



# SURREY RADIO CONTACT CLUB

87th Anniversary Year - Founded 1935

FEBRUARY 2022 – No 954

SRCC supports the RSGB Child Protection Policy

|                                   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
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| Club Website:                     | <a href="https://www.srcc.uk">https://www.srcc.uk</a>      |  |

MONTHLY MEETINGS NORMALLY ON 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> MONDAYS 7.30 FOR 7.45pm  
**Meetings at Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon CR9 7AT**

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**1<sup>st</sup> MEETING Monday 7 Feb: “Holidaying with radio in Ireland 2020 and 2021” by Pat G4FDN**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> MEETING Monday 21 Feb: Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat with John G8MNY**

## SRCC COMMITTEE 2021/22

|                                    |                     |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Chairman                           | Vacant              |               |
| Acting Chairman for February       | G3WRR Quin Collier  | 020 8653 6948 |
| Vice Chairman & BE Coordinator     | G3ZPB Peter Burton  | 01737 551413  |
| Hon. Secretary & Newsletter Editor | G3WRR Quin Collier  | 020 8653 6948 |
| Treasurer & Membership Records     | G4FFY Ray Howells   | 01732 357474  |
| Resources & Liaison                | G4DDY Maurice Fagg  | 020 8669 1480 |
| Events                             | G6JXA Kim Brown     | 07812 735507  |
| Fund Raising & Resources           | G4LZE Colin Lugard  | 07533 174388  |
| Publicity                          | G3MCX John Kennedy  | 020 8688 3322 |
| Committee Member                   | G7VAK Paul Beaumont | 07818 660493  |
| Webmaster (Co-opted)               | G4FYF Steve Jones   | 01424 584143  |

## EDITOR'S OPENER

Dear Members & Friends, welcome to the February 2022 issue of the SRCC Newsletter. I hope you are well and keeping COVID free.

It has been a busy month at Mission Control Norwood. A fair proportion of my time has been tied up with helping Gareth Simkins (the son of our late member and friend John G8IYS) prepare for the disposal of John's gear of which there is a substantial quantity! This initially involved identifying & cataloguing gear, testing it and preparing it for a Special Equipment Sale at Trinity at the January A meeting. As it turned out, because there was insufficient time to offer all the available items for sale, a further sale will be held at the March A meeting. Details of both events will be

given in the “Previous Meetings” and “Future Meetings” sections below. But as not all the items offered in January attracted interest and the same may be expected at the March sale, three tables have been booked at the exotically named “Hamzilla Radio Festival and Electronics Fair” at Sandwich in Kent on 13<sup>th</sup> March. Based on several years’ previous experience at the Kempton Park Rally (now sadly unlikely to run again) a much larger pool of attendees will mean that we should be able to sell a high proportion of items! Also to extend our “channels to market” (to use one of those dreadful terms I picked up during my working life), SRCC has opened an eBay account. This is already paying off, as we were able to sell for £60 a Redifon ATU (one of a number of items gifted to the club from the family of G4CCW SK) which had not proved saleable at a previous SES.

January was also the month when three of the eight Affiliated Societies Contests (AFSs) took place and a small number of SRCC members including myself took part in one or more. Details are included in a separate item below.

Finally – and this may surprise some members – I have started dabbling (in a minor way) in FT8!! On the principle that one should not form an opinion of anything unless you have tried it (although this principle shouldn’t really be applied to activities like armed robbery) I have had a bit of a play. It certainly proved easier to set up than (e.g.) RTTY (which had been my intended path into digital modes). So far I have only tried it on receive, preferring to listen first and see how things are done before making a fool of myself on transmit – which will no doubt follow... Based on about half an hour’s receive activity it feels like a bit of a passive activity (selecting the chosen band by a click then sitting back and watching the printout without any need to use the brain to decode) but maybe things will feel different when transmitting!

So, let’s get on to what you actually wanted to read....

