

Newsletter

Chesham & District Amateur Radio Society

www.g3mdg.org.uk

January 2021

We meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at the Ashley Green Village Hall, Ashley Green, HP5 3PP

Welcome

Yet another year clocked up. I can remember the Millennium when people from our street popped in to wish us well, it only seemed like yesterday, the older you get, the faster time seems to fly! Here's hoping your Christmas and New Year celebrations went as well as they could given the circumstances we find ourselves in.

It was good to see the COVID-19 vaccine being rolled out during December, hopefully by Spring we may have some form of normality returning to our lives.

My thanks to Jeremy and James for their articles and Malcolm for the certificates this month.

Please familiarise yourselves with the 2020 AGM notes in preparation for this months AGM.

While working FT8 I got a **M0IHY QSY JT9** message, something I had not seen before, changing to JT9 I found an entirely different world, very slow but fascinating, something else I've learned amongst the many facets of the digital world.

Bryan M0IHY

In this Issue

- 2 Chairmans Ramble
- 2 Editors Muse
- 3 Yes, 2 into 1 does go...
- 5 Snakes and Ladders...
- 6 Top 10 FT8 Operating Tips
- 7 2020 AGM notes
- 10 Doppleganger?
- 11 Contest Corner - everything contesting
- 15 'Air Miles', how far have we gone?
- 17 Air Miles - End of year analysis
- 18 Any other business

Contact details

Chairman - Jeremy Browne (G3XZG) Secretary - Angie Page (M6WTL)
Treasurer - Matt Whitchurch (M1DTG) Editor - Bryan Page (M0IHY)

All the above are members of the committee and can be contacted on cdars_committee@googlegroups.com

Chairman's Ramble

Yesterday was the shortest day of the year and somehow it's good to get that out of the way. Often at this time of year, it's customary to do a review of what we have done as a club in 2020, but I think I can do that at the AGM, and instead would rather think about what we might do in 2021.

First though I have an apology to make. Some of you may have noticed a shocking omission from my last ramble in the December newsletter. I failed completely to mention beer. I am sorry and it won't happen again.

So next year. We are still looking for new members of the committee, or replacements for those of us who are happy to remain. In particular we need someone to take on the role of secretary, but would also like to extend the committee to 5 members again, in order to spread the work. Volunteers please.

Secondly I look forward very much to being able to meet again and start to make good use of our new QTH at Ashley Green. It has a great deal of scope to become the base for most of the things we do, including some contests. We need to organise storage there, but now have permission for that and once the virus allows, can clear the cupboard at the Whitehill centre.

Next, let's hope that things will have improved sufficiently by May to enable us again to run a station from Brill windmill. Although we made good use of the callsign last year, actually operating from the mill is good fun, it's cold fun, and you can always warm up in the Pheasant pub close by.

Let's also hope that we can again take part in SSB field day, as far away as September. A note to myself, if I stay there overnight next time, find a way of keeping my trousers from stiffening up in the cold overnight. It would be great to continue being joined by more new members and so far this year, there are 5 I think.

We are always looking for suggestions of topics and speakers to cover them in what is an immensely varied hobby, and only becoming more varied with the introduction of data modes. Please if you have any ideas, let us know.

There should also be a continuing improvement in conditions on the DX bands. It would be good to start working VK and ZL again on the key.

Finally, by the time this newsletter comes out, it will be too late to wish everyone a happy Christmas, but I can still wish you all a happy, prosperous and well-vaccinated new year.

73, Jeremy.

The Editors Musings

I've been rather busy this month with FT8 and have been working remotely from the front room (far too cold in the shack). What I've noticed this month is how 17m and 30m have yielded excellent results with Indonesia, Japan, Canada, USA, Brazil, Cuba, Asiatic Russia and Kenya among the many QSO's I made whilst 40m and 20m seemed to be more European than anything else. I even tried to get back to ZL3RIK (New Zealand) some 11,784 miles away, Australia (forgotten his callsign) was on the waterfall too but my 50 Watts just didn't stretch that far, maybe time to look for just a little more power!

