

C.D.A.R.S.

August 2026

CHESHAM & DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VHF National Field Day 2026 Full Report

We meet the 2nd Wednesday each month at The Golden Eagle Pub in Ashley Green and every 4th Wednesday each month at the Ashley Green Memorial Hall, Ashley Green, HP5 3PP



For Sale & Wanted

Still Lots of Items
Up For Grabs

Regulars

*Dates For Your Diary
*Radio Rally Dates
*Contest Results

Want to write something for the newsletter?
Then you can contact me on
cdarsnews@gmail.com

Can't find that elusive part or have anything for sale?
Why not drop me an email and put it in
'For sale and wanted'.

Learn About.....

What are you interested in? Here are a few useful links:



FISTS CW Club

Promoting Morse Code for 36 years 1987-2023

<https://fists.co.uk>

VK3TBS

Learn About VARAC

<https://vk3tbs.home.blog/2024/03/06/vara-varac/>

Essex Ham

FT-8 Basics

<https://www.essexham.co.uk/ft8-basics-explained>

Essex Ham

What is PSK31? The Basics.

<https://www.essexham.co.uk/psk31-the-basics>

Welcome to LCWO.net

Learn Morse Code (CW) Online!

<https://lcwo.net/>

Electronic Notes

What is RTTY? The Basics.

https://www.electronics-notes.com/articles/ham_radio/digimode/s/what-is-rtty-radio-teletype.php

Meshtastic and MeshCore

Information and Downloads to build your own LoRa Node or Repeater

<https://meshtastic.org/>
<https://meshcore.co.uk/>



Morse Code by Ray Burlingame-Goff (SK - 29th July 2021)

<http://www.g4fon.net/>

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Chairman	- Dave Keston (G8FMC)	Secretary	- Malcolm Appleby (G3ZNU)	Treasurer	- Matt Whitchurch (M1DTG)
	- Guy Plunkett (M0GUY)		- John Hall (G0ODQ)		- Peter Holliday (M8PTH)
	- Roger Fellows (M8TGU)				

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

Newsletter Editor - Roger Fellows (M8TGU) newsletter submissions to: cdarsnews@gmail.com

Welcome

Welcome to the August edition of the CDARS Newsletter.

Once again time is flying by. It seems only 5 minutes ago I was reminding everyone about the upcoming National Field Day. Now, a month after the event, we have a full report and photo's of the day in question.

It would appear CDARS has done rather well again but maybe, just maybe we have fallen a smidge short on our previous two attempts. Dave G8FMC has all the finer details in his contest round up and Malcolm G3ZNU and Mark M7EFR give a full report of the weekend.



Roger M8TGU

Thank you everone that provided photo's of the weekends happenings, it is most appreciated.

Along with all the regulars I hope you enjoy this months newsletter

Roger M8TGU

Chairmans Ramble

My car, the alarm saga etc. continued! (See last months Ramble - Ed)

It appeared that even after cancelling the alarm correctly, it seemed to re-set itself & I still had some random alarms going off. I failed to find any more spider webs though, so maybe the recent extreme heat drove the spider away; or even cooked it?

The car largely behaved itself whilst running back & forth for VHF Field Day weekend (Thankfully). It worked fine for a run on Monday, but when about to go out to lunch on Tuesday it had no life at all! I got into it manually & raised the bonnet. My trusty Fluke multi-meter indicated that the battery had just 3.78V across the terminals! Less than 24hrs before there was no problem starting. Why do modern batteries do that? Back in the old days one got months of warning with sluggish starting, indicating a new battery before winter was likely called for.



Dave G8FMC

I used my super new charger purchased for my LiPO4 battery, set to 'Lead' & after a few hours got enough charge to start the car. I got a compatible replacement battery ordered & fitted later that day by my local people. I still did not know for certain if I had any hardware problems causing these random alarms, so booked the car in at the Mazda dealership for full diagnostic analysis. Roger M8TGU had tipped me off that I would need to ask them to 'tell' the car computer that a new battery had been fitted. On the Friday afternoon, they did this & ran an analysis. It seems that as a result of a new battery being fitted the software needed updating! It also seems that there are 6 processors in the car & all 6 needed their software updated!!! This took another hour of workshop time.

