



SURREY RADIO CONTACT CLUB

JUNE 2025 – No. 994

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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**

A MEETING Monday 2nd June: VHF NFD planning meeting
B MEETING Monday 16th June: Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat with John G8MNY

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EDITOR'S OPENER

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

At the May A meeting, Colin G4LZE announced that the SRCC 90th Anniversary Dinner would be held on 11th October. It has since become apparent that at least two of the key attendees won't be able to make that date – so we are going to have another try to get a date that works. Although we have an alternative date in mind, we will be taking a show of hands at the June A meeting (2nd June) to see what might work for those present – so you may wish to have a look at your diaries to check your availability between (say) mid-September to mid-November.

Just following up on an item in last month's Newsletter about the risk of email-based scams A fortnight or so after the first attempt I received another e-mail purporting to be from the amateur in question (Derrick G3LHJ) – but this time the scammer used some amateur radio type terms (e.g. 73) which implies that he/she (personally I deprecate the use of the term "they" to mean "he or she" – but that's another story) to make him/herself more plausible to potential victims. For me that is a rather worrying trend. 😞 This time I rang Derrick – who said, "oh dear, not again" (I think he was talking about the scam rather than talking to me but one never knows....). It seems that he was aware of the first set of emails, but the most recent one appears to be another attempt.

But on the positive side, it was good to talk to Derrick again and at his age (I think he is 89) it is even better to see that he is still very alert, active on the bands (I had worked him in the AFS contest in January) and was irritated rather than concerned by the attempted scam. In these days of frequent house moves it is unusual to note that he still lives in the house where he had been born (although he and family had moved elsewhere in Newton Abbot for a few years). And I am pretty sure he had told me that his shack was the room in which he had been born! Sadly, his wife Sylvie died last year but his sister lives in the house next door and as he put it “we look after each other”. Quite a reassuring ending to a sad tale!

For me the summer outdoor radio session is starting, with HF (CW) NFD on the first full weekend in June. As usual Alun G4WGE, John G4CZB (an ex-Purley resident) and I will be going up to Northampton where John has access to a useful site. Last year we were roughly at the bottom of the top third in our section and have made a few improvements that may help – or then again, maybe not. (Spoiler warning... there will probably be an item on HF NFD in the next issue).

That will be followed by VHF NFD on the weekend of 5th/6th July as part of North-East Surrey Contest Group. After last year – probably the worst VHF NFD year in terms of lack of people and filthy weather that any of us can recall – there was a view of “never again”. However, we have had commitments of significantly greater support this year: the Addiscombe ARC contingent from deepest Farnham will be joining us, more support from CATS is likely and Mike G0GJV and maybe his wife Jacqui G6XSY will be along too. Mike is the guy who produced the Minos logging software which – in addition to him being an experienced contest operator – could be quite handy! As for the weather – well that is in the lap of the gods – or perhaps the Met. Office - and we shall see. Other readers will, of course, be welcome.....

And finally at the end of July it's over to the Isle of Wight again for Alun G4WGE, Mike G3VYI (and his wife Hilary) and self for the IOTA (Islands On The Air) Contest. After which we will probably all be maxed out on contests for a while!

So, on to the interesting stuff....

73, Quin G3WRR

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

May A meeting (12th) Surplus Equipment Sale. This was well attended with 17 members present, four of whom had gear to sell. Our usual auctioneer, Gareth G4XAT, was not able to attend but Quin G3WRR stood in for him. A good proportion of the items on offer were sold – but there is no need to grieve over missed opportunities as it is likely that some of the unsold items will make a return visit at the autumn SES. Total takings were £277.00 of which £62.75 went into SRCC funds.

May B meeting (19th) This was the usual Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat session with John G8MNY and his test gear.

FUTURE MEETINGS

June 2025 A meeting (2nd) VHF NFD preparation. As stated above it is expected (subject to confirmation of site availability from the farmer) that the NESCG VHF NFD entry will be going

ahead. This meeting will be to tie up loose ends, sort out remaining issues (which is why the meeting is being held at the June A meeting rather than the July one...) and answer questions from potential attendees. Representatives from Addiscombe ARC will be attending and CATS have also been invited. It is also intended that at the end G3WRR will give a brief training session on the Minos logging software with the aim of giving those who haven't used it before the confidence to give it a go during the contest.

