

Llais Y Ddraig

The Dragon's Voice



CYLCHGRAWN CLWB RADIO AMATUR Y DDRAIG

THE JOURNAL OF DRAGON AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Ionawr / January 2019

Rhif / Issue 119

Wishing all members and friends of
Dragon Amateur Radio Club a happy,
healthy and
prosperous 2019

HAPPY NEW YEAR !



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Thank you

A big thank you for contributions to this issue from:

Peter Brookes GW0EDF, James Clarke MW0JHC / EI8KJ and John Brimecombe GW3GUX

Notice of AGM

The AGM of Dragon Amaterur Radio Club will take place on Monday 21st January, at the Ebeneezer Chapel Hall in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, starting at 8pm prompt.

Please do your best to attend and have your say on who runs your club for 2019!



From the Editor

Simon MWONWM

Welcome to the Ionawr / January 2019 edition of the Dragon ARC journal, Llais Y Ddraig / The Dragon's Voice.



The latter half of 2018 was a busy time for our club, with Special event stations at Waunfawr in September to celebrate the centenary of the first signal sent from the UK to Australia and in October GB100MCV in Holyhead to commemorate the centenary of the sinking of RMS Leinster by a German U Boat. Both of these stations involved a lot of hard work and effort by members to organise, but were supported by a large percentage of members who turned up to help set up and operate them. Both of these events were a credit to our membership and we should congratulate ourselves for a job well done.

The club has also had an active programme of talks and events each month, which I believe is planned to continue into 2019.

The start of 2019 see's the sun cycle still in the doldrums making every HF contact precious, shall we see the start of a recovery this year, or do we have to wait a while longer? However the DX is still there and can be worked with patience!

But what of the club? Membership numbers appear good and attendance at meetings is healthy. What events and activity would you like to see this year? Paul GW1PCD gave us a valuable review of the membership questionnaire last month and I look forward to seeing some of the ideas put into action. Whatever happens, it promises to be another good year for Dragon ARC.

Thanks again to those who have contributed to this issue, it really is appreciated. However you will notice we have no report on the September station at Waunfawr, nor do we have any technical piece on antennas or otherwise and no club programme. Publications such as this are only as good as the material contributed and I urge you all to send in items for inclusion.

Wishing you all the very best for 2019.

Simon MWONWM. Editor Llais Y Ddraig

It's not REAL radio is it?**(UHF / VHF dying or thriving)**

By Peter Brookes GW0EDF

Up to about 10 years ago I was one of those dinosaurs who would always say "it's NOT real radio" to any mention of the internet without giving it much thought really and just dismissing anyone that dares to offer a different opinion.

Then some 10 years ago, as with radio's I got older and slower and some would say less useful, due to ill health and other circumstances I was forced to move to a flat in a strange city where I was not allowed to have any exterior antennas. Nor did I have a loft or attic and the flat was so small there was no way to get even a small wire up.

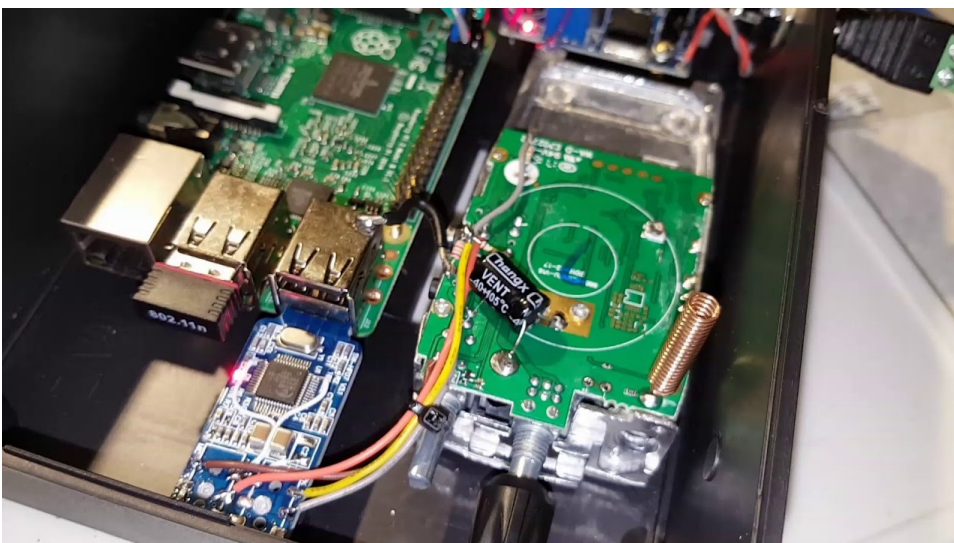
Reluctantly having no friends near I gave up my beloved hobby and slowly but surely sold all of my equipment.