**73, Quin G3WRR    Newsletter Editor**

## **PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The January A meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> was a Special Equipment Sale for John G8IYS’s gear. Around eleven members (plus those officiating) were present in person, with a further three joining by Zoom. Colin G4LZE and Quin G3WRR had transported the gear to Trinity (a total of 91 items of varying size, type and condition), Peter G3ZPB and Ray G4FFY managed the financials, Gareth G4XAT performed his inimitable auctioneer act (with occasional interventions from Quin G3WRR who provided additional details on some of the items). Lack of time meant that just under a quarter of the items were not presented for sale. Of the items that were presented 43% were “no bid” – probably inevitable with a fairly small pool of potential purchasers – but 41% were sold. Bids were received for a further 16% of items but did not reach an acceptable price. Colin and Quin drove home afterwards with cars quite a lot emptier than they had been on arrival.....

The January B meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> was the usual Fix It / Move It On session. This was attended by new member Ali whom we were pleased to meet, and whom Ray G4FFY assisted with how to drive a Yaesu VX6E handheld. David G0PAR and John G8MNY worked on trying to fault find a BNOS amplifier which David had purchased at the 10<sup>th</sup> January Sale: the changeover relay was found to be faulty and one of the PA devices was also believed to be suspect.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

The February A meeting (7<sup>th</sup>) will be a talk by Pat G4FDN entitled “Holidaying with radio in Ireland 2020 and 2021”. Pat describes its scope as “a family holiday with some amateur radio operation and not a trip whose main aim is amateur radio operation”. The picture on the right is presented as a taster...

### VIEW OF SCOTLAND'S KINTYRE PENINSULA FROM COUNTY ANTRIM (NORTHERN IRELAND)



The 21<sup>st</sup> February B meeting (and subsequent B meetings) will be the normal Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat session.

As stated above, the March A meeting (7<sup>th</sup>) will be a continuation of January's Special Equipment Sale. The intention is to offer all the remaining G8IYS gear for sale and use any remaining time to offer some of the outstanding SRCC stock – of which there is a substantial quantity!

The April A meeting (4<sup>th</sup>) will be the Annual General Meeting.

## 80/40m AFFILIATED SOCIETIES (AFS) CONTESTS by Quin G3WRR

The December 2021 Newsletter contained a reminder of the RSGB AFS series of contests. Three of these, all on 80m & 40m but using different modes, took place on consecutive weekends during January. All three had at least one SRCC member taking part. The results are summarised below:

| DATE    | MODE     | ENTRANT | SECTION | CONTACTS | INDIVIDUAL POSITION | CLUB POSITION |
|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------------------|---------------|
| 8/1/22  | CW       | G3SRC   | 400W    | 246      | 45 / 79             | 35 / 57       |
| 16/1/22 | RTTY/PSK | G3ZPB   | 100W    | 30       | 102 / 106           | 35 / 36       |
| 22/1/22 | SSB      | G3SRC   | 100W    | 122      | 72 / 158            | 35/65         |
|         |          | G4FFY   |         | 106      | 79 / 158            |               |
|         |          | G3ZPB   |         | 26       | 140 / 158           |               |

SRCC's current position in the AFS Super League (the summation of the results of the eight individual AFSs) with one session still to run is 19<sup>th</sup> out of 60 in the Local Club section. The remaining session is 70cm AFS on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February from 0900 – 1300 UTC. Entries by SRCC members will be welcome...