With going into tier 4 I expect your plans for Christmas have been put on hold. Our Christmas tree is going to remain in the front room until restrictions allow us to go out, at that point we're going to have a party!

Whatever you do, stay safe, stay healthy and above all stay sane.

Bryan M0IHY

Yes, 2 into 1 does go...

Getting my Yaesu FT-847 onto digital modes proved eventful. Unfortunately the XGGComms unit didn't work out and I ended up purchasing a Signalink unit, which works fine albeit with a strange configuration, using the external speaker socket for the 'sound' input and microphone socket for the 'output', this left me with the issue of having to swap leads in and out of the microphone socket to work digital and phone modes, a plan was needed.

eBay to the rescue, 3 8-pin plugs and chassis mounts, 1 8-pole 2-way slide switch, an aluminium project box and some ptfе covered wire were the components I needed.

Plugs and chassis mounts	£9.45
2-way slide switch	£2.00
Aluminium box	£6.75
Wire	£4.60

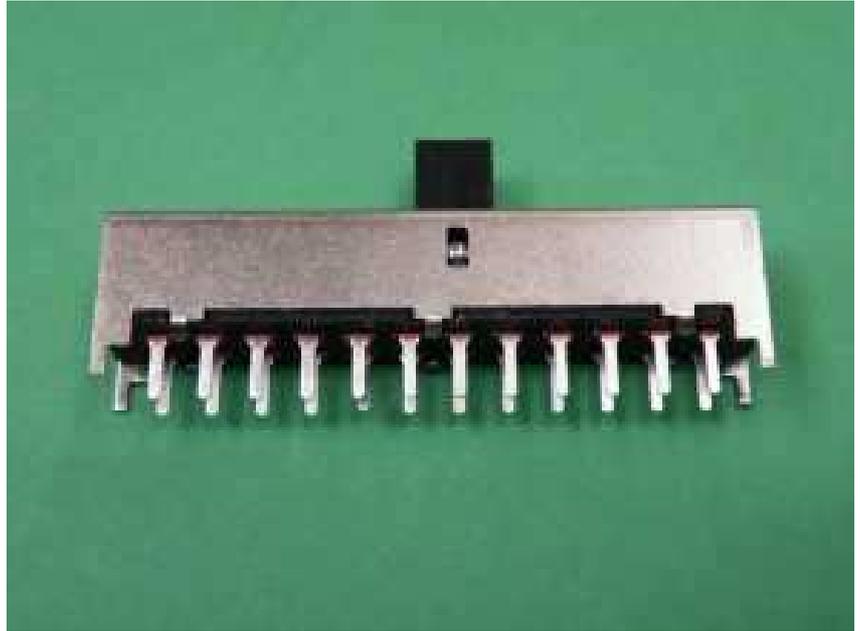
The build was quite simple although I had to mount the chassis sockets with the washer on the outside of the case due to the back of the sockets being very close to the 2-way switch, "measure twice and cut once" as they say!

Wiring and testing took me about 4-hours from start to finish.