Luckily some 2 years ago I again moved to an apartment complex near the sea, where the landlords were more radio friendly and allowed me to erect a vhf/uhf antenna on the roof, sadly for me to find that this location was only 1 metre above sea level and that I was surrounded by large hills. Needless to say this was the original black hole. BUT I was getting out again and making a few contacts albeit the same ones regularly.

I bought a HF rig and managed to get a wire out but with poor conditions and with only a short wire the results were extremely disappointing. So, this radio got sold and I was resigned to just a few local contacts which was great but limiting.

Some 12 months ago a friend who is also licensed asked to listen and see if I could hear his gateway, the answer was no but being out of radio for a few years I had never heard of a gateway and quizzed him relentlessly until he invited me round to his shack to demonstrate it.

What I saw was an internet gateway linked to the Allstar network via HUBnet UK which has a number of servers run and funded by Steve M0HOY. I was astonished to hear contacts from all over the UK not to mention others from all around the world with crystal clear BBC type audio.



*Inside the G7RPG
micronode.*

It's not REAL radio is it? Ctd:

The microHUB is a self contained lightweight hotspot providing access to AllStar and the Echolink networks via its internal low power UHF FM transceiver with approximately 100 meters range.

Remote control is by DTMF commands or through a simple web application on a smartphone, tablet or PC. The microHUB connects to the internet via its integrated WiFi adaptor and is supplied completely preconfigured - ready to use. The microHUB has its own internal switching power supply and can be powered from 9 - 24V DC via a standard DC (2.1x5.5mm) connector, a DC cable is provided for connection to the shack 13.8V supply.

Having spoken to Peter G7RPG and having heard the system in use I was very interested, especially as this little box could be situated anywhere in the flat and I could then use it with any cheap Chinese radio using uhf from anywhere around my flat, and even outside in the grounds. The icing on the cake was that it only cost £130 set up and delivered.

This was considerably less costly than the digital systems I had also explored.

Another benefit from these micronodes, so I am told by white stick operators, is the ease of use for those who are visually impaired, and flat dwellers who cannot have antennas.

My setup has been in use daily now for about a year and I have since managed to use it mobile in my car regularly and have had contacts all over the world.

However the most noticeable thing for me has been the fact that as repeaters are added to the system the uptake and increase in users is amazing. Examples of this are coming to light daily as repeaters that were clearly dying from lack of use are switched to HUBnetUK with the number of users multiplying massively.

There are also links into this system from DMR, Echolink, and others.

The HUBnetUK system is almost constantly in use 24/7 with users always finding someone to talk to and at any time there are upwards of over 100 repeaters/nodes connected.

In my opinion this system is added new spice to vhf/uhf and to amateur radio in general. It has certainly reinvigorated my interest in the hobby.



Is it real radio, well that is subject to individual opinions and there will never be an answer, but it is definitely communication and to my way of thinking that is the object of the exercise.

Is VHF/UHF dying or thriving, I think there is certainly some decline in the traditional repeaters but the upside is that the repeater sysops that are trying HUBnetUK are having great success.

Draw your own conclusions and do not dismiss any aspects of this fascinating hobby.

Note: I have no involvement with either G7RPG or HUBnetUK other than being a satisfied user.

Annual Construction Competition 2018

On the 5th November, Dragon Amateur Radio Club held their Annual Construction Competition. There was a healthy turnout of members and ten separate entries in the competition, three of which were from the same person; MW6SVL.