I took part in the CW and SSB sessions and also listened for part of the RTTY / PSK one: not having used RTTY since the days of “mechanical RTTY” using the likes of the Creed 54, it seemed sensible to listen to how things are done these electronic days before venturing on to transmit! For the CW event I was (after checking clear of COVID in a Lateral Flow Test) again kindly hosted by Peter Madagan G3RQZ whose QTH is in South Godstone. Peter has much bigger antenna than I have at WRR Towers - a trapped 80m/40m inverted V hanging off a 55ft tower at the edge of his semi-rural property . There is also a much lower noise floor there than in urban SE25. Having exchanged social chat with Peter and his wife Sally, the gear was set up without problems. On low power the SWR was perfectly usable (better than 1.6:1) on both bands. But on winding up the linear, at about 250W output the linear displayed a worrying “ARC FAULT” message. It was OK up to the full 400W on a dummy load so the fault was clearly in the antenna or feeder. Unfortunately it was raining very heavily: Peter was persuaded that as it was his site and his antenna, he was the one who should go out and investigate.... Two minutes later he came back in with the good news that it was just a connector in the feeder that was loose. So up with the power again and guess what? “ARC FAULT” says the linear. Out goes Peter again (wearing heavier rain protection this time....) and finally found the fault to be a corroded joint between lengths of normal thick coax and heliax. A pragmatic temporary solution was joining the 2 lengths of coax with a piece of choc block, which performed impeccably for the necessary four hours. And Peter seems to have avoided getting pneumonia, so it was a bit of a win-win. The contest itself went off quite well. With the improving sunspot cycle 40m proved to be more profitable for those of us in the south of England than for the last few years, during which the longer skip had meant that the GMs cleaned up. And 80m was its usual hectic self with less of a dip in the third hour than in recent years. The final result was 252 QSOs (although six of these were busted by the adjudicator) – from memory my best result ever in AFS.

The SSB event was less exciting – I went on from home. The small antenna and high electrical noise (S9 on the meter over most of the band and 10dB over in some parts) meant it was a bit of a struggle – and all S&P. Calling CQ was no go because of the risk of sitting on top of someone already on the frequency who was not audible under the noise and who would have asked me politely (or otherwise) to go elsewhere! 40m was again better than in recent years, leading to a total of 130 contacts. But with Peter G3ZPB and Ray G4FFY on as well, SRCC was able to put on a decent enough entry for the club at just below the half-way mark.

## **SRCC CLUB “BEYOND EXAMS” SCHEME**

Some of you may remember back in March last year we launched our Club section of the RSGB scheme known as "Beyond Exams". To date only 4 members have contacted me and taken any active part in the scheme. The Committee is therefore wondering whether this scheme has “run its course” in SRCC and maybe should discontinue further support? It’s up to the members – if I don’t hear any positive response by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, we will quietly discontinue the Club scheme.

**Peter, G3ZPB      SRCC Beyond Exams Coordinator**

## **SRCC LEAGUE TABLE – DECEMBER 2021**

The number of entries received for the December 2021 League Table was ten. Nine were the “usual suspects” and the tenth was a first (and last) entry of the year from Alun G4WGE who submitted an entry based on a single contact – his last contact of 2021, made at 1455 UTC on New Year’s Eve! A well-known strategic analyst has advised him that an alternative approach may

be needed if he wishes to win the League in 2022....

There was a major change round in monthly positions from November. M0CGF and G4FFY both move up one to take first and second places. G3ZPB moves up six places to third following a busier month radio-wise, followed by M0LEP who moves up two places to fourth. G3SRC takes fifth place, three up from November and G3EUE moves down two to sixth. Seventh place is taken by G3WRR who moves down six places followed by G4FYF who moves down one to eighth. G4WGE moves into the listing at ninth, followed by G4LZE in tenth place with a null entry.

| ENTRANT | WORKED DXCC / SQUARE | WORKED SRCC MEMBER | WORKED IN CONTEST | POINTS THIS MONTH |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| M0CGF   | 60                   | 1                  | 4                 | 126               |
| G4FFY   | 56                   | 0                  | 0                 | 112               |
| G3ZPB   | 23                   | 1                  | 7                 | 55                |
| M0LEP   | 13                   | 4                  | 0                 | 34                |
| G3SRC   | 11                   | 0                  | 11                | 33                |
| G3EUE   | 13                   | 0                  | 3                 | 29                |
| G3WRR   | 9                    | 0                  | 9                 | 27                |
| G4FYF   | 8                    | 1                  | 0                 | 18                |
| G4WGE   | 1                    | 0                  | 0                 | 2                 |
| G4LZE   | 0                    | 0                  | 0                 | 0                 |