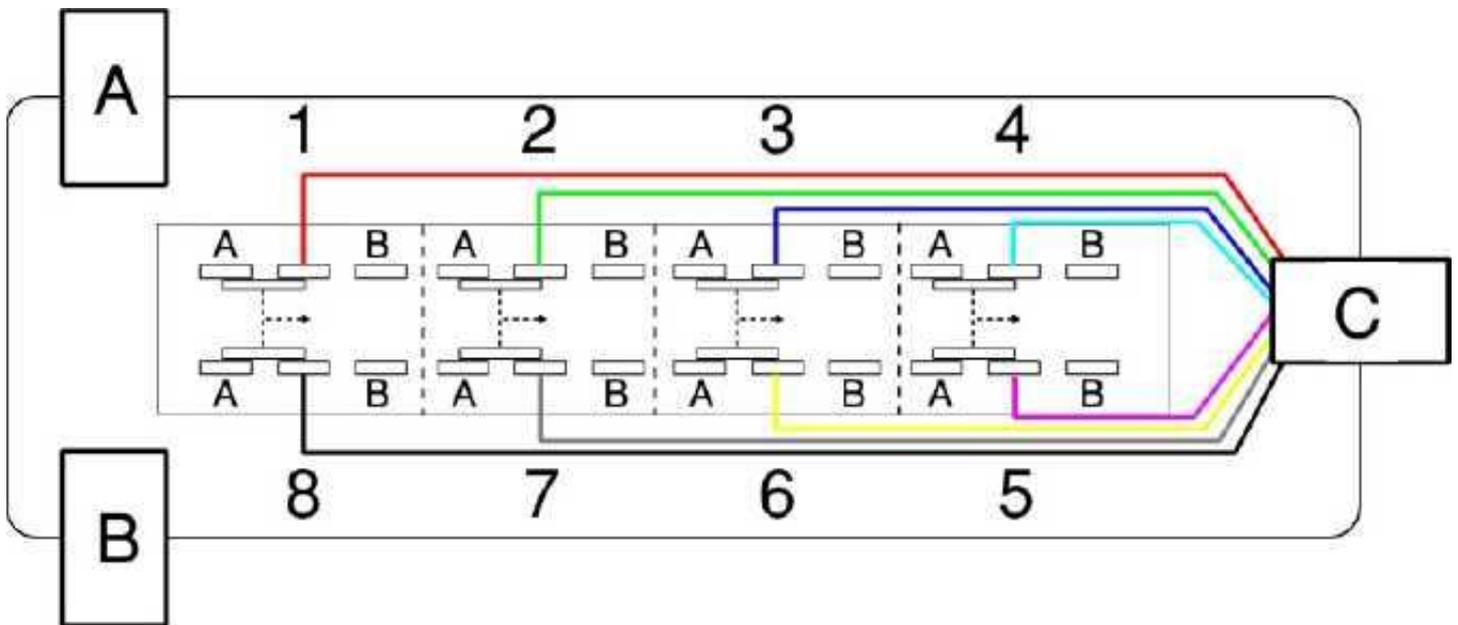
Here you can see the box with the Signalink box plugged in on the left, the microphone on the right and the far lead going into the microphone socket on the Yaesu FT-847. The stereo jack goes into the headphones socket on the rig, this is for digital modes (it has to be removed for microphone work) - I've done it this way to prevent me having to plug into and unplug from the back of the rig. The slider switch on the top of the box switches between digital and microphone, the results so far have been excellent.

Yes, 2 into 1 does go...



Above left - the finished item and right - the 8-pole, 2-way switch.

Below is the wiring diagram of the switch to input ("A" and "B") and output ("C") chassis mount sockets. I found it easier to wire socket "C" first followed by "A" and "B".



A - SignalLink input, B - Microphone input, C - Output to microphone socket

This schematic shows the common connections (coloured) to the output socket ("C") on the right. All 'A' connections go to their respectfully numbered input "A" pins and 'B' connections to their respectfully numbered input "B" pins. I was advised to put ferrites on the input and output, these will be added when I get them although as the box is metal and continuous connection between "A", "B" and "C" connections and the rig's chassis it seems to be working okay.

Could this be done cheaper, probably, you could use a plastic project box and put ferrites on each of the 3 leads.

Bryan M01HY

Snakes and Ladders...

I recently had a slightly surreal QSO with an Italian station on CW. This was on 10 MHz and I was surprised when he asked if I knew my maidenhead locator, as that is not often used on HF. I did, and he explained that he needed it for a game of snakes and ladders run by EU CW. Apparently squares can be either snakes or ladders, or just normal squares and greater London, particularly JO1 is usually a snake. Ladders in the UK, tend to be in Scotland where less people live I guess.

