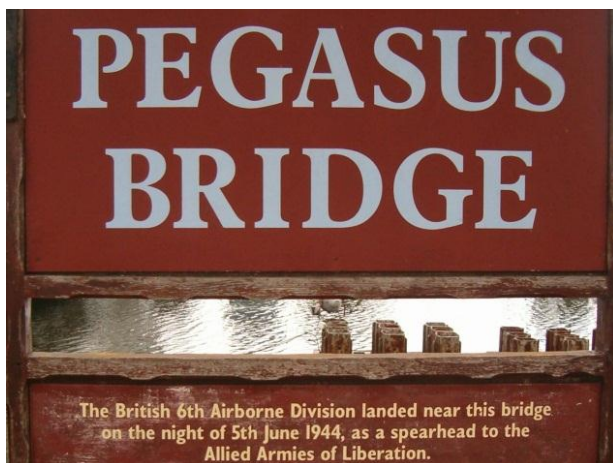




The Newsletter of the

Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society

Spring 2012



Web Site: www.rnars.org.uk

The RNARS is affiliated to the RSGB

RNARS Officers & Committee

Patron: Admiral Sir Peter Abbott KCB RN
President: Commodore Paul Sutermeister DL RN
The Gables, Barton le Street, Malton, YO17 6PN
Chair: Doug Hotchkiss G4BEQ Lt Cdr. MBE QCB RN
54 Sanderling Lodge, Gosport, PO12 1EN g4beq@btinternet.com
Vice Chair: Mick Puttick G3LIK mick_g3lik@ntlworld.com
Treasurer: Adrian Mori M3ZNU adrian.mori@ntlworld.com
33 Valerian Road, Southampton, SO30 0GR
Membership Sec: Wally Walker G4DIU wally.g4diu@ntlworld.com
26 Sketchley Court, Dogwood Avenue, Bulwell, NG6 7DL
General Sec: Joe Kirk G3ZDF 111 Stockbridge Road, Chichester, PO19 8QR
g3zdf@btinternet.com
Ex Officio: WO1 Rosie Dodd, HMS Collingwood
Committee: Keith Ray, Ray Ezra, Doug Bowen, Les Horne, Bill Mahoney
Dave Lacey

RNARS Managers

Commodities: Doug Bowen G0MIU 14 Braemar Rd, Gosport, PO13 0YA
rnarscommodities@btinternet.com
Awards: Ian Pitkin G4KJD
Call List: Sid Will GM4SID 53 Bishop Forbes Crs, Aberdeen, AB21 0TW
Website: Joe Kirk G3ZDF 111 Stockbridge Road, Chichester, PO19 8QR
Data Comms: Diana Prothero G0RNO rnars2news@btinternet.com
Newsletter: Colin Topping GM6HGW – **See editorial for contact details**
HQ Station: Keith Ray G1GXB 4 Elm Road, Bishops Waltham, SO32 1JR
g1gxb@talktalk.net 01489 891110
Area Rep Wally Walker G4DIU
Co-ordinator: 26 Sketchley Court, Dogwood Avenue, Bulwell, NG6 7DL

Overseas Managers

Australia: Vacant – Subs to the membership secretary
West Australia: Gerald Wild
1080 Great Eastern Highway, Glen Forest, WA 6071 Australia
Canada: Ian Coombe - VA3ICC
254 Reynolds Drive Brockville Ontario Canada K6V 1X9
USA: Bill Cridland 57 Pinewood Road, Bolton, Mass, 01740, USA
South Africa: Mickey Warr ZS1WA 21 Steyn St, Barrydale, Capetown 6750, RSA

QSL Managers

UK: Marc Litchman G0TOC
26 Oak Tree Close, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2RE
Australia: Colin Whale VK4CU
237 Newman Road, Geebung, Queensland 4034 Australia
Germany: MF Runde DL0MF
USA: Vacant
New Zealand: Nigel Hardy ZL2TX
PO Box 15078, Otaki Railway, Otaki, 5542, New Zealand
QSL Printer UX5UO – Details: QRZ.com

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Please ensure your name and RNARS number appear on all transactions.

