

Beyond Exams

Here is an introduction to the Thames Amateur Radio Group (TARG) Beyond Exams Club Scheme. This will enable you to build amateur radio experience with the help of your club. There are 23 tasks to be completed, none of which are compulsory or time limited. You decide how much or little you wish to do. Its intended audience is the new Licence holder but also those who have been away from the hobby for some time. But, importantly, it is open to all who might wish to expand their horizons.

To support each task the RSGB have introductory online materials and links where a task requires interface with an external organisation such as Summits on the Air (SOTA) or Worked All Britain (WAB). There are awards, certificates and published recognition of your achievements.

In the TARG tradition of providing high quality training to support you we have in house expertise and are preparing a range of online materials to provide further help on your journey during this time where face to face meetings are not possible.

The scheme is administered for the Club by the Beyond Exams Coordinator Andy Atkinson M0IXY. Please contact him if you wish to enrol or require further information. If you wish to take part Andy will set up a spreadsheet register of your tasks and make regular checks on your progress to keep your register up to date. This will also give you the opportunity to flag up any issues you may be running into which we will work to resolve with you.

We will carry out a reasonable level of validity checks on reported logged contacts and claimed completed tasks. The scheme spans 5 subject areas which are:

1. Having a go

This covers making logged contacts using

- Voice (analogue & digital)
- CW (Morse Code)
- Data modes
- Satellite communication
- Image exchange, and
- Extending your coverage within the Home Countries of Great Britain.

This is the easiest of the sections to complete and the one of most interest to the new M7 and also not so new licence holder. It is also probably the one that will build your confidence and operating skills.

2. Getting Involved

This is a little more challenging requiring interaction with the Club & external organisations. It covers:

- Use of portable equipment in a challenging environment by activating a Summits on the Air (SOTA) station.
- Logging contacts in different Worked All Britain squares.
- Logging contacts in contests.
- Assist in setting up or teardown of a Special Event Station.
- Operating &/or logging at a Special Event Station.

Completion of this section will show you how to undertake new and sometimes adventurous activities within the hobby.

3. Taking Part

This section further strengthens your relationship with the club and an external organisation by providing active support. It Covers:

- Attending Club meetings or, under the present Covid restrictions, joining our regular Webinars.
- Take part in our regular Club Nets.
- Undertake a role in the club on a regular basis this can be as simple as compiling the meeting register, helping out in the kitchen or selling meeting raffle tickets. It can also be much more such as taking a committee seat. The point of the activity is positively supporting your club.
- Making a presentation to the Club on an amateur radio related subject.
- Take part in a RAYNET event (one for post Covid times I would suggest most planned Raynet events are currently cancelled). We have a number of Raynet members within Targ and we will assist with this activity.
- Assist in organising an activity for the club. We have to look forward to a time when Covid restrictions will be greatly reduced. When this happens the club will need regular assistance with its activities and meetings.

4. Making

This section is designed to improve your construction & computer skills and consists of two activities.

- Build a piece of amateur radio-related electronic or mechanical equipment for your shack. There are many simple kits available for a range of shack equipment and a tremendous amount of satisfaction can be derived from completing even a simple piece of kit.
- Write an amateur radio-related piece of software that you can use in your shack or design a simple website. Many pieces of Ham equipment require software to support them these days. Writing from scratch or modifying the software of a device such as an Arduino to suit your specific requirements is a regular Ham activity which gives a real sense of satisfaction when you get it right. A lot of Hams these days produce blogs or websites showing their activities to the Ham world.

5. Promoting Amateur Radio

This section is about you actively supporting Amateur Radio & helping to increase our numbers.

- Introduce somebody to the hobby who then goes on to a Foundation course. Many Hams are introduced to the hobby by a friend or relative. Now more than ever the hobby is accessible and affordable at entry level.
- Attend a rally, or exhibition, to promote your Club. As we return to something approaching normality in the post Covid world we will begin to see rallies and other promotion opportunities again. When this happens the Club will need your support.
- Help run a training course at your Club. At a future date practical tasks will return for Foundation candidates and you could help, for example, by being a QSO partner

Now these are a lot of activities and it would be unfair to expect you to complete them all before you were recognised or if you did not wish to complete them all. So, the recognition is graduated along these lines:

- Bronze:** 3 activities completed
- Silver:** 5 activities completed
- Gold:** 10 activities completed
- Platinum:** 15 activities completed
- Diamond:** 23 activities completed

For each award you receive a certificate and you will be recognised by publication in Radcom.

Empowering you to succeed

At TARG we have all the facilities and expertise in house to support all club scheme activities but, we are also prepared to work with other clubs to allow you to progress through the scheme.

For example, if you wanted to complete a particular task quickly the club coordinator would speak to the area coordinator and we would arrange an opportunity for you to get that particular task done at another club if necessary.

The aim of the scheme is to enable you to gain experience, increase your achievements and enjoyment of our fascinating hobby.

Any Questions?

Your Beyond Exams Coordinator at Thames Amateur Radio Group is Andy Atkinson, MOIXY.

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Support can be provided by email, over the phone or by a pre-arranged video conference (eg Zoom or Skype) where a visual demonstration would help.

Andrew Atkinson, MOIXY

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