



MKARS News

Letter from the Chair

Dear Club Member,

As we come to the end of 2020, this has been a year none of us expected, and a difficult one for many. Amateur radio has been a god-send for many of us to keep in touch. Through lockdown and social distancing, the existing norms have been challenged, and many things are being done differently. It has meant that the Club has also had to adapt and use electronic and virtual means of keeping Club momentum, keeping our members in touch, and providing a way to continue to grow the Club.

We have gained many new members, and we welcome them all. We have also tried to keep in contact with existing members who are shielding, through nets and video coffee chats. We

have also tried to give regular updates through our very successful Facebook Group and Club internet site.

Although the national vaccine programme has now got under way, it is going to be some months until many of us are confident enough to start face to face meeting again. Our programme for the first three months of 2021 reflects this, where we again have a programme based around Zoom meetings. We have tried to span as many interests in the club as possible – we are trying to be a Club for all.

So, take a look on the back page of this newsletter and mark your diaries with the arrangements for the next few months. Talks and activities for March are presently being arranged. On a more positive note,

given the nation-wide vaccine programme, we are going to plan for entering NFD's as a Club this year and also for holding the MKARS rally in August 2021.

I look forward to welcoming you all to these Club talks, events and activities. Our Club nets and coffee chat sessions continue into the new year. For those who are interested in contesting, in 2020 we had our best season ever with our home-grown talent (see *next page*)

Let me wish you all, on behalf of the Club Committee, all the very best for 2021 for you and your families and may our fantastic hobby, supported by MKARS, contribute to your health and happiness in the year ahead.

Phil G4FVZ

Committee News

At our AGM the following positions were filled for 2020/2021:

Chair

Phil Gould – G4FVZ

Vice Chair

Stu Crann – MOMMZ

Secretary

Will Fludgate- G1YYU

Treasurer

Tim Cowell – G6GEI

The remaining members of the committee were announced shortly afterwards as follows:

Technical lead

László Sánduly (MOBOY)

Assets Manager

David Wells (MOCEM)

Events Manager

Phil Gould (G4FVZ)

Editor and Marketing Specialist

Brendan Owen (G8IXK)

Training Manager

Francis Hennigan (MOUKF)

Membership Secretary

Malcolm Richardson (MOGXZ)

January 2021

Highlights:

- Jan/Feb 21 club programme announced
- MKARS Club committee
- Contest success
- Club talk highlights

Inside this issue:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Contesters Special Interest Group | 2 |
| CW Special Interest Group | 2 |
| Home Construction Special Interest | 2 |
| Club Meeting Reports | 3 |
| Membership News | 3 |
| Members Ads | 4 |
| Club calendar | 4 |



Phil G4FVZ

Contesters Special Interest Group



**CQ Contest,
CQ Contest ...**

At the end of November, the club contest team were 8th overall in the UKAC local clubs table with only a small gap to make up to rise to 7th place. An all out effort was made by the team in December to move up the table and we were pleased to have support from some of our occasional contesters too.

So far December results have been announced for the 2m and 70cm bands and now we have moved up and are knocking on the door of 6th place. The results for 6m, 23cm and 4m are eagerly awaited! Whatever the results of these it will be the best year ever for the club in the UKAC

championship.

We were very pleased to see that Andy 2E0XMB was the overall leading Intermediate Station on 2m with 6897 points and he has also been awarded the Intermediate Shield for 2020. Congratulations Andy

Individuals have been looking at their station setups and planning what they can change to do better next year. Improved antennas, transceivers and locations are all on the cards. However the biggest difference to the club score would be to have more participants earning points for the club. You don't need to have lots of equipment.

or be in a great location. Operation from home with 10W and simple antennas is fine. Why not give it a try in 2021?