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If you elect to receive your Newsletter via e-mail, this is reduced to £10.

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Items published in the Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the RNARS.



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Chairman's Chat

Where does the time go? Here we are with the Spring edition of the newsletter, yet, in what only appears to be a few weeks ago we had the Winter edition dropping through the letter box, that's those of us who have it by "snail mail". You could save money by electing to receive it electronically as well as in glorious colour, never to be lost in the post or delivered to the wrong postal address.



I was careful to say postal address as it will come as no surprise, especially to the membership secretary, that some of you change your address and forget to inform him. Later the said member complains he has not received his Newsletter. The editor suffers the same fate when members change their e-mail address and fail to inform him. On the subject of obtaining your Newsletter electronically, it will only happen if you and only you send an e-mail in the correct format to the **Editor**. The reason for this is that the system he uses is automatic. It works by identifying the text in the subject. It is designed this way to save many hours of transcribing details to the data base. Time he does not have.

This is the time not only to refit your antennas and outside units of equipment, but to also ensure your subs and Bankers Orders are for the correct amount. You can also now use **PayPal** for your subscriptions, see under subscriptions above. It is surprising how many times some members are reminded to check they are paying the right amount and still fail to respond, causing additional work for the Membership Secretary as well as expense. Wally G4DIU took the membership portfolio at the last AGM so please address all membership queries to him and not Doug GOMIU, who now only deals with Commodities.

On the subject of commodities these are now reduced in price making them a very good buy. It is not intended order any stock with the new logo on until present stocks are run down.

I look forward to meeting up with you at the numerous rallies I make every effort to attend.

73, Doug. G4BEQ

Missing life in the navy?

Here's how to recapture the atmosphere of the old days and simulate living on-board ship.

Build a shelf in the top of your wardrobe and sleep on it inside a smelly sleeping bag. Remove the wardrobe door and replace it with a curtain that's too small. Wash your underwear every night in a bucket then hang it over the water pipes to dry. Four hours after you go to bed, have your wife whip open the curtains, shine a torch in your eyes, and say "sorry mate, wrong pit".



Every time there is a thunderstorm, sit in a wobbly rocking chair, and rock as hard as you can until you are sick. Don't watch TV except for films in the middle of the night. For added realism, have your family vote for which film they want to see; then select a different one. Leave a lawnmower running in your living room twenty-four hours a day to re-create the proper noise levels. Once a week blow compressed air up through your chimney. Ensure that the wind carries the soot over your neighbour's house. When he complains, laugh at him. Buy a rubbish compactor but only use it once a week; store up your rubbish in the heads.

Wake up every night at midnight and make a sandwich out of anything you can find, preferably using stale bread; optional, cold soup or canned ravioli, eaten out of the tin. Devise your family menus a week in advance without looking in the fridge or larder.



Set your alarm to go off at random times throughout the night. When it goes off, leap out of bed, get dressed as fast as you can and then run into the garden and break out the garden hose. Once a month, take every major household appliance completely apart then re-assemble. Use four spoons of coffee per cup, and allow it to sit for three hours before drinking.

Invite about eighty-five people who you don't really like to come to stay for a couple of months. Install a small fluorescent light under your coffee table and then lie under it to read books.

Raise the thresholds and lower the tops of all your doors in the house. Now you will always hit your head or skin you shins when passing through. Put lock wire on the wheel nuts of your car. Whilst baking cakes, prop one side of the cake tin while it is baking. When it has cooled, spread icing really thickly on one side to level it out again.

Every so often throw your cat in the swimming pool, or bath and shout; "man overboard", then run into the kitchen and sweep all the dishes onto the floor while yelling at your wife for not having secured for sea properly.