They decently waived the initial 30mins booked analysis & just charged me for an hour. BTW there were no other hardware issues, so everything was down to a small spider & a failing battery; which incidentally was just 2.5 yrs old! Modern cars! Special expensive batteries & expensive software updates to boot. Ah well, I cannot take it with me, so just had to pay up more than £300 & move on.

I have just had a few days in Swanage with my youngest daughter Liz, plus boyfriend, plus dog! Quite nice not having to drive for once & Connie the dog that Liz was looking after (a Border Terrier) was no problem at all. This did mean that I missed the club meeting on CW Skimmers & Readers/Decoders by Malcolm. I have yet to have a full report on that.

73 all, Dave K, G8FMC (Chairman & Contest Coordinator)

UKAC's 2026: (CDARS + Associate members only)

We are well into the Sporadic-E season & there have been some big openings, particularly on 6m. The 50MHz UKAC of 11th June had stations coming in from all over Europe right at the start! Most unusual, as it often drops off just as the contest starts! However I found it really difficult to be heard by the DX, as half the UK was calling them.

As mentioned last month in my comments about the 6m Trophy (part of the VHF Championship) I seem to struggle with the EU DX. On this Thursday evening I spent about 30mins with only 1 DX station in the log; F4TXU in JN23CX, at 962Km. My 2nd QSO (in JO02 square) was 32mins in! A lot of time was wasted with questionable benefit? Later when beaming South (a much better direction for me) I did get called by CT1FHE in IM58IR at 1,607Km for my best DX.

Now that the results are out, the outcome was as expected; my best raw score this year, but my worst Normalised score by a long way! Just proves yet again that this QTH is a bit rubbish to the SE & much better to the SW to NW. On-balance I consistently do better under flat conditions & e.g. UKAC's where EU contacts play a less important part. We are now 5th overall & 2nd on 2m, but still lead on 70cm.

80m CC Series (Northampton):

I was particularly please with my 80m SSB entry at the end of last month. I tend to be a bit 'chicken' & mainly do S&P; particularly since joining the 10W group during recent months.

On this occasion conditions were a bit poor & there were fewer stations on, probably mainly due to the extreme heat? My 'shack' is the small bedroom in a bungalow, so was no hotter than anywhere else & fairly manageable. I did my usual 'pass' from one end of the band to the other responding to all the stations I could hear. Then a skim back up the band to try & catch anyone missed on the first pass. A little over 1hr had passed, with just 20mins left, when I managed to find a relatively quiet slot. I fired up the voice keyer (with just 10W) without any great expectation. I was pleasantly surprised to have a good number of stations reply, with up to 4 calling at once! So my tally went from 57 to 84 in the next 18mins. A run which peaked at about 65 QSO's/hr according to N1MM+.

My subsequent Normalised score was 829, 5th out of 12. My best effort by far. As I have mentioned before, it is quite common for 2nd place behind G4PIQ to get a modest 650 – 800 score. This was one session where G4PIQ did not enter! So on this occasion the lead station was M0DDT with a relatively modest 103 QSO's. My 84 is not so far behind?

Just proves if one gets bold, sharpens ones elbows, & gets 'Running' (calling "CQ contest") it can make a big difference. Only feasible with a fairly decent antenna though. My full-size EFHW is quite good but maybe down on the Dipole by about 1.5-2dB? The centre is about 11.5m AGL, in a shallow inverted V. Overall maybe slightly better than average?

The latest CW session also had Andy G4PIQ as an absentee which gave John G4CZB (using the Northampton club call of G8N) the top spot & the coveted 1,000 pts. Well done John. My modest effort had a couple of errors in this time, so I was 9th out of 12.

