

October 1988.

NEWSLETTER OF THE SEVERNSIDE TELEVISION GROUP
Edited by G8VPG.

DETAILS OF NEXT SOCIAL EVENING

As a result of requests by a number of members, we have decided to experiment with a different night for this social evening. The date will be Sunday 27th November at 7.30 pm at Elm Park Parish Pavillion, Filton. Please let the committee know how this change of day affects you, and what your preferences are.

Rather than have yet another Christmas Social, we have decided to hold this event some time before Christmas, and it is expected that another will be arranged after during January/February. For many people, December can be rather too full of parties and events, especially since most of the local clubs hold their own parties about this time.

Since the Group has now been running for nearly three years, it may be an opportune moment to remind members of one or two matters which were well known to the original few, but which both new and old members may have forgotten. The Group has always held social evenings as a benefit of membership, and I think that this is one reason why we are such a friendly group. However, it has never been our intention to drink and eat away Group funds which are badly needed to support engineering work on GB3ZZ. Social evenings are meant to be more or less self supporting, neither earning a profit nor costing us a loss.

The committee hire the hall and provide a light buffet, sometimes with the aid of a small sub from Group funds. A raffle is held to pay for this, and any surplus food or drink is auctioned off at the end of the meeting. This usually balances the funds, which then leaves the members with the task of supplying the drinks. If everyone brings along a bottle of wine or some four packs of beer, then there will be plenty for all to drink. It is unfair to turn up and drink other peoples donations without contributing yourself.

The committee felt it necessary to make this statement, so that everyone is aware of how these events are run. Hopefully, it will be at least another three years before it has to be repeated.

TRADING NEWS

I am sorry to report that all the 70 cm Group aerials have now been sold. For some reason, these were very slow sellers and we will therefore not be ordering any more for the foreseeable future.

The 23 cm aerials continue to sell strongly, and it is not hard to understand why. Where else will you get 10 dB gain across the whole 23 cm band for only £10.00 ? (members only price). In terms of £ per dB, these have to be a bargain, and with over 120 now in use, it is obvious that lots of people agree. They are currently available from stock, either from G8VPG or G4YQR. The members price is £10.00 (add £2.50 for postage if required) and I will repeat that at this price, they are for members own personal use only. Non-members must pay the retail price of £14.00.

I now have news of a super new Group product, whose first batch was sold out before we even got them. The Group is now able to obtain, in limited quantities, second-hand satellite TV receivers. These were designed to tune the IF output of an LNB, and are infact fully tunable FM TV receivers covering 950 to 1750 MHz in two bands. As such, they make a very effective 23 cm TV receiver, ideal for monitoring GB3ZZ's output or any of the simplex activity on the band. It would also be possible to use them as part of a satellite TV receive system. Brand new these cost about £150 to £220, depending on the model. However, we are able to offer them to members for about £35.00 (non-members about £40.00).

Depending how far you are from the repeater, you may need a low noise pre-amp to increase their sensitivity since they were not designed to be a primary receiver. However, the FM demodulator, being designed for wide band FM TV works very well indeed.

If you are interested in getting hold of one of these, please let G4YQR know as soon as possible. Supplies are not always regular, and you may have to wait for a few weeks for the next batch to come through.

BRISTOL RADIO RALLY - 18th SEPTEMBER.

The South Bristol ARC, who organise this excellent event, very kindly donated the Group a stand right by the main entrance to the hall. The first thing that all the visitors to the rally saw was the STG stand, which looked quite professional. The day before the rally was held, G1IXF, G7CAR and myself visited the site to establish if it would be possible to monitor GB3ZZ live on our stand. The first task was to scale the roof of the Brunel Old Station at Temple Meads, where the event is held. The ladder we brought was not quite long enough, but luckily a longer one was found on the premises.

Using this we found a very suitable piece of flat roof, and soon erected a short mast, topped by a 28 element JVL loop quad. Despite the built up surroundings, GB3ZZ was a solid P5 with fully quietening sound, and so we were able to make a live demonstration of GB3ZZ a central part of our stand. We also had a video showing film of some of our recent events including contest entries, the BATC Convention and work to the repeater.

