



SURREY RADIO CONTACT CLUB

SEPTEMBER 2024 – No. 985

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Club Website:	https://www.srcc.uk	

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 2nd September: Introduction to VarAC by Ray G4FFY
2nd MEETING Monday 16th September: 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 September 2024 SRCC Newsletter.

I am pleased to say that for me the manic months of June and July are over and that with the arrival of August I had the usual relaxing ten days of holiday with my son and elder granddaughter in Exmouth, followed by four days (family stuff rather than holiday) in Nottingham with my daughter and younger granddaughter. The second half of the month was relatively easy, and it was possible to catch up with some outstanding tasks including gardening. I must admit that there would be advantages in a garden that was 2 ft wide and 550 ft long rather than 22ft wide and 50ft long. It would have the same area, but much less gardening would be involved and it would be possible to get a serious long wire up: but I suspect the council, to say nothing of the neighbours, would not be keen to support this – so it seems that current arrangements must persist!

As we move into September, I will be going up to Mablethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast with daughter and granddaughter for a week mid-month. We did the same last year, and I came to realise how true the old holiday chestnut "Skegness – it's so bracing" is. I'm sure it will be enjoyable! But enough from me - now on to some interesting stuff....

Fake News in SRCC Newsletter! Alun G4WGE has contacted me to say that the information in the last Newsletter about the equipment used on 2m for VHF NFD was incorrect. He advises that the rig used was a Yaesu FT736R running 25W. Mea culpa....

Phil Mead will be taking the Foundation Licence course and licence exam at the Bromley Club shortly. I'm sure we all wish him the best of luck and hope to hear him on the bands with a new M7 callsign soon.

73, Quin G3WRR.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

August A meeting (5th) "On air" evening. John G8MNY put up an antenna with the aid of a catapult and a number of QSOs were made on 40m using John's aged but trusty IC735. Much of the operating was done by Kim G6JXA assisted by Pat G4FDN.

August B meeting (19th) This followed the current Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat format. In addition to use of John G8MNY's test gear, Jason G7RUX showed his Icom IC705. This is a portable (although not quite handheld) 5W/10W rig with very wide receiver capability and transmit capability on all the amateur bands between 160m and 70cm (except 4m) and supporting a wide range of modes including DSTAR.

FUTURE MEETINGS

September A meeting (2nd) This will be "An introduction to VarAC" by Ray G4FFY. VarAC is a free, modern HF P2P real-time chatting application for the amateur radio operator that leverages the glorious VARA protocol. Ray will be giving a brief introduction to VarAC based on the May 2023 RadCom article by Mike Richard G4WNC. He will cover what it is, installing the software components, configuration and operation. If time allows, he may also attempt a live demonstration. This website gives more details: <https://www.varac-hamradio.com/>.

September B meeting (16th) In addition to the usual Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat format, it is intended that Ray G4FFY will put on an FT4 station in the RSGB FT4 contest which takes place that evening. It is hoped that this will allow members (a) who have had no experience of modern digital modes to see one in use, and / or (b) are without previous contest experience to see why some of us are so attached to the competitive side of the hobby!

October A meeting (7th) Surplus Equipment Sale. Your twice-yearly opportunity to acquire items of previously used (and hopefully still working) equipment – and/or the opportunity to pass on to others, items that you acquired at the March sale....

GX3WIM: WIMBLEDON & DISTRICT ARS SUMMER CAMP 2024 - John G8MNY

A lot of my kit needed a good check over before carefully packing my 27-year-old van with the 1.3 tons of kit for the 9-day event. I got there at 08:00 on the Saturday as usual, but I went via Banstead as my Coulsdon route was being resurfaced. This time we were in the South Cow field. Lee M7THX, Andrew G4ADM, and Chris G0KPU had arrived Friday.

So, I sized up the exact parking spot needed, by laying out the 80m dipole and mast rotator cable, then levelled up the van in position. Put up the side tent just as a escape from the hot Wx this year. The 2 carpets were laid, put in my new car battery for the PA and placed the operating table in position. This year we tried a second tent butted up to mine: a great success allowing the 2-metre station to have more access and people in the shack.

