

Winter, 1999

Issue: 14

MORSE ENTHUSIASTS GROUP SCOTLAND NEWSLETTER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have no Acknowledgements this edition

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN

J.R NICHOLSON (GM0MFE)

SECRETARY/ TREASURER

G. M. ALLAN (GM4HYF)

R. RANKIN (GM0NPS)

DONALD BLACK (GM0PIV)

JON. OATES (GM0VIY)

COLIN MUIR (GM0UOU)

PETER DEANS (SWL)

ROBERT CASSELS (GM4WLN)

EMAIL AND PACKET ADDRESSES

Megs Membership -
Membership@megs-group.freemove.co.uk

Megs Newsletter -
newsletters@megs-group.freemove.co.uk

SEC/TREAS.
George@allan99.freemove.co.uk

Packet address - GM4HYF@GB7SAN

Megs Website:

<http://www.joates.demon.co.uk/megs/>



CHAIRMAN'S ARTICLE.

Back in 1991, little did the four original members think that by the Millennium the membership would be over 700. It is thanks to your dedicated committee that the membership has increased so dramatically. We have recruited many members at the various Scottish rallies, by recruitment at club meetings, by meeting other CW enthusiasts on the air and by various other means. This increase in membership throws a lot of extra work on our already hard-pressed secretary / treasurer, George Allan (GM4HYF). Many thanks George!!

What is it that has led to such an increase in members? Can it be the £1.00 life membership fee? I hope not! The life membership is only to cut down on administration costs and it is hoped that by joining MEGS that you have a genuine interest in the mode. Perhaps some of you who are reasonably expert can take some learner under your wing and encourage them to become proficient Morse men. I know that George's Tape Service has enabled quite a number to progress but there is nothing like individual tuition to help the learners along. Perhaps reducing the speed of the Morse Test to 5 wpm and allowing access to the H/F bands has done something to encourage more people to take an interest in Morse. It seems natural that once a person has learned the code and passed the 5 wpm test that they should want to improve and join the happy band of key bashers! Don't look on the holders of the M5 / MM5 call signs with disdain; Try to give them every encouragement - - Think back to the days when you were trying to learn!!

I had an interesting QSO with one of our members a short time ago. It was Adrian, G4GDR - - QTH Swindon. He had just completed the refurbishment of a wartime R1154/1155 aircraft transmitter and receiver, a set-up I was familiar with and I was delighted to be his first contact when he was testing it out on cw. Having done my radio course at R.A.F. Yatesbury in Wiltshire, which is not far from Swindon, he put me in the picture on that station's demise.



Andy, GM3CSO also did his radio course at Compton - Basset - - Lucky Andy! That's where all the W.A.A.F. lady operators trained. Any hanky panky and they would say "QRM"(at least that was my experience) Hi! Hi! No doubt some of our members trained there during WW2 at these locations and know the area.

Unfortunately only a small proportion of members venture on our bi - weekly skeds on 3.530Mhz on Mondays and Thursdays from 1900 to 2100 local time. There are about 20 who come on fairly regularly and give GMORSE/P (our group call sign) a call. I am sure whoever is doing their month long stint will be pleased if you keep them busy. There is always at least one other member on an adjacent frequency looking for your call. I would like to thank the small band of operators who take over our unique call for a month at a time. If you would like a turn at this give sec. George a call to arrange it. What a pity none of our members outside Scotland can take a turn. They have to live in Scotland to use the GMORSE c/s.

We often get donations from members to aid the finances of MEGS so if you have a spare quid or two, put a smile on the Treasurer's face!

Good wishes to all in the millennium, especially you on the bands.

73 de Jack GM0MFE.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The Morse Controversy Must Now End!!

In NEWSLETTER 13 I made the point that I could see no sign of any enthusiasm within the RSGB for Morse. I must be fair and say that over the last few months there appears to have been a sea change within the Society on this matter.

The 5 wpm A-B Morse Test with its increased privileges is now a fact of life. One which we in the UK and particularly within MEGS must learn to live with and putting aside our previous criticisms concentrate on the training of as many of our fellow Radio Amateurs as possible for the new qualification. One of the positive advantages, which I, for one did not foresee during the controversy has been the sudden surge of interest in the Morse mode since the new regulations were brought into force. This is a fact which has also been commented on by Geo. Longden, G3ZQS, of 'FISTS' in the November edition of their magazine 'Keynote'.