VHF Field Day:

This was on the weekend of 4 - 5th July. A report & pictures else where. My thanks to the quite large numbers of members who helped in one way or another. As well as operators,

Continued....

we could not easily do the weekend event without the additional helpers with the mast & tent erection. We hope that it raises the profile of the club & is of overall long-term benefit to us all?

We again entered the MS section on 2m, 70cm & 23cm. Looking for a possible 'Hat-trick' having won the last 2 years. We were very pleased to have Roger in his red van as 'night-watchman' again & he did get up quite early on Sunday morning to bag the best DX, an EA at over 1,000Km. (Shame it was just the one!)

All logs are in & it looks like we may have to accept 2nd place this year? It all depends on the errors of G4ALE/P the Addiscombe club & us on the 2m band. (They had 'several' EA's) Addiscombe have almost certainly won the 6m & 4m bands; & we have almost certainly won the 70cm & 23cm bands. That leaves the 2m band as a head-to-head between us. On submitted/claimed scores Addiscombe are ahead, but it could change depending on any errors with the big DX stations worked?

VHF Championship:

We have results for 5 sessions now in. We seem to have climbed up to 3rd position after the 50MHz Trophy results. Our lack of numbers entering this one was compensated by Stefano G7RDX operating Phil's (M0NVS) site at the Bovingdon farm (IO91RR). He entered the 'Single Operator Open' section & bagged 2nd place not so far behind G3TBK/P (who seems to win many events!) Great effort Stefano & thanks for tagging your points to CDARS.

Phil also did a stint under his own short call of M0N on the Sunday & managed 9/16 in the 6 hr Open section. I guess Stefano had worked most by then so a fresh call probably added more club points overall?

The 70MHz Trophy was on Saturday 18th July, but there was minimal support for that. I did not bother to raise my mast, so was somewhat surprised to get called by Roger EI8KN as my best DX at 444Km! There was nothing heard from the EU at my QTH.

The 144MHz Low Power & 432MHz Low Power are on 1st & 2nd August, but I am not expecting much support for these?

IOTA (Islands On The Air):

I had a dabble for a few hours on this, with just 70 QSO's, but 37 IOTA entities. I felt that propagation was not great & less activity than last year?

GR2HQ Challenge (part of the WRTC weekend):

I managed to find the SSB stations on various frequencies, thanks to a near live update on QRZ.com for GR2HQ; so submitted a request for a basic 'Chrome Certificate'. That was for working GR2HQ on 160m, 80m, 40m & 20m. My antennas are not efficient on 15m & 10m, so did not manage to raise them on those bands; competing with Beams on towers! I was pleasantly surprised to complete on 160m as I was using my EFHW for 80m as a ¼ wave, but without any real counterpoise or radials! Not to mention a 49:1 UNUN instead of a direct feed. Antenna efficiency was probably about 5% or less, but they were calling with no response & managed to receive me, just!

73, Dave K, G8FMC

VHF Field Day 2026

VHF Field Day took place on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th July 2026.

You might think that holding a field day portable contest in July would mean that good weather could be relied upon. But history says otherwise. In recent years it's never been truly awful, but it's been cold (I had to turn on the heated steering wheel when driving home to thaw out my fingers) and wet (walking across a field of long wet grass to Roger G3MEH's house was not fun). But this year was shaping up to be, if anything, too hot, and certainly dry. Another fine summer weekend in our regular field in Wigginton.

The team assembled briefly on the Friday afternoon to construct and raise the mast. With Malcolm G3ZNU's excellent rigging and knotting skills we hauled it up using the 'Falling Derrick' method (formerly known as the Gin Pole until Marc G5TEA corrected us).

The next morning we returned, along with our friend Phil G4FVZ from Milton Keynes, who kindly lent us his 23cms antenna. The 2m, 70cms, and 23cms antennas were fastened on to the mast, then hoisted aloft, and the rotator installed. Meanwhile some of the team attempted to put up the tent in quite high winds. There's always something 'Keystone Cops' about this activity but up it went and soon all was pegged down

and secure. Malcolm and Dave G8FMC set about setting up the radios, laptops, and a host of switches and wiring. The generator was fired up ready for the testing to make sure we were ready for kick off at 2pm UTC. (so 3pm for us).