I checked out an old picture for the shack layout when we had the Drake L4B and 12V HF PA's both available and PSU's, IC735, Auto caller, BHI LS, and a "Suck Rx Out" trap in case of a 2nd on site Tx. The shelf went in with a bendy Lamp LS, ATU, and KR400 Rotator controller, FT690R Rig, BHI LS and pre-driver PA. I wired up the 6-metre valve PA doing 250W this year and caught an opening of 32 contacts. The cooking tables stack was put in place with its minimum shack footprint. Both tents were lit with four small 4Watt LED lamps and a backup 12Volt lamp.

We then assembled the aerial poles for the 40-foot 2 pole mast, put it up with no aerials for the first test lift. We then spent the next 2 hours putting on the 3 aerials: an up-rated Mosley TA33 HF Tribander, a 6el 5m beam, with UR67, and a VHF Triband V2000 colinear with WF103 coax. Then aerials were all RF tested on the ground with an MFJ analyser. Several people turned up Friday so there was manpower to put up the 42ft mast easily with my 30ft gin pole OK. Then the mast was lifted onto the rotator and direction calibrated. The 3 wire aerials' tree sky hooks were sorted and attached to the 2 mast halyards, a 40m dipole, 80m dipole and an inverted L (100m of wire) pulled up with Union Flag.

At 19:30 I started preparing a well-deserved evening dinner after an exhausting hot day. Then some HF working (e.g. a VK 2nd 20m contact) and VHF FM 3 band shack set up dual band Kenwood TM731E and Key 15W radios on the 2nd table and the TS700 and 12V 200W PA.

Visitors Jo M0SOZ and Garry M5YRG operated the callsign on 2m and HF with their own set up, a steerable 20m delta loop and colinear @ 20ft. They also brought Alan Betts G0HIQ on one visit, who had never visited GX3WIM before and was pleased to see many of his students at the event.

Monday, we put up my 54ft telescoping mast empty OK and then with 9 element and SWR tested before erecting, but I had some rotator issues with it. The 2m beam set up by Tuesday but no contest this year. At the rear of the van was my 2.5W 2m packet system running into the van's passenger side dual bander, but I was unable to send my daily packet bulletins as the kit had a flow control issue. Also in the van was my 4m Ascom rig to an end fed 1/2 wave @ 27ft beside the van. All the Sunday nets went well, and the site's HF noise floor was very low and a pre-amp could be used on 80m and 40m to give only S1-2 levels!

I took 3 petrol generators, 500W, 1kW and my old 2.3kW were really not needed as Andrew's new 6kW Diesel installed Friday, worked fine again, moved with an engine hoist and run on farmer's pink fuel.

Lee, Andrew, Steve, Damien 2E0EUI, camped all week, Eric G0KRT visited 2 days, and Graham G4WNT spent a couple of days visiting.

The Wx was warm enough for a solar shower most days and several had own set ups. On Wednesday after putting up Andrew G4ADM's 100ft Clark army mast with a 2el triband Moxon on it. Natham did much of the muscles needed. It was cabled to Natham's HF tent. We then had heavy rain with thunder and lightning (closest 2 miles away) which was a bit of a worry and caused some kit and logs to get wet!

Most left the site by 17:00 hours Sunday, but 3 of us stayed late to pack up the 100ft mast that

was bending dangerously on take down till I sorted it. We got all the kit into Andrew's large van somehow, so he could then tow his caravan off in one trip at 20:00 hours. An exhausting and long van pack in the dry, and at home I had a well needed bath!

Main station operating was done by G8MNY, M0PEL, 2E0EUI, G6JXA, G0KRT, G0KPU, often till after midnight and one night till 04:30hrs! With our QRO and special event club call, long pile ups were normal, most nights were good for stateside on 20m up to 4a.m. until no one could stay awake. In all there were 13 members (were members or camped before) and 23 visitors several who tried /P operating with their own kit, but this was risky near a 1kW Tx on a Rx!

