

Brickworks relaunched for 2022



Brickworks is an exciting and fun way to build on what you've learned whilst studying on your Foundation course, to get you back into the hobby if you're returning after a break, or if you just want to explore new aspects of the hobby you've never thought about before – all in the supportive and friendly environment of a Brickworks Accredited Club. The scheme helps you build your confidence, expand your knowledge, gain a greater understanding of how to get the best out of different modes, your equipment and time, and enjoy new experiences.

Brickworks – Why the relaunch?

Brickworks was originally launched in early 2020 under the name of the Beyond Exams – with both a club and individual scheme available.

Beyond Exams is a whole suite of initiatives designed to enable participants to discover more of what the hobby has to offer using a variety of delivery platforms; live webinars (Tonight@8), videos (the RSGB YouTube channel), a specially produced beginner's e-magazine (*RadCom Basics*), an advanced exploration scheme (Individual Scheme) and the Beyond Exams Club Scheme. The effectiveness of each platform changed as a result of the pandemic and the various lockdowns that followed. The population turned to online resources for information and support as face-to-face meetings were reduced and, as a result, the webinars, videos, and e-magazine became the most used elements of Beyond Exams. Meanwhile the uptake of, and participation in, the Club Scheme slowed to almost nil as clubs were no longer able to meet in person.

As clubs started to spring back into life during the early part of 2022 we started to see a return to a 'new' normal. Clubs reopened but saw lower numbers attending. Also, recently licensed radio amateurs were observed on social media asking the sorts of questions that could be easily answered if they had the support of a local club. As a result, the RSGB is relaunching the Club Scheme to give it the chance it needs to succeed following the various pandemic shutdowns, to support the clubs, and to assist the large number of newly licensed radio amateurs that have been created over the last two years in a predominantly online environment.



Brickworks will help you gain a greater understanding of the amateur radio hobby.

During a review of the scheme, the team responsible for the relaunch concluded that it didn't need any tweaks to give it a boost at relaunch. However, they believed that changing its name back to Brickworks, its original development name, would give the scheme a modern, short, snappy, and memorable name that, together with its strap line, 'Building on the Foundation', symbolises exactly what the scheme was all about; providing the construction blocks (activities) that build up the participant's knowledge, understanding, experience and confidence, to produce a radio amateur that is ready for a lifetime of operating, sharing, and progressing.

Why take part in Brickworks?

At the RSGB we understand that taking the Foundation exam and obtaining your first licence is a giant step for many. The hobby is technical and has so many facets that it

frightens some people; especially when they have to make their first solo contact.

This will have become more of an issue throughout the period of the pandemic since that vital face-to-face support and encouragement has, through necessity, been missing. We want to relaunch Brickworks and provide a supportive and friendly environment for those new to the hobby with a framework of activities to ensure that you get a taste of as many different aspects of the hobby as possible. For those returning to the hobby, it has changed over the years with the emphasis moving towards digital communications as technology has developed – the hobby looks very different to ten, or twenty, years ago.

By signing up with a Brickworks Accredited Club you are joining a group that has committed to support you. They will deliver sessions on different aspects of the hobby that are aimed at your level and follow these up with a range of unique practical activities so that you can



Soldering/kit building is something on the Brickworks programme.



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experience them for yourself. Your fellow group members will support you all the way, providing advice and helping when things go a little awry (which they do from time-to-time). To reward you for all your hard work and accomplishments, the club will present you with several awards so that you can see your progress and be proud of your achievements.

Do not think that Brickworks is just for those new, or returning, to the hobby. Many of us have used the same modes and bands for many years, doing the same thing day in, day out. Maybe it's time for a change, or maybe something new intrigues you. Not everyone is great at making the change on their own, so Brickworks is for you too.

Brickworks is your personal support network and it's completely free to take part in, aside from the membership fee you may have to pay the hosting club.

If you're already happily with a club that is not Brickworks accredited, why not ask them to investigate registering. You can then be part of Brickworks and reap the benefits and rewards together.

How do you get involved?

We've got a new easy-to-remember address for our main web page at <https://rsgb.org/brickworks>. You can find links to all the relevant information from there.

To participate in the Brickworks scheme, simply visit the web page, read more about it and follow the link to the Brickworks Accredited Club Finder. From there you can contact your chosen club and they'll take it from there.

Beyond Exams continues

Brickworks is the re-launch and name-change for just one component of the Beyond Exams initiative. All other components continue unchanged, and you are encouraged to make as much use of them as possible, individually and within your club. Some of the Tonight @ 8 webinars serve as perfect companions to the Brickworks activities.

Beyond Exams can be found at www.rsgb.org/beyond-exams and consists of:

Tonight@8 – a series of live webinars designed

to introduce you to various aspects of the hobby. New webinars are planned and archived editions are available for viewing at your leisure.

RadCom Basics – a bi-monthly digital magazine that explores key aspects of amateur radio in a straightforward and accessible way.

Facebook Group – design for newly licensed radio amateurs, and those returning to the hobby, to be able to ask questions in a supportive and friendly environment that may be deemed too basic for other groups.

Foundation Practical Videos – a suite of videos that show how to set up your radio station, use an ATU, make your first contact, adjust your antenna for lowest VSWR and using other non-voice modes.

Useful Practical Skills Videos – an introduction to some of the most common constructional skills you will need including building a simple antenna, soldering a PL-259 plug to coaxial cable, using a NanoVNA to tune a dipole antenna, and more.

Individual Scheme – this is a more advanced version of Brickworks that encourages you to explore the hobby in more detail and develop new/enhance existing skills even further on your own, or together with a few friends.

Is your club Brickworks Accredited?

The RSGB will be promoting the Brickworks scheme to everyone that passes their Foundation exam, those that join the RSGB, with regular articles in *RadCom* and *RadCom Basics*, and at the rallies and events it attends. As a result of all this publicity, there will be people looking to take part in the scheme, many of whom might not be a member of a club yet.

The RSGB firmly believes that becoming Brickworks accredited will not only attract new members to your club, but also boost retention of newly licensed members. As your new members become more skilled and knowledgeable, it will translate into a desire for some to progress in the hobby and study towards obtaining their intermediate and advanced amateur radio licenses.

It's not difficult to become Brickworks accredited, all we ask is that clubs make a

commitment to help and encourage their membership to explore the hobby further and provide that all-important supportive and friendly environment in which to do it. It's a great opportunity to get your club active with talks, demonstrations and have your members doing something new together.

Administration of the scheme is minimal, requiring just the simple recording of what activities a member has completed and issuing awards as they progress. Do not worry about the name change if your club is already BE Club Scheme Accredited, you do not have to reapply to become a Brickworks Accredited Club; new Brickworks branded logos and certificates will be available to download from the website and you can carry on as normal.

Free promotion for your club

In return for all the effort your club puts into running Brickworks the RSGB will publicise your members' achievements on a regular basis using all of its publishing channels. Furthermore, they will publicise your club as a place to go for similar experiences. All your club has to do is tell us what you and your members have been up to under the umbrella of Brickworks and the RSGB will do the rest.

Register your club for Brickworks today

If you belong to an RSGB Affiliated Club that would like become Brickworks Accredited, log in to the RSGB website using your club's credentials and go to <https://www.rsgb.org/brickworks>. There you will find further information, a video explaining the scheme in more detail and the application form. Once completed, an RSGB Regional or District Representative will contact you and progress your accreditation with you.

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