

Q5

North Bristol Amateur Radio Club

The Proactive Radio Club

Page Community Association
Page Road, Staple Hill
Bristol BS16 4NE

August 2025



Courtesy of Geoff, M6GFM



One of our best events so far this year. It was Burgers On The Hill With Richard, M6RTK. This was a **FREE** event held on a Saturday so as to make use of the relatively good summer weather. More of the event is covered in this Q5. What other clubs have free events like this?

This was more like a field day, with four separate stations running.

Another success, is Paul, previous call of M7LZG. He has now gained his intermediate 2E0YJS. Congratulations, Paul.

Talks:- We have had a few talks this quarter. Dennis on Modulation and yours truly on basics of antennas. We hope to have more talks as we get into Autumn. We notice that having talks during the holiday season is not the best idea as there are absentee members.

ROTA :- Railways On The Air is listed in the calendar of events, but I am awaiting conformation from the new Manager at Bitton Railway, if we are still permitted on their small green with our gazebo.

WhatsApp Group :- Our group is gradually expanding. If you wish to join, please let Geoff know. The group has only a few rules, don't be abusive, and no jokes. It is for passing messages to other members in the group, and passing messages to the group.

Don't confuse WhatsApp with social media It isn't It is purely text messaging with the ability to phone and send pictures free, unlike your text that generally charge, like mine 30p for pictures.

Longest day In The Park

After the disastrous cancelled event back last month, (Burgers on the Hill) it was, a worry. Was it going to Thunder with Flooding. Gail force winds with us unable to erect antennas. No!! It was brilliant weather, the sun shone, a light breeze and the bands gradually recovering from the disastrous past month or so. The KP index returning to a lower 3 to 3.5. still not perfect, but usable.



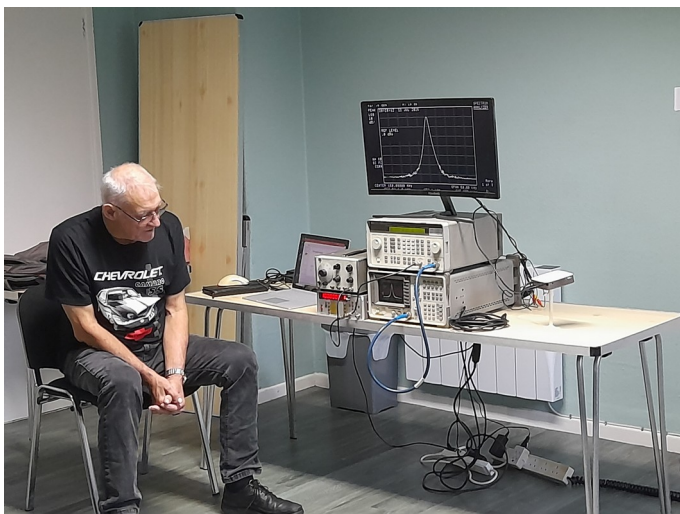
The longest day being the Saturday, this was the nearest we could get. Some of you may remember, when we used to meet at She7. We had a meeting at the Sea Walls on the Bristol Downs. Being we are near to Page Park, it makes sense to meet here. Last year we had a Chit Chat and a general meeting.

This year was a little different. As there are a number of us now joining in with the POTA project, the event was taken advantage of by a number of members.

On the bench to the left on the microphone is our new member Carl, M6CJN. He was using an Xiegu G90. On the right is yours truly using my FT991a. In the middle is Paul, M7LZG with his son Ethan M7YPZ looking on. They joined me on my kit to hone their skills working several DX stations, the Best DX of the night was VE9CF, Canada and CT1GFK, Portugal. A special thanks go out to Adrian, PD1AT from the Netherlands for having a special chat with Ethan. I have now emailed Adrian thanking him for the encouragement and kind words given to Ethan.

Dennis (M0IYQ) Talks On Modulation

Dennis gave one of his epic talks on Modulation. His talk became easier to understand as He brought along his array of test equipment. To display the modulation obtained was by way a very clear monitor.



Left, Dennis in mid flow with a wave on screen. Looks like a fundamental frequency with no resonant sproggies to me, Dennis.

Dennis, as well as giving the club talks on various subjects, he is one of our training team.

If you would like a specialist talk at the club or would like a one to one with Dennis, I am sure he would oblige.

His specialist subject? Communication, of course.