The following items were entered into the competition:

- 1) Soldering Station Variable Filter by John MW0JWP
- 2) 70cm 432MHz Dipole by Carl MW6PQQ
- 3) 16th Wavelength 145MHz Vertical by MW6XWP
- 4) Homebrew Morse Oscillator by John MW6SVL
- 5) Buzzbar Earth by John MW6SVL
- 6) Filtered External Speaker with valve preamplifier by Karl MW7KMB
- 7) 100 watt 1:1 and 4:1 Baluns by Simon MW0NWM
- 8) Antenna Matching Unit 'AMU' by John GW3GUX
- 9) Radio Controlled Boat by George MW3MEY
- 10) 'DX Commander' Style Multiband Fan Vertical Antenna by John MW6SVL

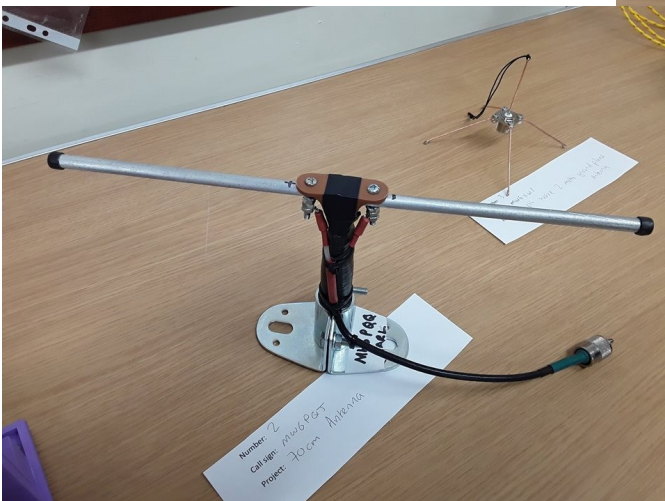


Left: L Match Antenna Matching Unit by GW3GUX

Below: Morse Oscillator with hacksaw paddle by John John MW6SVL



Left: 70cm Dipole by Carl MW6PQQ



Annual Construction Competition 2018 Ctd:

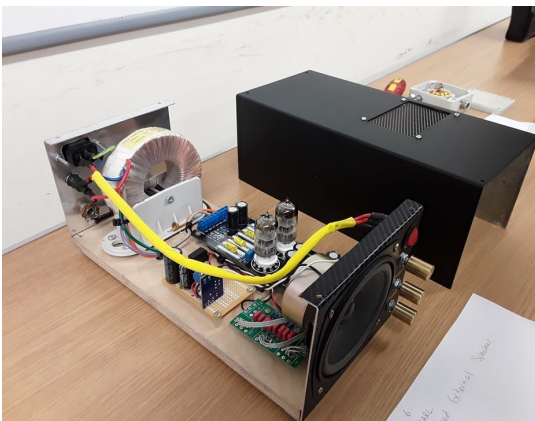


Above: Solder Station Filter, using 3D printed parts, by John MW0JWP

Right: George MW3MEY describing his radio controlled boat.



After listening to all their projects being described, the membership had a chance to take a closer look and then vote for their winner. There was a clear winner, Karl MW7KMB with his amplified and filtered external speaker. Not a bad evening for Karl, who had also passed his foundation exam earlier the same evening; well done Karl!



Images from left to right: the winning build, Karl MW7KMB describing his homebrew external speaker and Karl receiving the Construction Competition trophy from the 2017 winner Emil MW0IMZ.

My Tour of Iberia and France

by James H Clarke EI8JK/M*

January 3rd 2018 saw MW0JHC/EI8KJ embark the P&O Ferry from Dover to Calais together with wife Sue to start our first “Snow Geese” escapade lasting until April 4th. We were travelling (and living) in our *Auto-Trail Imala 720* Motorhome which carries the nickname **Geronimo II** (Geronimo I having been our previous Auto-Trail Apache 634).



On board, in addition to a stock of those daily food items that we know from past experience are not available abroad, I had installed my Yaesu FT857D (*Shack in a box*) and the matching “screwdriver” Antenna Yaesu ATAS-120A. I also carried a Watson 200 Multi-Ranger (a multi-band Whip with tapings for all HF bands from 6m to 80m) in a bid to achieve 40m & 80m operations—which the ATAS-120A just cannot provide.