Put on the headphones from your stereo, do not plug them in, go and stand in front of your dishwasher and say to nobody in particular, "dishwasher manned and ready, sir". Stand there for three or four hours. Say, once again to nobody in particular, "dishwasher secured". Remove the headphones, roll up the cord and put them away.



Nickname your favourite shoe "steamies" and get your children to hide them around the house on a random basis.

Dave G4JBE 0434

Can you help? Dutch Minesweepers Hr. Ms. Libra & Hr. Ms. Texel

In 1939, the father of my partner was a naval reservist in the mine service and called up during the general mobilisation at the outbreak of World War Two.

On 15th May 1940 when the Netherlands was overrun and had no option but to capitulate and her father along with three other mine personnel managed to evade German patrols on foot and eventually reached the port of Oostende in Belgium where they found an old fishing boat. In darkness on 23rd of May they made their escape and headed towards England they were picked up by a British destroyer and taken into Dover where interrogation took place before sending them to Portsmouth. 26th May they were given passage aboard a tug to Falmouth and then on 28th May to Enys House in Mylor, a village in the Carrick Roads opposite Falmouth. Enys House had been requisitioned by the Admiralty and became the Dutch Navy Depot also the headquarters for the minesweepers based in the old naval dockyard in Mylor.

Now back in the Netherlands Navy he was drafted to Hr.Ms. Libra, the minesweeping area of Libra throughout June and 14th July 1940 was between Start Point and the Lizard. On 14th July 1940 Libra was sent to Milford Haven and from that date, through August until 24th September she was engaged not only in minesweeping between Milford Haven and Holyhead but also as a rescue/pick up vessel astern of the convoys bound for Liverpool.

On 24th September Libra was operating out of Barrow in Furness searching for mines in the area until Libra returned to Milford Haven sometime in August 1941 where it is believed that she was fitted to deal with acoustic mines.

At the end of 1942, he was drafted to Hr. Ms. Texel one of the "Mickey Mouse" minesweepers operating from Harwich and covering as far as the Dover Straits. In September 1944 she was operating off Oostende and fourteen days later returned to Harwich until 1st October when she was sent to Sheerness for 'Operation Calendar'. From 2nd November 1944 Texel was operating between Sheerness and the Belgian coast and was sweeping in the

Westerschelde as far as the Zeeuse Vlanderen port of Terneuzen, sweeping between the fierce artillery action of opposing armies between the dug in Waffen SS on the Dutch side of the Westerschelde and the allies on the Belgian side opposite.

Texel returned to Harwich on 7th December 1944 and for the remainder of the war and up to 1st December 1945 was operating along the Dutch coast and major accessible inland waterways such as the route to Rotterdam, Zuiderzee; now enclosed and renamed IJsselmeer.

The principal reason for this article is to ask if any of the readers of the RNARS Newsletter who served in Minesweepers have any knowledge of the activities of the Minesweeper Libra in particular, of and around Barrow-in-Furness involving Libra during the period mentioned. I did obtain some information from the Netherlands Naval Records but nothing related to the areas of my request. Various contacts have made enquiries for me but I have come up against a brick wall regarding any Harbour Masters' Records from Barrow – in - Furness. If anyone can help with any information especially photographs of Libra and Texel, I would be eternally grateful. And happily pay any cost incurred. My partner does not mind my saying that as she was a 'war baby' and on the death of her English mother she was adopted by the Dutch family of her father and she is very proud of, what I call her dual nationality and the intention of this request is to try and fill some gaps in her life because, sadly, her father died before she could meet him but as I told her, "Look at the lovely Dutch family who have welcomed not only you, but both of us with open arms and hearts and in them you will see your father".

Ron Kirby 2E0KAN RNARS 4894
Email: 2e0kan@gmail.com

D-Day Remembered

We had been five times to the landing beaches since the end of the war, but as the last time was nearly 30 years ago, we found that it was time to go to Normandy again, so in September 2010 we went.

