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The amateur radio community is diverse and draws together people who enjoy different aspects of this fascinating technical pastime. Its numbers have been boosted significantly in recent months as a result of the Society's 'Get on the air to care' (GOTA2C) campaign, including the introduction of remote invigilation exams. More than a thousand people have passed their Foundation licence and others have been inspired to return to amateur radio after seeing the high-profile coverage of 'Get on the air to care' in the national mainstream media.

All of this is good news and demonstrates that amateur radio is still very much relevant and of interest in our modern world. However, it also means that now, more than ever, the RSGB needs to provide the information, resources and support to enable people to take their next steps in amateur radio. So, what is the Society doing?

Tonight @ 8

These webinars cover a range of topics and are live-streamed, allowing you to watch the presentations and ask questions online. Topics so far have included: 'Raspberry Pi' by well-known expert **Mike Richards G4WNC**; 'Antennas for small gardens' by RSGB PSC Chair **Steve Nichols G0KYA**; and a very topical explanation of 'How to check for VDSL RFI' by RSGB Board Director and EMC Committee Chair, **John Rogers M0JAV**. The webinars have been watched by people across the world and have been well-received by both new and experienced amateurs, with requests for the initial series to be continued over the coming months:

www.rsgb.org/webinars

Mentoring new Foundation Licensees

With the Foundation exam practical waived until further notice and interaction with clubs restricted due to Covid-19 regulations, we're aware that the hundreds of people joining amateur radio via remote invigilation exams don't have access to the same local support as previously. We're setting up a group to provide advice and information to new Foundation licensees as well as those returning to amateur radio after a number of years, which will provide a safe environment in which they can ask

How the RSGB is helping Radio Amateurs to build their experience

Heather Parsons provides an update on the latest initiatives to help new and existing amateurs progress in the hobby.



questions without fear of being ridiculed – no question will be thought too basic or too obvious! As well as being a source of help from a small group of experienced mentors, we hope it will also be a way that these licensees can get to know other radio amateurs while restrictions are still in place.

Videos

The RSGB YouTube channel is a rich and varied source of information for radio amateurs. From RSGB Annual Convention presentations to taster videos about different aspects of amateur radio; vlogs and videos from events and campaigns like YOTA (Youngsters on the Air) events or 'Get on the air to care' to archive footage from amateur radio in past times, there is something for everyone.

Our videos received over 15,000 views last month alone and the Society regularly receives requests from amateur radio societies in other countries to dub our videos into their language. We're also planning some new short videos, so look out for those.

Awards

The RSGB offers a number of awards for radio amateurs with a range of experience. We also launched a new Youth Award recently that provides a way for young radio amateurs either to gain experience or discover different aspects of the hobby:

www.rsgb.org/awards



Beyond Exams (BE)

Beyond Exams is a group of resources brought together by the RSGB Learning Team with the aim of encouraging participation and highlighting the diversity of amateur radio. It was launched nationally at the end of April 2020 after a successful pilot of the Club Scheme in Region 13 at the end of 2019, led by RSGB Regional Representative **Mark Burrows 2E0SBM**.

Whether you are just starting out in amateur radio, returning after a break or are an experienced radio amateur looking for a new challenge, the Beyond Exams resources can help you learn about the latest technology or guide you through trying something for the first time:

- **Getting started:** from training and licensing, to setting up and operating your equipment for the first time, it's all covered in our step-by-step online guide
- **RadCom Basics:** a bi-monthly digital publication that explores key aspects of amateur radio in a straightforward and accessible way
- **BE Club Scheme:** this is a way to build experience with the help of your local club. As you go through the scheme and complete activities successfully, you will receive certificates to reward your progress
- **BE Individual Scheme:** building experience on your own, this scheme is all about personal development and higher-level awards as you complete activities and gain experience

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BE Club Scheme: Building Experience with the help of your Club

The Club Scheme is run through accredited clubs that help you to complete a series of 23 activities, based around five themes. They don't need to be done in order and you can dip your toe in and out as you want.

The themes are: 'Having a go' – using different modes and bands; 'Getting involved' – in other award schemes, contests and special event stations; 'Taking part' – in club activities; 'Making' – something for your shack; and 'Promoting amateur radio' – introduce possible newcomers to your local club.

As you complete activities, the club will provide Bronze (three activities), Silver (five activities), Gold (ten activities), Platinum (15 activities) and Diamond (23 activities) awards.

