

STARLITE

The Newsletter for Members and Friends of

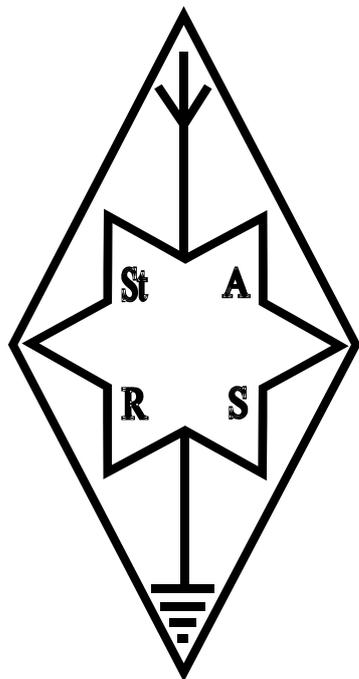
G6OI
1938

Stourbridge and District Amateur Radio Society

G6SRS
1938

incorporating

Old Swinford Hospital School Radio Club



G4CVK

1969

ISSUE
09/2010



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Visitors always welcome

MEETINGS

The Society holds its full meetings on the

1st and 3rd Monday's of each Month at

Old Swinford Hospital School

Heath Lane

Stourbridge

(8.00pm – 10.00pm)

Additionally the shack is open during the same times on the intermediate Monday's

*All correspondence/enquiries should be addressed to the
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STARS Web Site

WAP enabled ??

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www.g6oi.org.uk

www.g6oi.org.uk/wap/index.wml

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

This month's main article is different to those found in previous editions of Starlite. After reading and considering the article, **I would like Club Members to e-mail their views on the future of Broadcast Digital Radio**. I am sure there are plenty of valuable views and opinions out there and it will be interesting to hear and share them with other club members. For those club members without access to e-mail, please pass your written views to me. All replies both electronic and otherwise will be published in the next edition of Starlite.

This month we also have a welcome contribution from our Roving Reporter, Malcolm Palmer, with a photograph which adds a welcome splash of colour to this month's Starlite.

I have included a new section where you can share your views of any recent purchases you have made and wish to share with other club members. It would also be interesting to hear, however briefly, of any Rallies or Radio events you have attended.

As usual, any contributions for articles for Starlite will be well received !!!!

Best 73's

Adrian (G0NLA) – Newsletter Editor – editor@g6oi.org.uk

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BROADCAST DIGITAL RADIO

Why did is this article arise?

I was mildly curious about Internet Radio after installing and using the Screamer Radio shareware product that I obtained from download.com around a year ago. Subsequently I visited a colleague a few weeks ago who had purchased a Roberts WM201 WiFi Internet Radio. I subsequently saw a packaged USB Radio Dongle device on sale in the local ASDA for £5.00. We are told that the demise of FM and AM is out there in the not too distant future and that DAB will be the replacement. Clearly Digital Radio in some form will set the agenda for the medium and long term. All the above topics sparked some interest for me and I thought that they may be of passing interest to fellow Stars club members.

Receiving Digital Radio

There are several ways to receive broadcast digital radio at present :-

Satellite Radio Broadcasts

Sky and Freesat provide digital radio reception. I do not have any figures to hand, but I suspect that this method of digital radio reception presently only accounts for a low percentage of the listening public. This may change in future as radio spectrum usage is less critical at satellite frequencies. Satellite signal coverage across the UK is more widespread than that of broadcast FM/AM radio. Both signal reception and bandwidth availability will assume greater importance when FM/AM broadcasting is reduced in the future, so although not significant at present, it is likely that receiving radio via satellite will increase in future. The greater availability of radio spectrum at frequencies used by satellites may allow higher sampling rates and thus better sound quality which could be a future issue for DAB. Lastly (and I apologise for the simplification) satellite broadcasting capacity can 'simply' be increased by launching more satellites.

Freeview Radio Broadcasts

Similar observations apply to Freeview radio broadcasts as to Satellite Radio Broadcasts above although signal reception is more of a problem and also there is less availability of radio spectrum at broadcast TV frequencies. A possible advantage of receiving radio via Freeview is the ease with which radio programs can be recorded by currently available equipment.