92% of Ian's scoring contacts were made on HF, 47% being on 20m, followed by 39% on 40m and the rest evenly distributed across all the other HF bands with the exception of 160m. Just over two thirds used SSB and the rest FT8. Geographically, they included all continents except Antarctica: Europe predominated with 79% of contacts, followed by North America (4%), Africa and South America (3%), Asia (2%) and Oceania (1%). All his VHF contacts (8% of the total) were on 6m using SSB apart from one contact with OZ (Denmark) using MSK144 (better known as meteor scatter). He notes that he worked several VKs (Australia) from his car using a mag-mount from a location in Woldingham. He also spent time operating in a number of awards schemes, including WCA (English Castles Awards – see QSL card above) and WWFF (Worldwide Flora and Fauna in Amateur Radio), which sounds fascinating – see <https://wwff.co/>. Among several interesting countries, one that caught my eye (ouch...) was XT (Burkina Faso, formerly Upper Volta) – a rare one in today's post-colonial world.



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Ray's scoring contacts were all made using FT4 or FT8 (93% on FT8) and were all on the HF bands, covering all the HF bands except the 5MHz allocation. 20m provided the greatest percentage of contacts (41%), followed by 40m (22%) and 15m (14%), with the remaining 23% spread fairly evenly between 17m, 160m, 80m, 12m, 10m and 30m. His scoring contacts included all continents except Antarctica, 77% being with European stations, followed by Asia (9%), North America (5%), South America (4%), Africa (also 4%) and Oceania (2%). Interesting contacts included 5Z (Kenya), VK (Australia), LU (Argentina) and PY (Brazil). He notes that his score was lower than usual due to domestic commitments and a holiday trip to the USA.

Most of Peter's HF activity was on FT8, including VK6 (Western Australia) and NP3 (Puerto Rico). He also made a number of FT8 contacts on 2m, but most of his VHF activity took place in the

70cm UKAC using SSB.

Rick reports that the mild weather in December led him to spend a fair amount of time on outdoor tasks, including re-aligning his hexbeam following earlier gales. Nevertheless, he managed his best score for four months – largely from SOTA stations (including summits in the USA and Canada) and the SRCC 80m net. But he also admits to straying into FT8 territory on 30m, adding OD (Lebanon) and VK (Australia) to his monthly total.

The club call G3SRC (without the “X” this time) was used in the 2m AFS contest to make 41 SSB contacts, gaining an individual position of 55<sup>th</sup> out of 117 entries in the Single Operator Fixed section. Best DX was GD (Isle of Man) in IO74 at 431km.

No detailed information is available for Ted’s entry, but it’s a fair bet that it was all HF and all CW. He says that he will be taking part again next year, as the league provides a real incentive for him to turn the gear on, and also suggests a bonus of 1 point for every day the rig is switched on – this will be considered for 2023...

Quin’s scoring contacts were 10m CW only, made during the ARRL 10m contest. Contacts were mostly European but included LU (Argentina) and PY (Brazil).

Steve describes his December entry as his Yule Log. That is worthy of a joke from a Christmas cracker.....and hence much approved of by your scribe. Steve notes that “escalating domestic stress and tension w.r.t. decoration, implementation and increasing numbers of our progeny inviting themselves for Xmas Day” had an impact on “radio playing” - but on the upside the family had a very good Christmas.

As stated above, Alun’s entry was the tokenest (is that a real word?) of token entries – but is welcome anyway. Hopefully this is a sign of him geeing himself up for a major effort in next year’s table?