We started in St Mére-Eglise where a model of US paratrooper John Steele still hangs on the Church Tower on his parachute. We visited the Museum in the shape of a parachute. Inside there is a horsa glider with paratroopers and Pilots. Next to UTAH Beach and on to “Pointe du Hoc” where US Rangers had to climb a 35m cliff under heave enemy fire.

Next stop was Omaha Beach with a very nice museum at Vierville/s/Mer. Then on to Port en Bessin where the first pipe line was installed along the Pier. This was later replaced by PLUTO (pipe line under the ocean) from the Isle of Wight to Cherbourg.



Also in Port en Bessin is the museum of the “Big Red One”; the first US Division that landed in France.

We then moved to Gold Beach, Arromanches; a great number of pontoons are still there from the artificial harbour and a nice museum.



Then to Juno Beach and Courcelles/s/Mer that was liberated by French Commandos under command of French CDT. Kieffer. On the 14th of June General De Gaulle set foot on liberated French soil in Courcelles. At Longues/s/Mer is the Batterie Allemande with big guns. At Quistreham; Sword Beach, we visited the Grand Bunker which is six storeys high.



From Quistreham we went ten kilometres inland to the famous Pegasus Bridge which was taken in

the early hours by British paratroopers in gliders. Then we returned back to the coast. If you wish to visit the area and see it all, you'll need at least one week.

As always on holiday, I had my transceiver with me and the US stations I worked were very happy to work me from Arromanches, the site of the artificial harbour and from Omaha Beach

Roger ON6WR 1282



22nd World Scout Jamboree, Sweden - SJ22S

Every four years the World Organisation of the Scouting Movement (WOSM) organises the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ). Much like the Olympic Games for sportsmen, the WSJ are to scouts worldwide the summit of their dreams. Every young scout has only one opportunity in his or her lifetime to participate, as participants must be 14 years old at the start of the event and no older than 17. Fortunately many older scouts are also welcome, as International Service Team (IST), planners and troop staff.

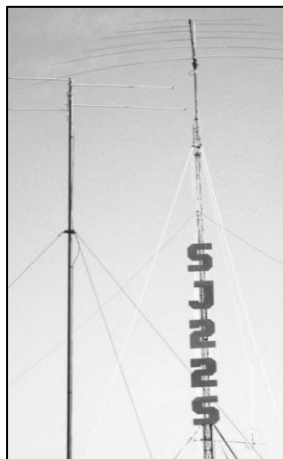
This year some 40,000 scouts and scouters (adult scouts) from more than 150 countries all over the world came together in the fields outside Rinkeby in Southern Sweden for the 22nd WSJ. This more than doubled the total number of inhabitants of Kristianstad, the municipality's main town. Weeks in advance, volunteer builders started preparations and most IST arrived on 24 or 25 July.

Among them forty radio scouters to operate the WSJ amateur radio station with the special event call sign SJ22S. The team consisted of about twenty



Swedish amateurs and some twenty from abroad. After arriving we quickly set to work preparing for the oncoming activities. On 27 July as most participants arrived, preparations were concluded and team training was conducted. Divided into seven small groups, all team members participated in all activities that had been prepared. This made sure everyone knew the basics about all activities and it helped iron out some minor problems before the participants would come in. The first QSO's were made around the world and it was good fun for the operators to be on the good side of a pile-up.

The activities were housed in a number of tents, a big white tent held the reception desk, information panels from the SSA (Swedish amateur club), positions for Echolink, 2m/70cm local communications and 80m and on display the world's largest collection of JOTA badges from Jochen DK8ZM. A smaller tent next to it was used for kit building. Some 750 JOTA/JOTI kits had been brought from the Dutch JOTA/JOTI working group and almost all were built during the WSJ. A very big tent housed the main radio station with three separate HF stations (QSO's made using SSB, CW and several digital modes) and a 6m/2m station for DX contacts. Behind the tents were three big antenna masts courtesy of a local radio club, with a three element tri-band beam for 10-15-20m, a log periodical beam for WARC bands and a 12 element beam for 2m.



