at home with your computer!

# *Linux*

## *by Helen Watt 2E0AVH*

I loaded Mandrake 7.0 on my computer and it was great, easy to install and it didn't crash! WOOO!

I had some trouble with a lack of applications for it but it worked. When the computer starts up it asks you whether you would like to run Linux or Windows (this is called a dual boot system). Linux has a different file system to DOS/Windows so files on one system don't appear to be visible by the other.

Then after installing Worms Armageddon windows crashed ( it was unrelated to Linux.) I then reinstalled Windows which destroyed the dual boot start-up However, even after I had reinstalled Linux, the boot up would not work. I can get into Linux by going into the root directory and typing "Linux" which works for me.

Whilst re-decorating my desktop I came across a utility to install the applications off the CD-ROM, I was delighted, and

installed every package I thought looked vaguely useful. I also learnt how to change the user icons, which are little penguins with different hairstyles.



I was really pleased because I could now play my CDs whilst experimenting further. There were also plenty of funny, simple games to play.

I am finding Linux challenging, my modem doesn't seem to have a Linux driver for it The Internet is a dead loss so far but I have posted a few pleas for help. I have discovered that the solution appears to be... "Buy a new modem".

I have been looking at reviews on Mandrake 7.0 and I have been reading "Rebel Code – Linux and the Open Source Revolution" by Glyn Moody.

Dad (ZBU) bought me “The Linux Magazine” which had a CD ROM included but I and had no success installing anything as I needed to read the readme.txt files – I had no text editor before I found the package installer and I was not having much success on trying to view it in the terminal

emulator. I will try that again, this time with a text editor at hand to read the readme.txt files. I am pretty confident that I will be able to succeed. However, time is not quite so abundant as it was, it is coming up to parent’s evening so homework has become more of a priority.

73&88

Helen 2E0AVH

## *Events for the diary to mention.*

### **May 4th and 5th Sandown Radio Controlled Model Event.**

Some spectacular flying displays especially of model helicopters, which often fly upside down and trim the grass with their main rotor blades. This year could be the debut of jet engine powered models for the first time.

**May 11th Windmills on the Air.** Jack and Jill will be operational and no doubt many more.

**June 15th** setup day **Vallance Byways Classic Vehicle Show.**

**June 16th Epsom Rally and Low Power 2m VHF Contest.**

**June 22nd/23rd Vallance Byways Event.** Last year was great fun; HARC were operating on HF on the Saturday. Of special interest to the hon sec was an excellent beer tent. After visiting that, he won some prizes on the Mercury FM stand with ( a lot of ) help from 2E0AVH!

**June 30th Longleat. and World Cup Final?**