Moving on to December’s cumulative results (which are also the whole year results), congratulations go to the overall leader and winner of the SRCC Club Cup, Ian M0CFG in his first full year as a League Table participant. In second place is last year’s winner Ray G4FFY and in third Colin G4LZE who was second in 2020. Unlike last year, when the leader’s score was only 0.4% above that of the second placed entrant, the 2021 win was much more decisive with Ian’s score being 15% above Ray’s. It is also interesting to note that this year’s winning score was an enormous 79% higher than last year’s. And this trend is reflected in the total scores for all entrants in 2021 compared with 2020 – although the percentage increase was lower (54%), it is telling a similar story. It is not immediately clear why this should be, as there were no significant changes to the rules and conditions did not seem sufficiently different between 2020 and most of 2021 to account for the difference. Perhaps the close competition for the winning position in 2020 led entrants to try harder in 2021, or could it be to do with COVID and lockdown? Somehow that doesn’t feel quite right – so if you have any ideas, please share them!

Another fact that jumps out from the annual tabulation is the enormous gap between the top three entrants and the rest – the score of the lowest of the top three was all but three times that of the “best of the rest”. Again, this shows the benefits of FT8 – but for some of us the concerns about de-skilling remain...

| ENTRANT  | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | TOT  |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| M0CGF    | 310 | 281 | 313 | 220 | 616 | 473 | 441 | 223 | 150 | 239 | 152 | 126 | 3544 |
| G4FFY    | 211 | 215 | 252 | 224 | 535 | 405 | 431 | 122 | 193 | 242 | 151 | 112 | 3093 |
| G4LZE    | 179 | 177 | 239 | 180 | 592 | 319 | 217 | 0   | 110 | 127 | 104 | 0   | 2244 |
| G3WRR    | 21  | 66  | 62  | 33  | 156 | 167 | 33  | 0   | 6   | 39  | 165 | 27  | 775  |
| G3EUE    | 15  | 60  | 80  | 97  | 140 | 63  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 30  | 131 | 29  | 645  |
| G4FYF    | 40  | 36  | 36  | 28  | 40  | 43  | 40  | 44  | 40  | 83  | 20  | 18  | 467  |
| G3ZPB    | 20  | 136 | 77  | 74  | 51  | 0   | 0   | 18  | 0   | 0   | 4   | 55  | 435  |
| M0LEP    | 22  | 14  | 12  | 18  | 24  | 22  | 10  | 44  | 16  | 24  | 22  | 34  | 262  |
| G(X)3SRC | 48  | 21  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 57  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 9   | 33  | 168  |
| G4WGE    | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 2    |

To existing and potential future entrants for the 2022 League Table, please make sure you are familiar with the rules which are on the SRCC website at <https://www.srcc.uk/league-table-notes/> You may also wish to note that in addition to RSGB / ARRL / CQ / PW contests, it has now been agreed that contests organised by the UKSMG (UK Six Metre Group) can score for the contest bonus – at the time of writing this addition has not found its way onto the website but will go on it in the near future.

So, what can we say about the 2022 League Table? Having just revisited my observations at the end of the 2020 season, I said “...it’s time to just sit back and see what happens [with the ionosphere]...”. That of course is exactly what I didn’t do – looking at the month-on-month comments I seem to have been getting increasingly manic about the inability of cycle 25 to get started properly. Well, at last things do seem to be improving. Comparing today’s solar flux index (SFI) – 114 - with that on this date a year ago – 75 – it’s clear that something is finally happening. Obviously, a single one-on-one comparison is of very limited value (on the “one swallow doesn’t make a summer” principle) and for real significance we need to produce a smoothed average to take out the current large swings in day-to-day value. Such a chart is available on VE3EN’s excellent SolarHam website. This includes (at <https://www.solarham.net/progression.htm>) a graph of SFI against date, the predicted, raw monthly and smoothed SFI suggesting that things at last look promising – but we shall see... Hope to see you in next year’s League Table!

### 73, Quin G3WRR SRCC Leaguemeister

## HERE AND THERE

The VE3EN SolarHam website was mentioned above and is available at <https://www.solarham.net/>. If you are at all interested in what the sun is doing – and the information contained goes far beyond its impact on radio propagation – it really is worth a look. Personally it is the second thing I look at it every morning after starting my computer. (The first is the Dilbert cartoon strip which is always humorous - particularly for those who have experience of working in a hierarchical office environment... we’ve all met the “pointy haired boss”...) and sets me up for the day. It too is worth a look - see <https://dilbert.com/> .