One of the big masts showed the call-sign SJ22S in one meter high letters. On smaller masts we had an HB9CV for 6m and several antennas for VHF and UHF. Several wire antennas were used for the lower bands. We had an onsite repeater on 70cm, connected to an Echolink -L node, for QSO between hams onsite and others on Echolink. Another smaller tent housed fox hunting and PMR equipment. The PMR handies were used in several games where a blindfolded participant would be guided by another through a maze by radio. The last smaller tent had some Morse sounders. In the WOSM stand elsewhere on the

Jamboree we had another VHF/UHF station for demonstration QSO's to the main station and hams onsite, operating as SM7/HB9S. Finally, a bicycle with a trailer was available to show amateur radio around the camp. It had 80m, 2m and 70cm on board.

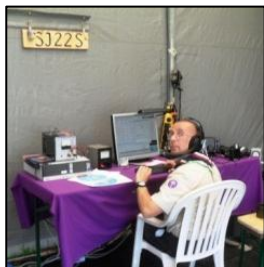
From 28 July, the team were organised in shifts to allow for 24/7 radio-activity that lasted until 7 August. Over a thousand participants and IST did at least three of our activities, earning a special badge. Many of them had never participated in JOTA and we hope we wet their appetite for more. On 3 August an eyeball sked was held for any amateur onsite and dozens participated.

Many more visited us during one of the visitor days. A WSJ record number of some 7,500 QSO's were made into over 130 DXCC entities on all continents. This way many scouts worldwide had the opportunity to be part of the WSJ from their homes or from other Jamborees. Noteworthy were many contacts on HF and on Echolink, with PA11HJ, the Haarlem Jamborette in The Netherlands. Scouts on both sides were able to communicate and compare their experiences.



For the first time during a WSJ, electronic logging was done. Jim N4JJR set up a networked logging system. Every operator position had a computer where QSO's were logged on the fly. Log details were gathered in a central database and directly uploaded to QRZ.com, eQSL.cc and our own blog.

This way, amateurs around the world were able to monitor our activities and enhance chances of making a QSO. Some QSL's were hand written but as numbers increased rapidly this became impossible to do for all QSO's. From the database, labels have been printed and large stacks of QSL were ready for shipment by the end of the event. A lack of label sheets prevented us from finishing the job on the Jamboree itself but the remaining card labels will be printed and sent out in a matter of days.



Operating on a WSJ means long days of intensive activities. As operators also want to participate in other WSJ program activities and enjoy the company of so many old and new friends, we didn't have enough time to maintain our online presence as well and as frequently as we would have wished. We really enjoyed receiving your emails, eQSL's, Facebook messages and blog comments.

This showed us the effort we made was greatly appreciated by scouts and the amateur radio community worldwide.

Thousands of amateurs from around the world have been able to speak to scouts and help them get a taste of our hobby. We hope this contributes to numbers willing to help local groups participate in JOTA. Scouts and amateurs both have a lot to gain from this. Amateurs anywhere need young people to join their ranks and showing scouts what fun it is to contact others around the world might guide them to become hams. Have you considered offering your assistance to your local scouting unit for JOTA? Be prepared and get as many of them to participate as possible. See you in October!

73 and a firm left handshake from Paul PA5UL.

RNARS lends a helping hand

A recent addition to the radio clubs in the Mediterranean area is the **Mellieha Amateur Radio Circle** (MARC). Well, I call it a club because that is the nearest description of the organisation. One of their principal members, Joe, tells me that they are a circle of friends who meet frequently at the fort in Mellieha.

It all started some time ago when the Mellieha Scout Group had radio stations operated by some of the amateurs in the area. For those that don't know, Mellieha is a town which is built on a hill in the northern part of the island of Malta. It boasts one of the best beaches in Malta at Ghadira which is at the bottom of the hill towards the north.

