



SURREY RADIO CONTACT CLUB

JULY 2024 – No 983

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MONTHLY MEETINGS NORMALLY ON 1ST AND 3RD MONDAYS 7.30 FOR 7.45pm
**Meetings at St. Paul's United Reformed Church, Croham Park Avenue,
 Croydon CR2 7HF**

1st MEETING Monday 1st July: Construction Contest
2nd MEETING Monday 15th July: Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat with John G8MNY

SRCC COMMITTEE 2024/25

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EDITOR'S OPENER

Dear Members & Friends, welcome to the July SRCC Newsletter.

Life has, once again, been seriously brisk at WRR Towers with two upcoming high priority events in July needing attention.

The first event in question is VHF NFD, in which SRCC participates as part of North-East Surrey Contest Group, on 6th/7th July – more information on that later. The second is the Islands On The Air (IOTA) Contest towards the end of the month. Strictly this isn't an SRCC event, although two of the three active participants, Alun G4WGE and Quin G3WRR, are among its members. The third member of the triumvirate, Mike G3VYI, will be trying pastures new and will be going to the island of Yell in the Shetland Islands! That is a seriously long and expensive journey (overnight train, 12-hour ferry trip and second (shorter) ferry **or** a horrifically expensive flight and only one ferry – take your pick): but as Mike is combining the contest with a holiday the overheads are supportable. Why Shetland? Firstly, I believe Mike's wife Hilary visited there on holiday with her parents as a child, and secondly Shetland counts as an island for IOTA purposes which makes it a kind of QSO magnet. Alun and I had been invited to join them for the contest, but on its own it wasn't really realistic to do four days travelling for 24 hours of contest! So it's back to Brighstone on the Isle of

Wight for Alun and self – only one ferry each way, but with the dubious reputation (I've seen this stated in several places) that it bears the highest cost per mile of any ferry in the world.....

I shall be glad to get back from those two and take my usual 10 days in Devon (near Exmouth) with my son and elder granddaughter in early August.

So, on we go...

73, Quin G3WRR

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

June A meeting (3rd) nanoVNAs by Quin G3WRR. This was not a technical exposé of how these work – rather a demonstration of some of the things that they can do (e.g. SWR and cable loss). NanoVNAs provide a remarkable level of functionality but as with all modern electronic gear that provide high functionality in a small box (modern HF/VHF rigs are a classic example), learning to drive them is rarely straightforward, and it is hoped that the presentation gave nanoVNA “virgins” enough to get them onto the learning curve!

June B meeting (17th) This followed the current Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat format.

FUTURE MEETINGS

July A meeting (1st) This will be the Construction Contest. This has traditionally been a feature of the SRCC annual programme, but somehow fell by the wayside in 2023. Just to clarify, this is a very different thing from the Construction *Project*, in which club members build useful items, typically smallish items of test gear, using parts usually bulk sourced within the club. The aim of the Construction *Contest* is on some ways the opposite. It encourages individuality by allowing members to bring along items they have built which they are pleased with, and feel may be of interest to others. These can be either fully home built or kits – anything you like really - and contributors are encouraged to give a brief description of the item and its background. Entries don't have to have been made in the preceding year – anything goes provided it hasn't previously won a prize. Construction to a high standard is certainly not mandatory: although it is a factor, that is just one of a number along with items such as functionality, ease of use and originality. After the display, attendees are given the opportunity to vote for their favourites: and there will be prizes...trophies for the first and second positions as well as small financial prizes (very small, according to our Treasurer...) for the leading three entries. So why not come along and vote? After all, that will give you practice for another voting spree four days later....

July B meeting (15th) This will follow the current Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat format.

August A meeting (5th) August is a difficult month to arrange meetings for, as it is the peak of the holiday season: we will be holding an “On The Air” night as we did at last August's meeting – which incidentally was the first meeting held at the United Reformed Church.

August B meeting (19th) This will follow the current Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat format.