From the logs...

- **160m** with 30W/400W had just 2 contacts with no Dx
- **80m** with 400/1kW had 22 QSOs: D G GI LA M P OE
- **40m** saw 166 QSOs: D EA EI F G GM GW GX I LA LB MI MM MW ON OP OT OZ P SA SM SQ 2E 2W
- **20m** saw 393 QSOs: A CT D EA EI F G GB GM GW HI I JA K LA LQ4 LZ M MI N P OB OE OH OK ON OM OZ R SC SM SP SQ SV S51 S57 TA TC TM UA UR VA VP VE VK W YB YO YT 2E 2I 5B 5P 6Y
- **15m** had 12 QSOs: EA G I TM OH TA YF YL ZO 3D
- **10m** saw 15 QSOs DL F HA HB I M OH YO 2A
- **6m** with 250W we had 32 contacts in 1 sporadic E session: D G HB I LZ M OE OK ON SP SQ YU 2E
- **4m** with 25W end fed dipole @ 8m saw 5 local QSOs
- **2m** had 50 G station QSOs with 15W to V2000, but none with 200W SSB to 9el @ 54ft: a non-contest week?
- **70cms** had 3 QSOs on repeaters.
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(Editor's note ...) These pictures (courtesy of the GX3WIM page on QRZ.com) of the HF antennas (left) and G8MNY operating (right) are actually from the 2023 camp but convey a good impression of this year's event.

PURCHASE OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT FOR SRCC by Quin G3WRR

Members may recall discussion at the 2024 AGM regarding the possibility of “hybrid meetings” (i.e. face to face plus remote attendance). Ray G4FFY and Peter G3ZPB had conducted an analysis concluding that a practical basic setup would cost an estimated £1200. Discussion at the time and subsequently concluded that:

- there were advantages and disadvantages. If it was decided to proceed it should not be used for all meetings (mainly due to the risk of losing club coherence): probably not for B meetings but at A meetings under appropriate circumstances (e.g. for external remote speakers)
- a trial should be organised to see how it would work in practice
- arrangements would need to be made for storage of the equipment.

The trial was conducted at the May B meeting using a seriously ad hoc set of equipment and a mixture of on-site and remotes attendees. It proved quite easy to set up and was found to work well. Subsequent discussion by the Committee concluded that rather than go for the full £1200 set from day one, it would be possible to proceed with an initial reduced set of equipment (single camera and microphone) at reduced cost – possibly around £500. The other items could be purchased later once the benefit was established. The Committee is minded going down that route – but before doing so it was agreed that the views of the membership should be sought. So, if you have any views one way or the other, please send them to secretary@srcc.uk by 11th September.

ACROSS THE WILD WATERS (2024) by Quin G3WRR

Regular readers of the Newsletter may recall that at this time every year there is an item describing the trip to the Isle of Wight by a couple of SRCC members to take part in the RSGB IOTA (Islands On The Air) Contest. Well, you are not going to be spared the experience this year! Without going into too much detail, the contest is based on the RSGB IOTA Award Scheme and involves entrants (who don't have to be located on islands, although many entrants find it fun, and good from a scoring point of view, to visit them) making contacts with other stations. Contacts with island stations are worth having as they score at least five times as many points as contacts with non-island stations: and furthermore, each island (as defined in the IOTA list – the Isle of Wight counts as EU-120) worked acts as a points multiplier. This formula clearly works as the 2024 contest attracted 2087 entries of which 643 were from island stations of which 86 were DXpeditions specifically for the contest.