Right on top of the hill, at QRA locator reference JM75 EW is the fort. This site is where the scout group meet and they have accommodated MARC in the tower there. In the area there are a number of other forts and towers including the Red Tower and also Selmun Tower which is adjacent to one of the hotels that the town has. There are a number of walks in the area, and, a bird sanctuary with a fresh water location for migrating birds to stop over. Part of the countryside around Mellieha is designated a nature and history park.

MARC is an Affiliated Club member of the Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society (RNARS) and has a history of a number of years in assisting the Mellieha



Scout Group with various activities including Jamboree on the Air (JOTA), 'field days, training in radio and communications, etc. They operate from a former communications tower which comprises a meeting room that doubles as a shack and dining room with kitchen and storage facilities. Above this is an observation room which is also theirs to use. MARC has exclusive use of these rooms due to the generosity of the scout group. They have a number of HF and VHF aerials permanently installed for their use. They operate under the callsign 9H9MSG, a special callsign which was obtained as "9H9 Mellieha Scout Group".

Unfortunately, the Circle did not have a radio of their own but relied on members taking radios up to the site to use for their many events. This has changed now because the RNARS donated a Yaesu HF transceiver to MARC. This radio was taken out to Malta and presented to MARC at a special meeting on Saturday 5th November. The Circle was first presented with the RNARS Membership certificate and the welcome letter was read out to all present. This was followed by the handing over of the radio by Bill Mahoney,

G3TZM, who is also 9H1BX, on behalf of the RNARS Committee of which he is a member.

The presentations were followed by an excellent spread of food and drinks which were prepared by Joe Aquilina 9H1AJ (right).



There were photographs taken of the group of friends and Scouts after which two miniature banners were presented to Bill, one for himself and one for the RNARS as a token of appreciation for the donation of the transceiver. The Yaesu was connected up and used on the air immediately making many contacts on the ten metre band which is currently in good shape for DX contacts.

The circle meets most, if not every weekend at the fort (Triq Sant Anna, Mellicha) and all visiting Radio Amateurs are made very welcome. MARC also runs a number of events including barbecues for fund-raising as well as appearing at local high-profile events such as military days, etc. so keep an ear open for them on the bands and keep an eye open at events if you are visiting the island of Malta. Contacts by radio with MARC can be confirmed by QSL card but not via the bureau. If you need a card, please send them direct and only via 9H1SF.

73 de Bill Mahoney

News from **Rodger Vandenbussche ON6WR** RNARS 1282 who is also a member of the Royal Air Force ARS 3076.

For several years Rodger has been entering the RAFARS CW Contest. With thirteen entries under his belt, he has come first in the overseas category thirteen times from 1992 through to 2011, which equates to a 100% success rate!



500 KHz CW to Voice & Digital

In the early 1960s I finally decided to quit the job I had in the Chemistry Laboratory of a large steel company in the Midlands. I had been interested in radio since a schoolboy, I had built two of the new transistor radios from kits, and having heard of a school friend of mine who had gone to sea as a radio officer, I took the plunge, applied to Norwood Technical College in South London and was accepted.

All went well with the electrical and radio theory which I found very interesting having read radio magazines since around the age of ten, though not fully understanding all the articles. However, I did struggle somewhat with learning Morse and, when it came time to take my 2nd Class PMG exam, my worst fears were realised and I failed the Morse test. Thankfully, the college allowed me to stay on and take the 1st Class PMG course while also trying to improve my Morse. When exam time came around again, as well as the 1st Class PMG radio theory exam, I took both the Second Class Morse test and the 1st Class Morse test on the same day.