This got me thinking, with Christmas being the traditional time for family games, whether any other games could be adapted for amateur use.

One possibility is Cluedo. I could picture a game in which G3ZZZ was found murdered in the shack, using an AR88. There are a number of flaws in this idea of course. All radio amateurs would be murdered in the shack. Suspects would be limited to those who could actually lift an AR88 and anyway the prime suspect would always be the ham's partner. So I discarded that idea.

Monopoly is another possibility. You could progress round the board with rarer DX countries having higher value. Say France and Germany could be at the beginning, graduating to some of the more esoteric islands rather than Park Lane and Mayfair.

Devising Community Chest and Chance cards would not be too much of a problem.

Examples.

You are stuck in a pile-up trying to work a station in Uganda, miss three turns.

You are informed by another amateur that your signal is spreading, go two squares back, while you fail to find out why and decide to carry on.

You increase power to the point where the nearest lamppost comes on when you key up, go forward 3 squares.

You erect an antenna without realising that it requires planning permission. Either miss two turns, or just keep going, but be aware that if you do, your opponents can choose when you miss the turns.

But then I hit the problem of what to do with the corners. Go to gaol didn't seem appropriate somehow, nor free parking.

In the end I decided that the only thing to do was to try and invent a game. This would be called "full licence" and players would compete to move round a board, first obtaining a foundation, then intermediate, then finally a full amateur licence.

Various pitfalls could be introduced, such as, in current circumstances, the internet failing part-way through your exam, the antenna that you erect on getting your foundation licence, collapsing on to the garden shed, Your neighbours going on to a government website and reporting that you are contacting aliens, etc.

There would of course be quicker progress for those who learned CW.

Sadly that is as far as my invention has gone at the moment and I don't think I will be suggesting to the RSGB that it is a good way of marketing the hobby.

I must find out more about this Snakes and Ladders game though.

Jeremy G3XZG

At the time of going to press this article could be included in this newsletter, it is now owned by Practical Wireless and is therefore copyrighted, should you wish to see the article go to:

<http://www.hamblog.co.uk/top-10-ft8-operating-tips/>

CHESHAM & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY

MINUTES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EXHIBITION ROOM MEETING STARTED 22/01/2020 20:10

WHITE HILL CENTRE, WHITE HILL, CHESHAM, HG5 1AG

1. Apologies

Denis G4TBG
Terry G0VFW
Matt M1DTG

2. Members Present

Jeremy G3XZG
Angie M6WTL
Bryan M0IHY
Graham G0MKI
Dave G8FMC
Malcolm G3ZNU
Phil G8BLB

3. Minutes from 2019 AGM

Read and Approved

4. Matters Arising

None

5. Chairman's Report

Jeremy would like to thank all the members attending tonight and all the members of the committee for their work and commitment throughout 2019.

We had the sad news of the loss of one of our members this year, Guy was just beginning to attend the club again after being made redundant in Jan 2019. The last time he attended was the Fun in a Field day in June. He was very much a loner and his family appreciated the attendance from the club at his funeral in September, we made a donation to the charity in lieu of flowers.

Jeremy gave an explanation for item (b) in the items to be discussed, we need to consider a change to the constitution as we have made some members from other clubs temporary members for contests, in order to do this we would need to hold an EGM, more will be said later.

6. Treasurer's Report

Matt was unable to attend tonight but a copy of the treasures report was available and had been circulated on the google members group.

We also need to get Matt to reimburse Dave G8FMC for items bought for the club,

2020 AGM notes

7. Secretary's Report

Angie gave her 1st secretary's report outlining the challenge she has felt in an eventful year.

She mentioned some of the items that we took part in on club nights including The Bletchley Park Story, Operating on 13cms, Military Radio, Radio Caroline and the table top sale to name but a few.

There was also the two field days that we did in June and September. Apologies for not having the Windmills on the Air due to the Mill not being available as it was having a face lift, we hope to take part this year.