Storm *Eleanor* was battering the UK, Ireland & western France (in fact our ferry had been stopped for awhile prior to us embarking in the early hours) so we decided to get through France as quickly as possible, whilst endeavouring to avoid using any Autoroute Peage (as the tolls can add up for a large vehicle like *Geronimo*). Hence, no radio operating took place during our southwards transit of *La Belle France* which was showing the severe flooding effects of both *Eleanor* and the very wet Autumn they had experienced on the western side of the *Massif Central* mountain range that divides France. In some towns the rivers were three times their normal width having overflowed on to their flood-plains which was obvious by the sight of sign-posts sticking up out of the swirling waters at locations well within the river's new boundary.

In France we usually use *Aire-de Camping-Car* (AdCC) located in or adjacent to most French cities, towns and villages. These are designated places reserved for Motorhomers (Camping-Car = Motorhome or Camper Van) to stay a night or two and many are free and some may have basic services like Drinking Water (€1 for 100lt) and WC Emptying. These *Aires* are provided by the local *Communes* so as to attract tourists (French & foreigners) to visit and patronise shops, restaurants, castles etc. What a contrast to Britain where the opposite is the case with empty Car Parks prohibiting such leisure use and the spin-off benefits for local Pubs, shops etc. Recently, a new arrangement has started to emerge in France with some *Aires* being converted into higher-standard barrier controlled *Camping-Car Park* locations with a Computer Terminal for users to gain access and pay for their usage on exit—usually around €11 for 24 hours including 230V AC, Water and WC Emptying facilities.

<https://campingcarpark.com/en/>

*EI8KJ = MW0JHC

My Tour of Iberia and France Ctd:

Our first overnight stop was to be at the *Camping-Car Park* on the outskirts of the town of **Dreux** at a cost of €11.25 inclusive water, 230V 10A & WC emptying. Because we had been up very early to catch the 3am ferry we decided to have an early stop so arrived there at 3pm on 3rd January. It is just west of Paris and handy for those who don't want to drive in Paris but wish to visit while parked at **Dreux** and take the train.

Next day 4th January we had a lazy start and after a good breakfast we availed of the water fill, WC emptying and resumed our journey southwards after midday on the D2020 & A20 (called L'Occitane) skirting Chartres & Orleans and chose the *Aire de Camping-Car* in **Argenon-sur-Creuse** which as its name implies lies on the **River Creuse** arriving quite late at 6.30pm for an overnight stay. This was one of the free parking places reserved for Motorhomes & Camper Vans. Our aim now was to make it to the drier and sunnier east coast of Spain as soon as possible.

Friday 5th January having changed from the A20 to the D820 we arrived in **Cahors** where the riverside *Aire de Camping-Car* (AdCC) was just a short walk from the city's main shopping streets - and like most



Our riverside location in centre of Cahors city.



Just across the river we found this Ice Rink right in the city

AdCC in France this one was free. We enjoyed a nice evening walkabout the city - thankfully the rain and wind of previous days had ceased.

Saturday 6th January we resumed our southwards trajectory on the D820 skirting Montauban and Toulouse and then east at Foix on the D117 to cross *Montagne du Plantaurel* which separates the wet west from the dry east heading for **Port-Barcares** north of *Perpignan* on the Mediterranean coast where we availed of the facilities in the *Camping-Car Park* for €10.80 inclusive.

Sunday 7th January we ascended the Pyrenees on the D900 to take the tunnel into Spain (now the Spanish N11) heading towards *Tarragona* and choosing our only toll motorway the AP7 to by-pass the dangerous Barcelona region and onwards to **Castellon** to stay two nights right beside the Mediterranean at a free *Aire de-Camping Car* (Spanish equivalent). Here I had my first Radio operation as EA/EI8KJ/m from Grid Locator JM09ax. Incidentally I use the free Grid Locator App from Playstore and QRZ.COM's excellent Grid Map to find my exact location for QSOs. A brief session on Tuesday evening produced a QSO on 7MHz with Alberto IV3WTJ in Udine who gave me a 54/6 while he was 59/8. So, the station had survived the bumpy ride across the French mountains. Much of the two days at Castellon was spent cycling, shopping (food & wine), enjoying our first Spanish *Menu del Dia* - 3 course late afternoon lunch with wine for €13.00 each. That explains the short session on Radio.