On related matters I was delighted to learn from the RSGB that they have now decided to accept my offer of extending our Morse Tape Service to all RSGB members and I was able to place an article explaining how the system would operate in the September issue of RADCOM. Since then I have received & recorded about 140 tapes at the speeds and in the formats requested. I am pleased to report that in spite of being away on a 3 week holiday we are now up to date with all requests for same. Many of these have been from operators who have been aiming at the 12 WPM Test for a long time and have decided now to take the easier option. Most of these operators assure me that they are only using this as a step towards the 12 WPM test and it is certainly the case

that having passed the 5 WPM A-B test there will be a further encouragement for them to update their 'Receive' speed so that they can read other QSO's on the bands. very few QSO's on the bands which they will be able to copy unless they improve their 'Receive speed' Time alone will tell!

I have also just recently received written confirmation from the RSGB that as their Morse Practice Co-ordinator I am now authorised to proceed with 2 other proposals which have been with them for consideration for some time.

1. To co-ordinate Broadcasts of Morse Practice via VHF and UHF Repeaters under the GB2CW call sign so that the range and coverage of these transmissions can be improved. All that is necessary is for the GB2CW operator concerned to make arrangements with the local Repeater Keeper and then advise me so that the details can be included in the Schedule which is published in the RSGB year book.

2. To place printed versions of QSO Morse Practice Texts on the Packet network. This will enable operators equipped for Packet operation and with a Morse Program on their PC to use the texts to produce audible Morse. Fictitious call signs would be included. The format would be so chosen that when they were re-produced audibly (which incidentally can be at any time and at any Morse speed suitable to the down-loading operator) they would provide a ready made batch of 'Receive' Mock Morse Tests and each one would be similar to that used by the RSGB in the official Tests. Since the content of the texts would be changed frequently there would be a constant fresh supply of such Morse Practice material.

I have appointed operators to take charge of trials on both the above systems and you will not be at all surprised to learn that they are both long standing members of MEGS! I am hoping that they will both be able to give reports on their work periodically in our Newsletters for your interest.

MEMBERSHIP

As forecast by our Chairman we have now indeed passed the 700 mark.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR.

We are greatly indebted to Ian, M15AFL and to Gordon, MEGS 500 for offering their help in formatting the Newsletters ready for printing. We are now urgently in need of an 'editor' to gather together the articles for each issue. Any

member willing to help with this task please contact the secretary.

MORSE TAPE SERVICE.

Remember these simple rules if you wish Morse practice on tape :- simply mail to the Secretary a C90 cassette with a note of the speed and format required and include a return mailing envelope or label together with the same stamp value used to mail the original. We now have a wide variety of formats and the easiest way is to give me a ring if you are not sure. The interest in Morse Practice at all levels is steadily increasing. It is a pleasure to see it.

HELP WITH QSO'S ON DISK.

As most of you will know we are gradually building up a library of QSO 'overs' to provide Morse practice in a practical format using fictitious call signs. GM4WLN, Bob has excelled himself and has supplied us with several hundred texts. Very many thanks, Bob!! We are anxious for many more and from as many different 'brains' as possible. The more operators, experienced or beginner who contribute, the better mix of texts we get. Please think about doing this for MEGS. It does not take long and is often done over several 'sittings' If required we can supply sample QSO's of the sort of thing we are looking for. It is time saving for us if you can produce the passages on a 3.5" PC floppy disk or send them by E-Mail, but any method of production will be greatly appreciated.

SKEDS (and a challenge)

Our 3530Khz meetings with **GMORSE** each Monday and Thursday evening at 1930 continue to be popular but we want all our members to try and come 'on air' with us. So here now is the challenge: - If you cannot make it on 80 metres because of antenna or other problems contact the sec. by phone, packet or E-Mail and we will arrange for a MEGS member to try to work you on the HF band of your choice. Do not worry about how good your Morse is or how slow (or fast) your speed. We want to meet you on key or paddle!! And here are 3 frequencies to watch and call signs to look out for :-

3527Khz
3530Khz
3534Khz

GM4HYF
GMORSE(P)
GM0MFE.

OSL MANAGER

The most recent batch of qsl cards has come to us in October 1999 from our new GMORSE sub manager, Bill Couse, MM0ABQ;. we look forward to working with Bill and take this opportunity to thank the outgoing manager, MR. J. E. CLOUGH, GM0MDD, for his past services. In the last year cards have come from a dozen European countries and is evidence of the continuing popularity of the Morse code.