We also had the successful De Havilland Trip that was arranged by Vic Gerhardi from the Aylesbury club, something we hope to repeat.

Along with the annual quiz we had a reasonably successful year.

Angie also confirmed that Bryan M0IHY has been accepted as an assessor for the planned training.

Angie also appreciated the members who showed their appreciation for her first year.

8. Election of new committee.

Graham M0MKI stood down from the committee.

The following were voted onto the committee as follows :-

Chairman	Jeremy G3XZG
Treasurer	Matt M1DTG
Secretary	Angie M6WTL
Member	Bryan M0IHY

Proposed	Dave G8FMC
Seconded	Graham M0MKI

9. Items up for discussion:-

a) Proposed change of club nights to 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, it has been agreed that we would give this a try as parking may be better, we are also going to try and book the Tiered Room on a more permanent basis as we feel this would be more suitable for talks and presentations.

We have said that we would have a general meeting on the 2nd Wednesday and make the 4th Wednesday the Main/Principle meeting for talks etc.

b) Possible change to the constitution as to qualifying to membership (for discussion as any alterations will need to be voted for at an EGM).

The current constitution will need to be amended if we would like to attract younger members as at the moment there is a restriction on membership to over 18's and student members to be under 25 and in at least 20 hours of education.

We would like to have it, in writing, the description of Associate members to cover the members from Northampton who are helping towards CDARS points in any contest that they are not participating in themselves. It is the committees intention to look into this in more detail and then call an EGM in order for the members to vote.

c) Recruitment of new members / promotion of the club.

We as a club need to make some positive moves to promote the club to attract more members. As the club has a healthy budget and we do not require any more equipment at present, we feel we could put this money to good use in the promotion of the club.

We feel that maybe the age group to target would be from the middle age to older age groups, this will include those that maybe have family that have flown the nest leaving them with more time on their hands, or the retired group that may want to pick up an old hobby.

We are looking into doing some flyers to place into library's, community centres, local groups etc. We also thought as a club that maybe putting something into the local papers, magazines might also be a way to go, Angie will look into this and find out what sort of costs the club would incur. One group to approach could be U3A's, Jeremy may be able to point us in the right direction.

The club will look into spending some money on a RSGB poster, there is also a problem with Chesham not appearing in the RSGB search when looking for local clubs. Bryan will approach Mike Brewer of the RSGB to see if he can find out why.

We also need to see if we can get any links from the website to email Angie as the secretary, along with any group enquiries, to be changed as they currently go to other people. We also need to bring the site up to date with events etc.

d) Training

The club intention is to start running a Foundation Course in the spring, Jeremy will get this into Radcom.

Bryan is now the qualified instructor and Jeremy will do the CW, Terry G0VFW has said he will help as much as he can along with Angie.

It appears CDARS are listed as holding training on RSGB but Terry is listed as trainer with his phone number, this will need changing along with CDARS Google group so we need to set up a new admin.

e) Ideas for future newsletters.

It has been agreed that the club will pursue the idea of a monthly newsletter to include Chairman's Corner, Club Night Info, Contests, including which ones we intend to take part in to name but a few.

Bryan will email the contest info so members can see which ones we intend to take part in and give members a chance to say which ones they can participate in.

Current results are:

Chesham AFS Series, 7th out of 29.
Northampton – UKAC we will offer our support.
Northampton 2m, 2nd out of 29.
6m to be confirmed.

10. AOB

Google Groups, we need to check with James M0JCQ, who is currently in the group. Dave G8FMC asked if we could have a Google Contest group, but it was suggested that this may not be a good idea as it splits the group, so it was agreed we would just email the group using the group email.

It was suggested we visit Northampton as a club to meet some of the members who would like to work with us in contests.

