



MKARS News

Letter from the Chair

Dear all,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. Many of us have now had our COVID jabs, and with the incidence of infection falling we hope we will be able to return the club to more normal times when we can all meet up once again.

However, for the foreseeable future we maintain the use of Zoom for Club meetings, talks and events.

This is what we have organised for the next couple of months:

On **Monday April 12th** we are very fortunate to have internationally recognised Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA talk to us about Solar Cycle 25 Predictions and Progress. Carl will be joining us on Zoom from the US. Watch out for the meeting information on the club website and Facebook page, but mark this for your calendar as it will be a talk not to be missed.

We are also going to try to form a special interest group on digital modes, and will be holding an evening for all those interested on Monday 19th April. This will be on Zoom and further details

will be posted shortly.

On **Monday 26th April** we have a talk to guide us on how to comply with the new OFCOM EMF license regulation by Martyn Baker G0GMB. Martyn will give us a talk on how he has approached the EMF assessment for the NRC at Bletchley Park. This is a complex operation with multiple bands, antennas and transceivers for a station that is in regular contact with the public. It should illustrate the principles to us of how to approach the task that is now becoming part of our licence.

Monday 10th May sees us having a Zoom talk on chasing VHF/ UHF DX using two new software tools - ON4KST and AirScout by Tim G6GEI. Tim will give us an overview to the software, which is heavily used by contesters, on how to use it to make DX contacts.

On **Monday 17th May** we have the next Special Interest homebrew/ constructors group Zoom meeting where we will be focusing on soldering and SMD type components.

We also have a new event for the Club - the

MKARS QSO Challenge for the Easter bank holiday. Planned by Tim G6GEI and Brendan G8IXK, we will run this on 2m, 70cm and an HF band. It will be all about working as many MKARS members as possible over the weekend. Further details can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Finally, like all of us we are unsure when the COVID restrictions will be lifted to restart our face to face Club meetings at the Irish Club. No sooner do we get light at the end of the tunnel than someone or something turns the light out. It was very disappointing this week to see that Friesland has been cancelled this year, but understandable.

As reported later in the newsletter, the complexity and uncertainties in planning this year's MKARS rally has regrettably meant that the Committee have taken the difficult decision to cancel it for this year. We have though, next year's firmly in the calendar.

That's it for now,

Best 73's

Phil G4FVZ
Chair 2020/2021

April 2021

Highlights:

- Spring club programme announced
- Club meeting recordings available
- Easter QSO Challenge
- Special Interest Group news
- Club talk highlights

Inside this issue:

MKARS Easter QSO Challenge	2
Contesters Special Interest Group	2
Home Construction Special Interest	2
Club Meeting Reports	3
Membership News	3
Committee News	4
Club calendar	4



Phil G4FVZ



**CQ MKARS,
CQ MKARS ...**

MKARS Easter QSO Challenge

One of the ideas from our open house meeting at the start of the year was to hold some form of event to encourage QSO's between club members. Tim and Brendan have put together a challenge that will run over the Easter weekend for everyone to work as many club members as possible on 70cm, 2m and 10m bands. Contacts can be made using FM, SSB, FT8 or CW. QSOs must be made outside of the club nets (but could be before or after the net period). For a contact to be valid, both parties must submit an entry

showing the QSO.

The challenge runs from 00:00 on Friday 2nd April until 23:59 on Tuesday 6th April. This period includes the 2m FM activity contest 7-8pm on Tuesday. You can use any means to publicise your activity times or setup skeds such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Club nets etc. eg *G8IXK will be calling CQ on 28.4 USB Friday from 5pm* All QSOs should be made in accordance with the RSGB band plans. You can operate from home, mobile or portable (if permitted under COVID

rules)

Entries should ideally be made using the spreadsheet that can be downloaded from the club website, but a CSV file is acceptable too. The entry must be in the format shown below. Contacts between members will only score once on each band. Certificates will be awarded to the member with the largest number of contacts for each license class. All entries must be submitted by 23:59 on Sunday 11th April using email to qso@mkars.org.uk. Make sure that your QSO partners submit their entry too!

My Call	Their call	Date dd/mm/yy	Band	Mode
G8IXK	G6GEI	02/04/21	2m	FM

Brendan, G8IXK

Tim, G6GEI

Contesters Special Interest Group

2020 was a great year for the MKARS contest group with their best ever results. After all of the December results were announced we were extremely pleased to end the year in 6th place in the overall local club section of the UK Activity Contests (UKAC) which is up three places from last year. 38 clubs entered the contest.

The 2021 season is now well under way and the club are currently in 5th place overall.

We are pleased to welcome some new team members which has helped to improve the club scores. We are in the top six on all of the bands with 3rd place on 6m and 23cm. Let's hope the good run continues through the year.

Several members have been enjoying taking part in the FM Activity Contests and the 2m FT8 contests.

Do you fancy giving it a go?

The monthly timetable is:

1st Tuesday	144MHz
2nd Tuesday	432MHzx2
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. See Facebook for the meeting link or PM Tim or myself and we can get you started.

Brendan, G8IXK

Home Construction Special Interest Group

The inaugural meeting took place in January. We discussed PCB fabrication, where we source components, what kits are useful and where we get them from. We also talked about a club based construction project and ended up with two! The first is a power and SWR meter and the second is a

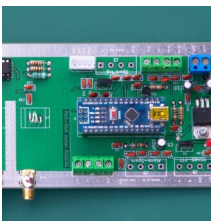
compact 20/40/80m single band SSB/CW CAT controlled transceiver using a design by Steve G6ALU.