There were only two of us this year, Alun G4WGE and me. The other regular, Mike G3VYI (not an SRCC member but otherwise an OK guy...) gave the IoW a miss this time and went with his wife Hilary to the island of Yell in the Shetlands and took part in the contest as part of a holiday trip. Alun and I had been invited along for the contest but declined as it would have involved 2 days travel and 2 ferries in each direction for a 24-hour contest, which would have been a very big (and expensive) tail wagging a fairly small dog. Anyhow, we took the 10 am ferry from Portsmouth to Fishbourne on Friday morning and arrived on site at Brighstone on the Southwest facing cliffs around 1130. Unfortunately, Charlotte, the lady who runs the site, was nowhere to be seen and so we were delayed by a couple of hours getting set up as we weren't sure where we were going to be located. But, with Charlotte appearing and chalet allocated, by about 6pm we had all the antennas (two fan dipoles, one for 80/40m and the other for 20/15/10m both on a 30ft extendable mast, plus a 14AVQ vertical for 40/20/15/10m at ground level) up. The weather was pretty kind to us, although the wind, as always on an exposed site, made antenna-upping interesting. We also got

the gear (Elecraft K3 plus N1MM+ logger) connected and working..... and we had usable SWRs on all bands without too much pain.....

We had accepted an invitation from rivals G5XV (Newbury ARS plus a few friends) on the North side of the island for a curry supper. Actually, we weren't really rivals, being in different sections (Newbury in the Open and us in Multi-Single). Their setup was much more elaborate than ours as their resources (which included a 60ft tower supporting a huge Tribander, a 40ft tower with a smaller beam and an assortment of dipoles on lower mastage) and manpower greatly exceeded ours. After a good meal and a (fairly) responsible amount of alcohol, we returned to Brighstone and had a good night's sleep.

As the contest did not start until 1pm clock time on the Saturday, we had a fairly relaxed morning and were ready to go by kick-off time. There is not a lot to say about the next 24 hours which were spent taking turns operating, drinking tea, eating (sophisticated cuisine, including Pot Noodles, sandwiches containing, bacon, Bovril and jam – not all at the same time – and biscuits) – and of course sleeping. The latter is a particular skill of mine. At the end, everything came down – in a controlled manner – and we got away from the site early enough to get onto the ferry half an hour earlier than the one we had booked. Then it was up the A3, abandon Alun in Tolworth and home to Mission Control Norwood by about nine in the evening for a snack, bath and night's sleep. Emptying the car was deferred until Monday.

So how did we do? We made a total of 811 QSOs. Having made 800 QSOs as the contest was drawing to a close, we nearly decided to stop at 807 on principle, then decided to aim for 813 but ran out of time on 811. (Younger members may wish to consult those of us who are longer in the tooth regarding the significance of those numbers). 82% of the contacts were made on CW and the rest on SSB (no FTx in sight). These included 60 DXCCs including all continents except Oceania and Antarctica but 99.5% of contacts were with Europeans. Conditions were poor at the start (presumably due to one of the solar storms that have been so evident recently) but did perk up a bit on the Sunday.



VIEW OF ANTENNAS FROM CHALET (fan dipoles left, trap vertical right)



**SHACK BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR,
14AVQ TRAP VERTICAL IN FOREGROUND
(the front of G3WRR's car appears to have
fallen off since the previous picture)**



**VIEW UP THE
MAST
SUPPORTING
THE FAN
DIPOLES
(NOTE BLUE SKY
& SUNSHINE!!)**



**STUDY OF A PENSIVE
AMATEUR – G3WRR
THINKING WHEN HE
SHOULD BE OPERATING....**



**NOT SRCC BUT....
MIKE G3VYI SETTING UP
GM4ALE FOR THE IOTA
CONTEST ON ISLE OF YELL
IN THE SHETLANDS**

HERE AND THERE

Steve G4FYF raised an interesting question recently: he enquired about the source of the key in the SRCC emblem (see front page). Ray G4FFY has responded as follows:

“It goes back to 1995 when there was a certain Phil Pardey G0OHI on the committee. He was infamous for developing the Table Tennis Morse. In the Diamond Jubilee Booklet of that Year on Page 14 was the following statement: *“It should also be noted that in this Jubilee year the Club has obtained permission to use the Surrey Coat of Arms as a Logo, and this is now used on the heading of the newsletter. Employing this logo we have produced a special QSL card with the Logo on and 1935 — 1995. This can be used by the Club Call as GX3SRC or it can be used as an ordinary member’s card inserting the members call. Our thanks go to Philip Pardy, G0OHI who devoted much time and energy to this project.”* “

Thanks Ray – and the “Table Tennis Morse” sounds interesting.....perhaps we should re-introduce it?