June 2025 B meeting (16th) This will be the usual B meeting Fix-it, Move-it-on and Social Chat session.

73, Quin G3WRR

STAR OF STAGE, SCREEN...AND RADCOM

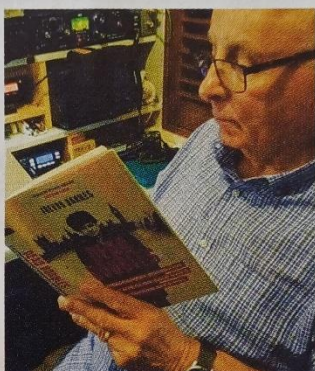
RSGB National Radio Centre volunteer to deliver Number Stations talk

If you have ever been interested in discovering more about the mystery and phenomenon of spy communications, particularly Number Stations, then this talk is for you.

On 28 June 2025, RSGB National Radio Centre volunteer Paul Beaumont, G7VAK will give a talk on "Number Stations, 1950 to the Present". He will look at modes used, the different styles of sending and will present a number of examples where Number Stations were used and stated in the prosecution of the recipients.

The session is being delivered as part of the RSGB's ongoing strategy to promote amateur radio to wider audiences. RSGB members who would like to attend the talk are able to benefit from a 10% discount, reducing the price to £14.40.

To find out more go to the Bletchley Park 'What's on' web pages via bletchleypark.org.uk



While reading through my May issue of Radcom, I came across a picture of our member Paul G7VAK advertising a presentation on Number Stations that he will be giving at Bletchley Park in June. This is slightly off our core hobby of amateur radio but a bit of variety is always worthwhile and we can be sure it will be interesting and stimulating. The details, courtesy of Radcom, are copied in on the left...

AUSTRALIAN VISIT by RICK MOLEP

CYCLES, SMOKE AND SUMMITS

I recently returned from a holiday to visit my sister in Australia. We were away for almost four weeks. Obviously, in a holiday that long there should be at least a small chance of getting on the air, and I wanted to activate at least one Summits on the Air (SOTA) summit during my stay, so I took some equipment with me. I knew that we would be spending most of the time away from my sister's home, so any operating I did manage to do was likely to be of the light-weight portable variety. I took my Elecraft KX3 and my QRP Labs mid-band QMX, a charger capable of giving a LiPo battery pack a balanced charge, a link dipole to cover the bands from 40 to 15 metres, a couple of "flowerpot" antennas for 10 and 15 metres, and a compact fibreglass flagpole with assorted guy lines and pegs. Taking LiPo batteries onto planes is not always that easy, but I found a shop near my sister's home where I could easily buy some 18650 LiPo cells, so I took a couple of suitably wired-up empty battery holders. In the end I only bought three LiPo cells, enough for one pack, but that proved sufficient for most of the operating I ended up doing.

We spent the first fortnight of our holiday on Wadjemup, also known as Rottnest Island. The accommodation on the island is mostly in the form of self-catering chalets, and they usually don't have any space nearby upon which an antenna can be erected, so operating in comfort with mains power is generally not possible. There are, however, quite a few picnic sites around the island, and I found a handy one near Pink Lake, a short cycle ride from our chalet, at which I could set up my antenna without getting in anyone's way, and because it's away from the beaches I could also expect not to be disturbed all that much. It was, however, rather a hot spot during the middle of the day, so I generally limited my on-air time to a couple of hours or so after sunrise and before sunset.



**ROTTNEST
PICNIC BENCH
SHACK - 1**



**ROTTNEST
PICNIC
BENCH
SHACK - 2**

My initial plan was to test the antennas I'd made just before the holiday. I'd done the work in my back garden at home, and there was a very good chance conditions on the island and on a summit would be different, so some testing seemed like a good idea. In Europe I find a good way to give an antenna a quick test is to put out a call on CW and see how many reverse beacon network (RBN) skimmers pick it up. There are far fewer skimmers near Western Australia, so second best was to try to work a some stations I could hear. During my first couple of on-air sessions I managed to raise a grand total of zero contacts, and no RBN skimmers picked me up either.

