



G3NMD Newsletter
Houghton-le-Spring ARC

- Club Meetings
- Meat Raffle
- Lighthouses on the Air Special Events
- Fried onion aerial

Welcome to the Houghton-le-Spring ARC newsletter for September 2017, Just a short newsletter this month as I have been away and busy with one thing and another,

Club Meetings

1/8/17 Listening on the HF radio tonight the bands were very quiet, even the CW part of the bands, Ian MORZE had bought a mains socket tester off Ebay which was showing as no earth on all sockets even known good sockets! So after receiving a replacement, we dismantled the faulty one to see what was wrong, it turns out the earth neon had a dry solder joint (very poor especially for a mains tester!) we resoldered the joints and re-assembled it and it worked as it should, luckily the light illuminates if all is ok, if it had been the opposite it could have been quite dangerous



Reg and Sarah brought in a Icom E208 dual band radio in for us to check out for him as he was thinking about buying it, Ian

MORZE and George M5GHT powered it up and with the help of Tom MOHYE entered the offset for the local repeaters and George had a few contacts, all working perfect and received good reports, and as you can see in the photo it attracted some attention



, as usual Tom continued his Intermediate training and Scott and Ian were doing morse practice

8/8/17 all setup to listen for ISS space station pass at 18:40 but unfortunately we didn't hear it



I did see on facebook a video of someone



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receiving it on the second pass between 21:00-22:00, John M6RZE, and as usual intermediate training and morse practice

22/8/17 A quiet night at the club tonight, probably due to people watching the football, John M6HWN brought in his Icom IC7100 for Tom to help program it,



as always at the club a lot of interest as a lot of members hadn't experienced D-Star, Tom M0HYE and George M5GHT are active on D-star so they explained how it worked and gave us a demonstration using GB3PB repeater, someone had connected to a reflector and hadn't disconnected, this causes a problems for other people wanting to use the repeater, a lot of us don't have D-Star so don't fully understand the mode but it was good to get an idea of how it works and to see it in action, no morse practice from myself and Ian tonight but we both did win the meat raffle 😊 so it being a quiet night was a bonus for us, there was no intermediate training tonight but the students brought in their practical work to be signed off

29/8/17 Another good night at the club, quite a bit of activity going on too, Tom

M0HYE had the laptop set up with the DVMega setup listening to D-Star, great to see how it all works, demonstrations like this contribute a lot to the hobby, not only does it give people an insight into what it actually does, but educates people how to get the best out of it, as demonstrated last week where someone has connected to a D-star Reflector via GB7PB and didn't disconnect, this was sorted quickly by Tom who can connect via RF and disconnect it, so a little education can go a long way, George G4RNI has been busy again making a trapped dipole, a quick demonstration from him to how it was made from various parts and looked quite substantial but easy to assemble and disassemble. Chappy M6OGC had an unknown aerial, it looked to be 2/6/70 and this was confirmed using the analyser with a nice and quick test. Ian MORZE continued the foundation training course. We got another new member tonight, Welcome to the Club Greg and good luck with the Foundation course, we also had a surprise visit from Nick G7EVW, it's been a long time since we've seen Nick, always good to see different faces coming along. Sadly I didn't get any photos from tonight.

Meat Raffle

8/8/17 Tom M0HYE & Mick M6MMY

22/8/17 Ian MORZE & Scott M0MCN



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Local Lighthouses on the air weekend

I visited a couple of Lighthouses on the air special events this weekend, first being Souter Lighthouse where the South Tyneside Amateur Radio Society (STARS) use the call sign GB2SJ, they couldn't get their normal location within the grounds of the lighthouse, but got a nice spot just outside of the lighthouse wall, I only managed to get there on Sunday morning but from what they said they had a lot of visitors over the weekend, by the amount of callsigns in the log book they done very well for the aerials they had up, Dave G7PHG was working 2M and Lee 2E0DZC was working HF on 40M and 10M here are a few photos of the setup



Then after leaving Souter lighthouse I went a few miles south to Roker Lighthouse where the Bishop Auckland

Amateur Radio Club were setup using callsign GB2RL it was quite a sun trap where they were setup overlooking the sea and the pier where Roker lighthouse is being renovated, they have a good setup for the very limited space they have, and plenty of contacts in the log book,



Fried onion aerial

Well, not quite.

Not being overly impressed with an onion (unun) aerial and remembering I had three HF mobile whips stashed in the loft for years, I decided to have a go at making a multi band HF aerial for WSPR. That's the low power weak signal propagation reporting programme (app in modern parlance).

I don't want to have to keep swapping aerials so I decided that mounting them all on a single base should be fine as whatever signal I send should, like water running downhill, look for the easiest path to radiate. So, after hunting for some suitable aluminium plate free of charge I saw an aluminium pan in my mate's kitchen and said to the lads at STARS club that such a pan lid may be suitable, if



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not a bit thin and bendy. Dave G7PHG came up from the cellar with an old mini frying pan they used when camping. None of them actually believed what I wanted to try.

The photo shows my aerial analyser with nice resonances at 14, 21 and 28 MHz using only a cooker shelf for a counterpoise so thats 20, 15 and 10 metres covered. Next step is to mount a mobile helical vertical in the middle for the WARC band at 17 metres (18MHz) topped with a 40m similar (7MHz). That will hopefully give me a 5 band low profile aerial to dedicate to WSPR. By the time I mount the lot atop a 1.5m x 32mm "hot" aluminium pole I may even score for the 12m (24.9MHz) band too although that may be asking too much.

Marion's gonna be annoyed though when I bury the rest of her cooker for a ground plane!



George, G4RNI

And Finally, Thanks for reading the newsletter for September 2017 from Houghton-le-Spring ARC, and if there is any radio related content from the club email details to Scott using email MOMCN@yahoo.co.uk