Wednesday 10th January we continued south on the A7 for **Valencia** to meet José Sequi **EA5HRV** at his *Al-daia* home. José provided a tremendous welcome arranging secure parking for *Geronimo*, taking us to an

My Tour of Iberia and France Ctd:

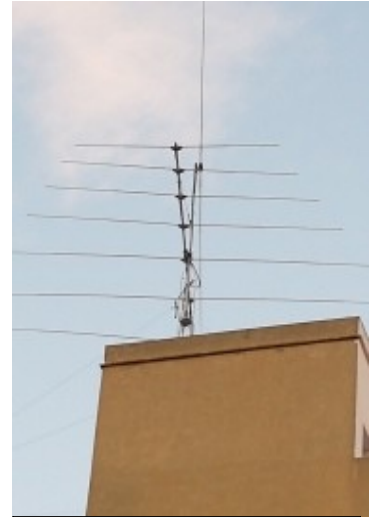
and even providing us with a bed for the night so he and I could have an evening session followed by an early morning session on-air using his Yaesu FT1000MP, Acom1000 Amp, Rotary Dipole & 7 element Log Periodic @ 30m agl (on the rooftop of his family's apartment building).



EA5HRV José - took us to a Paella restaurant



EA5HRV José & EI8KJ James



EA5HRV Antennas

José is a widower having tragically lost his wife to breast cancer in her forties leaving him to raise his two sons single-handedly. Unfortunately, my Spanish amounts to very little and José had a similar competence in English so our conversations were necessarily limited to Amateur Radio terminology and frequent use of Google translate.

It was from José's rig that I made my first South African QSO with Bill **ZS6CCY** on 14.188MHz Thursday morning just prior to our departure for Denia.

Thursday 11th January we arrived at **Els Poblets, Denia** where we parked outside a quirky hotel that we stayed at several times in previous Fly/Drive holidays to Spain: Hotel Bichet, Els Poblets right beside the Mediterranean. As we knew the staff parking for the night was fine and we availed of their good value dining-room that evening. Meantime I worked SK6SAQ, DF8XC, PA1LS and calling CQ OE1ABV, PD1PBX, DC8HT on 14MHz & DK1NO on 7MHz..



Hotel El Bichet, Els Poblets, Denia.



The beach at Hotel El Bichet.

Most of Spain's beaches are nowhere near as nice as those back home on Isle of Anglesey. Many are pebble beaches and the sandy ones are often claimed by a hotel.

12th January we headed for **Alicante** and a rendez-vous with Maxi **EA5CV** and his local Amateur **Radio Club Elda EA5RCI** where we were greeted with a great welcome from quite a few Club Members - many of whom had earlier made QSOs with me on 7MHz while we were parked in the town's supermarket's

My Tour of Iberia and France Ctd:

car-park. These included EB5BZH, EA5ZS, EA5AQB, EA5DAS, EB5BQC, EC5BB, EA5IER, EA5ISZ. I also worked several other stations CT4GD, DK3EE & F5VBY all on 7MHz from **Geronimo**.

At **Radio Club Elda EA5RCI** the Club President Salvador EA5AQB presented me with a bottle of their Club's 35th Anniversary 2016 celebratory wine. A very friendly and hospitable welcome was given to us and my wife was taken off by Maxi's wife to see the town while I exchanged info with the several Club Members who came to meet us.



www.EA5RCI.com



Club President Salvador EA5AQB presents 35th Anniversary wine



Some of EA5RCI Radio Club Elda's Members who greeted us at their HQ.

The

Club

have been given the use of the top floor of a building in the centre of Elda for which they just have to pay the costs of water and electricity. They have a multi-element Yagi mounted on the roof of the building.