Radio Reception using a computer

As at Aug 2010 broadcast radio can be received by one of two methods utilising a computer. As mentioned at the start of this article Screamer Radio, Real Audio and other programs can be utilised. It is possible to buy a "dongle" attachment that plugs into the USB port to receive radio over the internet. The USB device probably contains a program, with a list of stations that can be accessed ← this is unverified information. The radio stations may be accessed by genre, country etc. and it is reported to give access to over 10,000 radio stations. Both of the above methods provide similar facilities and radio programs may be recorded and a range of pre-set radio stations can be saved for easier access. Examples of dongle type



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radios receivers are Muzee and iRadioPop ¹. ASDA Halesowen sells a dongle type radio for five pounds.

WiFi Internet Radio

WiFi Internet Radio is a relatively recent development and presently there are only a few types of sets available, mainly from the usual makers of DAB radios, consequently early adopters of this technology will pay a premium until sets become more affordable. Essentially the radio connects to the Internet over your WiFi equipment and provides varying degrees of sophistication that allow one to select the desired radio stations which are claimed to be similar in number to a computer dongle or computer program. There could be a hidden cost to accessing radio over the Internet; according to Which Oct. 2009, 18 hours of listening will require around 1Gb of data over your Internet link which may have a cost implication depending on your Internet Service Provider. WiFi Internet Radios tend to have a high current drain and mains operation is desirable. Clearly the radio will only operate in WiFi range. An example of this type of radio is ² the Roberts WM201 WiFi Internet Radio. The BBC provides a feature called 'Listen Again' which is similar to iPlayer but is for radio and can be utilised by this type of radio. International Payment of Royalties for the broadcasting of copyrighted material over Internet Radio is a developing and disputed area. ⁵ Streaming formats for Internet Digital Radio are not standardised to a single format and there are seven competing formats at time of writing. ⁶

Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB)

DAB has become more widely available during recent years and prices have become more competitive. DAB is part of the government's Digital Britain strategy and in future it is intended to phase out AM/FM radio. More on this later. The batteries in a typical AM/FM radio will last 20x longer than an equivalent WiFi radio, consequently many DAB radios are mains only for this reason. Often the battery consumption is overlooked by salesmen at the time of purchase and more emphasis is placed on the radios features. The future of DAB is not clear as DAB+ is on the horizon. DAB+ is used by Australia and some EU countries and it has a more efficient method of signal compression and better audio quality. Future sets may incorporate a chip which supports both DAB and DAB+ so there is some uncertainty here.

What are the drivers that will increase/impede the take-up of digital radio?

Clearly one of the main drivers for more widespread use of digital radio is the government's Digital Britain White Paper. The Carter Report ³ indicates that in future AM/FM radio is to be phased out as radio stations are moved over to DAB. The Report suggests that AM/FM broadcasting will be switched off by 2015, however this date is subject to DAB coverage being similar to present FM coverage and being available to 90% of the population.

Presently there are disincentives to moving to DAB, not least is the number of car radios in existence that would no longer work. Devices are available to enable current car radios to receive DAB signals, but specific DAB car radios cost in the region of £160. Another disincentive is that broadcast radio is already a commercially difficult market place; the addition of DAB makes things more difficult. The DAB, DAB+ issue also is unhelpful.

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So how does DAB work?

For those of you with an interest in the technical side of DAB please go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/dab/works.shtml> ^s

In brief, presently DAB uses 7 Multiplex groups with each group having a capacity 2.3 million bits. Each radio station is sub allocated part of a MUX group and the proportion can be increased and decreased dynamically during the day to improve or reduce sound quality. As expected this leads to debate and dispute with listeners advocating higher allocations for their favourite radio station, with Radio 3 listeners being a vocal minority.

The radio frequencies used by the multiplex groups are: –

11B: 218.640 MHz

11C: 220.352 MHz

11D: 222.064MHz

12A: 223.936MHz

12B: 225.648 MHz

12C: 227.360 MHz

With each Mux group capable of supporting ten to a dozen radio stations depending on desired signal quality.

Conclusions -

This month's article is different to those found in previous editions of Starlite. I would like the readers to e-mail their views on the future of Broadcast Digital Radio. For those without e-mail please pass me your written comments. Replies will be published in the next edition of Statlite.

See below for a list of possible areas you may be willing to comment on:-

DAB looks as if it will be superseded by DAB+. Will this be a major disincentive to buying into DAB?

Most people have their radio permanently tuned in to one radio station – is greater choice that big an issue?

Is DAB sound quality a disappointment compared to current FM broadcasts?

Is battery life going to be a problem for future portable digital radio sets? A comparable AM/FM radio set's batteries last 20x longer than a comparable DAB radio.

What will happen to the radio spectrum freed up by the move to DAB? Is all the upheaval justified?

What about car radios in general? DAB radio costs could take us back to the bad old days of having the DAB radio stolen from one's car!

