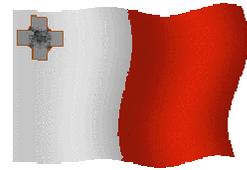


MARL



MALTA



Magazine by MARL

For Maltese and Gozitan
Radio Amateurs

Number 24

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Smoking is prohibited at the Centre

From the Editor

Friends,

I welcome you to another issue of this magazine for March 2008, which is issue 24 of this series.

The MARL Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 24 February 2008. During this meeting information was given of what had been done during the previous year and about how we were promised by the Malta Communications Authority that as soon as they revise the band plan we will be given an allocation on the 136 kHz frequency.

According to what was decided at the World Radio Conference, radio amateurs are to be granted a secondary allocation on this frequency as from 1 January 2009, and perhaps we may be given an allocation even before, although it appears that the revision of the band plan will take up to at least this year.

As regards the 500 kHz frequency the answer was that until there is an allocation by the International Telecommunications Union, they are not prepared to give us an allocation on it.

For this frequency there is a proposal for the World Radio Conference that will probably be held in 2011, that is 3 years from now, and we hope that this will also be approved, although there are a number of countries that have already given an allocation to their radio amateurs on this frequency.

The same can be said about the 5 MHz frequency band, although there is a substantial number of countries that have given an allocation to their radio amateurs to use some frequencies.

About 70 MHz there are also difficulties, although there is a substantial number of countries, including countries in Europe that have given an allocation to their radio amateurs on this frequency.

I remind you that in England, last year they had celebrated the 50 anniversary of having been given this frequency while we are still waiting for an allocation.

During the meeting an explanation was given about our previous repeater, that is R7 which is now being converted to a beacon to serve as a propagation indicator on 144 MHz.

There was also an intervention about the television repeater on 10 GHz that has now been rebuilt and fixed temporarily at the MARL Club, although some things may be added later before it is finally fitted.

Mention was also made of the FTDX400 transmitter given to MARL which was repaired and given a general service by 9H1AV because it had not been used for a good number of years. This transmitter is now at MARL and we thank the donor who gave it to us.

After the meeting certificates were presented to those who sat for the radio amateur and Morse code examinations and who were present during the meeting. Those who were not present were to be given the certificates later.

Further down you have some photos of the Annual General Meeting and the presentation of the certificates.

On my behalf and on behalf of the Committee I thank all those who during the previous year and also during the years have worked in the interest of MARL, especially all those who are teaching all those who show an interest in our hobby so that they will be able to sit for the required examinations.

I hope that you find the information in the magazine useful to you and if you have some article please leave it in my QSL box.

Lawrence

9H1AV / 9H9MHR

QSL Problem

A problem MARL is constantly facing and which I think I have made reference to before is that which regards QSL cards received for 9H3 stations.

9H3 stations are presently foreigners who come for a holiday and have to have a 9H call since the practice of using 9H/ their own home call has not yet been implemented in Malta.

Other stations presently worked by 9H3 are sending their cards to us instead of the home call of the 9H3 station, since it appears that the 9H3 stations do not mention or request a QSL to their own home call when they are in QSO.

Furthermore, they do not even bother to leave their home address, although no one can expect MARL to foot the bill to send the QSLs to their home address when one considers the postage costs which have been constantly increasing.

This is not only causing a problem at MARL by receiving thousands of QSL cards for 9H3 stations, but the stations sending the QSL cards will not receive one back as courtesy calls for.

Our QSL manager had sent e-mails to those whose e-mail he could find on what to do with the QSL cards, but they didn't even bother to answer.

Furthermore, this is causing a bad reputation for **9H** stations in that foreign stations may think that Maltese radio amateurs receive QSL cards but do not bother to send one back.

The situation is no longer tolerable and a decision will shortly have to be taken whether to destroy the cards since we are running out of space and it is impossible for us to shoulder the costs of sending them back or to the intended recipient.

Moreover, foreign stations should take notice and make sure that when they presently work a **9H3** station they ask for his/her home call so that they will send their QSL card to his/her home address and **NOT to the MARL QSL bureau.**

I think that we should also try to tackle the situation with the respective authorities in Malta to stop issuing **9H3** call signs to foreigners and only allow them to use **9H/** their own home call, since the use of **9H3** call signs by these foreigners is giving a very bad reputation to Maltese radio amateurs.

Lawrence
9H1AV/9H9MHR

Internet webpages

Further down you have internet webpages links from where you can download a number of old books on electricity, electronics, and subjects connected with our hobby.