73, Quin G3WRR

HF NFD 2024

This was not actually an SRCC event, but as it involved two SRCC members (Alun G4WGE and Quin G3WRR) and another former Purley resident John G4CZB it is being recorded here! For approaching the tenth consecutive year (COVID excluded) Alun and I drove up to Northampton in an aged and well laden Volvo estate. Why Northampton? Because John who lives near there has access to a suitable HF site nearby courtesy of Northampton Radio Club.

NFD was, along with BERU, one of the first RSGB contest going back to 1933 and although things have changed in many, many ways the original ethos of working stations on CW in the HF bands under portable conditions remains. We entered as G3WRR/P, branding ourselves as “Flying Ducks Contest Group” (Alun will tell you why...) in the Low Power Unassisted Portable Section (formerly called the Restricted Section). This involves portable operation using a single transceiver with a maximum power output of 100W to single antenna at a maximum height of 15m – and no online support such as Reverse Beacon Network or DX Cluster.

The most challenging aspect is always getting a single antenna to provide a usable SWR, radiate in desirable directions and work effectively, on all the six pre-WARC bands between 160m & 10m. We used an Elecraft K3 transceiver (still the most numerous rig this year, despite the design being well over 10 years old now) to a 160m doublet fed with open wire feeder via an auto ATU. As auto ATUs are designed for use with unbalanced antennas, it is necessary to put a balun on the input side and “float” the entire ATU above earth by choking off the DC feed. We think we have finally got this right (except on 160m, but that’s another story...). Conditions were not as good as hoped at this stage of the sunspot cycle, but we did get some good sporadic E on 10m – with classic sporadic E characteristics of mid-distance stations thundering in when they called and then coming back very much weaker (or not there at all) with our report.

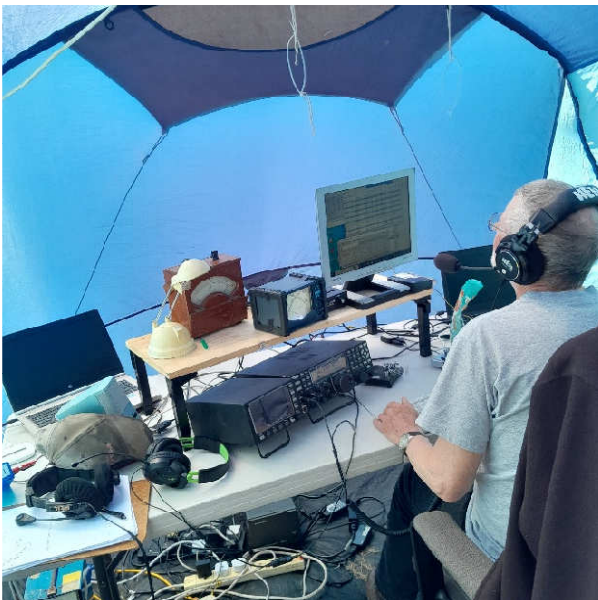
We ended up making 1081 contacts with 55 different DXCCs which gave us a position of seventh out of 14 entrants in the section: this was a tad disappointing as although our number of contacts was well up, our score was less so. This is probably because we were a bit down on DXCCs worked compared with other entrants (DXCCs being used as a points multiplier in this event). Perhaps we’ll get it right next year.... but anyway, the weather was good and the weekend enjoyable! A couple of pictures follow:



WELL LOADED NFD TRANSPORT (no car keys lost this year...)



2 x 45ft MASTS SUPPORTING 160m DOUBLET ANTENNA



G4CZB OPERATING THE STATION

VHF NFD 2024

As stated above (and also as mentioned in a recent e-mail on its e-mailing list) SRCC will again be taking part in VHF National Field Day (VHF NFD) as part of North-East Surrey Contest Group (NESCG) together with members from CATS and others with no specific club affiliation. The date this year is 6th/7th July although we expect to be on site from the afternoon of July 5th for setting up. We will (subject to formal confirmation from Nick Fuller the farmer) again be operating from Warren Barn Farm, probably from a field on the right-hand side (going out from Warlingham) of the B269 Croydon Road / Limpsfield Road. However, it is possible that Nick will be asking us to use a slightly different part of the farm this year so please look out for further e-mail messages.