I was glad I'd brought my NanoVNA along for the ride. It turned out that the links for 15 metres on my dipole, which quite happily brought the antenna to resonance around 21.1 MHz when set up in my damp hillside garden in Dursley on the edge of the Cotswolds, were instead leaving me with a dipole resonant at about 22.6 MHz when set up over a flat sandy ground near Pink Lake. Luckily I'd brought a couple of stubs with bullet connectors along, and a rather more comfortable resonance could be achieved by adding them at the link point and then carefully trimming them. Some of the other bands also needed a little adjustment, though none of them were as far out as the 15 metres band, and I found a good match could be achieved using just one of the stubs.

Having worked out how to get the antenna to resonate at a suitable frequency on each of the bands for which it had links, it was time to see whether I could now make contacts. I decided to try playing the Parks on the Air (POTA) self-spotting game as a way of raising contacts. I managed to get a number of contacts (mostly in Japan) on 15 metres one evening, and a few more (mostly from within Australia) on 20 and 40 metres the following morning. The 17 and 30 metres links also seemed to be working well enough after the adjustments, and the POTA spots brought in more than enough contacts to keep me busy.

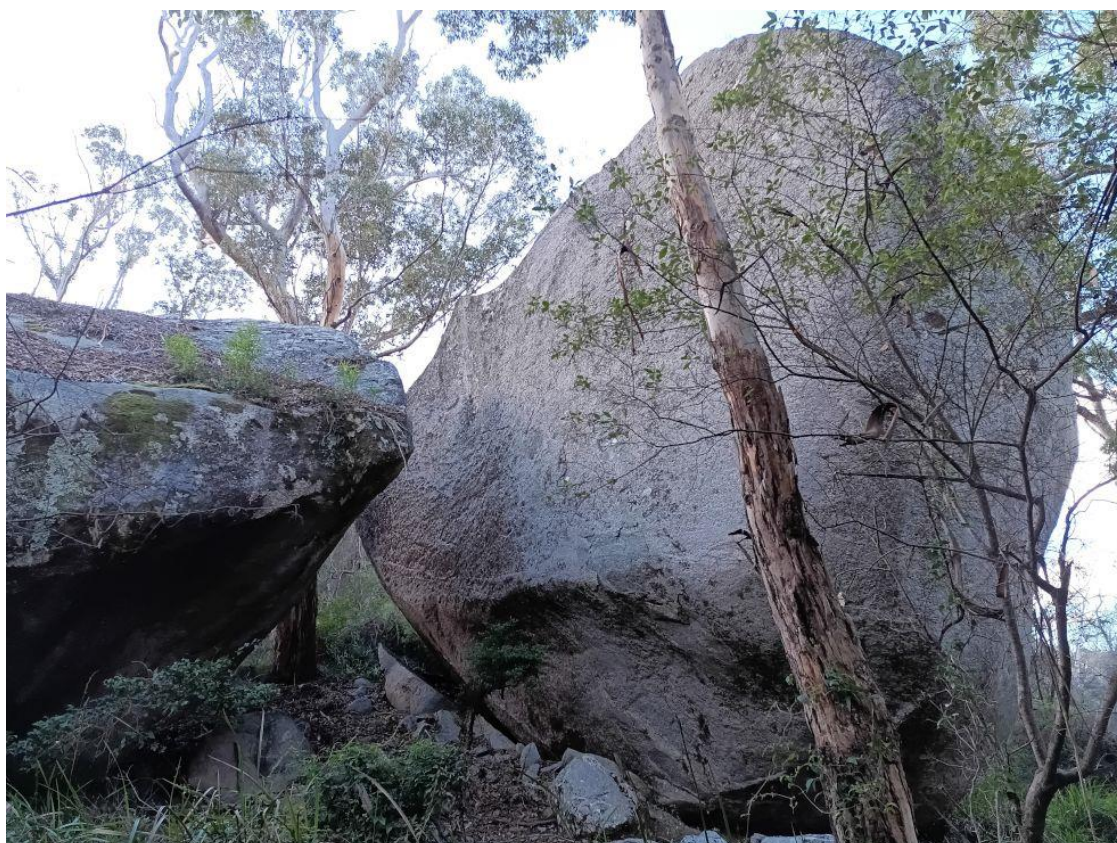
Inevitably, given I was on an island, Islands on the Air (IOTA) was brought to my attention. It's a little more work to run an IOTA activation than it is to run a SOTA or POTA one, but enough emails were arriving (even given the less than wonderful Net connection available to me on the island) to make me give it some thought. I continued to operate using the POTA self-spotting system as it did a good enough job of letting folks know when I was on the air, but I made sure the IOTA details also went into my log, and started the process necessary to make my activation qualify for IOTA.

