

Welcome to Essex Ham TX:

Here we are with the second issue of the **Essex Ham TX**. The first edition was released in January as a test to see if there was any interest in a newsletter such as this, and the feedback has been extremely encouraging. Within the first couple of weeks, well over 1,000 copies were downloaded, and that's not counting the copies emailed out by many of the clubs in the Essex area. A mention on the Southgate Amateur Radio News site also prompted lots of downloads and feedback.

If you missed the introduction in our first issue, **Essex Ham TX** is intended as a short electronic newsletter that updates you on upcoming local amateur radio events, looks at what's been going on recently, and focuses on a topic that may stimulate you to try new modes or aspects of the hobby.

Since releasing last month's newsletter, we've had a few suggestions for things to cover in future editions (many thanks!). We've also been contacted by some of the local clubs asking to have their events listed in **Essex Ham TX** as well as on our online events calendar – We're happy to do that!

The **Essex Ham TX** is a free online newsletter. It's available to download from www.essexham.co.uk, and it's emailed to those who subscribe to our free mailing list. Please send on a copy on to anyone who might find this interesting. To get future newsletters and updates by email, sign up free via the box on our website.



Thanks to everyone for the support so far. Thanks also to Geoff G3EDM for suggesting that we offer a postal version. Please get in touch if this is of interest - if there's demand, we could look at offering a snail mail version for those without Internet access.

The **Essex Ham TX** is driven by you – If you have any comments, suggestions or feedback, get in touch!

Pete M0PSX

Local Events:

Latest Events Calendar online at <http://www.essexham.co.uk/events>

13 Feb 13	Harwich ARIG	Club Talk: Talk by Harwich RNLI
13 Feb 13	Havering ARC	Club Talk "Apocolypto: Revealing the unreadable" by David Mills G7UVW
18 Feb 13	Braintree ARS	Club Talk: "How I hope to win the Construction Contest" by Edwin G0LPO
21 Feb 13	Colchester RAC	Club Talk: "Aurora" by Paul G4YQC
27 Feb 13	Havering ARC	Club Talk: "LOG4HOM" by Terry G4POP
28 Feb 13	Vange ARS	Club Talk: Natter Night
01 Mar 13	Thames ARG	Club Talk: "Chain Home Towers", by Andy G1GKN
03 Mar 13	Bredhurst RTS	Rainham Rally, Rainham, Kent
03 Mar 13	Cambridge ARC	Cambridge Rally – Details at www.cdarc.co.uk
04 Apr 13	Braintree ARS	Club Evening: Morse Evening (keys, programs, on-air)
07 Mar 13	Vange ARS	Club Evening: Junk Sale
08 Mar 13	Chelmsford ARS	Club Talk: "Professional Aerials for Radio Amateurs"
12 Mar 13	South Essex ARS	Club Talk: "The Night Sky" by Bruce G1JJS
13 Mar 13	Harwich ARIG	Club Talk: "SDR" by James M0ZZO
13 Mar 13	Havering ARC	Club Talk: "Deciphering Enigma and Lorenz Cyphers in WW2"
18 Mar 13	Braintree ARS	Club Talk: "Baluns and their construction", by Melvin G0EMK

Monday Night Net:

Thanks to so many of you for taking part in the Monday Night Net. This normally starts from 8pm on, as the name suggests, Monday. We typically have a dozen or more participants, and often hear from people off-air letting us know that they've been listening in. In case you've not heard (or joined) the net before, here's some information:

What is the Monday Night Net?

This was started by Pete MOPsx and Jim 2EORMI in 2011. The net was originally run on a Thursday, and was intended to help out the new M6 Foundation licence holders. As you may recall from when you passed your first radio exam, making that first contact, or that first expensive purchase from the local emporium can be tricky, and it's helpful to get some friendly advice first.

Although the Net was intended to give the new M6s a chance to have a chat amongst friends, the Monday Night Net has grown into a meeting place for all amateurs in and around Essex. It's not uncommon for the Monday Night Net to get upwards of twenty people – some with days of experience, and some with decades. The net is welcome to all, so please give it a try!