We are expecting to be operating on 6m / 4m / 2m / 70cm and possibly 23cm. We appear to be OK for equipment, tents, mastage, antennas etc. but are likely to be short of people as we are two

of the “usual suspects” down this year. So, if you are interested in coming along to help set up / just say hello and have a cup of tea (we can stretch that to coffee if pushed...) / possibly operate, we'd be glad to see you! If you haven't been before and need more info, just contact me by any of the means shown on the Newsletter or website.

73, Quin G3WRR

JUST ANOTHER 7-BAND SUNDAE...by GARETH G4XAT

After my 2002 expedition I was keen to go back to Walbury Hill for this year's IARU DATV contest, so after booking the site I made plans. 'Mr Whippy' is now 41 years old, and we have registered it as 'historic', rendering it 'tax free' and ironically OK to drive in the London ULEZ! It needed some TLC after being laid up for nearly 2 years so new petrol feed pipe between the tank and metal pipe was needed along with front brake wheel cylinders all sourced and fitted along with some contact-cleaning to restore the indicators functionality – always useful....

With transport and venue sorted it was on to sorting what gear to take. Gaps in the gain provision have been plugged since 2022 and a total of 8 boxes and a large dual-band (9 & 6 cm) transverter were loaded into the camper along with three tripods, 3 beams, 3 dishes and other useful bits like a small generator and my trusty Fogstar LiFePO4 battery - 43.5 A/Hr used for the weekend, less than half the available capacity.

I departed 1pm on Friday afternoon, arriving after a congested journey (M25 on a Friday afternoon) around 4pm. Having used the site before I knew what to expect and had the main mast assembled and up by around 6pm. A reach into the 'might come in useful' store had produced a perfect size 1m long piece of Tufnol ex-military mast section that fitted into the top of my aluminium mast, hopefully leaving the beam radiation pattern as the designers predicted. The talkback this year was provided by a lightweight 'fishing pole' based 12 Element ZL special for horizontal and my usual full-wave dipole for 2m, a dual band mobile whip was added for 70cms on a mag-mount. The bench in the camper was populated with my FT857 talk-back, antennas selection switch (2H, 2V and 70cms), my main station Portsdown 4 and PAs for 70, 23 and 13. On air tests followed by accessing GB3JV firstly on 70cms (150 watts, 14 element) and then on 23cm with just 5W (37 element). Justin popped up on 2m talk-back and we switched to horizontal where signals well in excess of 5/9+40 were received. I don't think he needed the linear.... GB3SQ was also accessed by swinging the beam around towards the south-west. Saturday dawned grey with a threat of drizzle but soon dried up, allowing the microwave bands to be sorted out. Various placements of the different bands were tried in an attempt to cover all bearings needed without major movement. 3.4GHz benefitting this year from an ex-Meteosat 95cm dish and coffee-tin feed, giving +10dB on the previous flat-plate antenna. 5.7GHz and 10GHz were using a new lightweight 78cm offset dish acquired from a neighbour with 24GHz benefitting from a dedicated Andrew 30cm dish with a precision commercial transition. Saturday highlights were microwave contacts on 6, 3, and 1.2cm with Dave G4FRE from two locations and on 70cms working David G0YDH/P up in Shropshire and then Rob on the N Yorks moors at my best DX of 335km. Rob had to wait for Sunday morning to complete the contact, but it was a successful 2-way. The microwave bands were busy on Sunday with Noel G8GTZ/P roaming to three sites, Dave G8GKQ/P (who I completed with on 7 bands!) and Dave G4FRE/P just across the hill at Coombe Gibbet. Not surprisingly I did not need to swing the dishes towards him! Things had pretty much finished by mid-Sunday afternoon but before I took the station down, I managed a 2-way with Justin G8YTZ on 70cms. 23cms did not oblige so I began to take down and pack away. I cleared the site at 5:30 pm and had a much easier journey home, just a shade over 2 hours. Mr Whippy cruises quite

happily on the motorway between 55 and 60 but is hard work around town as ‘back in the day’ power steering was an option!