Saturday 13th January we were collected from **Geronimo** and taken to the vineyard and bodega from where the 35th Club's Anniversary wine was harvested and produced. A free tour of the **Bodega Santa Catalina del Maña** for which the off-duty guide whose English was perfect was brought in for us. This was followed by a tasting of five or six of their wines including their speciality **Fondillón Solera Gran Mañán 1982** (quite an expensive wine being a vintage) and we departed with a selection that we purchased but not before the President Salvador took us on a drive around his vineyard pointing out the various grape varietals they grow. He also showed us the enormous Antenna set-up he has on a tower beside his house set amidst the vineyard.



The **Fondillón Solera Gran Mañán 1982**. The Bodega where it is produced. My wife Sue being presented with a bottle of **Fondillón Solera Gran Mañán 1982**.

EA5AQB Salvador's home amidst his vineyard with his HF Yagis & Vertical Antenna

End of Part One



GB2TD from Penmon / Trwyn Du Lighthouse

By John Brimecombe GW3GUX



Once again Penmon Lighthouse was put on the air for the International Lighthouse and Lightship weekend on 18th and 19th August 2018. As in the past, we were able to operate from the Coastguard Lookout at Penmon Point, thanks to Emlyn and his ever helpful crew.

The antenna used was the Hustler vertical and on checking the continuity of the tube sections, before set-up, it was found that one of the joints had seized up with corrosion, the oxide forming an insulating layer between the two tubes at the joint. No amount of heat or penetrating fluid would free the joint and so a temporary bridge was fitted between the two tubes. With this in place the antenna tuned over its normal range. The rig was the ever faithful FT990. The weather forecast for the weekend was not promising, however Friday was dry for the set-up and all equipment worked OK.

Saturday was more or less dry to start with but with a strengthening breeze, however the band conditions were not very good and so it was rather slow going. Logging was mainly on the club laptop using N1MM program. Bryn had brought another laptop to try out, but the power unit sprayed out so much QRM that it was impossible to use. Beware cheap Chinese copies, they often have very poor RF filtering!

One new and pleasant contact was with the lads just up the coast, who were operating GB0PLL from Point Lynas Lighthouse. Needless to say it was '5 and 9' both ways.

One rather disappointing thing was the lack of support by club members, despite the event having been publicised well in advance. This is the ideal event for inexperienced members to gain operating experience in pressure-free conditions (no high power contest operating) with help and advice on hand if needed. My thanks to the stalwarts who did support this event – you know who you are! One very welcome visitor to the site on Saturday was Darren, M0WIT with his young son, who had come over from Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire. He operated for some time and subsequently sent an email to our Secretary saying how much he had enjoyed the visit. That sort of thing makes it all worthwhile.

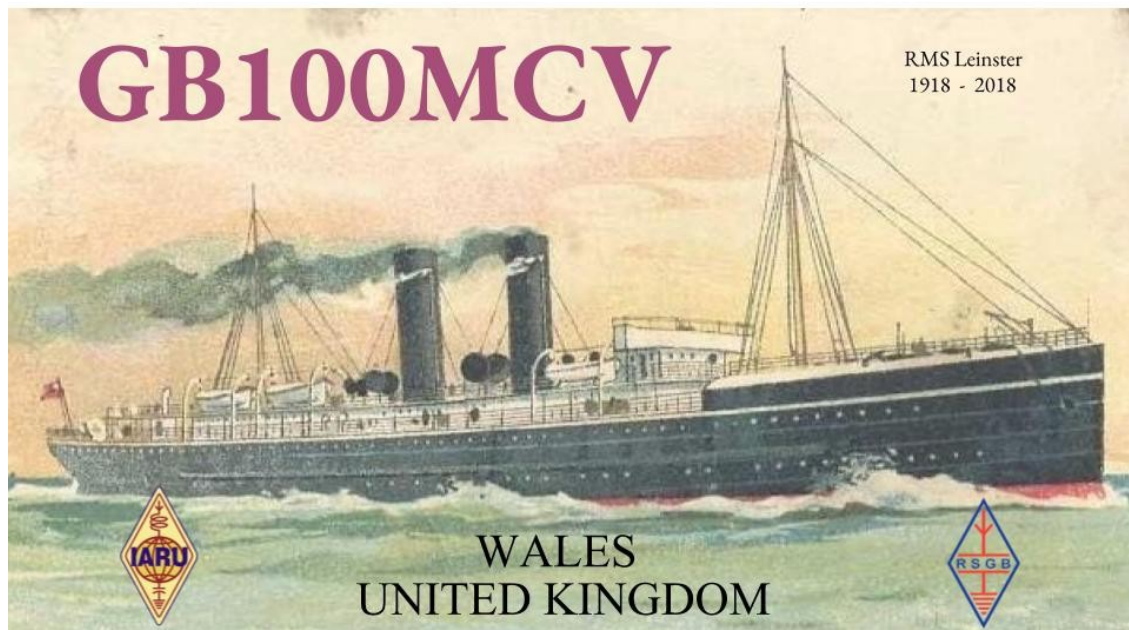
The wind continued to strengthen to gale force overnight, and it was with some trepidation that I approached the lookout on Sunday morning, half expecting to see the antenna to be on the ground, even though it was guyed, I need not have worried as all was still intact.