2020 AGM notes

We feel as a club that the website needs to be bought up to date as there is a lot of information that no longer applies and is out of date, we can approach this in a couple of ways, we either ask James to release the domain name and set up a new site using a new host provider, or we can approach Terry/James to set someone else up on the website as admin so that between them the site can be maintained, Malcolm G3ZNU has offered to do this in order to bring the website up to date.

Radcom entries – Jeremy has been sending info for the club to Radcom but we need to start to make decisions early as to what the main club night agenda will be so that we can place this in a more timely fashion.

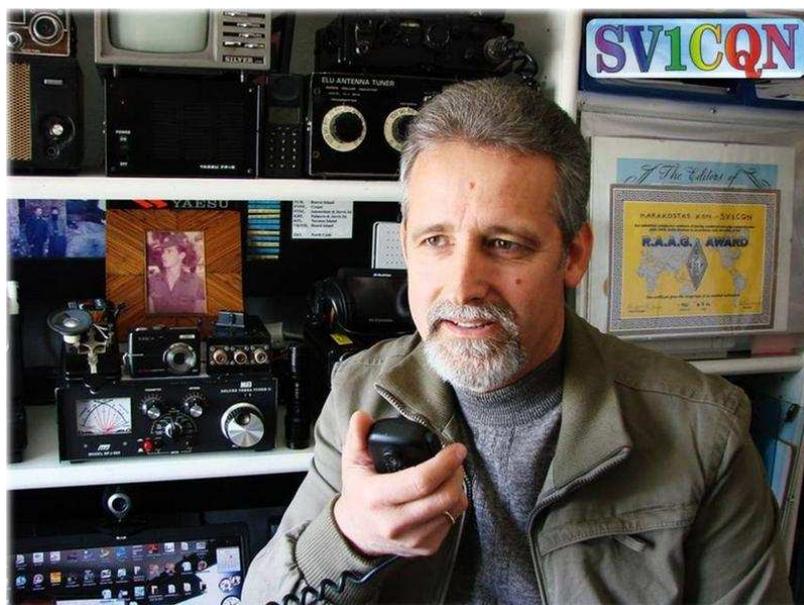
Phil G8BLB raised the question on the amount paid on fees that are charged as he felt that as some of the meeting's have been cancelled members should not pay so much. It was pointed out that none of the 1st Wednesday meetings had been cancelled and the 3rd Wednesday meeting that had been cancelled was due to lack of interest on the night from other members. The Xmas get together was given as an example where there were only 2 members going to be present.

11. Awards

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| G3JCQ New Member Trophy | - | Awarded to Malcolm G3ZNU |
| Denis Kind Shield | - | Awarded to Terry G4UEM |
| CW Trophy | - | Awarded to Jeremy G3XZG |

Meeting Close 10pm

Doppleganger?



While checking out the locator for SV1CQN I came across his picture, I had to do a double take as the resemblance to our Jeremy (G3XZG) is quite remarkable. They do say we all have a 'double' somewhere.

Bryan M0IHY

January

HF

Day	Date (2021)	Time UTC	Contest Name
Sat	02 Jan	1300-1700	RSGB AFS 80m-40m Contests CW
Mon	04 Jan	0930-1100	Christmas HQP #2 RTTY 1
Tue	05 Jan	1100-1230	Christmas HQP #2 Phone
Wed	06 Jan	1230-1400	Christmas HQP #2 FT4 1
Thu	07 Jan	1400-1530	Christmas HQP #2 CW 1
Sun	10 Jan	1300-1700	RSGB AFS 80m-40m Contests Datamodes
Mon	11 Jan	0930-1100	Christmas HQP #2 FT4 2
Tue	12 Jan	1100-1230	Christmas HQP #2 CW 2
Wed	13 Jan	1230-1400	Christmas HQP #2 RTTY 2
Thu	14 Jan	1400-1530	Christmas HQP #2 Phone 2
Sat	16 Jan	1300-1700	RSGB AFS 80m-40m Contests Phone

February

HF

Day	Date (2021)	Time UTC	Contest Name
Mon	01 Feb	2000-2130	80m CC SSB
Wed	10 Feb	2000-2130	80m CC Data
Sat	13 Feb	1900-2300	1st 1.8MHz Contest HF Championship
Mon	15 Feb	2000-2130	RSGB FT4 Contest
Thu	25 Feb	2000-2130	80 CC CW

Our collaboration with Northampton Radio Club where CDARS members contribute to NRC's Activity Contest team has resulted in NRC being placed third in the 2m, 6m and 70cm Local Clubs section.

