

Club Report

(A bit wordy but there is a lot to say..!)

The 22nd October Acorns virtual club meeting on Zoom was one of our best. We had as many people “attend” as we would have expected from an actual meeting in the hall. Our guest speaker was Seb 2E0FZS who described his entry into the world of Amateur Radio.



International Space Station (ISS): One of the topics mentioned was the International Space Station. Nick G4HCK put up a screen shot of the repeater frequencies shown below for reference. The most common way to connect is with a handheld yagi pointing to the ISS as it tracks across the sky. There are several phone apps that help with this as you can hold the phone in one hand pointing to the sky and hold the yagi in the other in the same orientation. (nb: different yagi for uplink and downlink as on different bands).

VHF FM Uplink (to talk) 145.990 MHz & CTCSS 67Hz : UHF FM Downlink (to listen) 437.800 MHz

Digital Mobile Radio (DMR): Another topic was DMR. An analogue radio uses transistors and coils to generate a radio signal; a digital radio does it all by computer. So, digital radio is just a computer with an antenna. The manufacturer will determine who you can talk to: “Fusion” is operated by Yaesu so both parties need a Yaesu. “D-Star” is by ICOM so both parties need an ICOM. Fusion can’t talk to D-Star as they use different software. DMR is popular as they use handheld and mobile radios (rather than a home base station) and a chain of DMR repeaters connected by the internet. Both parties need a DMR radio, be in range of a DMR repeater and on the same network. DMR repeaters mostly use two networks, Phoenix and BrandMeister. Calls mostly work on their own network but there is a limited way to talk between them. DMR for amateurs has been adapted from walkie-talkies used in business.



Acorns and Zoom: Looking around it seems that virtually all clubs (excuse the pun) have moved over to some kind of video conferencing as the only option for continuing with club meetings; and with the uncertainties of a second wave of COVID-19 it seems this may continue to be the case for some time to come. Therefore, the Committee is considering whether to pay for a year’s subscription to Zoom which will allow for our meetings to be held for longer and will double up for training purposes.



Special Interest Groups: Sometimes Amateur Radio enthusiasts have an interest in other technical matters such as Astronomy or Photography. There are about 160M pieces of space debris each with the potential to destroy essential satellites in orbit. This link was submitted by a member:

<https://www.wearefinn.com/topics/posts/tackling-the-growing-problem-of-space-debris/>

GB2REM: Acorns Special Event callsign GB2REM is valid from Sat 7th Nov until Thurs the 12th of Nov. Remembrance Sunday is on the 8th Nov. Keep an eye on the Acorns website for details of the dates/times/modes it will be in operation. Please call in if you can to help raise the profile of Acorns on air and in remembrance of our fallen heroes. Obviously observe radio silence at 11am on the relevant days.