Joining the Monday Night Net:

The net usually takes place on a Monday evening from 8pm local time on the Danbury Repeater, GB3DA. The Net has a moderator, who holds a list of participants and tries to let each person on the net talk in rotation, so that everyone knows when it's their turn to talk, and everyone gets a chance to have their say.

GB3DA details: Listen on 145.725MHz. Transmit on 145.125MHz with CTCSS of 110.9. Note that there is a 90 second timeout

Thanks! Our thanks to the Essex Repeater Group for allowing us to run the Monday Night Net on the GB3DA repeater. If you use the repeater, please consider joining the ERG, or making a donation. More details at www.essexrepeatergroup.org.uk

For more details about the Monday Night Net, go to www.essexham.net

Recent Essex Activities:

South Essex ARS: The Canvey Rally:

Sunday the 3rd of Feb saw an estimated 500 amateurs from Essex and beyond descend to Canvey Island for the 28th annual Canvey Rally. Great to see so many Essex Hams there browsing and chatting, and to see so many vendors and local clubs out in force too. If you said "hi" to Pete MOPsx in his Essex Ham shirt – thanks. Rally pics and a 2 minute video montage: www.essexham.co.uk/news



Chelmsford ARS: Band Plan Changes / Electronic Logging:

Further north, in Great Baddow on the 8th of Feb, CARS held their monthly club night. Carl G3PEM introduced members to Logger32, the logging application that the club has chosen for RSGB Centenary operations in Chelmsford this year (where electronic logging is mandatory). The second part of the evening was a talk from Murray G6YJB about the various recent and upcoming changes to our band plan, as well as a look at a 1960s band plan.

There's a summary of both talks, plus photos here: <http://www.essexham.co.uk/news>

Thames ARG: Two Tree Island Field Day:

Around twenty amateurs met on a chilly 9th of Feb on Two Tree Island. Photo here: www.thamesarg.org.uk/news

Want to tell us what you or your club's been up to? Go to: www.essexham.co.uk/contact

Give it a try: eQSL

Do you eQSL? By Pete MOPSX

It seems that there's something of a marmite relationship with electronic QSLs – amateurs seem to either love eQSL, or hate it. It's easy to see why.



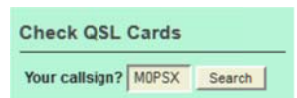
- **The pros:** Near-instant, semi-automatic sending and receiving of QSL cards. Oh, and it's free.
- **The cons:** eQSL cards are not valid for many contests, and there's something very tactile about opening that Bureau envelope and seeing a mix of actual paper cards.

It will come as no surprise that I'm in favour of eQSL, but that doesn't stop me enjoying the best of both worlds. As well as eQSL, I'm a regular user of the Bureau, and I also send and receive paper cards direct. I have both paper and electronic cards for some QSOs – it just so happens that I get one several months before the other. On this page, you'll find some eQSL basics and some handy tips.



New to eQSL?

The first thing to try, is a quick check to see if you have any waiting cards. You may be surprised! To check, go to www.essexham.co.uk and in the bar on the right-hand side, put your callsign into the "check QSL cards" box. The page that you get back will tell you if you're signed up to eQSL and how many cards are waiting. [Tip: you can check *any* callsign, not just your own!]



If you want to sign up, the process is free and doesn't take long. From www.eqsl.cc, you can be up-and-running by following the 'Register' option very quickly, and will then be able to view your waiting cards, as well as design and send your own cards.

What you need to know

eQSL.cc isn't the easiest site in the world to navigate your way around, and in this short article, I can't go into all of the finer points of using the service. Here are a few things of note that should help you get more out of using eQSL:

Inbox, Archive and Outbox: Get used to these yellow folders, as that's where your cards are stored. With each card, you'll have the option to accept or reject the card. By accepting, you'll automatically send an eQSL back to the person who sent the card. You can create a new card from your Outbox.



Designing your card. You do this via the postcard icon on the top menu. The choice is initially limited (which is why a lot of eQSL cards look alike). A donation of \$5 will get you upgraded to eQSL Bronze, meaning you can use your own photo, or a scan of your paper QSL card, for outgoing cards. Interestingly, if you update your card design, previous cards you've sent will also be updated!