Car radios will be the last to move over to DAB. Listening to car radio, whilst commuting, must be a significant part of commercial radio's audience.

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Perhaps with the coverage of Satellite and the reduced competition for radio spectrum at satellite frequencies, receiving radio via satellites may become more attractive given that a lot of future radio listening will be via a set plugged into a mains supply.

Does WiFi Internet radio have a future? The payment of royalties for this type of radio is currently disputed. ⁴

References

- ¹ http://www.ebuyer.com/product/180270?utm_source=google&utm_medium=products
- ² http://www.amazon.co.uk/review/RW63TZ6R4087X/ref=cm_cr_pr_viewpnt#RW63TZ6R4087X
- ³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/4387972/Carter-report-AM-and-FM-radio-signals-to-be-switched-off.html>
- ⁴ <http://www.mclld.co.uk/blog/blog.php?32>
- ⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Radio_Equality_Act
- ⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_radio
- ⁷ <http://www.uk-dab.info/stationlist.php>

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NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

The Radio Club which Jim belongs to on his visits to Australia have posted the following entry on You Tube. If you have problems locating the article, start YouTube and search on 'VK2MB at Barrenjoey Lighthouse 2009, Part 1'

If you enjoyed Part 1, you will be disappointed there is no Part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoynmSer11o>

FROM THE STARLITE ROVING REPORTER

August 2010

Your Roving Reporter is back; it's been three years or more since I last submitted one of my long monthly reports for Starlite which on a regular basis I had been doing for 24 years in between writing quarterly reports for the Vellum the publication of The George Formby Society, also another publication The Syncopator - the publication of The Ukulele Society of Great Britain, also The Shropshire Theatre Organ trust and The West Midlands Amateur Computer Club. As you can see I do more writing than practical work. Nowadays I have shelved some of them because I have taken on others like once a month the Stourbridge Branch of The George Formby Society which I started 19 yrs ago this December. My monthly reports for that publication can be seen by logging on to www.freewebs.com/george-formby-stourbridge-branch/ there is the occasional press report.

It is great to be back with STARLITE again. There were three reports that I sent to Malcolm, our late President but they were never published because Malcolm was so ill. We all miss him. He did so much for STARS in many ways and he fought cancer right to the very end.

I am going to go back in the STARS History now, and it's not often that I visit Stourbridge Town Hall, let alone play there, but in May of this year that most certainly happened when I asked the Town Hall Manager if I could play a few war time numbers on one of my four Ukes during a V.E. tea dance on the 8th May. He agreed - One might think so what? This October is an anniversary because I would never have thought 60 yrs ago [1950] when, as a young lad, still in the final months at school that along with my father & Stan G8SR a founder member of STARS we attended a Hobbies Exhibition in Stourbridge Town Hall & that was the first time I was introduced to members of the Stourbridge & District Amateur Radio Society. I still have the programme of the event which was organised by The Rotary Cub. It was the following year, 1951 before I attended my first meeting in The Science Lab. of Stourbridge King Edward Grammar School & I first became a member of STARS. So next year it's another celebration along with others that will be taking place like 60 years as a member of the RSGB April 1951 BRS20332 SWL; more about the events in future reports.

I have mentioned my other interests apart from the place where my Wife Glenys and I work one day a week, sometimes two, it's the Severn Valley Railway Carriage Works in Bewdley. I'm into my 9th year as a volunteer. I like the 1940s weekends that started my interest off in the SVR 2001. The first time I had ever traveled on The Severn Valley Line. This year, on the second Sunday of the month, I came into contact at Bridgnorth with three guys from Cheshire who were not only members of The George Formby Society, but all three are Licenced Amateurs and they are brothers [see photo] Brian G4XQB, Albert G4OGE & Colin G4OGF,



