



# Thurrock Acorns Amateur Radio Club

30th December 2016  
Volume 1, Issue 1



Welcome to the first of what I hope will be a bi monthly newsletter which will inform you as to what is happening within the club. Before I step down from the role of Chair in March I am hoping to produce one more news letter then hopefully the new chair will arrange for the production of future newsletters. Obviously for the latest news the web site [www.taarc.co.uk](http://www.taarc.co.uk) is the place to look.

So what can you expect from this newsletter. As this is the first edition most articles will be of a general nature but I am hoping future editions will include members comments on band conditions, projects they are working on, new modes and even perhaps reports on visits to different places such as HMS Belfast or Bletchley Park etc. Will the newsletter survive—well its up to you the member. Hopefully you spend a few minutes jotting down your comments and sending them through.

## Good bye 2016

### Chairpersons waffle

As I type this missive 2016 is getting ready to give way to 2017 and I wonder what it will bring radio wise. The solar activity today is 74 and the magnetic activity is K2, A17 which again does not bode well as far as DX propagation is concerned. So what should we do? Unfortunately Father Christmas did not bring the magic wand I requested so I am unable to answer/fix that problem. However there is still activity on the HF bands with AB4B 5.9 blasting through on my receiver at the moment.

Over the past 12 months the club has grown both in the number of members and the number of activities run. In March 2017 I shall be stepping down as Chair (well in fact vice Chair) and letting someone else take the reins so that I can focus on the training side. I consider the club and the training section complement each other so its important to develop both. More on this later in the newsletter.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome .....	1
Goodbye 2016 .....	1
New to the hobby .....	2
RNLI event.....	2
Christmas Social .....	3
SSTV.....	3
Nets .....	4

## NEW PEOPLE TO THE HOBBY



A major area of concern for me is retention of new people to the hobby. I have heard many radio conversations (QSO's) where comments are passed about the lack of amateurs on the air and I often wonder why. Recently Gordon (MOWJL) passed me some data which was published by the RSGB. Looking at the 2014 figures it showed that there were 1481 foundation, 682 intermediate and 303 advanced passes in this years (for latest Ofcom figures see end page 4). While I appreciate that this data is for the UK as we are in the highly populated part of the UK I would have expected to see more newly licenced amateurs on the air. I often wonder if it's partly due to existing amateurs who unintentionally paint gloomy pictures by talking about the lack of activity which deters newly licenced amateurs from staying or whether it's the training which I think needs some revising or both.

Having held my licence for a few years (all right many years and that's as far as I will go) I can recall when all you had to do was switch on a 2m or HF transceiver and within a very short time you would be talking to someone somewhere around the world. However times have changed, propagation is working against the amateur, the

mobile phone and the internet arrived all having an impact upon the hobby. Perhaps we should look at digital modes for DX and then there are satellites whizzing overhead on 2m and 70cm. What about the raspberry pi (no not bought from Sainsbury's). My limited technical knowledge here tells me there lots of different uses for them all connected with amateur radio.

So what am I going to do. I am going to focus on the training and the foundation course. My intention is that before any training starts to ensure potential new people to the hobby know what's required once they pass (rig, power supply, ant etc.) and the fact that there are so many different modes. I will also point them in the direction of the RSGB and a local radio club which hopefully they will join or at least make contact with. Like many organisation there are many times when you walk into a new hobby and really don't appreciate what's happening and it's the same for amateur radio so the easier we can make it for someone to integrate into the hobby the better. Once qualified the weekly nets can help the new amateur to make friends on the airwaves.

*They even rescue mad scots stranded on a breach on the South of the country. (read below) Now that takes real courage!!!*

### CONGRATULATIONS



Is this MOWJL or 2EOELI

## RNLI SOS DAY

### GB1TYC

Looking to late January John (G4LTH) is co-ordinating the RNLI event on behalf of the club. The SOS Radio Week takes place at the end of January each year to coincide with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute's (RNLI's) own SOS Fund Raising Day (itself the last Friday in January). The club has already approached local organisations to see if we can raise any funds to support the RNLI who do such an excellent job which at times can be in some horrendous conditions. They even rescue mad scots stranded on a beach on the South of the country. Now that takes real courage!!!

Although one of the goals is to raise some funds for the RNLI it's also to raise the profile of the RNLI so hopefully you will support John as he plans the event.

RNLI event 2016 G4LTH  
& M6LGG





*Christmas social.*

## CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 2016

Tuesday 20th December was the clubs Christmas social. Around 25 people attended the event. At the time of the picture above some members had already departed having helped to devour the sausage rolls and other delights on offer.

The evening started just before 20.00 hours with a small group getting the food ready (sausage rolls etc. in the oven) then the majority of people arrived at 20.00 hrs. Unlike the normal monthly meeting the evening was just a time to chat and have a mince pie or whatever. By the sound of the chatting going on the evening was very successful and an awful lot of information was passed from one person to another.

The one question I have is what is the person on the far left of the picture above doing. Any suggestions received will be included in the next newsletter.



## SSTV

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January is the monthly SSTV net on 2 metres on 144.500. Normally we start by sending a picture each then the qso develops into other areas focusing upon SSTV. Last month one member of the group asked about an issue with MMSSTV. By the end of the evening the problem had been resolved. For those who use the MMSSTV program (which is a free program – excellent) I found it rather a challenge at the start but like all programs the more you use them and the more you talk to other people the more you find out about the different tasks the program can carry out. I am now looking at the 70cm Dutch repeater and the SSTV it transmits, ISS SSTV as well as doing battle on the HF bands.



From PI2NOS 70cm repeater

## 2017

2017 is almost upon us and already we are talking within the club about the first outside activity, that of the RNLI event at the Grays Yacht Club at the end of January. This year (2016) the event was a huge success and we raised quite a few pounds for the RNLI. We also attended the Horndon Feast and Fayre which despite the weather was a very successful and interesting event. Although we did not have a lot of visitors those that did stop to talk were in some way connected to amateur radio so I think we can say our presence at this event should be given serious consideration in 2017. It certainly raised the profile of the radio club something we must keep doing.

## TAARC OPEN NETS

One of the longest activities that the club has supported has been the weekly open 2m net. In fact the net started before the club. It was via this vehicle that Gordon and I based our decision as to whether there would be any interest in a club in Thurrock. The net was run for a few weeks and slowly the number of licenced armatures increased. We decided to develop a data base of amateurs in Thurrock. Once complete we contacted them all and those interested in joining a club came along to a meeting and the rest is history.

The net continues 3 years later each Thursday starting at 19.30 hrs on 145.500. Recently we added a SSTV monthly net which occurs on the first Tuesday of the month at 1930hrs near to 144.500 FM. Are you interested in CW (morse). Stella runs a CW net on a Monday night at 19.30 hrs on 144.180. So there are plenty of opportunities to have a qso on different modes if you wish. And that's just from our club. Don't forget Essex Ham on a Monday 20.00 hrs on GB2DA.

Happy New Year and lets  
hope 2017 bring some  
good times on the

Thurrock Acorns Amateur Radio Club

Website: [www.taarc.co.uk](http://www.taarc.co.uk)  
E-mail: [acorns@taarc.co.uk](mailto:acorns@taarc.co.uk)



The following was taken from the Ofcom web site

[Monthly Amateur licence statistics - November 2016](#)

Product name	No. of licences
Amateur Club Radio Licence	1478
Amateur Foundation Radio Licence	21791
Amateur Full Radio Licence	52075
Amateur Intermediate Radio Licence	9348
Amateur Temporary Reciprocal) Radio Licence	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>84694</b>