Electronic Logs: If you log electronically, chances are you can send eQSLs automatically. If not, you can export your QSOs in the standard ADIF file format used by most logging packages, and import that file into eQSL. Easy!

Authenticity Guaranteed (AG): You'll be encouraged to certify your account. You can still use eQSL without doing this, but it means you can't get any awards, and your QSOs won't count towards other people's eQSL awards. You'll need to upload a photo or a scan of your licence, so that a volunteer can verify that you're you.



eQSL tips and tricks

Multiple accounts: If you have several callsigns, make sure you make use of the "My Accounts" feature on the eQSL.cc homepage. This lets you see all of your linked accounts, to see what's waiting for all your callsigns.



Slashes and Separations: The callsigns MOPSX, MOPSX/P, MOPSX/M and MOPSX/A are irritatingly all handled in eQSL as different callsigns, so if you work on-air using separators, you may have cards waiting for you that you don't know about. A handy tip here is to use the "Orphan eQSLs" option on the eQSL.cc homepage – This will list waiting cards for different variations of your call, and you'll need to "attach" an account for the different callsign to get to the waiting cards.

Awards: If you've been using eQSL for a while, you might find you're on your way to getting an eQSL award. The easiest one to get is likely to be the "I've worked 25 countries" award, which will give you an A4 printable certificate. There are plenty of other awards to go for, such as 300 prefixes and "worked all States".



Any questions about eQSL? Contact us via www.essexham.co.uk/contact

Worth A Look:

100 Years of the RSGB

To celebrate the centenary of the RSGB, a special callsign is active throughout 2013. Try to work G100RSGB as it moves around the UK and enter a special contest. This month, it's in Scotland (as GM100RSGB), and it will make its way to our region between July and August. Details at www.rsgb.org/aboutrsgb/rsgbcentenary2013

RSGB Newsletter for Newbies

The RSGB is due to launch a free newsletter in February, aimed primarily at those new to the hobby (Sound familiar?). The free email newsletter is written by Steve GOKYA (Radcom author) and the first issue will cover the QSL Bureau, Morse code, PSK31 and WSPR. Sign up for a free copy at www.rsgb.org/gettingstarted

Oh, and see the nice plug for **Essex Ham** and **the Monday Night Net** on page 85 of the March issue of RadCom!

Training in Essex:

Foundation Courses:

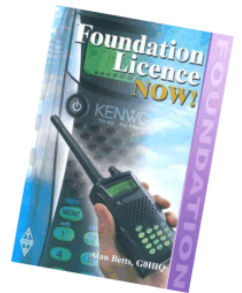
- **Loughton & Epping Forest:** Weekend Course 25-26 May 13 (www.lefars.org.uk)
- **Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society:** 05 Sep 13 (www.g0mwt.org.uk)

Intermediate Courses:

- **Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society:** 14 Mar 13 (www.g0mwt.org.uk)
- **Loughton & Epping Forest:** 06 Jul 13 (www.lefars.org.uk)

Advanced Courses:

- **Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society:** 01 Jul 13 (Exam only). 24 Oct 13 (Revision course - www.g0mwt.org.uk)
- Distance learning courses run by Steve Hartley G0FUW. Contact him for dates via QRZ.com



Know of any local training courses? Tell us at: www.essexham.co.uk/contact

And Finally...

We're pleased to have had such a positive reaction to our "test transmission" last month. For future issues, we've been asked to look at WSPR, electronic logging and how to use the bureau. Any preferences?

One of the hot topics on the Monday Night Net on the 11th of Feb was training. How can we get more people into the hobby? Can we offer anything to M6s to help them bridge the gap to Intermediate? And what more can we do as amateurs to keep newbies interested in the hobby? We'll be returning to this, no doubt, but if you have any comments, please add a note on the website, or start a discussion in the Essex Ham forum.



Comment or suggestions? Please get in touch via <http://www.essexham.co.uk/contact> - or if you're into Twitter, our Twitter "callsign" is @EssexHam. Alternatively, as we're all about radio... have your say on the next Monday Night Net.

Thanks for reading, and for your support!

Pete M0PSX