I didn't entirely forget SOTA, though; I managed to chase a couple of summits from the island, one of them being on Reunion.

After just under two weeks, our time on the island came to an end, and we headed back to the hills north of Perth.

A couple of days later we headed off again, but this time to the south west. We'd booked a tour of Jewel Cave near Augusta, and then from there we headed for Ocean Beach near Denmark where we were staying for most of the rest of our holiday. There are a couple of SOTA summits near Denmark, and I hoped to be able to activate both of them. The nearest was Mt. Hallowell (SOTA VK6/SW-056).

The hike up Mt. Hallowell was a fine one. We chose to follow the track up from Lights Road, having parked at the Monkey Rock car park. Monkey Rock is a popular climbing site, and we paused there on the way up to admire the views. The summit of Mt. Hallowell is, however, quite a bit higher up, and it took a while to reach, so the afternoon was getting on by the time I started my activation, and I had to pack up and start heading down before the sun set as we didn't want to be hiking down the trail in the dark. It was a reasonably successful activation for all it was quite short, with seven contacts on 15 metres, five on 20 metres and three on 40 metres.



**MOUNT
HALLOWELL
ASCENT - 1**



**MOUNT
HALLOWELL
ASCENT – 2**

(



**MOUNT
HALLOWELL
SUMMIT**

The following evening, we tackled Mt. Shadforth (SOTA VK6/SW-054). Access was a lot easier, and here's a handy shelter near the summit where I could set up my rig, but the views weren't a patch on the ones offered by Mt. Hallowell. The activation mostly went well. The higher bands weren't behaving quite as well as they had the previous evening, but I ended up with three contacts on 15 metres, four on 17 metres, eleven on 20 metres and two on 40 metres. I tried 30 metres, but there was an extremely high background noise level on the band.