Bodger's Burgers

First Attempt June 7th

The Weather forecast Was Very bad this year, on the Wednesday before, it was rated at 89% rain. Your committee was in conversation as to thoughts on cancelling the event. In the end, Friday morning, with a yellow storm warning in place, we had to postpone. Emails were sent out to the membership, some saying that it should still take place.



Bodger, managed to find a spot to assist RAYNET at an event, in Cheddar. Mike, M0DXV, RAYNET controller, was very pleased to get him under his wing as he was short staffed for their event. If you would like to assist with RAYNET, Mike is giving the club a talk, see the calendar of events.

July 19th Second attempt

At Last, we had our Bodger's Burgers. The weather improved with the second or third heatwave, however, for our event, rain was forecast. (There's a surprise) Bodger used his tarp, instead of our gazebo. After all it was just to keep the sun and rain off our heads.

HF Bands had been poor, however with them improving over the months by the time it got to the foodie event they were in reasonable shape.



Shaun, G8VPG, had set up a 2m station. From what I saw, Ethan, M7YPZ was having fun with this set up in he boot of Shaun's car.

The camper in the background belongs to Carl, M6CJN. It is equipped with his Xiegu G90 and a mag-mount ham stick on the roof. Now that is what I call comfortable radio working!!

The Club's station was set up under the shelter in prime position, By The Food,

The club station was using the IC7300 with the antenna being My Buddipole tuned for 20m

Bodger's Burgers Continued

The forth station was that of John, G4WOD. His station was set up at the beginning of the event, using park GB-0166 he worked his 10 stations for POTA activation.

John set up at one of the park benches that overlooks the magnificent scenery. The views being right over to the river Severn, Wales and the Welsh hills.

John's station comprises of his IC705 and his home made antenna supported by a fibreglass pole. John has set up this type of antenna at the club and has shown it at our latest antenna talk.

All of his kit fits in the back pack then, he will just cycle away on his electric bicycle. Double the fun!!



As the summer progresses, we may and try to have another event of some sort to be held on a Saturday or Sunday. I was asked if we could hold this foodie event at the Railways On The Hill in September. In all honesty, we would upset our host if we provided food and coffee in competition with themselves. That would go down like a lead balloon.



From this position, it looks quite impressive. Out of view to the left of the picture is the view down the hillside.

On a clear day you can see the Severn bridges. So if you decide to use 2m or higher frequencies you can beam directly into Wales.

Photographs at the Burger event were courtesy of Geoff, M6GFM and the POTA at the table was John, G4WOD

A Cheap Antenna From China



The antenna consists of a 5m long whip, an earth stake, a radial system and a connector / assembly block. This block is not a coil of any type. It is just a threaded block to hold the whip, ground stake and the SO239. Note The block has to be the correct way up so that the SO239 screen is to the earth stake.

The radial system is made from a computer ribbon cable that you unzip to form 4 to 10 individual wires, how many? Well it is up to you. It is very easy however to make your own from your favourite wire crimped to an eye ring crimp.

Easy to assemble, Just push the stake into the ground, add the radial system, then screw on the block and whip. If the ground is hard knock the stake in with a wooden or rubber mallet over a protective piece of wood to protect the thread.

I advise that you don't pound the red block assembled on to the stake as the plastic, although strong, may shatter.

Attach your length of coax, as usual with this type of antenna where it is not using the coax screen as a ground plane, choke off the RF with either a 1:1 balun, ferrite clips or coiled coax in the form of a dirty balun.

TUNING

Tuning is accomplished by adjusting the length of the whip for the band required. I have tuned this from 20m up to 6m.

This antenna is quick to deploy, the only problem I have encountered is having radials, can be a trip hazard if used in public areas. My experience is, when ever I lay out leads and wires, someone always want to step on or over them (Including My Fellow Hams). When I set up my radio at the Page Park event, I had a member of the public constantly stepping over the cable protection in the form of a line of tool boxes and cones over my feed line just so he could step on the coax.

How Good Does It Work

It is no better or worse than any other antenna of $\frac{1}{4}$ wave. The propagation of any antenna of a given type is always the same, spend £20 or £200 the propagation will be the same, it is only the mechanical assembly and design that is better or worse.

An example of this is you will not have a better signal with a 5m fishing pole and a wire down the side with ground radial system than this antenna. However the fishing pole is harder to tune. This whip antenna, is easier to tune to higher frequencies.

A Cheap Antenna From China Continued

Conclusion

I have to be very careful here. It was a gift from Mat, G7FBD Thank you Mat. He bought it from AliExpress and can be seen from many of the market place sellers from £17 to £80 so be careful and not buy from the first seller you see.