We (or NRC I should say) are still in line to come third overall in the year's ACs. See

<https://www.rsgbcc.org/cgi-bin//vhfresults.pl?ContestSeries=Overall%20UKAC&year=2020>

The following 3 pages show our certificates - well done.



**RADIO SOCIETY
of
GREAT BRITAIN**



This is to certify that

Northampton RC

2E0JMQ 2E0KLX 2E0ORE G0FKW G0GGU G1MZD(/P) G3NPI G3ZNU G4CZB(/P)
G6TVB G8FMC M0IHV M0JCQ M0KEA/P M0NVS M0UGA(/P) M7ICK M7IRL

achieved

3rd Place in the Local Section of the

144MHz UKAC 2020

President of the RSGB

Dave Wilson, M0OBW



**RADIO SOCIETY
of
GREAT BRITAIN**



This is to certify that

Northampton RC

2E0JMQ 2E0KLX 2E0ORE G0FKW G0GGU G1MZD G3ZNU G4CZB/P G6TVB
G8FMC M0IHY M0JCQ M0KEA/P M0NVS M0UGA M7IRL

achieved

3rd Place in the Local Section of the

432MHz UKAC 2020

President of the RSGB

Dave Wilson, M0OBW



**RADIO SOCIETY
of
GREAT BRITAIN**



This is to certify that

Northampton RC

G0GGU G1MZD(/P) G3XZG G3ZNU G4CZB G6TVB G8FMC G8LED M0IHY M0JCQ
M0NVS M0UGA

achieved

Third place in the Local Section of the

50MHz UKAC 2020

President of the RSGB

Dave Wilson, M0OBW

'Air Miles', how far have we gone? / results

This month I've gone a little OTT with FT8, some great results though. 17m and 30m seem to have come alive, especially with DX, 40m and 20m seemed into Europe mainly with the occasional DX on 20m.

So, how have we done this month?

(Running totals in red)

General

Most Miles

M0IHY		1,665,786	2,379,186	
M0JCQ		741,202	2,163,174	
M0GUY		150,659	200,632	

Most QSO's

M0IHY		1,455	2,167	
M0JCQ		388	1,092	
M0GUY		115	166	

Longest QSO (miles)

M0JCQ		ZL3NB(11,796)	ZL3NB(11,796)	
G3XZG		VK5MAV(10,130)	VK5MAV(10,130)	
M0IHY		YB1LKD(7,393)	YB1LKD(7,393)	

Shortest QSO (miles)

G3ZNU		G8XTJ(0)	G8XTJ(0)	
M0IHY		G3VSQ(4)	G3VSQ(4)	
M0GUY		M0ICR(18)	G8IXK(18)	

Average per QSO (miles)