The Samuel Morse event held on Sunday 25th April 1999, again hosted by the Stirling ARS at their premises in Bandeath Industrial Estate, Throsk near Stirling yielded 64 contacts with 21 countries. The distribution of these cards was as follows:-

GM, MM(8);
 G, M,(15);
 GW,(1);
 A, K, W (America)(12);
 D,Germany)(4);
 EA,(Spain)(1);
 EG (Balearics)(1);
 EW(Belarus)(1);
 F (France)(3);
 I(Italy)(2);
 OE (Austria)(2);
 OK (Czech rep)(2);
 OM (Slovak rep)(1);
 ON (Belgium)(1);
 LZ (Bulgaria)(1);
 SM(Sweden)(2);
 SP (Poland)(2);
 UA (Euro Russia)(1);
 UX (Ukraine)(1);
 VE (Canada)(2);
 YU (Yugoslavia)(1).

INTERNET MANAGER REPORT

The MEGS website continues to attract worldwide attention with over 12700 visits so far. See <http://www.joates.demon.co.uk/megs/>

The ever-popular book "The Art and Skill of Radiotelegraphy" remains a favourite amongst visitors. Atsuro Taniguchi JE1TRV/7 of JARL A1 CLUB has approached Bill Pierpont NOHFF and obtained permission to translate his book into Japanese.

The website also received a mention in the September 99 edition of Rad-Com (page 73) resulting in an in-

crease in visits and requests for membership. We are always pleased to receive comments, criticisms and suggestions. <mailto:megs@joates.demon.co.uk>

NOTES FROM A LEARNER

As MI5AFL I suppose I am more qualified than most to talk about learning CW. As an ardent sailor I have aspirations to operating CW in foreign countries but have taken the 5 WPM test in a moment of weakness, it has allowed me to maintain my interest and further my skill in operating on HF.

Interestingly enough once some of the learning pressure was removed I found I could read morse more easily! I am still learning and will still need that 12 wpm ticket for full CEPT privileges and also to operate on the bands I need to work a little bit faster.

Learning Morse using tapes and "live" operators (sic) is a most enjoyable experience and well worthwhile, however I thought I would pen a few words about additions to these learning resources. You may know that George uses the Supermorse program to produce some of his most excellent training tapes. I list below some of the other computer based resources that some of your friends may ask you about. Of course the list is not complete and sometimes sites move but a "web search" should track down the package you need. Check the MEGS website for pointers!

To research this article I downloaded a web search tool called WEBFERRET from <http://www.ferretsoft.com> and asked it using the package titles below. Many of the 118 sites it found pointed at a lot of CW based material. Enjoy your surfing...

Supermorse A popular package that is very powerful, used to produce the MEGS tapes and useful for its QSO producing abilities. I have had trouble getting it to work at the correct speed under Windows 95 on a laptop I couldn't bring up in DOS but many use it reliably. Version 4.16 is about 250k of a download from the MEGS website or <http://www.murrah.com/sm/> The author suggests a \$20 Donation

NuMorse A shareware package that initially I liked much more than supermorse. Simple to install and get going the shareware version needs to be registered to use above 10 wpm (it will go to 48 wpm) <http://www.btinternet.com/~tony.lacy/> A download of just under a megabyte for version 1.51.

MRX This program is designed to run under Windows 95. I have not used it much but it looks very professional. MRX Morse Code is the program chosen by Australian and New Zealand Defence Force Establishments to teach morse code receive and transmit. There is a free version with some features disabled and it is a large 3.7Mbyte download from <http://www.mrx.com.au/> It only costs \$30 to register this package to receive a full version

MorseCat This program runs very reliably under Windows 95 for me and its timing seems good. A totally free package and of high quality, I have switched to using this package on a regular basis.

<http://www.qsl.net/dk5ci/> points at Gerald's Home pages in Germany. The software is 275k in size for version 1.0

There are other packages of course, maybe another 4 or 5 and you may well prefer one over the other. There is also a number of learning guides well worth a read. If you are training or helping newcomers to learn CW you may find they can get a lot of help from their PCs.

There is other software that members may be interested in; there is software that can display "dots" and "dashes" as lines across the screen, you may have seen this used in very slow speed morse sent on 136Khz. I played with some of those packages when trying to transmit; as an engineer it is reassuring to see how regular your dots and dashes are as the computer sees them!

73 de MI5AFL or GI8OLR!
 De Ian, <mailto:IJ.McCrum@ulst.ac.uk>

MORSE PRACTICE ON REPEATERS

I am pleased to report that John, GM0WRR has taken over the task of liaising with the local Repeater authorities with a view to running tests to confirm the feasibility and value of a service such as this. Might I also pay tribute to the Repeater keepers (two of whom have already approached me with assurances of their whole-hearted co-operation in the scheme) for the work they are doing to ensure that once the service goes into operation it will be a real success.

BACK UPS.

