



INTERNATIONAL RADIO NETWORK NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

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Welcome

Welcome to the December edition of the International Radio Network newsletter.

I want to wish every member of the IRN a wonderful Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. Also, from myself and my wife, MM7HQS Helen Queen of Scotland, we send you all a huge 'Scottish squeeze' and thanks for being part of this amazing community over this last year.

The year 2025 has been amazing, with so many new members joining the IRN, older members returning to be on air again, and increasing participation and connections for our regular nets.



When we reflect on the last year, we also remember the sad loss of our friend Uncle Bob, KB1UPZ, who went silent key in March. Uncle Bob was part of the IRN from the beginning, many years ago, and took ownership of the Network in 2018. Without his leadership, the IRN might not have continued, so we are very thankful for everything he did, and our aim is always to make him proud of the IRN and how it continues to promote this fantastic hobby. We send lots of love to Auntie Barbara and all of Uncle Bob's family.

We are looking forward to another great New Year's Eve net, hopefully covering 24 hours this year for the first time. At the time of writing, the Net Schedule has just 2 more 1-hour slots to fill, and Netlogger duties still need to be completed. If you would like to help out with this year's NYE event, please email me direct at gm0uub@gmail.com and we can look at what opportunities are still available. All support is most welcome, and participating is a lot of fun as well.

We always welcome contributions to the **IRN Facebook page**. For this month, we would love to see pictures of Christmas decorations in your neighbourhood, silly jumpers and dogs with hats. Anything that shares colour and joy to celebrate this season would be very welcome indeed. If you are not already a member of the Facebook Group, then here is the link to join.....

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1245420475608672>

Of course, I must include a couple of pictures here of the Station Manager, Puppy Odin (now 7 months old) who is about to enjoy his first Christmas.



So far, Odin has not pulled the Christmas tree down, so that's a win straight away.

I think he knows he would be on the naughty list if he did. Certainly Helen's naughty list, after she spent hours decorating the tree!



This Christmas edition of our newsletter brings you delightful insights into how amateur radio and Christmas intertwine. Whether you're sharing festive cheer via radio waves or discovering the quirks of holiday-themed communications, there's something here for everyone!

Season's greetings and best wishes to you all

Graham M Matthews, GM0UUB

President, International Radio Network

RF Bells Ringing: The Connection Between Christmas and Amateur Radio

The Miracle at Brant Rock (Christmas Eve, 1906)

Every time you pick up a microphone to transmit voice (phone), you are echoing a Christmas miracle.

For years, radio meant sparks and Morse code. It was a series of dits and dahs, harsh and industrial. But on Christmas Eve, 1906, Reginald Fessenden changed the world from a station in Brant Rock, Massachusetts.

Shipboard operators in the Atlantic, wearing their heavy headsets and expecting the usual rhythmic static of Morse code weather reports, were suddenly stunned. They didn't hear buzzing; they heard a human voice. Fessenden read verses from the Gospel of Luke and then played "O Holy Night" on his violin.

It was the first AM radio broadcast of music and entertainment in history. The very first time the human voice rode the airwaves for entertainment, it was to herald Christmas. We, the ham radio community, are the direct descendants of that experiment.

The Santa Watch Net

Every year, Santa Claus makes his rounds, and many ham operators have taken it upon themselves to get in on the fun by establishing special contacts with Santa. It's a magical experience that not only delights the children but also brings the community together, and allows us all to experience and hear the excitement in the voices of the children speaking to Santa.

One event I want to highlight is the Santa Net, run by our friends on the DoDropIn Network (DDI). The Santa Watch Net is celebrating its 15th year, and starts at 2300 UTC on 24th December, and connections for DDI can be found at <https://dodropin.info/how-to-connect/>

Many other networks will connect for the special event, including the IRN, so please join in and enjoy this magical experience.

The "Christmas Morning Rig" Phenomenon

Ask any Greybeard or Old Timer how they got their start, and a significant percentage will tell you a story that takes place on December 25th.

For decades, the gateway drug to amateur radio was found wrapped under the tree. Whether it was a crystal radio kit in the 1950s, a pair of walkie-talkies in the 70s, or a Hallicrafters shortwave receiver, Christmas has traditionally been the recruitment drive for the next generation of hams.

