

G3YXX



I was allocated my ham call of G3YXX in 1969 at age 16, having been interested in electronics and radio from an early age.

Not having sight meant that reading textbooks and circuits was impossible, but family and friends helped a great deal.

A very significant help was that the school for the blind which I attended for my mainstream O- and A-level studies, had optional classes for coaching toward the theory exam which was passed by literally dozens of guys – including 1

other FOC member and former club president.

The school had its own station (donated by the Variety Club of Great Britain) consisting of an Eddystone 888A receiver, and KW Vanguard transmitter with a KW trap dipole at about 30 feet. The 4 licensed hams, who were attending the school at that time, used the equipment heavily!

My first equipment at home was a Heathkit DX100U transmitter, and RCA AR88D receiver which I bought as new in 1970 – it was still in its original packing.

I then migrated from that through a variety of transceivers starting with the National NCX5, a variety of Yaesu and Kenwood ones, and now to the Elecraft K3 and Quadra amplifier.

I keep my logs using DOS-based programs, Turbolog (originally written by another FOC member), and TRlog for contesting and special events. “Access” to the computer is through a simple piece of software which drives a Braille display – which shows half of one screen line at a time – with Turbolog and TR it focuses onto the current entry field.

I am not, however, a total dinosaur. The usual range of Microsoft products are used for my business and personal matters, using JAWS (Job Access With Speech) or Window Eyes for access (with both speech and Braille output), and I play a bit with Vinux – a version of Linux with an integral speech synthesizer output – I have a number of projects in view for this OS – when time permits!

For contesting, I am now in the process of migrating to N1MM log which is one of very few currently available windows-based programs useable with access technology.

My primary ham radio interests are CW rag chewing and DX-ing (there is nothing like the thrill of “busting a pile-up,) but I also dabble in some contests, and other special event stations such as Lighthouses on the Air (LOTA), and Titanic memorial events.

The photograph is of me operating GB2ELH from the Eshaness lighthouse (at the north end of the island of Shetland – 60.4 degrees north) in the August 2009 LOTA weekend, using TR on an old laptop PC and Braille display.