A couple of interesting snippets as usual from Mike M1CCF. Firstly, from the US Marine Safety Information Bulletin:

*"The U.S. Coast Guard Communications Command (COMMCOM), which operates HF radio stations, has seen the steady decline of voice distress calls over the last two decades, and except for Alaska has not received a voice distress call within its area of responsibility in the last seven years.*

*On December 31st 2019, the Coast Guard Communications Detachment Kodiak received the F/V Scandies Rose distress call on 4125 kHz. For reasons such as this, the Coast Guard will continue existing HF voice distress watchkeeping in Alaska on three frequencies: 4125 kHz, 6215 kHz and 8291 kHz. Distress watchkeeping from Guam, currently on 6215 kHz from 0900-2100 UTC, and 12,290 from 2100-0900 UTC, will also continue."*

A couple of things come to mind:

- it is interesting to speculate whether the decrease in distress calls is due to general improvements in maritime safety or the greater use of automated digital systems: Mike's second snippet below suggests the latter is involved
- Peter G3RQZ (referred to in the AFS item above) was earlier in his life a shipboard radio operator – I guess that is one occupation which, like hand-loom weaving in the nineteenth century, is dying or already dead as a results in the advance of technology – no "social comment" there – just interesting.

Mike has also picked up the following (not sure of the original source, but thanks to them anyway) is as follows:

- *DSC means Digital Selective Call. Every ship has a number, called MMSI, this is something like a telephone number. For ships it looks like 211 213 540, where the first three digits are the country identifier (211 is Germany). On board there is something called DCS controller (meanwhile mostly integrated in VHF- and MF-/HF-Radios). So you can dial the MMSI and if received by your called partner his radio rings like a telephone.*
- *But the more interesting part is the distress function which can be sent by pressing a distress button. If there is time enough you can specify the kind of emergency like man overboard or fire on board with a menu. The signal is something like 100Bd FSK and you can listen on the calling frequencies 2187,5 kHz, 4207,5 kHz, 6312,0 kHz, 8414,5 kHz, 12577,0 kHz and 16804,5 kHz. There is always a corresponding voice frequency which is usually sent by DSC also and either appears in the display of the receiving radio or does set the frequency by remote (depending on the radio). On VHF the DSC frequency is channel 70, the corresponding voice frequency is channel 16 (at least in Europe).*

## SRCC NETS

The following is a list of structured nets on which members of SRCC meet regularly. They are sometimes joined by members of other local clubs, who are always made most welcome. The net is not usually led by a nominated controller, but stations normally transmit cyclically in the chronological order in which they sign in. If any member wishes further occasions and frequencies to be added to the table, please let me know at [q.g.collier@btinternet.com](mailto:q.g.collier@btinternet.com).

| <b>BAND/FREQUENCY/MODE</b>        | <b>DAY OF WEEK</b> | <b>START (clock time)</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 160m / 1905 kHz / LSB             | Sunday             | 9.30 am                   |
| 80m / 3710 kHz (+/- QRM) LSB      | Monday             | 9.00 am                   |
| 10m / 28.078 MHz / JS8            | Wednesday          | 10.00 am                  |
| 4m / 70.30 MHz / FM               | Thursday           | 8.00 pm                   |
| 6m / 51.55 MHz / FM               | Tuesday            | 8.00 pm                   |
| 2m / 144.6125 MHz / Digital Modes | Friday             | 7.30 pm                   |
| 2m / 145.35 MHz / FM              | Friday             | 8.00 pm                   |



In addition to the regular Club Nets, several members monitor the local repeater channels, particularly GB3XP (145.6875MHz 82.5Hz CTCSS FM)

## **THAT'S ALL FOLKS.....**

One item that will be included next month is from Paul G7VAK, dealing with loop antennas and number stations. This has been on file for some months, but it has been stood over until after Paul's lecture last December to provide a bit of context about number stations. It will be worth waiting for!

**73 Quin G3WRR**