The monthly timetable is:

| | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1st Tuesday | 144MHz |
| 2nd Tuesday | 432MHz |
| 2nd Thursday | 50MHz |
| 3rd Tuesday | 1.3GHz |
| 3rd Thursday | 70MHz |
| 4th Tuesday | SHF |

The Contesters also meet on Zoom on the 4th Thursday) led by Tim, G6GEI

Brendan, G8IXK

Stop Press: 6m was a stonking score! Well done everyone.

Tim, G6GEI

CW Learners Special Interest Group

The group exists to help club members learn and improve at using CW (Morse Code).

The December meeting reinforced the letter codes and then added two and three-word abbreviations. The next step will be full slow-morse sessions. Our next learners session is on Monday 15th February. After several sessions by Will,

G1YYU last year, we have now progressed to the sending and copying stage. We'll start the process with a recap, and then get into some code reading.

If there are any members who know code and want to improve their skills, then please contact Phil, G4FVZ and we can expand what we are already doing on our

Tuesday and Thursday morning CW sessions. We try and run at about 20-25 wpm to improve our competency and ability to head read.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D |
| E | F | G | H |
| I | J | K | L |
| M | N | O | P |
| Q | R | S | T |
| U | V | W | X |
| Y | Z | | |



Do you enjoy making things? Come to our first Home Construction group meeting

Home Construction Special Interest Group

What are your home construction interests?

- Antennas?
- Filters?
- Commercial kits?
- Microwave equipment?
- PCB design?
- Surface mount?
- Computer interfacing?
- Software?

On Monday 18th January we have the inaugural meeting of our Special Interest Group in Home Construction. If you are active in homebrewing come along and help us shape the group. It may be that there are several distinct areas of interest and we can look at how to accommodate these. We want to create a group where we can

learn from each other and improve our skills.

Through this group we hope we can develop a club-based construction project.

Join us for the start of this new club venture.

Club Meeting Reports

On 12th October, Francis MOUKF gave us a 'teach in' on using GB3MK with the newly added Echolink facility. This allows users to connect the repeater to talkgroups and repeaters from around the world. Instructions are now on the Club website under the **Repeaters** menu.

The following week, Tim G6GEI, took us through the construction and use of the GM3SEK designed mains filter to help clean up the shack from mains borne interference. Tim pointed out that the filter also stops RF getting out onto the mains supply reducing the chances

of causes interference.

On 9th November, Stu, MOMMZ talked about the setup used to run a JOTA station at Gilwell Park—with the added complication of Lockdown just days before! He had everyone envious of the remotely controlled Flex radios and the antenna farm!



Club Meeting Report - 23rd November

We were pleased to welcome Tim Kirby, GW4VXE to talk to us on the subject **Further adventures with your VHF/UHF station**. Tim talked us through working meteor scatter on 6m and then went on to discuss using simple equipment to monitor 2m/70cm propagation. He

suggested programming ALL the repeater and simplex channels into your rig and then just leave it on scan when you are in the shack to see what pops up. Yes, you can work DX on FM! FT8 can also be your friend for monitoring propagation. Although it's not everyone's

cup of tea, it can be an ENORMOUS advantage in a small station and can alert you where to point a beam and when. Tim concluded "You don't need lots and lots of fancy equipment to make some fascinating contacts". Next time you are in the shack, give it a try.

**2m/70cm DX:
on FM?**

**If you have a
2m/70cm FM
rig and a
vertical
antenna, you're
in business!**

Club Meeting Report - 14th December

For our last talk of 2020 we welcomed Dr Richard Parker, G4ALP to talk to us about **Setting up a club remote radio station**. He discussed the licensing and technical aspects that he and members of the Cambridge

& District ARC have discovered whilst setting up a station for the club. The station is located at his home QTH and the rig is an FT2000 connected to either an 80m doublet or a DX Commander vertical. The

station is controlled using FTDXR software from DB3CB. Unfortunately this provides little security and so a front end system providing security and power control has been developed and runs on a Pi.

**How CDARC
setup an internet
connected
FT2000 that club
members with a
full license can
book to operate
remotely**

Membership News

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Due to the ongoing COVID situation, we have reduced the membership fee for this year only to £15. To avoid handling cash, please pay your subs if you can through our PayPal portal on the club website. Please ensure you include your name and/or callsign on the payment. If you are unable to do this please contact our treasurer Tim.