Other than being very tired I counted the weekend a success, only forgetting the RX filters for 23cm, something that probably lost me a contact with Mike G8LES. Received at MER27, but it would just not decode the video. Nice, filtered preamps for 23 and 13 are needed for next year. I took my lightweight portable rotator and tried it out. 3 UHF beams were probably a bit much for it – designed really for lighter ‘fishing pole’ based beams. So, a more rugged design for next year as the wind was capable of re-aligning the array as fast as I set it. I took and used all three Portsdown 4s and they performed as expected without trouble all weekend. I was also able to quickly check my 10GHz gear on the Greenham Common beacon (off the scale!) using the resident Langstone software. Such handy kit, why would anyone want an IC705? ;-)

73, Gareth G4XAT



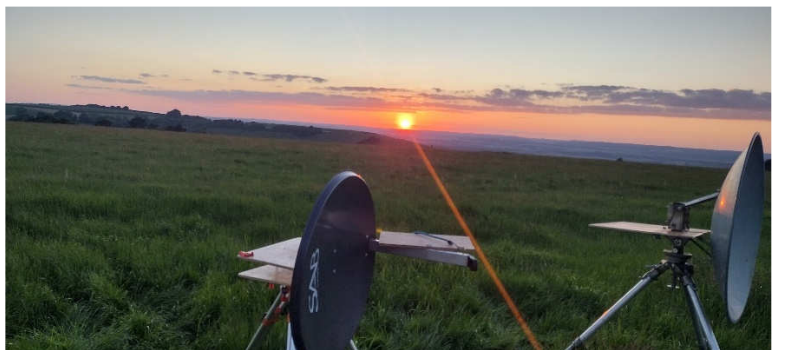
MR WHIPPY (2)



MR. WHIPPY (1)