I used my IC706 Mk2G as it was in my shack ready for the Sunday net. Everything is powered by a large Battery and solar system, so I was surprised that I had a lot of noise on the signal. Test your own system before blaming the neighbours. Yes, you are correct, it was from my system. It was the USB charging circuit charging my phone in the shack. I am normally charging my phone when on the net (70cm), or 20m Doublet, then, there no noise is evident I will have to install some filtering, but that is another story.

So with the Doublet, there is no noise, and a vertical, there is noise. This is not a fault with the antenna, as I have said many times, a balanced antenna is noise cancelling against most QRM.

The first station worked was a POTA station, YO9LYA on 20m he gave me 59 in Romania. Not bad for a first attempt.

Quick and easy to setup, if you don't tangle your radials, as I normally do, set up is about 5 minutes. Tuning can take you a bit longer if working alone and you are tuning with an SWR meter. However, a RigExpert antenna analyser, or a VNA makes life easy.

If you are clever, measure the whip on each band you work, write this down in a log then any subsequent tuning would take a couple of minutes.

Now, there is a question to pose, should this end fed antenna be fed via an UN-UN? If it is resonant $\frac{1}{2}$ wave on your chosen frequency, then it should be fed with a 49:1. However if it is a random end fed ie longer than resonant, then it should have a 9:1 fitted. In all honesty, I think it isn't required as this is $\frac{1}{4}$ wave antenna not requiring a tuner, other than altering the length of the rod. Remember, as stated earlier, have dirty balun in the coax to minimise the RF induction into the shield.

This is a great antenna to add to my arsenal. As it was mentioned to me, the thread is metric (10mm) and not the normal 3/8 inch. This is no problem to me as my Chinese Buddi-Pole also has 10mm threads. I will be experimenting with amalgamating the two antennas to form, who knows, a new BYN antenna.

Dave, G7BYN



Radial System using computer ribbon cable

News From Rocky

As of 31st July this year, our very own Rocky, M6VRL is now a state Registered Nurse. It has been a long hard slog for him, achieving a first class Honour Degree.

He worked so hard for this, he gave up amateur radio and our club for a while, but is rejoining next year.

Rocky is a family man, shown here with his wife Louise and daughter Holly in the middle. Congratulations from all of us at the NBARC.



"We're done" - Major government organization drops Windows for good.

German state Schleswig-Holstein wants to remove all traces of Microsoft, including Windows. The transition started in 2023, and should be complete by the end of 2025. Digitalization minister says, "We're done with Teams"

Schleswig-Holstein, Germany's northernmost state, has confirmed it will be phasing out Microsoft office software tools (including Teams, Word, Excel and Outlook) in its public offices in a bid to reduce its reliance on US tech giants.

This will affect almost all government departments in the state, the transition started in 2023. A full switch for civil servants, police and judges is expected by the end of this year.

Possibly one of the biggest changeovers to have happened, the transition extends far beyond switching Microsoft Office for LibreOffice.

Outlook is to be replaced by Open-Xchange, Microsoft Teams will be phased out for an open-source German platform, and even the entire operating system – Windows – will be switched out for Linux-based operating system.

Besides seeking geographical independence, Schleswig-Holstein's approach can also be seen as a reaction to geopolitical instability, such as President Trump's return to office and subsequent EU-US tensions.

By betting on open-source software (OSS), the German state could avoid expensive licensing fees tied to Microsoft's products (one of the pertinent antitrust cases to have been led by the European Commission), potentially saving tens of millions of euros in the long term.

Passed to Q5 by Dennis,M01YQ

SCRAPS OF NEWS

Validity / Revalidation

Although the current amateur radio licence is sometimes referred to as a “licence for life”, all radio amateurs are required to revalidate their licence at least every five years. This requires every licence holder to contact Ofcom to confirm or update their details on the licence database.

The quickest way to revalidate is simply to access the licensing system and (re)-confirm your details online via the Ofcom website.

To prevent your licence expiring because you forgot to renew, Ofcom are advising that you inform them every year. Please do this on line only as 60 thousand phone calls a year will cause major problems.

Revocation

If you fail to revalidate, Ofcom may revoke your licence. Note that this can occur where you have failed to inform Ofcom of a change of contact information (thus preventing their reminders/notifications reaching you).