VHF Field Day has a large number of categories that teams can choose to enter – from the Open (any antennas, lots of power) to the more restricted sections. For the past two years CDARS has done rather well in the so-called "Multi-Single" (MS) category. Out of the five VHF bands available (6m, 4m, 2m, 70cm and 23cm) you choose to operate on only three

bands, and you must only transmit on one band at a time (no simultaneous calling on several bands). The other main limitation is you can only use single antennas on each band (no stacked arrays) and all the antennas have to be on a single 12m mast. We used to operate on 6m, 4m and 2m, but then we twigged that not many stations were on the higherbands in the MS category so it should be easy to win those bands – which we did, two years running.

On the equipment front, we used two IC-9700 transceivers, one dedicated to the 2m band and the other covering 70cm and 23cm. Antennas were a 9 element M2 for 2m (thanks to John G0ODQ), a 21 element M2 for 70cm (also from G0ODQ), and a 44 element WiMo for 23cm with a mast-head preamplifier (thanks to Phil G4FVZ for both). We used a rotator at the base of the mast which turned the entire mast and antennas. Two laptops running the Minos logging program completed the setup

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- plus a Morse key for the difficult QSOs! We had an internet hot-spot in operation, and as a result used the KST messaging system extensively to set up QSOs, especially on the higher bands. The trusty club generator supplied power throughout the contest, and thanks to Mark M7EFR for keeping it good condition, and transport!

Conditions during the contest were quite good if not spectacular. With clear skies across most of Europe there were no thunderstorms (which can cause huge amounts of noise), and the stable air gave a fair amount of tropo propagation. The high pressure system was somewhat to the south of the UK, so propagation into Germany was not as great as it might have been. But with Field Day coinciding with a big European contest, there were plenty of stations available to work. As in previous years, we chose to close down overnight with the plan to start early on Sunday morning to catch the dawn tropo. Roger M8TGU had, almost at the last minute, got his Ford Transit campervan back on the road, and offered to stay on site overnight for security. This was doubly beneficial as Roger started up the station early and heard EA1T romping in on 2m, whom he worked quite easily for our best DX of the weekend – well done Roger!



In previous years the rules required us to operate on 70cm one day, and 23cm the next, with 2m available for the whole 24 hours. Thankfully the VHF Contest Committee realised this was silly, and we were allowed to operate on all bands throughout the contest. This meant that, when working a station on one band, we could immediately ask them to QSY to another band and work them.

Our combined efforts achieved 105 QSOs on 2m, the best DX was EA1T at 1013km, 36 QSOs on 70cm, best DX was DJ4MH at 544km, and 12 QSOs on 23cm, best DX G4LPP at 185km. We might have hoped for more activity on 23cm, or even 70cm, but many groups didn't seem to be running on the higher bands this year. We were also slightly disadvantaged by the mast head preamplifier not appearing to work, but as it failed in straight-through mode, we didn't lose out too much. And with only 10w TX power allowed, it probably meant we worked everyone who could hear us anyway!



For us, VHF Field Day is very much a team effort and a social occasion as well as a contest. The MS category is quite low pressure compared with the big guns running five stations and high power. It's a credit to the club that so many members helped with assembling and dismantling the station, and came along to offer general encouragement. It's also a great opportunity to "have a go" at operating in a contest, to get some experience of the rhythm of contest operating and logging QSOs accurately.

On Sunday afternoon it was all over. The team managed to bring down the mast (safely), de-rig all the wiring and bag up the tent in record time. Less than an hour! Preliminary results suggest that we didn't make it a hat-trick after all. Although we should win the 70cm and 23cm bands in the MS category, our old rivals Addiscombe were ahead of us on 2m, and look to have won their chosen bands, 6m and 4m.