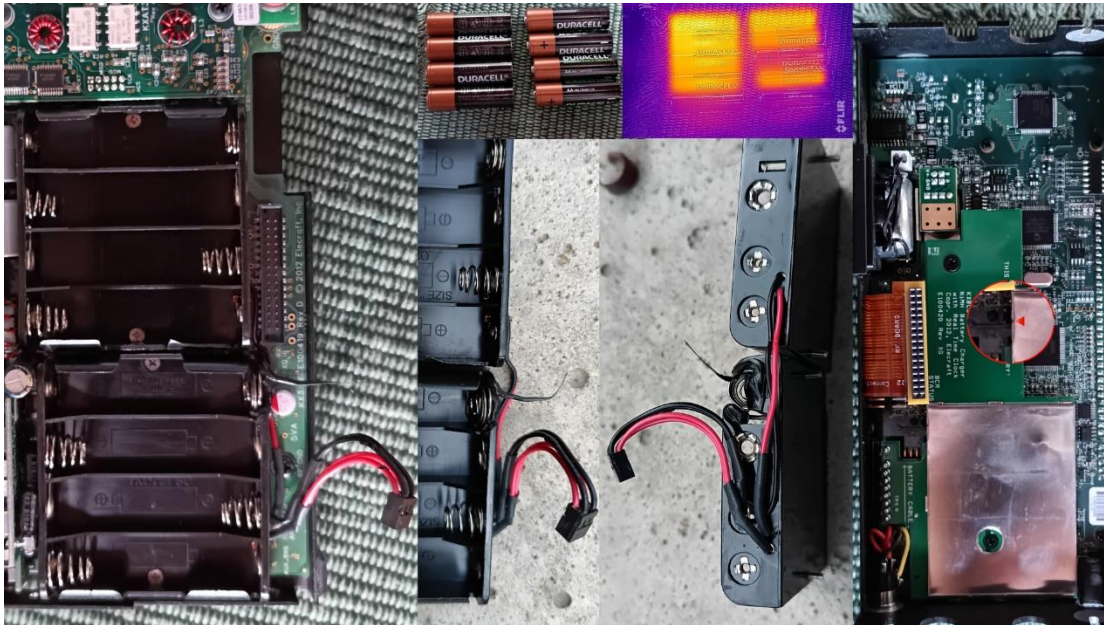


**MOUNT
SHADFORTH
SUMMIT**

During the holiday I made 154 contacts in total. 85 were with Japan, 50 with Australia, four each with Germany and New Zealand, two each with Czech Republic, Asiatic Russia, and one each with European Russia, England, France, Hungary, Ireland, Reunion and the United States. Ten of the contacts were on SSB, with the rest being CW.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE SMOKE?

While preparing for the Mt. Hallowell activation attempt I had a slightly alarming experience with my KX3's batteries. I turned the rig on to check the battery voltage, and noted it was a little low, so I decided to give it a short charge. I fetched my external power source, and plugged it in. I was just selecting the charge option when I noticed a smell of something burning and then smoke coming out of the KX3. I pulled the power fast and turned off the rig, but the smoke kept coming, so I opened the rig up as quickly as I could and noticed that one of the battery terminals was melting the plastic holder. I extracted the batteries as fast as I could, and disconnected the battery leads. Unfortunately (from a cause determination point of view) I wasn't too concerned about which battery came from which slot in the holder, but clearly something had shorted, and a lot more current was flowing through one of the battery terminals than it was ever designed to take. Equally clearly, there was no way the now partly melted battery holder could be made safe and usable again.



**PHOTO
MONTAGE OF
KX3 BATTERY
ISSUE**

One terminal had managed to get very hot. I'm puzzled why none of the others had overheated, but only that one terminal showed evidence. I took the batteries out in a hurry, so I don't know which one was in which position in the pack, though I do know the two sets of four were together in one side or the other. In one of the sets, one battery was cold, and one hot. In the other set one seemed to be hot and the other three were at least warm.

I removed the damaged battery holders and un-installed the battery charger board. I then re-assembled the rig and cautiously applied external power. The rig seemed to be working, so I packed it and the QRP Labs QMX backup rig in my bag and headed off, hoping that I'd be able to have a successful activation even without the KX3's internal batteries. It worked just fine.

Since then I've taken a very close look at the battery charger board (shown in the right-hand panel of the photo) and noticed two things. First, you can see lines on the metal sheet that covers the battery charger caused by the batteries pressing up against it. Second, if you look very closely at the edge of that metal sheet you can see a small, discoloured spot close to the inter-shell connector. The edge of the metal sheet is slightly burred, and that discolouration corresponds to a little nick in the burring which, when the case is closed, would come very close to the line along which one of the batteries would have been pressed against the sheet, and also very close to the battery terminal that got excessively hot....

For the foreseeable future I'll be operating my KX3 with external batteries only.

73, Rick M0LEP

[Editor's note – many thanks to Rick for a very interesting article which was well prepared, making it was easy to absorb it into the Newsletter. And it is vastly superior to the alternative which would have been a write-up on my recent four-day, non-radio visit to Skegness with daughter and four-year old granddaughter.... There are also a number of pictures from Ian M0CGF's recent trip to Greenland, but these are being stood over till next month to balance up topics and available material].

HERE AND THERE

(Warning – another of your scribe’s items on history of radio coming up... If this isn’t for you, please jump ahead to the next item)!

Steve G4FYF recently sent me an email regarding the use of distress signals in Morse code. I guess we are all aware of the use of SOS – but may not all be aware of the use of CQD as its predecessor....and even the use of SOS may not be all it seems. So here is a bit of history – largely derived from Wikipedia (always a reliable source!)