You will find books on valves, CRT tubes, materials with which they are made, circuits, transistors, receivers, amplifiers, transformers, tape recorders, oscilloscopes, radio manuals issued by the ARRL, and other things.

These books are a mine of information, and I suggest that you download them and save them on a DVD because if you download them all you will need more than one CD. They are interesting because you can compare the developments that have been made. This is <http://www.pmillett.com/Books/>

From the same webpage there is a link to another page on audio where there is information which is connected with the subject. This is <http://www.pmillett.com/index.html>

You have another page from where you can download a free book on digital signal processing (DSP) which today has become an integral part of the majority of our equipment. Therefore you will do well to download this book to learn something on what happens during this process. The page from where you can download this book in separate chapters is <http://www.dspguide.com/>

Another interesting internet webpage from where you can download some manuals and other information, among which for the Hammarlund SP400, SP600 u Superpro, which is that of Antique Radio Archives whose webpage is <http://www.antiqueradioarchives.com/>

Lawrence
9H1AV / 9H9MHR

Photos of the Annual General Meeting 2008

Thanks to 9H1AJ for the photos which are brought to you through his courtesy



Left to right 9H1M Dominic, 9H1PI Ivan, 9H1XE Edwin, 9H1JT Paul, 9H1AV / 9H9MHR Lawrence





Presentation of radio amateur and Morse code certificates



9H1JT, 9H1M, 9H1AQ



9H1M, 9H1AQ, ?



9H1M, 9H1AQ, ?



9H1M, 9H1AQ,



9H1M, 9H1AQ, 9H1AJ

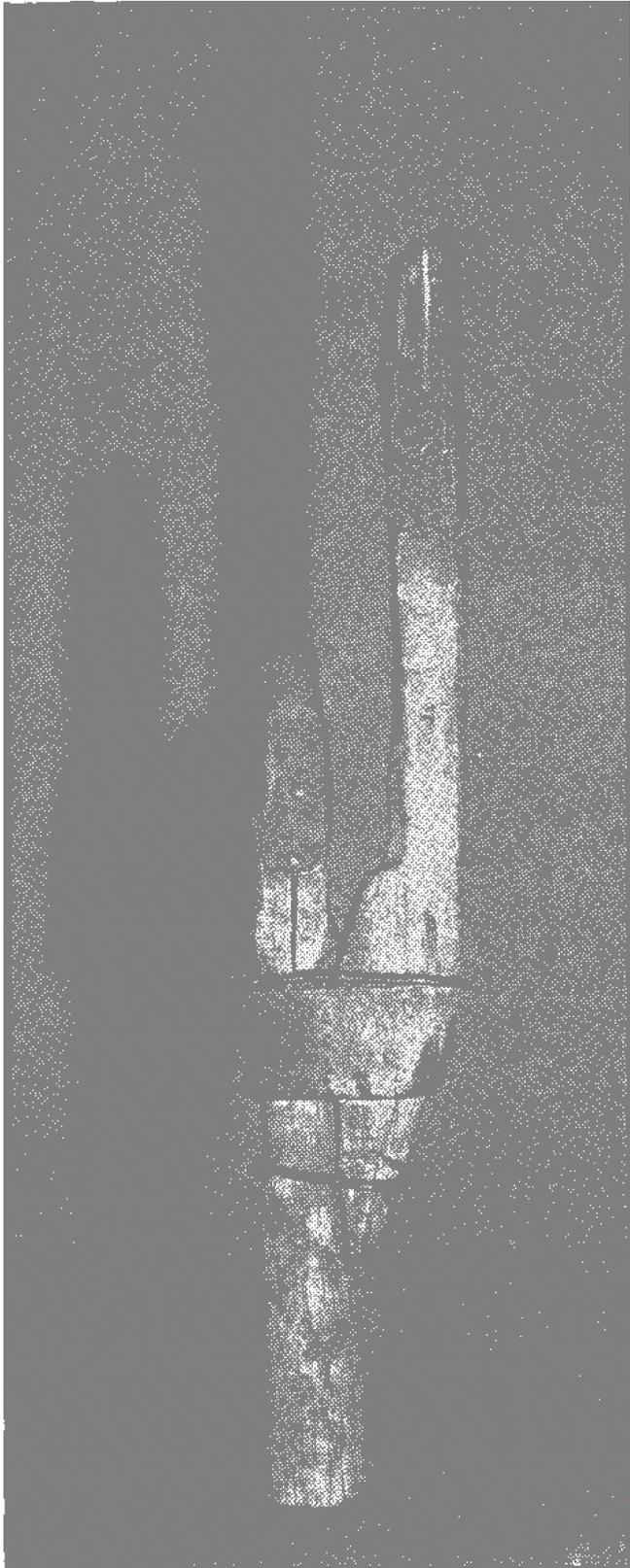


9H1M, 9H1JT, 9H1SF

As I did not know the call signs of all those who appear in the photos, I will give it in a later issue as soon as I have the information.

