

# Thames Amateur Radio Group

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## Air Band Radio

There is a lot more to this topic than hearing a pilot call out some meaningless numbers. TARG Chair, John M0LFX, is also a volunteer with at Southend airport with the Vulcan Restoration Trust so has firsthand experience of using Air Band. He was the speaker at TARG Club meeting in May.

One of the points he made in his demonstration is that it isn't just about the radio, it is also about having the correct headset. Airside can be a noisy environment without noise cancelling headsets or special microphones it would be impossible to communicate. John brought along a range of headsets, from the cloth cap style WW2 to what a baggage handler would use.



John explained the difference between the frequencies that are used by the Tower to people driving or walking around the airport, the Tower to planes landing or taking off and another frequency for planes that are no longer in the control of the local airport. Some are on VHF, some are on UHF, and why aviation uses AM rather than FM.



These frequencies aren't secret and you can find them in books from Amazon. If you register using your amateur radio call sign you get additional levels of access.

Many people are familiar with the website: "flightradar24", but there is a radio amateur alternative called "ADS-B exchange" which works by decoding the planes transponders and will show military planes in addition to commercial flights.

Some amateur radios are programmed to cover Air Band frequencies, like the handheld FT-P60, and are specially designed so that they automatically change to AM and the TX is disabled. Also, of course, for best reception you will need a different length of antenna than the usual 2m amateur radio.

## Why Cancel?

For the record, GB2MFM was going to be the first TARG special Event Station of the year. The Committee did a lot of work in preparation for this event, which, in itself is learning a skill of an experienced Radio Amateur. But it poured with rain and our risk assessment said Radio and Rain don't mix – so we made the right decision to postpone.



## It's only £20 for all this....

Due to good housekeeping and jurisprudence by our Treasurer, Belinda M6JNX, TARG is in a good financial position at the moment. But we can only remain that way if people joining our sessions either in person or online renew their membership. Without money in the bank we can't pay the hall hire or insurance. No money, no club. If you have renewed, thank you – if not, then please do so asap so we can plan for our outgoings.

## TARG Training – the plan

There is no live-feed of the "Radio Active" night on 19<sup>th</sup> May. This is because we need every TARG member who is able to attend Jubilee Hall so we can discuss and practice some of the topics for the 2023 TARG training course.

As the syllabus has changed since last time there is a considerable amount of work to do in preparing tuition for the new material. So, to encourage people to next level of their licence, a first step for TARG is to fill a niche in practical hands-on participation to answer many of the questions that are not fully understood by home study with a text book:



- Will SSB work with FM if I use the same frequency?
- Where is the HF button on my hand held radio?
- How do I put a plug on a coax cable?
- What is the calling frequency for HF radio?
- Is the repeater working as no one answers me?
- Why do I need a different antenna for HF and UHF?
- Help me work out my EMF calculation.

This Radio Active session is not the training session itself, that comes later in the year, this is a planning session to work out what we should offer and who will deliver it. If you have a view and want to take part – turn up on 19<sup>th</sup> May and get involved.

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