Malcolm G3ZNU & Mark M7EFR

More VHF Field Day 2026 Photo's



Contest Calendar for July & August 2026

August - HF

Day	Date	Time (UTC)	Contest Name
Wed	12 Aug	1630-1930	Eclipse CW
Wed	12 Aug	1630-1930	Eclipse FT8
Mon	17 Aug	1900-2100	FT4 Series #4

August - VHF

Day	Date	Time (UTC)	Contest Name
Sat	01 Aug	1400-1800	144MHz Low Power Contest
Sat	01 Aug	1400-1800	4th 144MHz Backpackers
Sun	02 Aug	800-1200	432MHz Low Power Contest
Tue	04 Aug	1800-1855	144MHz FMAC
Tue	04 Aug	1900-2130	144MHz UKAC
Wed	05 Aug	1700-2100	144MHz FT8 AC (4 hours)
Wed	05 Aug	1900-2100	144MHz FT8 AC (2 hours)
Sat-Sun	08-09 Aug	1400-1400	MGM
Tue	11 Aug	1800-1855	432MHz FMAC
Tue	11 Aug	1900-2130	432MHz UKAC
Wed	12 Aug	1700-2100	432MHz FT8 AC (4 hours)
Wed	12 Aug	1900-2100	432MHz FT8 AC (2 hours)
Thu	13 Aug	1900-2130	50MHz UKAC
Tue	18 Aug	1900-2130	1.3GHz UKAC
Thu	20 Aug	1900-2100	70MHz UKAC
Tue	25 Aug	1830-2130	SHF UKAC

September - HF

Day	Date	Time (UTC)	Contest Name
Sat-Sun	05-06 Sep	1300-1300	SSB Field Day
Mon	07 Sep	1900-2030	Autumn Series SSB
Wed	16 Sep	1900-2030	Autumn Series CW
Thu	24 Sep	1900-2030	Autumn Series Data
Mon	28 Sep	1900-2030	RSGB FT4 Contest

September - VHF

Day	Date	Time (UTC)	Contest Name
Tue	01 Sep	1800-1855	144MHz FMAC
Tue	01 Sep	1900-2130	144MHz UKAC
Wed	02 Sep	1700-2100	144MHz FT8 AC (4 hours)
Wed	02 Sep	1900-2100	144MHz FT8 AC (2 hours)
Sat-Sun	05-06 Sep	1400-1400	144MHz Trophy Contest
Sun	06 Sep	1100-1500	5th 144MHz Backpackers
Tue	08 Sep	1800-1855	432MHz FMAC
Tue	08 Sep	1900-2130	432MHz UKAC
Wed	09 Sep	1700-2100	432MHz FT8 AC (4 hours)
Wed	09 Sep	1900-2100	432MHz FT8 AC (2 hours)
Thu	10 Sep	1900-2130	50MHz UKAC
Tue	15 Sep	1900-1200	1.3GHz AFS Contest
Thu	17 Sep	1900-2130	70MHz UKAC
Sun	20 Sep	0900-1200	70MHz UKAC AFS Contest
Tue	22 Sep	1830-2130	SHF UKAC

Dates For Your Diary



CDARS Net and Club Meetings Dates

(Start times are all at 8pm unless otherwise noted)

July 2026

5th - Club Net on 2m SSB - 144.320 USB

12th - Informal Meeting at The Golden Eagle, Ashley Green

19th - Club Net on 2m SSB - 144.320 USB

25th - Formal Meeting at Ashley Green Memorial Hall -

Slow Morse most Thursdays at 14.45 BST on 144.060MHz SSB.

Please see the weekly email from Malcolm G3ZNU for any changes to schedule.