As seems to be the case these days, 20 metres was full of contest station and so most of the contacts, including quite a number of other Lighthouses (and one Lightship), were on 40 metres.

Only just over 100 contacts were made over the weekend, but judging by the thanks expressed by the many 'Lighthouse Chasers', it was worth putting the station on the air.

GB100MCV ...

Commemorating the sinking of the RMS Leinster



From Wednesday 10th until Sunday 14th October 2018, Dragon Amateur Radio Club ran the special event station GB100MCV from the HQ of Holyhead Sea Cadets, the Ts Prince of Wales. But what was the event all about?

The call sign, which contains the original call sign 'MCV' of RMS Leinster, was to mark the Centenary, on the 10th October 2018, of the sinking of RMS Leinster (of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company) in the Irish Sea. This was, and still is, the single largest loss of life in the Irish sea with a total of 567 people lost. RMS Leinster served as the mail ship between Kingstown (now [Dún Laoghaire](#)) and Holyhead.

The Ship was torpedoed by UB123 just 12.25 nautical miles off the Irish coast. To add to the tragedy, 2 weeks later UB123 was sunk with the loss of all 36 crew, many were very young with the oldest being 27 years old.

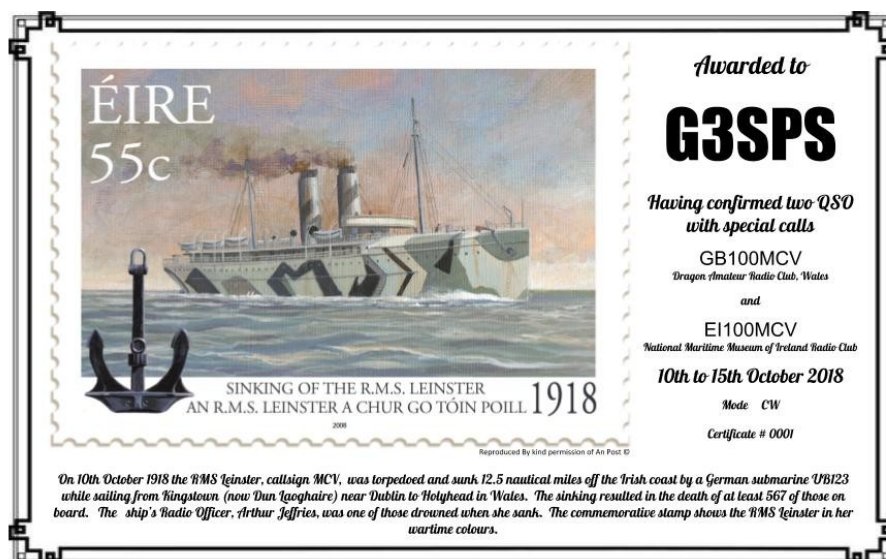
Numbers on board RMS Leinster

Category	Died	Survived	TOTAL
Military	360	142	502
Civilian	146	58	204
Post Office	21	1	22
Crew	40	38	78
Total	567	239	806

GB100MCV ...