Lawrence

9H1AV / 9H9MHR



become a part of amateur radio.

The Wouff-Hong

In the first editions of this magazine I had written about a torture instrument known as **Wouff-Hong** that was used on those radio amateurs who did not

If you think that this instrument is not very old you are mistaken, because the picture on the side is taken from page 7 of the 1936 edition of "The Radio Amateur's Handbook".

There may have been pictures of it before, but up to now I don't have a copy of them.

However, as clearly emerges from the writ-up, probably there will shortly be it's 100 anniversary celebrations, because **T.O.M.** had sent it on to the **ARRL** in **1919**, although it appears that he had been writing in *QST* from **1915**.

This book was first printed in 1926 and 5,000 copies were printed. It was amended with developments that were happening and in 1936 50,000 copies were printed.

Let's see what is said about the **Wouff-Hong** whose story is found on page 8 of the Handbook.

Traditions

As the League has come down through the years, certain traditions have

The Old Man with his humorous stories on “rotten radio” was one of amateur radio’s principal figures.

Beginning in 1915 his pictures of radio and radio amateurs as revealed by stories in **QST** were characteristic and inimitable.

There was much speculation in amateur circles concerning the identity of **T.O.M.**, but in twenty years of writing he never once gave a clue as to his real name or call.

The Wouff-Hong is amateur radio’s most sacred symbol and stands for the enforcement of law and order in amateur operation. It came into being originally by a story by **T.O.M.**

For some time it was not known just what the **Wouff-Hong** looked like, but in 1919 **The Old Man** himself supplied the answer by sending in to League Headquarters the one and only original **Wouff-Hong**, shown here.

It is now framed and hangs on the wall of the Secretary’s office at **A.R.R.L.** Headquarters.

This is what one finds written in the mentioned book. As I have previously written, I hope that there will be no one from among the radio amateurs where there will be the need for it to be used on him.

Lawrence
9H1AV / 9H9MHR

News

500 kHz

Today we have another bit of news about this frequency where the distance between stations that have communicated between themselves on this frequency has been again increased.

This time the communications were on 21 February between **V73NS/WD8CRT**, on Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein atoll, who received signals from **WD2XSH/6**. This experimental station is operated by Pat Hamel, **W5THT**, and is in Long Beach, Mississippi -- 6679 miles away from the Island which is found in the Kwajalein atoll.

Another bit of news is that on 6 March, Peter, **G3LDO** worked with **VO1NA** on this frequency. Peter worked **CW** with **VO1NA**, where Peter was on 501.19kHz CW and Joe, **VO1NA**, was on **40M**. Peter’s signals were 439, and we have to remember that presently the British stations have 1 Watt e.r.p.

From our side we are sorry that in Malta the authorities are still afraid to take a decision such as was taken by the authorities of other countries that have given an allocation on this frequency to their radio amateurs.

We are also sorry that we cannot be among the first radio amateurs from other countries who are achieving results with their experiments and are the first people to have made contacts on long distances.

How can it be that in Malta we will be at the forefront in research and experimentation if, when such occasions present themselves, we remain without being given an allocation on these frequencies to be allowed and be able to experiment on them?

When are we going to be among the first who will be establishing experiments and new distances and thus Malta will be put on the forefront in the developments that are happening all the time around the world?

Lawrence
9H1AV/9H9MHR

Information

Emergency programme

In this magazine we have already given you information that there are a number of Maltese radio amateurs who are working hand in hand with the Civil Protection Department to provide the required communications in case of emergency.

This service has been given for long years outside Malta, and the need was long felt for Maltese radio amateurs to give the same service to the Maltese authorities. There were examples where Maltese radio amateurs gave their service, amongst which were when two ships came with the Albanians, during the Pope's visit, and other occasions.

However, the emergency service requires not only that one be well prepared and have the required equipment for the service to be good and efficient, but also to have the latest technology to help him in his work.

In fact, American radio amateurs have developed a communication system that uses the computer to send messages in the form of an e-mail.

