

We're through our second year and what a year it has been!

Despite COVID, or maybe because of COVID, the club membership has grown and regular participation in meetings and other activities has increased year on year. I'm finding it difficult to remember a Thursday evening when at least two members have attended the club night and on many occasions we have had 7-8 active in the Zoom meeting. Well done to you all - it feels fantastic that we have progressed so far in our second year!



Not to purposely bring it up again, but COVID and the corresponding lockdowns have impacted us all. Limited travel abilities, no face-to-face opportunities (hence no SOTA activations or meet ups at rallies). Thankfully the club was formed on the basis of "not having to leave home" and it has really shown it's strength. From the outset of the first lockdown we decided to have a daily "Lockdown Net" on the club reflector which, I believe, made a big difference to us all. Being able to check-in every morning to make sure we are all safe and well, then to have a 30-45 minutes catch up on what we'd been doing - it all helped us keep our sanity and build on our collective friendship. Also, by discussing various projects we were active on during the period, we were spurred on to broaden our minds and stretch ourselves to areas of the hobby that we may have not dreamed of venturing. Difficult, challenging times helped by an ever inquisitive group of individuals.

During our last AGM we discussed outreach - how we broaden knowledge of the club through the community and encourage like-minded individuals to join us. We brushed up the website, affiliated ourselves with the RSGB, formalised our Facebook presence and made use of verbal recommendations on the air and on other less-orthodox modes of communication. Our Facebook Group was formed, replacing the original Facebook Page, where we encourage amateur radio enthusiasts to join the Facebook Group to get a taste of what the club is about. The Group has now 44 members even with the rigorous vetting of requests many of which think we are a group of Amateur DJs! Thanks to Michael G4XIX (or his alter ego John Dooh) for his shameless promotion of the club in every Facebook post he makes and for all other members who reference the club or "like" posts made by Michael or myself promoting what we do.

I'm proud to say that the efforts of the evangelists amongst us mean that club has doubled in size since this time last year - we started with 7 members and now have 14. Our members are scattered around the UK, temporarily reside in Spain and are as far reaching as the West Coast of the United States. I thank you all for making this a fabulous community and a place we can all be proud to belong.

How can I talk about the club and not talk about the technology. Our club reflector XLX994 has been expanded from D-Star and DMR to include C4FM and recently, with the help of Jon 2E0OPT, extended to offer Echolink access (and maybe Allstar). This allows us to communicate as a group from any digital radio AND through Echolink from either analogue repeaters around the world or direct via smart phone. It goes without saying there is no excuse **not** to be using the reflector.

Alongside the reflector, we implemented the club dashboard - an online space showing up-to-the-minute status of where members are currently active on the air. It started as a monitor for the reflector, allowing us to track how much it was being used, but soon expanded to highlight activity on the DX cluster and then expanded to consume data from the Reverse Beacon Network to show CW usage. Finally we recently added consumption of spots on PSK reporter for digital

mode activity which now means we have a holistic view of all radio activity for members to look out for other members on the air or just to encapsulate their on-air "log" in a single place. It's quite mesmerising when there is a lot of club activity to watch it all unfold in front of your eyes. And yes, with my recent foray into the world of DATV - it'll be on the dashboard soon too!

It's been a very interesting and pleasurable two years as Chairman but all good things come to an end and it is time for me to step down. But I would first like to thank my fellow founders, Robbie M0HVC and Matt M0NNJX without whom this would never have started. Also, thank you Robbie for being Treasurer and Grae for taking over the duty when it was necessary and Grae also for all your assistance on the TechOps side of the "business". My thanks also goes to Matt for taking the Club Secretary duty and, as you know, he will be standing down this year. Michael, as membership secretary you have promoted the club diligently and your efforts have been fruitful and appreciated. And finally, all of you for making this club a thoroughly enjoyable place to be and where I hope to continue to participate for many more years.

Thank you.

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