10GHz_5 & DIGITAL



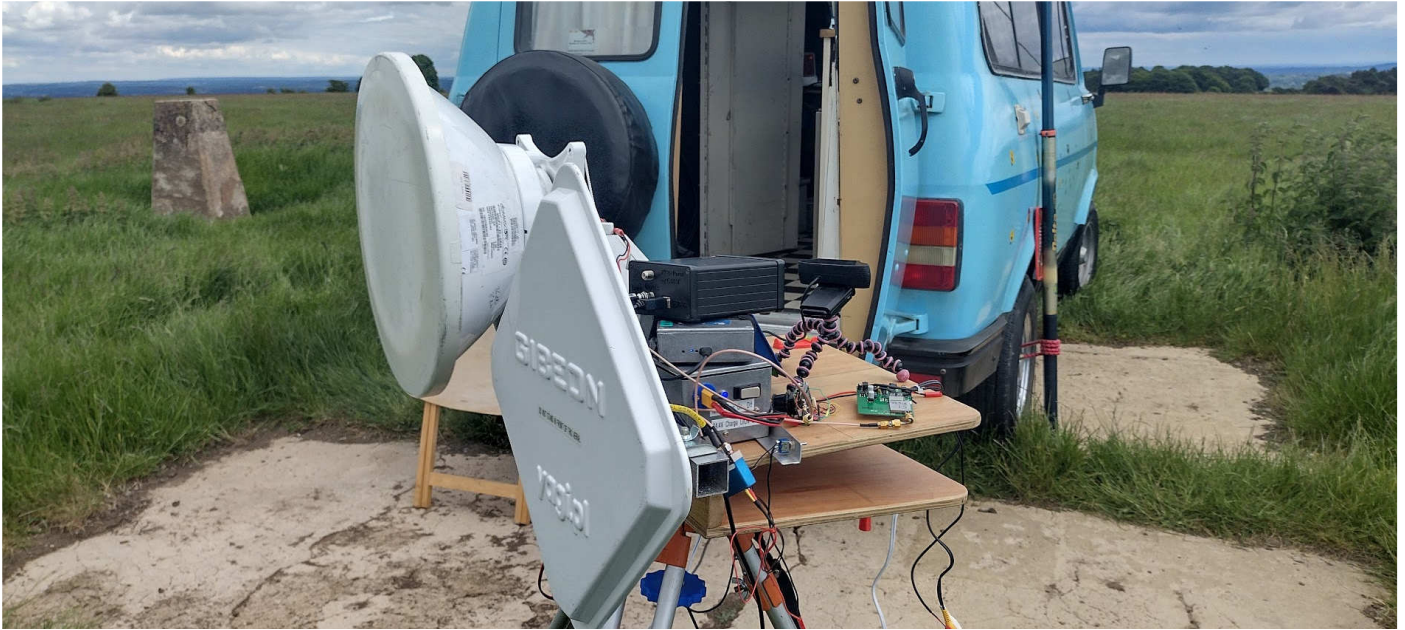
WHIPPY_ SUNBEAM



3.4GHz METEOSAT



70 / 23 / 13 cm



24GHz_5. FM



PACKED TO GO

HERE AND THERE

Last month's Newsletter promised some pictures from Ray G4FFY. As some readers (and certainly one writer) may be maxed out on pictures at the moment, these will be stood over until the August issue (sorry Ray).

73, Quin G3WRR

SRCC LEAGUE TABLE – MAY 2024

Four entries were received for the May League Table, the same number as in April – but not all the same four! The month’s results are as shown below:

ENTRANT	WORKED DXCC / SQUARE	WORKED SRCC MEMBER	WORKED IN CONTEST	POINTS THIS MONTH
G4FFY	64		29	157
G3WRR	15		15	45
G4FYF	14	1		30
M0LEP	10	1		22

The following notes come from the entrants...

G4FFY: *Missed the 2m & 70cm UKACs but did enter the 70cm FT8 as well as the May HF FT4 Contest. Was able to operate during some of the 6m Sporadic-E season boosting my score which otherwise would have been lower!! More in June....*

G4FYF: *Serious surgery required to my G5RV led to a week out of action. Action on 40, 20 and a few on 10 meters. Gibraltar was nice, not rare but unusually encountered here.*

M0LEP: *May was not a particularly good month for radio. Other things kept getting in the way, and then my old iMac released its magic smoke at the end of the month. As usual, almost all was SOTA chasing, quite a bit on 10 metres, and with a fair mix of SSB and CW.*

G3WRR: *All contacts made in CQ WPX CW contest (to get a bit of practice in for CW FD...)*

The cumulative scores are shown below. Ray G4FFY and Rick M0LEP retain first and sixth places: Steve G4FYF and Ian M0CGF exchange second and third places, and Quin G3WRR and the late Peter G3ZPB swap fourth and fifth places. Sadly, Peter can only go downwards in the annual listings, but he will remain in the list for the rest of the current League year.

ENTRANT	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
G4FFY	114	223	89	123	157								706
G4FYF	28	40	68	38	30								204
M0CGF			100	86									186
G3WRR	63	18	42		45								168
G3ZPB	69	83											152
M0LEP	14	22	20	46	22								124

There is little to add to recent monthly reports, with the SFI continuing to be volatile on a day-by-day basis resulting in variable conditions on the upper HF bands, which are further influenced by the volatility of the A & K indices. But isn't it that variability itself what makes the hobby interesting?

73, Quin G3WRR SRCC Leaguemeister

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.

BAND/FREQUENCY/MODE	DAY OF WEEK	START TIME (clock)
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
6m / 51.55 MHz / FM	Tuesday	8.00 pm
4m / 70.30 MHz / FM	Thursday	8.00 pm
2m / 144.6125 MHz / Digital Voice	Friday	7.30 pm
2m / 145.35 MHz / FM	Friday	8.00 pm

* The Friday night Digital Voice net usually starts with D-star.
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.....

Thanks for the inputs. As you will have noted, there has been rather a surfeit of contest related items this month. As a not particularly contest oriented club, this may not sit well with all the SRCC membership. Your scribe is very happy to accept items on any topic of your choice!

See you next month.

73, Quin G3WRR
Secretary and Newsletter Editor