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and they have an interest in steam trains. It takes me back to 1996 when I came into contact with a guy at the George Formby Society meeting in Blackpool & I was in conversation with one of the members for the first time, J.Cattertmole. During the conversation I found out he engraved the Badges for RSGB & he is Licenced - G8NKP & he has an interest & plays Cinema pipe organs & church organs & steam trains. So we share the same interests as well as being members of The George Formby Society. As with another member of GFS & Uke Society of Great Britain G.Osbourne G6KPA & former administrator of The West Midlands Olde Tyme Music Hall Society & entertainer especially the Max Miller impersonator from Redditch Colin Wheeler G0TOX, likewise on SVR. My colleague in carriage works department Bernard G0BJS & a MARS member Don Keeling who has been with SVR 18 years also another recent contact Mike Osbourne G7FCZ who worked with our late president at BT. Mike lives at Highley & works at SVR as a volunteer, just one other GFS member Derek Pierce who is a G6 from Leicester. Finally I would like to welcome John G4DYK & Janet M6DYK to STARs. It was great meeting you both at Wayne's Slow Scan TV demonstration in July which I found of great interest. If I can fit it in with my busy schedule, I have plans to have a go at that mode of communication & I know I can get help from Wayne & Geoff from Wednesbury. Geoff's son-law was my boss at my last full time job in 1990s. Before I end this report due to my other interests, I will not be able to attend all the STARs meetings other than main & committee meetings, because, otherwise I would find myself out every night of the week & especially during the winter months when the comforts of home seem greater than being out must be Old Age. I am now starting planning the next report, which will include Shropshire Steam Rally, a weekend in Blackpool & any other news from past & present.

73s Your Roving Reporter Malcolm Palmer G8BOP

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EXPERIENCES OF ANY RECENT PURCHASES OR EVENTS

Please write in about any recent purchases, experiences, rallies or events which you think will be of interest to other club members.

Andrew M6APJ writes -

I recently shared a purchase on Ebay with a ham mate :-

CLANSMAN MILITARY MANPACK NEW HF DIPOLE LONG WIRE
4 x NEW KEVLAR/WIRE DIPOLE ELEMENTS 50 to 60m LONG

It comes already tie wrapped and clipped for bands, so just fold back.
Also comes with hook and thin cord on a double winder for throwing over trees, etc.
They are each about 45m long, so around 180m in total.

I paid £20 + £7.50 P&P for the above which I thought was superb value.

Sold by Ebay user:
ta_shunca_uitco

I have bought a number of approx 1½ inch x 10ft aluminum poles (£6 cash no receipt trade price) and approx 2 inch x 10ft Aluminum pole (£10 cash no receipt trade price). Each swagged pole fits inside the other quite well to make a telescopic pole which you can drill and secure with a bolt. When ordering mention you are from Stourbridge Amateur Radio Club.

Website: <http://www.badland.co.uk/products.php>

Telephone: 01384 423160

Address: R W Badland Ltd Unit 3 Providence Street Lye Stourbridge West Midlands DY9 8HN

At the 99p shop in Cornbow Centre, Halesowen I bought 20m of 4mm Cammo camping / outdoor cord.

Used for tethering tents, fishing umbrellas, etc, but I bought for supporting a 2 element wire beam and supporting a delta loop.

Using an eyed bolt (see below) at the top of a pole and insulator to take up any slack in a loop.

Bought from Wilkinsons, an eyed bolt for the top of poles, etc. About 4 inches long M8 bolt with eyelet and nut and small washer for 99p.

In their prepacked section. Great for the top of poles to run cord/ string through to support dipoles, loops etc with insulators.

Andy M6APJ



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Malcolm Palmer writes :-

For radio & TV & electronic components George Feltons Shop near Bearwood is the place to visit. It been there a number of years and is situated opposite the now closed Barleycorn Pub.

Malcolm G8BOP



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YOUR COMMITTEE

Hon. President	NICK	G6DQN	
Vice President	JAMES	G7HEZ	
Hon. Secretary	JOHN	M1EJG	(01562) 700513
Hon. Treasurer	JOHN	G8UAE	
Committee Members	ADRIAN	G0NLA	
	MALCOLM	G8BOP	
	ANDREW	M6APJ	

CALENDAR of EVENTS

It should be noted that the Shack will be open every Monday evening unless shown otherwise in the Calendar

August	Mon 30th	Bank Holiday
September	Sat 4th Sun 5th	S.S.B Field Day
September	Mon 6th	Marine VHF Radio and Radar by Graham Woolfenden
	Mon 13th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 20th	Main Meeting - Not yet arranged
	Mon 27th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
October	Mon 4th	Informal - On air or natter
	Mon 11th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 18th	Main Meeting - Not yet arranged
	Mon 25th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
November	Mon 1st	Informal - On air or natter
	Mon 8th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 15th	Surplus Sale
	Mon 22nd	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 29th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
December	Mon 6th	Informal - On air or natter
	Mon 13th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 20th	Main Meeting - Not yet arranged
	Mon 27th	No Meeting
January	Mon 6th	Informal - On air or natter
	Mon 13th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter
	Mon 20th	Main Meeting - Not yet arranged
	Mon 27th	Open Shack Night - On air or natter