Many visitors to the rally came to our stand, and a number were sufficiently impressed to join the Group there and then. As a "flag waving" exercise amongst our fellow local amateurs, the stand was a most successful effort. We also took just over £60.00 from sales and subscriptions, which made the day even more worth it !.

The rally was a great improvement on previous years, with an attendance of over 800. The new venue seemed to work very well indeed, and we hope that the SBARC will allow us back next year to wave the flag for ATV at our local rally.

INTERNATIONAL ATV CONTEST - 10/11th SEPTEMBER.

September was a very busy month for the Group, with the major ATV contest of the year being held the week before the Bristol Rally. Once again, we were on top of the Mendip Hills at our new contest location. The Gordano ARG agreed to loan us their 60' crank up trailer mounted tower, which would make the task of aerial erection much easier. However there was a snag. First of all, Chirman G4ZQF had to give them a talk about satellite TV, which he accomplished very well in August. Then we were told that the steel rope which pulls the main sections up was broken. If we could fix it, then we could use it.

As always, it seemed like a job for Ivor !. So on August Bank Holiday afternoon, G1IXF and G7ATV were up at Almondsbury where the tower is kept replacing the steel cables. After several hours dirty work, it was done and time to test it out. However, we did not have the handle to wind the winch. Luckily, G4BVK and myself who were visiting rather than working that day, found a telephone kiosk that worked, and persuaded Tony G4WLX of the Gordano ARG to come up and bring the handle with him.

The tower was cranked full height and everyone returned home very pleased. Arrangements were made to tow the tower out to site on the Wednesday before the contest. Tony very kindly volunteered to do this for us, and after choosing the site and levelling the base, we all retired to the Castle of Comfort for a glass of beer and some excellent home cooked ham sandwiches.

As the weekend approached, the weather settled down under the influence of an all too rare high pressure system. Saturday dawned fine and dry, and a very strange convoy of heavily loaded vehicles met at Viv & Ivors QTH. The North Bristol ARC caravan was in tow, together with stacks of equipment, aerials, cable and a

of all this is a reminder that a Television repeater is not a "fit it and forget it" appliance, but one which requires constant development and refinement. So please keep the subscriptions, donations and sales income up, so that we can continue to improve GB3ZZ.

For next year, it is planned to change over to a new micro-processor based logic system. This is being jointly developed by G8KUW and GW6BWX, and will provide much greater flexibility in how we use and control the repeater. All the basic control parameters will be determined by software rather than hardware, and therefore changes can be made very easily. Eventually we hope that the repeater will have pages of teletext type information, which can be regularly updated to contain news of the Group and other local clubs activities.

As I write this two days after the repeater has been switched back on, the initial impression is that a big improvement has been effected. The repeater is slightly stronger on transmit with most people, and there has been a vast increase in receive sensitivity. The new pre-amp is working very well, with no tendency to overload in the nearby presence of the output signal.

As always, I expect that there will be some teething problems, so please be patient with the hard working engineering team, who really have burnt some midnight oil to carry out this work.

CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED

The bulk of this issue has been written by your editor. I am sure that the newsletter would be more interesting if some other people could write something for it on occasions. The articles need not be technical, but could perhaps express your opinions on a subject, or a description of your latest project, your shack or how you came into ATV.

I also wonder whether we have any artistic people in the Group?. G4BVK has drafted out a cartoon for the newsletter, which probably needs an "artistic interpretation" to make good final copy. Are there any volunteers?.

All contributions should be sent to the Editor. Please do not worry if they are not typed, since the newsletter is produced on an Amstrad PCW8512 word processor. If you could send copy on disc though, that would be really neat!.

On a similar subject, I hope everyone has seen the new ATV column in Radcom by G8LES. It is about time that the RSGB covered ATV in its journal, since they seemed to have ignored it for years. Along with G8PTH's various columns in R&EW and CQ-TV, they do provide everyone with some insight into the world of ATV. Like this newsletter, they all rely on you, the ordinary ATVer to send in news and comment for their survival. Therefore, please support G8LES and G8PTH by dropping them a line from time to time.