That nostalgia is a powerful force. It drives the "boat anchor" restoration projects we see on workbenches during the holidays, and it fuels the excitement of the new Ham licensee unboxing their first handheld radio this year. The hobby is often a gift, literally and figuratively, passed down from an Elmer to a student during the holidays.

So, as you sit in the shack this holiday season, perhaps calling "CQ Christmas" or just listening to the static of the universe, remember that you are part of a tradition that goes back to the very first voice broadcast.

May your SWR be low, your batteries charged, and your holidays full of 5-9 reports.

73 and Merry Christmas from Graham GM0UUB, and all the Admins here at the International Radio Network





Mission

The International Radio Network's mission is to promote the amateur radio hobby to those interested in radio communications. We welcome licensed and non-licensed operators, giving those with an interest the opportunity to gain experience in radio communications, theory, technology and fellowship.

The International Radio Network has been in existence for many years and has a considerable number of licensed amateur radio operators from all around the world. We also welcome unlicensed radio enthusiasts and short wave listeners to our membership, many of which go on to achieve their own amateur radio license.

Membership and Getting Connected

If you are not already a member of the IRN, it is free and easy to do so. Just visit our website www.irn.radio and click on 'Register'. Follow the instructions and we will be delighted to include your Amateur Radio Callsign on our database, and if you are not licensed, we will provide you with an IRN Callsign/Number. Licensed members have full access to all our connections, and non-licensed members have access to the connections that have no RF links.

Importantly, to be 'trusted' on our Zello channels, or to be given 'talk permissions' on the Teamspeak platform, you must register using the above link on the website.

Purpose, Aims and Objectives

To provide a reliable radio Network for the use by licensed radio amateurs, offering a range of methods and modes of communication, including analogue and digital modes

To build partnerships and connections with other amateur radio Groups and Networks

To provide regular nets, special events and other activities that promote the use of the Network and for the benefit and enjoyment of its members and users

To welcome unlicensed members and provide them with support to learn about the amateur radio hobby, ham radio etiquette and encourage them to apply for their own amateur radio license

To provide unlicensed members with a reliable platform on which to communicate and experience ham radio practice, with NO RF connection

To ensure that the Network is a safe and family-friendly place at all times, and take quick action where that is threatened in any way

To experiment with new technologies and modes of amateur radio operating.

IRN Nets

Several of our nets are open to all operators, and may be heard on 'International Radio Network Channel' and 'ZMR 851.065' on Zello and the 'IRN QSO and Nets Channel' on TeamSpeak 3. They are:

IRN Sunday net – first and last Sunday of every month, 8:00pm Eastern, 1:00am Monday UK time, hosted by Barry 8WAR717. Watch Facebook for updates to the schedule.

Friendship net - every Monday, 5:00pm Eastern, 10:00pm UK time with regular Net Controller VE6DCV Dave.

Coffee net - every Wednesday, 5:00pm Eastern, 10:00pm UK time with regular Net Controller 11IRN610 Shorn.

The following net is accessible only to licensed operators, as it is a multimode net that connects to licensed only platforms and RF. We have a permanent connection with the Extended Freedom Network so you can also use any of their links to connect with the IRN

KB1 Multimode net - every Friday, 4:00pm Eastern, 9:00pm UK time with regular Net Controllers MM7HQS Helen, GM0UUB Graham and GW8SZL Dave.

For full details of the Nets and connections, please visit <https://www.irn.radio/nets>

IRN Administration Team

Graham M Matthews GM0UUB - President, Ralph Streb K8TCP, Doug Behl VE3XDB, Helen Matthews MM7HQS, Bruce Lenton M0UKB, Gareth Steele G0WUR, Dave Phillips GW8SZL, Gareth Jackson M6IGJ. Contact members of the admin team at <https://irn.radio/contact> or by email at irnhamradio@gmail.com.

Invitation for Contributions and Contact Information

We invite all members to add content to the Newsletters, to share personal stories, technical information, equipment reviews, radio-related jokes or fun-facts, other hobbies and interests, and anything else that would be of interest to our members. For example, personal stories about what got you into the radio hobby are always interesting. You can also email us with any questions, comments or ideas.

Contact us at <https://irn.radio/contact> or by email at irnhamradio@gmail.com.