

Thames Amateur Radio Group

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You Said – We Did

At the recent AGM the members expressed a wish for more practical radio projects. So that is what we are doing. Our former Power Point style “presentations” are replaced by “interactive” show and tell type sessions, and our monthly hands-on radio has been rebranded “Radio Active”.

These Radio Active sessions are under the direction of TARG committee member, Andy M0IXY, who is also our RSGB Beyond Exams coordinator.



The 3rd Friday of each month from 8pm, has the premise of starting from scratch (photo) with no previous knowledge assumed making it ideal for any M7 who has recently passed their theoretical exams but lacks practical skills – and you don't have to be a TARG member to take part.

Andy has put in a lot of thought into these sessions and a full itinerary is on Diary Page of the Website. The evening has various projects on the go simultaneously around the hall.



Photo shows John, M0LFX (right), giving guidance on how to fit a RF plug to coaxial cable. These type of tutorials are missing from the radio amateur exam curriculum so TARG has jumped in to help fill the void.



Each month a different “mode” of operation will be demonstrated. For our first meeting it was Morse Code and for future meetings there will be live demonstrations of FT8, SSTV and WSPR to name a few.

Upstairs was “how to set up a HF rig” with a focus on how to identify if there is a problem with the antenna. Attempting to transmit into a faulty antenna can damage your radio so a valuable lesson for new licence holders looking to operate at their maximum power.



Also on show was a VFO kit to whet the appetite of anyone who wants to build their own, at a future Radio Active evening, as an introduction to construction.

Mike, G8EFG, a regular net Controller, has spoken on air about his homemade HF antenna. He brought it along and took the lid off the black box so we could see the components inside. Basic switching between 20m, 40m and 80m is done with two rocker knobs, and fine tuning is a practical exercise of reducing the length of the antenna until you reach the correct size for the wavelength. You don't get much more practical than that.

Boot Camp

On the 16th Oct Essex CW ran their annual Morse Code Boot Camp in Witham. This was attended by about 30 participants from as far afield as Liverpool.

The room was split into three groups: Slow (5-10 wpm), Medium (10-20 wpm), Fast (20+ wpm), where people could move between tables to find their own level.



The day was well run with light hearted banter amongst intense concentration. The 20+ wpm group progressed to head-reading (no writing down) words in CW sent at 40wpm. At lunch there was a fascinating display of antique and modern keys, including a “side swiper” made from a knife and fork.



Well done to Andy G0IBN, Dean G4WQI and Tony G0JYI for putting the event together. It was wonderful to see people come together from so many different local clubs. Special “thank you” to XYL of Keith G3WGE who gave up her day to help with refreshments. To join in online CW tuition EssexCW run a Skype session every Thursday at 8pm and a HF and VHF nets over the weekend – see their website for more details.

TARG November Meeting

Yes, it'll be on fireworks night, Nov 5th at 8pm, so it should go with a Bang.

We have two great sessions lined up, it's just a question of which one will go first. At the time of writing we're undecided - so do check out the Website for last minute updates. Either way, look forward to seeing you there.