"P5" is published for the Severnside Television Group by S.P.O'Sullivan, 15, Witney Close, Saltford, Bristol BS18 3DX, and is sent free to all members of the Group. Details of Group membership, which is open to all interested persons, are available from the Membership Services Officer, Bryan Collins G4YQR, 144, Longmead Avenue, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8QQ.

powerful generator loaned by G4XCB. We arrived at site by mid-morning and the first task was to send our lunch order down to the Castle of Comfort. This accomplished, we set about assembling the station. We must be becoming old hands at this now, since it took very little organising, everyone knowing what had to be done and how. The aerial system comprised our usual 14 element Parabeam for 2 m, the pair of 88 element Multibeams for 70 cm, and G4BVK's magnificent new pair of 48 element loop quads for 23 cm. With the tower now available, we were able to raise the top 23 cm aerial 73' above ground level. However you look at it, that is a very long way up and believe me, this was our best set up yet !! Unlike previous events, we had no major disasters with the aeriels either.

As soon as we switched on the station, it was obvious that there was a lift on. We were getting Irish TV on Band III using just a set top whip aerial. As the contest started, we began to do very well on 23 cm, with Kens new aeriels punching our signal right up into the Midlands and beyond. The lift was mainly on 23 cm, although 70 cm was quite lively at times as well. When the results were calculated, they showed that our claimed score was a long way up on our previous score in June. On 70 cm, we are claiming 7188 points from 38 QSO's and on 23 cm 3371 from 24 QSO's. The 23 cm score is nearly three times our previous best, and will hopefully place us well up the list on that band.

All told we had a very good weekend. The weather was good apart from some rain on Sunday morning which did not affect us greatly. Once again, several local stations did not show up and lost us vital points. However, we would like to thank all those who made a special effort to work us and give us some points. We are now looking forward and planning for the next contest in March 1989.

GB3ZZ TECHNICAL PROGRESS REPORT.

GB3ZZ was taken off air on 24th September, so that some fairly major engineering work could be carried out. We would like to apologise to all our viewers for the temporary loss of service, but I think you will judge it worthwhile now that service is resumed. (GB3ZZ was switched back on on 14th October).

The first item to be tackled was the aerial system. A new base has been built, to make winching the mast up and down much easier. The top set of guys, which attach to the aerial system itself, will be replaced with new steel wire. The old nylon guys tended to snap, and it would have been only a matter of time before something fell down. With winter approaching, this was a priority job.

A new aerial system has been built. Although essentially the same as before (a pair of vertically stacked Alford slots) the practical detail of the system is all new. A larger diameter plastic over sheath has been used, although this now only covers the radiating part of the aeriels. Inbetween, a new section of light magnesium alloy tube has been used, matching the diameter of the plastic sections. This has permitted the use of larger diameter, lower loss cable to feed the upper receive aerial. Following some experiments, the feeder to the upper aerial now passes through the inside of the lower one. Furthermore, G4BVK has constructed a new GaAsFET pre-amp which fits inside the mast, immediately below the receive aerial. This should improve receive sensitivity quite significantly.

The Transmitter has been rebuilt into a new rack, as has the PSU. A major design fault on the PLL has been rectified by substituting a Worthing Group board in place of the Wood & Douglas original. This should cure the problems of distorted through video and rolling on some signals. We have Ken G4BVK to thank for some very hard detective and development work on this item. New cooling fans have also been fitted.

Work has also been carried out on the repeater shack, with extra power sockets fitted and a ventilation system which we hope will help to cool it down a little. Its position at the top of the boiler house means that at times, it is uncomfortably warm up there !.

There have also been some detailed changes to the logic, increasing the i/d interval to 15 minutes. The extra EPROM's should now make a re-appearance. All this work has cost the Group about £150.00, together with many hours of hard work by G3JMY, G4BVK and G1IXF. First of all, thanks are due to them. Secondly, the cost