G3XZG		2,062.88	1,411.68	
M0JCQ		1,910.31	1,980.93	
M0GUY		1,310.08	1,208.63	

Maidenhead Squares

M0IHY		412	815	
M0JCQ		260	727	
M0GUY		74	111	

By Band

160m

M0JCQ		1	1	
M0IHY			19	

20m

M0JCQ		233	558	
M0IHY		163	363	
M0GUY		111	161	

10m

M0IHY		6	21	
M0JCQ		1	5	
G3ZNU			131	

80m

M0IHY		144	169	
G3ZNU		22	36	

17m

M0IHY		341	527	
M0JCQ		121	244	
G3XZG		3	34	

6m

G3ZNU		37	583	
M0JCQ		2	42	
G3XZG			135	

40m

M0IHY		353	481	
G3ZNU		8	30	
G3XZG		7	34	

15m

M0JCQ		5	101	
G3XZG		4	8	
M0IHY			25	

2m

M0JCQ		16	66	
G3ZNU		9	202	
M0GUY		2	2	

30m

M0IHY		445	548	
G3XZG		14	28	

12m

M0JCQ		10	42	
M0IHY		3	3	
G3ZNU			5	

70cm

M0GUY		1	1	
M0JCQ			30	
G3ZNU			7	

'Air Miles', how far have we gone? / results

By Mode

CW				FT8				JS8			
G3XZG		51	401		1454	2147					
G3ZNU		1	15		211	871					3
					108	159					
FM				SSB				Olivia 8/250			
M0GUY		2	2		8	47					1
M7CKP			5		3	3					
G3ZNU			2			44					
MFSK				MSK144				JT9			
M0JCQ		177	177		16	30					
G3ZNU		52	175								1
Digital Voice											
M0GUY		1	1								

By Country

M0JCQ		61	226	
M0IHY		57	170	
M0GUY		35	55	

Air Miles - End of Year Analysis

'Air Miles' runs from January to December. The idea was originally borne due to 'lockdown' and was primarily considered as a way of finding something to do during that time, not everybody's cup of tea. I found it particularly useful to find out what part of the world was open to radio transmission and at what time of day it occurred, it certainly helped my mileage when I would make numerous QSO's with the USA, Canada, Brazil, Cuba, even Indonesia, though the best 2 were New Zealand and Australia, unfortunately they were 'receive' only, my mere 50 Watts just wasn't good enough, not even with FT8!

The final standings for 2020 are as follows:

QSO's in general

Miles Travelled

M0IHY	2,379,186
M0JCQ	2,163,174
G3ZNU	1,018,922
G3XZG	568,906
M0GUY	200,632

Furthest QSO

M0JCQ	ZL3NB	11,796
G3XZG	WK5MAV	10,130
M0IHY	YB1LKD	7,393
G3ZNU	JR3NZC	5,909
M0GUY	JA4LKB	5,847

Maidenhead Squares

M0IHY	815
M0JCQ	727
G3ZNU	629
G3XZG	341
M0GUY	111

QSO's made

M0IHY	2,167
G3ZNU	1,181
M0JCQ	1,092
G3XZG	403
M0GUY	166

Shortest QSO

G3ZNU	G8XTJ	0
G3XZG	G4XRV	2
M0IHY	G3VSQ	4
M0JCQ	G8XTJ	6
M0GUY	G8IXK	8

Average miles per QSO

M0JCQ	1,980.93
G3XZG	1,411.68
M0GUY	1,208.63
M0IHY	1,097.92
G3ZNU	862.76

QSO's by mode

SSB

G3ZNU	47
M0JCQ	44
G3XZG	4
M0GUY	4

FT8

M0IHY	2,147
G3ZNU	912
M0JCQ	871
M0GUY	159

FM

M7CKP	5
M0GUY	2
G3ZNU	2

CW

G3XZG	401
G3ZNU	15

MFSK

M0JCQ	177
G3ZNU	175

Digital Voice

M0GUY	1
-------	---

JT9

M0IHY	1
-------	---

MFSK144

G3ZNU	30
-------	----

2021 starts the whole cycle again, will FT8 rule the count, how far will you travel in the next 12 months? If you find yourself with a little time on your hands, why not give it a try.

Bryan M0IHY

Any other business

Congratulations

Guy has gone through all 3 exams to get his full licence in record time, now he's MOGUY, well done!

Peter (M7PTH) is now using his Intermediate Licence callsign of 2E0PTH.

Welcome to 'Air Miles'

Guy has joined the ranks of the 'Air Miles' travellers, welcome, and let's see how far we can travel in 2021.