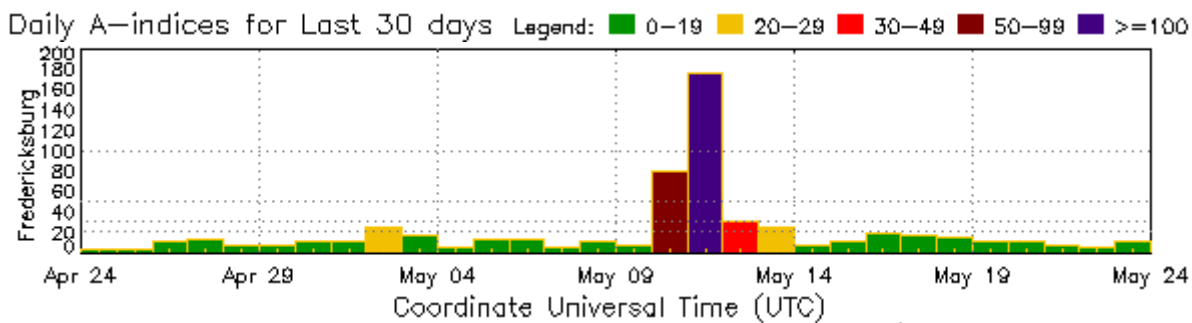


## THE SUN KICKS UP A STORM

Two weeks ago the sun reminded us that its getting close to solar maximum, after a week of almost daily flares, four coronal mass ejections were launched at Earth causing the first G4 Severe storm warning for 20 years to be issued, Auroras were visible across the whole of the UK on the 10th May with the storm actually reaching G5 levels. The K reached Level 9 as can be seen below causing radio blackouts.



## SO WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING ON THE 20M BAND IN RECENT WEEKS

As you may be aware I belong to an organisation called ROAR (Rotarians of Amateur Radio) and we have weekly meetings. The net controller Bill VK4ZD is located in Brisbane. Bill lives on a 5-acre plot of land, slightly out in the bush (to use an Aussie phrase) and has slowly built up an excellent station. Unlike me he has one major advantage whereas my wife thinks amateur radio is – well I cannot really say but she is not a supporter of the hobby, Bills wife is VK4DI which says it all.

Back to our nets. Communication between VK and G has been interesting. The SFI (solar flux index) which plays an important part in propagation over recent week has been excellent with the sunspots helping to get the figures really high on some days. This means that propagation between VK and G land should be good. However, and there has to be a however, two other factors appear on the horizon the K and A factor. Taking the uncomplicated way out for an explanation Mr Google tells me "The K factor measures the maximum fluctuations of horizontal magnetic components observed on a magnetometer at a specific geographic locations, compared to a "quiet day", during a three-hour interval and the A-index is a daily average level for geomagnetic activity." Now for a simpleton like me that's means the K and A factors need to be as low as possible. To summarise SFI up high and the A & K as low as possible. Then I can talk to Bill in VK land. Here it is again "however" the sun is known to have CMEs. Mr Google to the rescue again "Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) are large expulsions of plasma and magnetic field from the Sun's corona." These CME's have a major impact on propagation.

So as far as my weekly nets are concerned some days, I accuse Bill of sitting next to me trying to steal my coffee and the next time I cannot hear him as nature interferes. It is interesting how something we cannot see can have such an impact upon people. Radios, TV's, GPS's etc are all affected.

73's Nicholas G4HCK.



Air Cadets and Staff at Woolwich

## AIR CADETS GAIN FOUNDATION LICENCES

You may know that Nick and myself teach radio to the Air Cadets at a local squadron. We were asked to help the London region with assessments for the Air Cadet Foundation exam (similar to civilian version) as it required on air assessments. It was planned to be HF but conditions prevented that so it was carried out on 2M. My thanks to Paul GOLLE in Ilford who gave up some time so all 14 Cadets could make a contact. All 14 Cadets passed on the day.

Eddie G0BKL

**Don't forget the next meeting is on 4th June at the Bowls Club**