This system was developed to be used mostly on **VHF**, **UHF** as well as that known as **NVIS** on **HF**, that is where radio signals are sent at a high angle as much as possible to be received at short distances and also longer without there being a loss of signal between waves received that have been refracted by the refractive layers and the signal received through the ground wave.

However, there is nothing to stop the system from being used on all frequencies and all types of propagation, although it may be that some defects may develop under some particular circumstances.

Such a system is required not only because everything is written and if there is a mistake one will quickly notice it, but also because if you do not have the computer programme you will not know what is being said.

We have to remember that it is not only radio amateurs that have radio equipment that can receive communications sent by radio amateurs, and there is nothing wrong in this in itself.

If we take the example of mistakes, it is easy for one to understand a word differently from what has been sent, especially in technical words or worse in medicine. Imagine what happens if a person is given a medicine instead of another.

When words are written by whom they are sent, he would have shown it to the person who told him to send the message, and if there is something not correct it will be corrected. If on the other hand whoever receives the message or to whom the message was addressed does not recognize what had been sent, he may go back and ask for clarification.

Apart from this, in certain situations it will not be wise for the public or whoever is listening to know everything.

To take an example, it may be the case where a number of persons had been contaminated or killed, and the authorities would not want that this information be known immediately by the public before taking some precautions to prevent a general panic in the country or particular place which will complicate the situation or worse create another danger or increase the same danger.

The computer programme that I am talking about is a PSK system and may be used normally during communications which every radio amateur has, and also to send passport sized color photos which take about 10 minutes to send.

What we have to remember is that while in Malta the radio amateurs group who work hand in hand with the Civil Protection Department have also provided communications by television, the programme that I am mentioning is also used on **HF** and **VHF** where the frequency bands do not allow the use of television.

I therefore suggest not only that radio amateurs be ready and train so that God forbid the need arises for them to provide their service, but also to download the programme so that they will be familiar with it.

This programme is known as **NBEMS** which is an acronym for **N**arrow **B**and **E**mergency **M**essaging **S**ystem, is used on windows, and appears similar to outlook express. This programme was developed by Skip Teller, **KH6TY** and Dave Freese, **W1HKJ**.

I thank **Chris, 9H1BW**, who had brought our attention to this programme which can be downloaded from the internet webpage <http://w1hkj.com/NBEMS/>

Lawrence
9H1AV / 9H9MHR

Activities

A number of radio amateurs from time to time go to operate from some particular place. They inform their friends on an ad hoc basis, and sometimes they also invite whoever wants to go with them to meet them. I remind you that this is being done on a personal basis and they use their equipment and not MARL equipment.

MARL and the Committee members therefore have no obligation to inform the other members. Although it may happen that someone who may also be a Committee member takes part in such operations and also inform some other persons who may be or may not be MARL members, he will be doing this on a strictly personal basis as he has every right to do, and not as a MARL representative or as a committee member.

No one can stop a radio amateur or radio amateurs from agreeing with some of their friends on a personal basis and go together to operate from somewhere as they have every right to do so.

In the same manner, no one can expect to be invited from someone else when things are made on a personal basis or that MARL issues an official notice in such cases. Even if a committee member is asked to inform MARL members this will still not be an official MARL activity.

If the activity is organized by MARL the members will be informed as has always been the case. For this purpose, there is the yahoo group where the person in charge sends one e-mail that goes to the whole group.

Although the vast majority of the members are in the yahoo group where information issued by MARL is sent, there are some who are still not in this group.

Therefore I appeal to everyone to become a member in the group so that s/he will not only be able to receive information issued by MARL, but to also lighten the work of whoever has to send the information.

This is apart from the fact that the person sending the e-mails cannot send a substantial amount of e-mails because no one has time to waste, apart from the fact that if s/he sends a quantity of e-mails s/he may be cut off by the internet service provider as s/he will be considered as a spammer.

I remind you that when an activity planned by MARL is being held, it is normal that this is also notified on the magazine that we issue apart from the information being also sent to the group both with an e-mail as well as by letter by snail mail.

Do not forget that postage has increased apart from the material expenses as well as the time required to print the letters, fold them, put them in an envelope, stick stamps or taking them to the post office to be stamped and posted needs a lot of time, and if we are certain that through e-mail we will be reaching all the members we will save money for MARL and time for the person having to send the letters.

I hope that things have been cleared up and everyone cooperates to reduce expenses as much as possible and the precious time of all volunteers.

Lawrence
9H1AV/9H9MHR