Support your local repeater



OK, I am a bit biased here. I would like every one to support GB3BS, but it is OK if you support another local repeater. I know times are hard, and years ago when I was bringing up my kids I didn't have the money to go splashing out on repeater subs. However as soon as I could, I did. (If that makes any sense) Anyway, I am now pleading for anyone who uses BS group of repeaters regularly, to support the cause. There is maintenance and electricity to pay for of course, so I am asking on their behalf, **just donate £10 for the year**. If you can't no one will stop you using the box. However it would be really appreciated if you did.

The preferred method of payment is by B.A.C.S or you can always see Mat, G7FBD at the club

B.A.C.S. detail

Bristol Seventy Centimetres Repeater Group

Sort code: 20-13-34 Account: 20201316

Chairman's Report

It's been an exciting / interesting year for NBARC as we finally settled in and established the clubs Friday routines.

The club as you know, supports Page Community and thus when they reach out we help. Last year after some heavy weather their TV mast which we temporarily fixed the previous year finally gave up so it was a good opportunity to secure new brackets and a heavy duty longer pole which I donated. This allowed us to attach our 80m Offset HF aerial to it gaining significant height above the building to improve impedance matching and service ability.

GB3AC on the other hand, was working well being fed into a folded phased commercial dipole. Test were carried out and it was decided to improve the receiver gain by installing a preamp. This was partly due to the limitations of the aerial characteristics and temporary working height.

Initial, feedback and what we new about the aerials lower angle radiation patterns made us decide to change it for one of my commercial military standard white sticks or in this case grey stick. The idea would be so see if we could improve the performance.

This was successful achieved and I report a better signal path. We have left this arrangement in place and will continued to monitor through the summer because as you know the leafy season attenuates signals particularly uhf and above.

Whilst it was my intention to increase the height I had to reframe from doing any physical work pending open heart surgery to replace a faulty Valve and Double bypass due to it being hereditary.

I'm pleased to say, I have undergone this surgical procedure not without some complications which confined me to circa 12 hours in the theatre in total. Whilst the risk are always there the BRI Heart team did an excellent job plus my prior preparation/ fitness I managed to pull through.

As a professional engineer one is drawn to what you are connected up to (life Support Systems). Careful study showed that they would control your heart using external pace makers until normality and sustainability is achieved. Given this multi thousand pound unit pumping drugs , blood and monitoring your heart it's not surprising that I would never ever consider playing radio in hospital whether EMC compatible or not. Trust me several people mention taking a rig in.

I'm pleased to say I came home ahead of schedule due to my prior fitness. Normality will take time as my mind and body comprehends how to tackle daily tasks. This is where the journey begins.

Thank you for the card, kind wishes and support. I hope to be back on form soon.

73 Paul

Editor's Note.

Paul was well enough to attend the club on the 18th July. He looked in tip top condition from the outside, although I suspect he is putting on a brave face. I must admit I feel guilty for badgering him to send in this report. For this I apologise, but It is a cracking report.

Training Team's Report

Training has been quite busy during the last 12 months, we have had three trainees gain their Novice licences and most recently one of them successfully gained his intermediate licence. However all the students sat the online exams in their own homes because even though we have been approved as an Exam Location we do not have the necessary equipment or local resources available to run an online exam at the club - yet.

We are actively looking into overcoming these challenges and the Training team are hopeful that solutions will eventually be identified.

The Shack is operational for HF and provides practical demonstrations on interfacing radios to the PC so that members can experiment with the digital modes available, gaining practical experience before trying it at their own QTH.

It has been good to see members comparing their SSTV pictures received from the ISS this last week using a variety of different ways to receive the transmissions.

Editor's Note

The team have been working hard setting up the training. We, as a club must support them, this is our future.

The SSTV pictures that is talked about have been shared on the new What's App group. If you wish to join the group, please contact Geoff, M6GFM, our membership secretary.

Vice chair's report

The Club continues to grow with a few new members. I am sure its to do with the improved site we now occupy.

As you saw on the 18th July The Glorious Leader was in attendance, it is FANTATIC to see him up and about. Thank you to the guys in the BRI for looking after him so well. Other news,

Congratulations to Paul (M7LZG) who is now the proud owner of 2E0YJS after passing the intermediate exam.

As we now have a number of new members some of which has expressed an interest in the polo shirts, I will get some current prices of the polo/fleece and tee shirts with the logo. What do members think of asking for prices of logo base ball caps? I think Black with ether gold or white letters (or indeed Purple??) . If you can let me know what you want, and sizes I can go away and get some current prices. They do other stuff like Mugs and Pens (Just thinking).