Each of the five categories has interesting tasks to try, which range from the simple to the more challenging. More experienced club members can give advice and it is a great way of sharing knowledge or trying something together – for example, why not try a kit as a club construction project as an activity within the 'Making' theme?

All RSGB-affiliated clubs are invited to become a BE Accredited Club as a benefit of affiliation. The registration process has been made as easy as possible and there is no charge.

The club needs to commit to delivering a varying programme of events and activities. It will also need to choose a Club Champion who can collate and monitor each participant's progress, give out certificates and be the contact for the BE team: www.rsgb.org/be-club-scheme

BE Individual Scheme: building experience independently

The RSGB Individual Scheme was designed to encourage further experimentation and exploration. It is primarily aimed at those already established in the hobby but it can also be used by groups of radio amateurs who prefer to work together and share their knowledge among friends, or even by clubs to add new structure to meetings and projects.

The Individual Scheme has 150 activities based around nine themes, but they are different from those in the Club Scheme. Some of these activities might be more involved or take a little longer to accomplish, but the emphasis is to always have fun.

The areas covered include general operating; using digital, image and satellite modes; collecting awards; contesting and radio sport (e.g. ARDF); non-contest activities; promoting amateur radio; making; tinkering and experimenting through to research.

One example of the Individual Scheme tasks is to operate Maritime Mobile – this can only be achieved by Full licensees, but to encourage a Foundation licence holder there is an option to operate from an inland waterway.

To achieve the latter, a small group could hire a boat on the local canal and have a day playing radio with the skipper's permission.

Awards (Basic through to Gold) are self-managed using a downloadable spreadsheet that automatically tracks achievements. There aren't any time limits

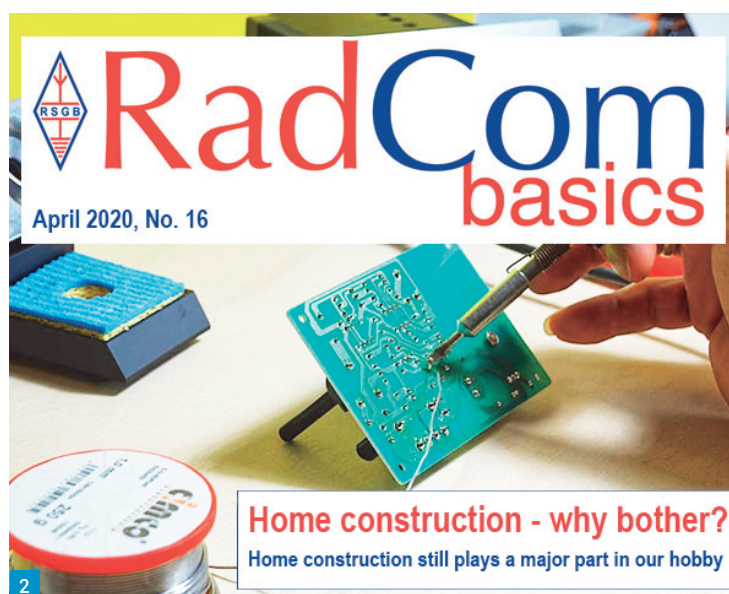


Fig. 1: A map showing the locations of clubs accredited for the Beyond Exams scheme.

Fig. 2: Front cover of the April RadCom Basics.

for the completion of the scheme and it is free of charge to take part:

www.rsgb.org/be-individual-scheme

The Society is grateful to **Derek Hughes G7LFC** for the current details of the Club Scheme and to **Alan Messenger G0TLK** for those in the Individual Scheme. Both have kindly given the schemes to the RSGB to use and develop over the coming months and years.

If you have any questions contact the RSGB Beyond Exams Coordinator **Chris Colclough G1VDP**:

be.coordinator@rsgb.org.uk

Fulfilling the Society's Strategy

This is just a taste of what the RSGB is doing to fulfil its strategic goal to have an active and thriving amateur radio community by 2022 – the end of its current five-year strategy. The Society's values and priorities include supporting and encouraging active participation in amateur radio as well as enabling people to enjoy learning about and using wireless communications.

All of the activities above support these values and priorities and we hope that, whether you're a new radio amateur, you're returning to it, or you're simply looking to try something new within this diverse pastime, there is something for you.

Our website holds more details about these and our other activities so take a look and discover something new...

www.rsgb.org

Read more radio news and reviews at www.radioenthusiast.co.uk/news