

# Thames Amateur Radio Group

[www.ThamesARG.org.uk](http://www.ThamesARG.org.uk)  
Twitter: @ThamesARG || Find us on Facebook



## TARG is Back in Business

The hall was full for Justin Johnson's (G0KSC) explanation of vertical antennas for the 5<sup>th</sup> November Club meeting. As promised, there was no Power Point!

Although the white board was used for pictorial representations of current distribution along an antenna so that Justin could explain:

- Where is the best place for a feed point
- How adding a coil (to make the antenna shorter) will also reduce its efficiency
- The best and worst places to add a coil
- Why quarter wave antenna's need radials but half wave antenna don't need a radial
- Why more radials are better
- Whether it is best to have radials above ground, on the ground or under the ground



Justin, who runs the company [www.innovantennas.com](http://www.innovantennas.com), pitched his explanations at just the right level – without reverting to mathematics. There is no doubt he has inspired many people to get more involved with making their own antennas now they have the knowledge of where to start.

## Christmas Meeting

There is no Christmas Meal this year – the Committee took the decision due to COVID in close proximity. But, as is our tradition, the December Club meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> Dec) will go ahead as your usual informal social function.



But it can be more than a chin wag. At the November meeting Gary, M5YRG, brought his amazing covert portable transceiver which some of you may have seen in operation at the TARG field day. The Christmas social is the ideal chance to bring your own special bit of kit to show to the group.

## The Bands are Opening

The new solar cycle has begun and the Solar Flux Index is slowly increasing, but has this improved propagation? Absolutely! Nick G4HCK told me about a regular net between the UK, Australia & New Zealand so I listened in with my modest multi-band Inverted V dipole.



For the first couple of weeks, I could only hear Nick but on week 3, every now and again I could hear Queensland. Week 4 propagation was much better and after the net I switched to 17m and had my first QSO with JE1SSE (Hideo) in Japan



I learnt that when propagation is good even a basic antenna like a dipole can give you global coverage. So how can you tell if your antenna can get you through to Australia? To test mine I use a Sotabeams WSPRLite which has a power level of 200mw. I like the WSPRLite because of its simplicity; no computer, no radio just a 2 inch square Tx to monitor. On 30m it gets spots from Australia most days, even on bad days grey line is usually successful.

Gary Tagg, M0ICG

## Radio Active, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov

You will have picked up that the new focus for TARG is “doing” radio rather than talking about it. You will read more about this in RadCom thanks to Maggie M7LCF. The scheme is run by Andy M0IXY who has published a list of activities for each Radio Active night on the Diary page of the website.

For example, on the 19<sup>th</sup> Nov there will be the chance to build a dummy load. You could buy a ready made dummy load but not really understand how it works; do resistors work with RF which is AC rather than DC and, if so, do I need 5Ωs or 50000Ωs. All will be explained along with chance to get involved in other activities that could count towards your RSGB “Beyond Exams” accreditation.



These evenings also give space to show off kit – for example, here is Andy's portable HF kit that he will use for /MM.

You can see the battery, SDR radio, key, mic, tuner and HF antenna, and the whole lot fits on a small shack table (or in his case on the table of a sun lounge on a cruise ship).