73, Quin G3WRR

VHF NFD 2024 – RESULTS

The results of VHF NFD 2024 have now been published. These are shown in full at <https://www.rsgbcc.org/cgi-bin/vhfresults.pl?Contest=VHF%20NFD&year=2024>. The NESCG results are summarised below:

BAND	SECTION	VALID QSOs	POSITION
6m	Restricted	21	13/13
4m	Restricted	36	8/15
2m	Low power	49	6/8
70cm	Restricted	28	8/9
Overall	Mix & match		5/11

This is clearly a pretty disappointing result compared with previous years and as stated in last month’s Newsletter, we will need to consider the situation carefully for 2025. One interesting observation is that despite the poor results on the individual bands, our overall performance – just over half-way up - was much better. Another item to be factored in for next year....

SRCC LEAGUE TABLE – JULY 2024

Four entries were received for the July League Table, the same number, and same entrants, as in June. G4FFY and G4FYF retain their first and second places, with G3WRR and M0LEP swapping places to take 3rd and 4th.

ENTRANT	WORKED DXCC / SQUARE	WORKED SRCC MEMBER	WORKED IN CONTEST	POINTS THIS MONTH
G4FFY	33		25	91
G4FYF	25	1		52
G3WRR	10		10	30
M0LEP	11			22

The following notes are provided by the entrants...

G4FFY: *I missed all the 70cm and 2m UKAC and FT8 contests - just entered the HF FT4 July Contest, mainly due to other domestic activities and dog agility.... DXCC's worked has increased by one to 162 with the working of Cambodia during the HF FT4 contest – XU7GNY on 20m.*

G4FYF: *Fairly lightweight, seems replacing skirting boards was deemed more important! Short skip (from here) on 10 still working at times. Otherwise, rest on 40 and 20 with a few local contacts on 6 meters.*

M0LEP: *Not much more exciting than my entry for June, except perhaps for Iceland and Canada. As usual it's mostly SOTA chasing, with the SRCC Monday morning 80 metre Net thrown in. My on-air activity was slightly hampered by my shack desktop computer letting out its magic smoke. Sorting out an alternative took a fair bit of the time I might have spent on-air.*

G3WRR: *All points are for the locators worked by self on 6m & 4m in VHF NFD.*

The cumulative annual results are shown below:

ENTRANT	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
G4FFY	114	223	89	123	157	265	91						1062
G4FYF	28	40	68	38	30	70	52						326
G3WRR	63	18	42		45		30						207
M0CGF			100	86									186
M0LEP	14	22	20	46	22	14	22						160
G3ZPB	69	83											152



The ionosphere has continued its erratic behaviour of recent months, with the SFI continuing to be highly variable on a day-to-day basis. However, the general trend continues to be upward and even further ahead of predictions, with no sign yet of the inevitable downturn. However, one associated characteristic of solar maxima - solar flares – has an influence on the A and K indices which acts in the opposite direction and tends to worsen HF propagation: the poor conditions during the recent IOTA Contest (reported above) are evidence of this. If you are interested in this topic, VE3EN's SolarHam website at <https://www.solarham.com> is

recommended. On the subject of solar flares, this picture of an aurora resulting from a recent flare was taken by Ray G4FFY from his house in Kent. He admits that as seen by eye the aurora was quite faint compared with the photo – but was still impressive.

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 as always for the inputs. Some of the available material has had to be stood over till next month, but more is always welcome! See you next month.

73, Quin G3WRR
SRCC Secretary and Newsletter Editor