Commemorating the sinking of the RMS Leinster Ctd:

Throughout 2018, the National Maritime Museum of Ireland was also active with the sister call sign of EI100MCV. It was decided to produce an award certificate for amateurs who managed to work both GB100MCV and EI100MCV in October, the attractive certificate can be seen below.



With the help of several club members, we set the station up at the Holyhead Sea Cadet building on Tuesday 9th October. We had two HF stations, one using the club doublet suspended at 30ft using the clubs mobile mast, which has been recently refurbished and the second station used the club vertical which was mounted at ground level with radials.

The biggest issue we had during setting up was the lack of internet in the building, which thanks to the efforts of Bryn MW6DZO was eventually sorted. We also needed plugs resoldered onto various coax feeder and this job was expertly undertaken by Tony GW0LIS. Finally by late evening, we had two HF stations, laptops for logging and also a VHF station for local contacts..



GB100MCV ...**Commemorating the sinking of the RMS Leinster Ctd:**

On Wednesday the 10th October, shortly after 10am GB100MCV made an historic contact with our friends at the National Maritime Museum of Ireland; using their call EI100MCV. New club member James MW0JHC was on the morse key to send our greetings, what is remarkable about this is that James had not used a key in over 40 years since his time as a Maritime Wireless Officer, well done James!

Following the special contact, all three stations were active for 5 days, with club members always on site, even overnight! When the bands became very quiet at night, members had the luxury of beds and showers on site, a real luxury!

On Saturday 13th October, Holyhead Maritime Museum held an event in the main room of the Sea Cadet building, giving people the chance to read more about the tragedy. There was tea, coffee and some delicious Bara Brith! Danny GW7BZR had a lengthy chat with the Mayor of Holyhead about amateur radio and Dragon ARC, well done on the positive public relations Danny!



We had approximately 700 contacts on HF and a few dozen on VHF, despite radio conditions which could be described as challenging at best! We had 19 club members involved over the week, which is an immense effort! It was particularly pleasing to see some of our newer licensed members working on HF with such ease, becoming more confident as time went on..... Well done, you know who you are!

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who took part, helped set up, made tea and coffees, manned the radios and finally, simply made the event such a fun and social occasion. Special thanks go to Paul GW1PCD for looking after much of the pre event admin, Bryn MW6DZO for being there throughout the event, managing the IT system and towing the mast. I am sure many more deserve my thanks, you know who you are! Without you the event would have failed, thank you!

GB100MCV ...

Commemorating the sinking of the RMS Leinster, Concluded:

This event was a real pleasure to be involved with and just shows how much Dragon ARC can achieve when we work together!

Simon MW0NWM
GB100MCV Station Manager



WANTED!



Gwybodaeth am y Clwb / Club Information



- ◆ Cynhelir cyfarfodydd y clwb yn Neuadd Ebeneser Lon Foel y Graig, Llanfairpwll ar Nos Lun y cyntaf a'r trydydd yn y mis am 7.00 at gyfer 8.00 o'r gloch. Croeso i ymwelwyr ac aelodau newydd.
- ◆ Club meetings held at Ebeneser Hall, Lon Foel y Graig, Llanfairpwll on the evening of the first and third Monday in each month at 7.00 for 8.00. Visitors and new members welcome.
- ◆ Pob gohebiaeth at yr ysgrifennydd / All communications to the Secretary John Pritchard MW0JWP.
Tel: 07515 031025 Email: mw0jwp@yahoo.com

Cylchlythyr / Newsletter Editor

Simon Taylor MW0NWM

Tel: 07904 874652 Email: m3set@yahoo.co.uk

We're on the Web!

www.dragonarc.org.uk

Pwyllgor / Committee

Cadeirydd / Chairman:	Steve Goodwin	MW6KGY
Is-Cadeirydd / Vice-Chairman:	Position Vacant	
Ysgrifennydd / Secretary:	John Pritchard	MW0JWP
Trysorydd / Treasurer:	John L Brimecombe	GW3GUX
Aelodau / Members:	Cliff Nicholls	2W0CBZ
	Bryn Smiles	MW6DZO
	Emil Preda	MW0IMZ
	Paul Dicken	GW1PCD