Exam successes

Congratulations to our members who have passed exams recently to progress to the next license level.

Stefano Pinna (2E0FNUN) is now G7RDX

Andy Bloomer (2E0XMB) is now M5TKA

John Owen (M6JPO) is now 2E0JPO

Club Member Awards

We were delighted to announce the winners of a number of Club awards at our AGM. They will receive their Club Awards once we can see each other face to face again

Club Member of the year : Stefano (Ste) Pinna 2E0FNUN

New Club Member of the Year: John Owen M6JPO

Club Contester of the year : Andy Bloomer 2E0XMB

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to MKARS:

2E0UHU Stuart McElwee

G0BYH Geoff Stokes

G6MIY Paul Lund

Paul Kilby (SWL)

M7CBC Chris Clarke

Welcome
Congratulations!



Milton Keynes Amateur Radio Society

Meeting Venue:
Milton Keynes Irish Centre
Pavilion Manor Field
Milton Keynes
MK2 2HX

(Due to COVID-19 restrictions all club activities are currently online or on air)

Web: www.mkars.org.uk
Email: information@mkars.org.uk

Please send items for the club newsletter to information@mkars.org.uk

The club for Radio Amateurs in and around Milton Keynes



[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
GROUPS/MILTONKEYNESARS](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/MILTONKEYNESARS)



Weekly nets and coffee chats

Sunday 20:00 —club net on GB3MK

Wednesday 20:00 —Club net on 28.4MHz

Friday 10:30—coffee chat on Zoom

Members Ads

This area is for placing advertisements for the MKARS members for items for sale, exchanged or available to be freecycled. Please included some words of description about the item with its condition and then your contact details.

Please ensure that all local and national COVID guidelines and restrictions are observed when viewing or collecting items.

For sale

Upgrading your station? —Want to sell some kit to fund a new purchase or make space? Send an email to information@mkars.org.uk and we can let the rest of the club know what you are selling.

Wanted/Exchange

Are you looking for a piece of kit for your station? - drop us an email and we will include it in a future edition.

Club Calendar

Monday 11th January we kick off the year with a Club Members Round Table – ‘What would you like to see the Club doing in the year ahead?’ Come and chat with the Committee and make suggestions about what you want more of, what we should do less of and what new things should we do.

Monday 18th January sees us start our Special Interest Group in Home Construction – this is a group for those active in homebrewing who want to improve their skills and learn from each other. It is through this group we hope we can develop a club-based construction project.

Monday 25th January sees us welcome Steve Clements, G(W)1YBB to give us a talk on ‘My adventures with Contesting’. Some of you will know that Steve is one of the leading testers in the UK, a superlative portable contest operator, who runs the UK Contesting Facebook Group.

8th February we have a talk from Steve Shorey, G3ZPS, on ‘Classic ham radio gear and why some of us are keen to restore it and keep it going’. Steve is a UK authority on refurbishing and restoring ‘classic’ equipment (see his website www.g3zps.com) and this should be a fascinating talk.

15th February we have a CW interest night for our CW learners. After several sessions by Will, G1YYU last year, we have now progressed to the sending and copying stage. We’ll start the process a recap, and then get into some code reading.

22nd February we are set to have a very interesting talk from Bill Coombes, G4ERV on ‘Battery Technology for QRP Portable Operation’. Bill is an accomplished speaker on battery selection and maintenance for ham radio applications and has talked at the RSGB convention and the GQRP Club.

We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of MKARS news. We look forward to featuring your projects in Shack Corner. To tell the rest of the club what you are doing or place a Members Ad, please email information@mkars.org.uk



Milton Keynes ARS
Amateur Radio Society

GB2BP - Bletchley Park
G8MKC - Training & Events

M5MK - Club Contest Call
M5EI - Irish Centre Call