Listed below are dates of other RSGB, UK and International contests for April 2026

10-10 Int. Summer Contest, SSB	0001Z, Aug 1 to 2359Z, Aug 2
European HF Championship	1200Z-2359Z, Aug 1
SARL HF Phone Contest	1400Z-1700Z, Aug 2
WAE DX Contest, CW	0000Z, Aug 8 to 2359Z, Aug 9
NTC QSO Party (Netherlands)	1900Z-2000Z, Aug 20
YO DX HF Contest (Romania)	1200Z, Aug 22 to 1200Z, Aug 23
SKCC Sprint (Brazil)	0000Z-0200Z, Aug 26
World Wide Digi DX Contest	1200Z, Aug 29 to 1200Z, Aug 30

Full details and more contests at: <https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.html>

Please double check dates, start/end times etc in good time prior to the event.

Radio Rally Dates.

Full details of the events are available in Radcom & the RSGB website.

August 2026

2nd - BATC Convention for Amateur TV, Midland Air Museum, Rowley Road, Coventry. CV3 4FR.

2nd - Finningley ARS, DN8 5SX. More info at: g0ghk.com.

2nd - Kings Lynn ARC Rally, Gaywood Community Centre, Kings Lynn.

9th - Flight Refuelling ARS Hamfest, Cobham Sports & Social Club Ground, Merly, Nr Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3DA.

14th - Cockenzie & Port Seton ARC 31st Annual Mini Rally Night, Community Centre, Port Seton.

15th - DXCommander Fest, Holly Farm Business Park, Honiley, CV8 1NP.

16th - North Wales Amateur Radio Group Rally & Table Top Sale, The Bryn Cadno Community Centre,

16th - Rugby Amateur Transmitting Society, Princethorpe College. Details at rubgyats.co.uk

16th - West Manchester Radio Club Red Rose Summer Rally, Mather Hall, Mather Lane, Leigh WN7 2PJ.

30th - Milton Keynes ARS Rally, Herons Lodge Guide Activity Centre, Bradwell Road, Loughton Lodge, Milton Keynes MK8 9AA.

30th - Torbay ARS, Annual Rally, The Courtney Centre, Road, Newton Abbot TQ12 2QA.

31st - Huntingdonshire ARS Radio Rally, Ramsey Rural Museum, Wood Lane, Ramsey, Cambs.

October 2026

11th - Annual Hornsea Rally, Driffield Showground YO25 9FB

25th - Galashiels Radio & Computer Rally, The Volunteer Hall, St. Johns Street, Galashiels, TD1 3JX.

(All information courtesy of Radcom & the RSGB website)



For Sale and Wanted

For Sale: Wouxun KG-UV6D Two-way radio. £Offers (See pic right)

2m (5W) and 70cm (4W).

In original box with charger, handbook and a replacement for lost antenna.

Transceiver works well but I can't guarantee the battery life which appears OK.

Contact: 07909783027 or email g8mfh@aol.com.
You can also find me at the club meetings.

Bob G8MFH



SK sale of the shack contents of the late Bryan M0IHY (Items with Dave G8FMC)

ITEM	ASKING PRICE or O.V.N.O.
1. Power Mag 145 – large magnetic mount + cable (new £30) New & boxed.	£20 (<i>price reduced</i>)
2. Comet CHA-250HD/BXII Multi-Band HF Vertical Antenna (new £350) 250W SSB 75W Data. See March 2024 PW review. As new, unused	£220
5. Modified Cobweb antenna (Polish) (new £200)	£70
6. Sangean ATS-909X2 all-band portable receiver £225 ish new boxed	£150
7. QRM Eliminator X-phase 1-30MHz - £45 new	£25
8. Kent Straight key	£65
9. CW Keyer TC 701 - £70 new	£45
10. Soldering Station (basic) 60W	Offers
11. IGEN Max regenerative receiver. eBay US has an unbuilt kit at £160.	£50
12. Lead-free solder & cleaner (in bag)	Offers
14. Austcol Radiation Meter MT525 -£25 online average price new.	£10
16. Metro VNA in case (£270 new)	£175
18. Prepp Comm multi-band morse transceiver. Approx £358 new.	£225
19. MFJ Super Hi-Q Loop Remote Control . Unknown model.	Offers
20. QRP Kits EFHW Tuner	Offers

Please initially contact Dave G8FMC if interested in any item :- g8fmc547@gmail.com