Thanks to Dave G7BYN for organising the "Bodger Burger on a Hill" event, and to the cooking staff for not poisoning everyone, BUT A BIG BIG thank you to young Richard. (We know him as Bodger) for all his efforts in both erecting the Tarp and for providing the excellent cooking facilities .

Oscilloscopes

Do we have one or should we get one, and what does an oscilloscope do? As my old lecturer at college told us, an oscilloscope is a volt meter with a bit more. The bit more is that it will display voltage against time on a screen. This resultant display will be in the form of a graph.

Many of you may know that I bought myself a new digital oscilloscope. I spent my money on a Rigol as this was thought to be one of the better makes and were advertised in the RSGB's Radcom. But this column is not about spending lots of money, this is about a budget hand held device.



I saw advertised on AliExpress a hand held scope for £28. With a band width of 120MHz this looked too good to be true. I looked on YouTube for any reports and reviews. There were some, mainly good, although one of them said there was a problem getting above 100MHz. He, however, failed to recognise that the probe supplied had a band width of 100MHz, so the chances of 120MHz was never going to materialise.

It is never going to be as good as the Rigol but, putting one against the other, frequency and voltage readings were very accurate. I just wish that I had one when I was working, just as a bit of test gear in my tool box.

What can an oscilloscope be used for? Well with a dummy load or tuner with an RF tapping point, we can display a transmitter's display on the screen. Even a cheap little unit like this will do this task.

If you experiment with audio amplifiers, oscillators, digital circuits or anything else that provides a signal, this could be for you.

The scope comes complete with a reasonable quality Probe (x1 and X10) that has sprung hook, earth shield and all the normal accessories you would expect.

It also has a screen shot function so you can analyse complex signals at your leisure.

There are different versions on Ali Express, a latter version being a two channel one. I personally think the screen a little on the small size to read off two channels at any one time.

The one here is the ET120M. I bought it at £28 including tax. Prices do vary day to day, so check before ordering.



Calendar Of Events

August

- 1st Q5 Published and Round Table at the Club
- 8th General club night
- 15th Antenna Planning and Construction (Club Workshop event)
- 16th Saturday 11am to 1pm coffee at Page Park Cafe**
- 22nd Film Night
- 29th General Club Night with Club Workshop Event

September

- 5th Rummage Box Sale. Bring your items for £1 an item or less
- 12th **Guest Speaker:-** RSGB By Andy, G7KNA, The Regional Manager
- 19th General Meeting with club workshop (Dummy Loads)
- 26th Prep for Railways On The Air
- 27th Railways on the Air at Bitton Railway (Subject to New Manager's permission)**
- 28th Railways on the Air at Bitton Railway (Subject to New Manager's permission)**

October

- 3rd **Guest Speaker:-** RAYNET By Mike, M0DXV. (What is it, and how to join).
- 10th General Club Night with Club Workshop
- 17th Autumn Quiz Night
- 24th General Club Night
- 31st Make an UN-UN for an End Fed Antenna

November

- 1st Q5 published Round Table at the Club

Please Note, Training Takes Place At Each Club Meeting From 7:15 to 8 :45
Unless there is an instructional, talk or video when Training is 7:15 to 8pm

Events marked in Red are for events other than our normal Friday meetings.

Club Nets & Contact Details

Please remember, we are trying to keep the Wednesday net a Technical net (If we can). Members may have a problem, or just want to know how something works, ask your question here.

This decision came about because some participants of our nets didn't want to spend the night talking about the weather and general chit chat. They said it was boring, so wouldn't come on any net. The Chit Chat evenings will be the Sunday net. We hope this will cater for all.

Participants of nets can always change the conversation of a net. Therefore, if the conversation said to be boring, you only have yourself to blame.

Wednesday net (This is the regular Net) GB3BS 20:00 to 21:00

Sunday Evening Net This is on GB3BS 20:00 to 21:00 However, GB3AC may be the repeater of choice in the forthcoming month or so. Stand by for an announcement at the club.

Additional nets By Dave G4FJH

Mondays 2m ssb (144.340Mhz) Vertically polarised @ 20:00

Thursdays 6m via the GB3ZY repeater @ 20:05

Club Contacts

Secretary and Q5 Editor

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Please Note a reply may be from another email address as I use this as an inbox .

Chairman

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Next Q5 November 1st

Q5 Publication

Last date for articles October 24th

Publication Date November 1st

I hope that I will get articles sent to me from time to time. I thank all of you that have submitted items over the past couple of years. All back issues are available on the club's new web site.

www.nbarc.org.uk