

144MHz TROPHY CONTEST & SSB FIELD DAY

Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd September 2017



The two contests – the 144MHz Trophy and the SSB Field day – were both held over the weekend of the 2nd & 3rd September. In the weeks leading up to the event the two Davids KWA and LRD had worked hard to prepare and test the equipment so that all would run smoothly. David LRD had revised the on-line briefing document, sent out to all club members, and those that used found it very informative and helpful. As he always does, Dave KWA had made arrangements with the landowners for the use of the pitch. We are very grateful to and thank them for their generosity.

The plan to start setting up on Friday evening was ruined by heavy rainfall and a thunderstorm. However, Saturday dawned bright and sunny and we were able to get everything set up quite swiftly. The grass was very wet after the storms but dried up, more or less, by lunch time. Dave KWA arrived on site at about 8.30 and he was soon joined by David LRD. Richard G4AWP arrived soon after with the club's tents and tables, not forgetting Millie, his faithful hound, who made lots of friends and really enjoyed the weekend. Bob G0GVZ very kindly took on the important job of Gate Control – we have to be very careful to keep the site secure while we are using it. Darren provided the usual excellent services – tents, lights, drinks and snacks – as well as keeping the site safe for everyone.



GVZ LRD PJT TFX RGQ CRB

We were ready for the starts of the contests. The SSB began at 14:00 (local) followed by the 2m Trophy at 15:00. In both cases the pace was slow to begin with but we stuck at it and made some very useful contacts. More members gradually rolled in and took a turn at operating or logging. We also had some very welcome visits from the ladies, Judith XYL-KWA and, on Saturday evening, Denise XYL-LRD who brought a lovely meal of chips for everyone. Note for future events: don't let the operators have chips – the kit

has to be de-greased afterwards!

Both stations continued to operate through the night. On HF David LRD and Richard AWP made better progress than Dave KWA on 2m. Calls came in slowly but some useful distances were worked although the anticipated dawn-lift did not occur. The morning brought Steve G8CRB to join KWA in operating while Richard AWP knocked up an excellent breakfast of bacon butties.



OFA GKP Millie Lin HTA

The 2m station comprised two 8 element Tonnas stacked at 15m on KWA's Scam 12 Trailer Mast. These were connected to an Icom IC-7100 transceiver via a sequencer and DG8 pre-amp as well as KWA's home-brew valve linear. Well done, Dave, for sorting out the PA – there were no tripping issues this year. On 144MHz we achieved 173 contacts making a claimed score of 48,690 points. Our best DX was 5PT5 in JO64GX (Denmark) at 883 km.

A new licensee, Michael M6IAF came along to try operating in his first ever contest. He did a fine job, taking part firstly on VHF and then, later, on HF. Michael gained some useful experience even though the VHF station was suffering from severe impulse noise at the time. We never did manage to track down the source but it was certainly local. Eventually, due to the difficulty of operating through the QRM and with ominous storm clouds forming up overhead, we took the decision to close the 2m station before the contest had reached its conclusion.



WSZ KWA OFA



LRD GVZ TFX

The HF SSB Field Day Contest was a little different this year, in that the rules have been harmonised with those for the CW Field Day and eliminating the use of more than 100W or the use of more than a single antenna element. This was no problem for us since our standard HF setup, which we used last year, was already in the 100W / single-antenna class. We also opted for the 'unassisted' section, so no DX-Cluster or other electronic aids were used.

The HF station was made up of LRD's Icom IC-7100, powered by a float-charged 120Ah Lead-Acid battery. Logging was carried out on a laptop PC running the 'SD' application. As well as the built-in screen and keyboard, the laptop was provided with a duplicate mains-powered monitor and an additional USB keyboard which allowed both the operator and the logger to amend the record as required. The battery-power arrangement for the radio has the advantage that when the generator runs out of fuel or has to be swapped over, the station can continue to operate with only the temporary loss of one of the two logging positions.



AWP LRD AWP GVZ LRD Through the night - AWP



WSZ ZEB WSZ RGQ GVZ OFA

Once again, we used the club's doublet antenna which is a modified full-size G5RV. The aerial was suspended between the Scam trailer-mast used for the VHF beams and AWP's fibreglass mast, which together raised the wire to a height of about 8m above ground level. An auto-tuner provided 'instant' matching and seemed to cope with its task better this year than last. A 30MHz low-pass filter was also inserted into the tx path to ensure good isolation between our HF station and the 2m station with which we were sharing the site.

shows Richard at his post during the night. Other significant contributors to the HF score were Richard TFX, Bob GVZ and David LRD. The new Foundation licensee Mike M6IXF did a great job on his first ever involvement with contesting.

Richard AWP proved to be the most prolific operator on HF, soldiering on alone into the early hours while the rest of us fell asleep or went home. The picture

Conditions were not great with the bands above 20m remaining firmly closed for most of the contest. German and Belgian stations were the most abundant on 80m and 40m – this was also their national Field Day - so this is where we concentrated our efforts. 20m worked well early on Sunday morning and, much to our surprise, at 0649z Richard AWP managed to work Tim VK3TJK near Melbourne, Australia.



WSZ OFA WSZ OFA Judith IXF



CRB AWP Lin HTA TFX RGQ

Altogether, a very successful and enjoyable weekend attended by 24 members and visitors:

Our thanks to:

- David G0LRD
- David G6KWA
- Bob G0GVZ
- Steve G4WSZ
- Martin G8OFA
- Steve G8CRB
- Richard G3TFX
- Ian M0HTA
- Lin XYL-HTA
- Tony G3RGQ
- David M0ZEB
- Richard G4AWP
- Denise XYL-LRD
- John G0GXP
- Michael M6IXF
- Charles, Miriam & Arthur - guests of LRD
- Luisa & Graham - guests of G6KWA
- Judith XYL-KWA
- Darren
- Peter G6GLG
- Bob G3PJT

- The land-owners for the use of the plot.
- Dave KWA, David LRD and Richard AWP for loaning and transporting kit and organising everything.
- Darren for the loan of kit, unceasing supplies of refreshments and eternal vigilance.
- Denise for the wonderful chip supper.
- Ruth XYL-ZEB for the sausage rolls and the specially-imported mustard.
- All those who brought along supplies of fuel for the generator.
- All those who made a financial contribution.
- and everyone who attended and made this another successful CDARC event.
- apologies for any omissions -



KWA dismantling The Gang RGQ GKP packing up



SSB QSO Map 144MHz QSO Map

Thanks to Dave KWA and David LRD for the reports, photos and maps