The term CQ goes back to the days of line telegraphists where CQ was used to identify a message sent to all stations (presumably because of the phonetic similarity between CQ and “seek you”) and it became used for the same purpose as wireless telegraphy came into regular use. Marconi operators then tagged a D on the end to make CQD a code for “general call: danger”. But in that pre-standardisation world, CQD was not adopted internationally. Meanwhile, German operators had adopted the nine character symbol `...---...` instead, and this was later accepted as an international standard at the 1906 International Radiotelegraphic Convention in Berlin. This was meant to be a single nine character signal with no gaps, unlike CQD which was sent as three separate characters, the rationale presumably being that a single character of nine digits would draw particular attention to itself. However common usage (possibly among the general public rather than telegraphists) teased the individual elements apart into the three separate characters

`...(space)---(space)...` (ie. S, O and S) which was assumed to mean Save Our Souls or similar. In fact, there is a specific word “prosigns” – short for “procedure signs” - for characters made by concatenation of existing characters, and we still use examples such as `.-...` (AS) to mean “wait”.

There is a story that as the Titanic was sinking in 1912 and distress calls were being sent via the radio, Jack Phillips (the lead operator) suggested to Harold Bride (the second operator) that he should try using SOS rather than CQD on the grounds that “this may be the only chance you ever get to use it”. If true, that is a splendid piece of gallows humour – but I do wonder if it might be an apocryphal tale – which I have heard defined as “a story which, if it isn’t true, ought to be”. I guess we will never know – but sadly although Bride survived, Phillips went down with the ship.

SRCC LEAGUE TABLE – APRIL 2025 RESULTS

There were five entries for March 2025, the same as in March (although one of them was a null entry) and all from the “usual suspects”. The monthly listing is as follows:

ENTRANT	WORKED DXCC / SQUARE	WORKED SRCC MEMBER	WORKED IN CONTEST	POINTS THIS MONTH
M0CGF	189		8	286
G4FFY	47		39	133
M0LEP	14	1		30
G4FYF	11	1		24
G3WRR				0

Ian M0CGF has moved up to first place swapping places with Ray G4FFY who moves down to second, and Rick M0LEP up two places moving Steve G4FYF and Quin G3WRR down one place each to fourth and fifth.

The following notes are provided by the entrants...

M0CGF: *I have just returned from 2 weeks in Greenland, still a tad chilly over there!! No radio this time. Maybe back over in June. Photos at <http://www.flickr.com/iesphotography>. Highlights this month on 6m, 3x ZS for a new DXCC on the band.*

G4FFY: *Operating opportunities were down in April 2025 due to the start of the dog agility camping session. On VHF I was only activate in the 2m UKACs and FT8 contests. On HF I operated in the April HF FT4 Contest, did a small amount of FT8 on 10m from home, and some 40m FT8 from the Motorhome when camped in Alrewas Showground (near Tamworth, Staffordshire). DXCC's worked has increased to 167 during April with working Sri Lanka (4S7AB on 10m FT8) and Norfolk Island (VK9DX on 10m FT8).*

G4FYF: *Blimey, where did April go? Perhaps a weaselly way of saying my log this month was much less than impressive! 10 meters seemed to have dimmed, at least at the times I monitored. So all on 7 & 14 MHz with nothing worthy of note.*

M0LEP: *I'm now back from Australia. I did get some opportunities to operate, always in a light-weight portable manner. I wasn't running more than ten or twelve watts and Western Australia's quite a distance from anywhere, but I did manage a few more countries in April than in March. All the DXCCs apart from LA were contacted from Western Australia, hence the Eastern Hemisphere bias. The FR was with a SOTA activator on Reunion, and I also contacted one SOTA activator near Canberra, but sadly no SOTA from ZL.*

G3WRR: *Null entry – again! Must try harder 😞*

The cumulative annual results are as follows: No change in positions since last month.

ENTRANT	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
M0CGF	146	223	128	286									783
G4FFY	138	165	164	133									620
G4FYF	40	22	68	24									154
G3WRR	30		68										98
M0LEP	6	30	4	30									70

After last summer’s glory period in which the Solar Flux Index (SFI) substantially overshot the predictions, things have swung the other way and the SFI is now significantly lower than current predictions. CW FD next weekend will be an interesting test of the effect of that on HF conditions!

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 g.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.....

See you next time.

73, Quin G3WRR
SRCC Secretary and Newsletter Editor