Might I first of all thank Bob, GM0NPS for agreeing to act as back-up operator for my GB2RS Morse Broadcast on Sunday afternoons.

We would repeat the appeal from the last Newsletter.

We support the efforts of other organisations in producing Morse practice on air. If you would like to lend a hand with the work undertaken by MEGS members in this field by becoming a scheduled main or back up operator for one of the services please contact the secretary. Most of this work involves auto transmitting and you do not require to be a high speed 'expert' to be a good operator on this type of transmission. **PLEASE HELP!**

On a related matter we would like to publish a list of existing Morse practice transmissions and would appreciate your help in compiling this. We already have full information on all RSGB sponsored broadcasts but information on the ARRL and Dutch transmissions together with any others you know of would be appreciated!

GROUP CALLSIGN (GMORSE) ROTA

First of all a grateful word of thanks to FIN, GM0WXX for taking over May and Oct.

JAN GM0MFE
 FEB. GM4BAE
 MAR. GM4WLN
 APR. GM3YCG
 MAY. GM0WXX
 JUN. GM4WLN
 JUL. GM4BAE
 AUG. GM4HYF
 SEP. GM0MFE
 OCT. GM0WXX
 NOV. GM3YCG
 DEC. GM4HYF

It is not always possible for the named operator to meet the sked. and changes may have to be made. Opportunities are always available for any 'GM' operator to do a trial stint as GMORSE/P. Just contact the Secre-

tary!! Just a thought how about a back up service here. When any op is not able to meet the sked they simply contact their back up who takes over 3.530Mhz using his/her own call sign for that particular evening.. Any takers??

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**CHAIRMAN ;
J.R.NICHOLSON(GM0MFE)**

**SECRETARY / TREASURER;
G.M.ALLAN(GM4HYF)**

**JON. OATES (GM0VIY);
COLIN MUIR (GM0UOU) ;
R.RANKIN(GM0NPS);
DONALD BLACK(GM0PIV);
BOB CASSELLS (GM4WLN) ;
PETER DEANS (SWL).**

NEWS LETTERS BY PACKET OR E-MAIL

We are greatly indebted to all members who have advised us of their willingness to take part in this service & have supplied us with the appropriate address. Between this and the number of members who supply SAE's &/or give us donations we are now able to 'deliver' about one third of our News Letters by these methods. Many thanks!

CALLING ALL AMATEURS & SWL'S

Anyone interested in cw operating (MEGS members or not, bring your friends along) all will be made warmly welcome at Throsk, near Stirling. Wheelchair facilities are available!

"MEGS ANNUAL 'SAMUEL MORSE'

BIRTHDAY PARTY

ON SUNDAY 30TH APRIL 2000 OPENING AT 10AM"

Members of Stirling and District Amateur Radio Society have kindly invited us back again, (this will be our third visit), to use their shack and elaborate aerial system for another "get - together". bring your pet key for a spell 'on the air'. Soup, tea/coffee, supplied free. bring your own victuals and enjoy the day with your fellow radio amateurs and their friends.

RALLIES

It is our wish to have a presence at as many Amateur Radio Rallies as is possible. Would any member willing to organise &/or help to

man a MEGS stand at ANY RALLY IN THE UK please contact the secretary.

NAMES AND CALL SIGN LISTS.

These up-dated lists are available from the secretary on receipt of a SAE

'ON AIR NAMES' We like to be able to welcome each member who calls into the nets by name. To complete our listing of 'ON AIR' names could the following members please contact the secretary with that information.

**G0EJF, G0TWT, G7OZK, G10STC, G1BHCP,
GM0MXZ, GM8MLH, GM8RPE, M0AGO,
M0BLI, MM1DWH, SWL247, SWL575,
SWL631, SWL691.
Many thanks de Sec.!**

DONATIONS

I would like once again to acknowledge the kindness of individual members and others who continue to send us donations to help with the work. So many of you say not to acknowledge these gifts and it has therefore been decided now to simply say 'thank you most sincerely' in each issue of the Newsletter which I now have great pleasure in doing. Should any doner wish direct acknowledgment please indicate at the time of the donation and we will be only too pleased to do so. In the case of gifts from organisations we will continue to send acknowledgements by mail. de Sec.

LIST OF TASKS WITH WHICH WE NEED HELP

Many of you keep asking is there any way in which you can help MEGS. Here are a few that come to mind at the moment.

Typing. - Periodically we need help with this as my two middle fingers get sore!
News Letter Editor. - As previously mentioned.

Photo-copying - Now and again we find a need for these facilities.

Finally

Thanks all members for their friendship in Morse.