15 members attended the March meeting where we progressed the club projects and discussed test gear including various VNA's test meters and 'scopes.

If you have an interest in the broad area of home construction, join us for the next meeting in May. You can also sign up to the group message board by visiting <https://groups.io/g/MKARS-Homebrew> or contact Steve, G6ALU or Las MOBOY.

Pos	Club	Total
1	Hereford ARS	5649
2	Parallel Lines CG	2471
3	Northampton RC	2374
4	Workshop ARS	2040
5	Tall Trees CG	1987
6	Milton Keynes ARS	1958
7	Bolton Wireless Club	1922

**2020 UKAC
contest results**



**The Home
Construction
group has met
twice so far and
have a couple of
club projects**

Club Meeting Reports

On 11th January we started the year with a club member round table to discuss the sort of things that you want to see the club do over the coming year. Some of the suggestions included homebrewing, developing

links with other local radio clubs and a club QSO competition.

On 8th March we had one of our "What's on my workbench sessions". Several members have been

using Arduinos in projects, Dave has been refurbishing some old power/swr meters and Phil showed us how he has been configuring a StreamDeck to automate his shack



Club Meeting Report - 25th January

We welcomed Steve Clements, G1YBB to give us a talk on 'My adventures with Contesting'. Steve took us through the evolution of his contest station and the Hereford Contest Group

He started in 1990 with the PW 144MHz QRP contest logging on pieces of paper pre numbered with serial

numbers! The highs and lows included 1st place scores and a number of disasters with tents, masts and antenna! Steve is keen on homebrewed hardware and has built his own antennas, masts and drive on rotator bases.

After his near solo UKAC effort gained 68th place for

Hereford club in 2016 the club inspired and cajoled others to join him and they gained 2nd place in 2017 with 26 members entering.

Steve reminded us that even those who enter 1 or 2 sessions a year make a valuable contribution to the club score and that every point counts.

Steve G1YBB recounted his contesting adventures - including when he shinned up a mast after it was erected to add a forgotten pulley

Club Meeting Report - 8th February

Steve Shorey, G3ZPS, gave us a fascinating talk on 'Classic ham radio gear and why some of us are keen to restore it and keep it going'.

Steve told us he currently has about 40 HF stations that he has restored over the last 20 years or so and his

garage is full of spares and future restoration projects

He talked about "State of the art" radios from the 1920s & 30s through WW2, the post war era and the Cold War. Steve had many of us reminiscing about our early stations with surplus ex

military and commercial kit and took us on a journey past all the major manufacturers of ham gear such as Collins, Drake, KW, Codar, Eddystone, Heathkit and the Japanese manufacturers.



For more, see www.g3zps.com

Club Meeting Report - 22nd February

We had a very interesting talk from Bill Coombes, G4ERV on 'Battery Technology for QRP Portable Operation'. Bill has worked in the battery industry throughout his working life and is an expert on the subject.

Bill explained the chemistry and physics behind batteries and told us about the oldest known single cell from around 250BC and the very latest Mars lander batteries.

He then took us through all of the common battery technologies from wet lead

acid through to modern LiPo & LiFePO lithium cells. In each case giving the pros and cons of the technology. Finally he moved on to how to look after the batteries from correct charging to monitoring the cells in the batteries and suitable connectors

Did you know that you can light a fire with a potato? CLUE—use it as the electrolyte for a battery!

Membership News

Exam successes

Congratulations to Simon Phillips (M300V) who has just passed the Intermediate exam and is now 2E000V.

New Members

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

Peter Copeland
Bery Roberts M7BDR
Nick Kelly G4UUF

Welcome
Congratulations!



Milton Keynes ARS
Amateur Radio Society

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

Committee News

We now record the club meetings that are held on Zoom and the recordings are made available on YouTube. If you missed a meeting or just want to revisit something in the talk, you can easily access these recordings. Just click the link under

Library on the MKARS website or go to youtube.com and search for **Milton Keynes Amateur Radio Society** to see a list of the recorded club meetings.

GB3MK is off the air at present for maintenance. The Sunday evening net

is temporarily running on 145.450 MHz FM.

The committee have taken the decision to cancel the MKARS annual club rally that was to be held during the August Bank holiday as we have been unable to find a suitable venue.

Club Calendar

Friday 2nd to Monday 5th April MKARS QSO challenge For more details see page 2

Monday April 12th we are very fortunate to have internationally recognised Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA talk to us about Solar Cycle 25 Predictions and Progress. Carl will be joining us on Zoom from the US. Mark this for your calendar as it will be a talk not to be missed.

Monday 19th April we are hoping to start a new data modes special interest group. Look out on the website and Facebook for details.

Monday 26th April we have a talk by Martyn Baker G0GMB about the how the NRC has conducted its EMF assessment as part of the new licensing requirement.

Monday 10th May we have a talk by Tim G6GEI on Chasing VHF/UHF DX using KST and AirScout.

Monday 17th May will be the next meeting of the constructors special interest group.

Monday 24th May TBC

Sunday 29th August The annual MKARS rally has been cancelled for 2021

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