The next day I was told that the examiner wished to see me. Feeling very nervous I met the examiner. His first words really gave my heart a lift though, he said; "Ah Mr Barry, I marked your First Class Morse test and you passed". But then he went on; "I wasn't going to bother marking your Second Class Morse test, but then I thought I had better do so". "I'm afraid you failed it!". He did give me another go at the Second Class Morse test and this time I managed to pass it. I can only think that I had concentrated fully for the 25 WPM First Class exam, but in the 20 WPM Second Class test I had let my mind wander off. In another couple of days I heard that I had passed the theory for the First Class PMG, which I had been quietly confident of anyway. And so, I became the proud possessor of a 1st Class PMG Certificate, having never had a Second Class PMG.

In early summer of 1963 I joined the Marconi International Marine Company and was appointed to a sugar ship, the MV Crystal Sapphire, as trainee radio officer. As we left London and headed down the Channel, I found MF Morse reasonably straightforward on a one to one basis with GNF (North Foreland), GNI (Niton) and GLD

(Landsend). We had practised ship to coast station QSOs at Norwood quite often which stood me in good stead. When it came to working Portishead on HF though I found picking out our call sign from among all the others that Portishead was in conversation with quite difficult. I often needed a nudge from the Senior RO when Portishead called us. Gradually, with more practice, my HF working became easier.

In one area, however, I discovered I was more confident than the senior RO. Our main transmitter on the Crystal Sapphire was a Marconi Oceanspan VII with MF radiotelephone facility. The Captain loved to make a radiotelephone call to head office whenever we were within range of Lands End Radio. I noticed that whenever the Old Man asked for an RT call, the senior RO would come and ask me to do it. I was very happy to do the RT as I had obtained an amateur radio licence more than a year before I obtained my PMG Certificate and I had spent many a happy hour chatting away on the amateur bands using my WWII 19 set which had cost me 39/6 in Lisle Street. I suspect that it was the first time that our senior RO had sailed with a radiotelephone transmitter and was totally unused to it and even a little nervous about using it.

My next ship, sailing on my own this time, was a brand new Bank Line ship, MV Hollybank, being built at Doxford's shipyard in Sunderland. I stood by the ship for two weeks while it was being finished and then sailed on trials with it. The radio office was quite large with windows looking forward over the bridge wing, looking aft and also out on the port side.

Although the radio room was quite large and bright, there was not much equipment in it. There was lots of empty Formica bench space with just an Oceanspan VI main transmitter, Reliance emergency transmitter, Atlanta receiver and a Lodestone DF. I was disappointed to see that there was no RT facility at all. In fact the ship did not even have a VHF radio. Bank Line were renowned for keeping things to the bare minimum when it came to equipping the radio office on their ships. The ship was going to be on the India - Africa run and I was away for some eleven months before eventually paying off in Antwerp. While on board Hollybank using only WT, at least my keying skills improved. As on Crystal Sapphire though,

one thing annoyed me with the station – there was no sidetone on the transmitter keying. At Norwood, I had always been able to hear my own keying. On both the Marconi stations I had sailed with I had to listen to key clicks. I decided to do something about this and after obtaining a few transistors and other parts, I built an audio oscillator and amplifier to drive a small speaker. My only problem was how to make the oscillator respond to the keying. I then discovered that when the Marconi key was pressed, 24V appeared across the back contacts. By wiring the oscillator across the back contacts with a dropping resistor in series to bring the 24V down to a more reasonable 10 – 12V, I was in business, happily sending away with a nice sidetone to listen to.

It was while I was sailing on the Hollybank, we happened to be in Colombo when the P&O flagship Canberra came in. Myself and a couple of other lads went over to her and managed to have a look round on board. She was barely three years old at the time. I couldn't help wondering what it would be like to sail on a mighty passenger ship such as Canberra.

Although my Morse sending and receiving had advanced to a pretty good standard while I was on Hollybank, I became somewhat dissatisfied with the hard work of sending CW compared to simply talking on the radio. With traffic for Portishead Radio I found that it could be quite a while calling him before he listened in your part of the calling band. One afternoon when we were in the Indian Ocean, I had a message for the UK and though I could have sent it through Mauritius on the Commonwealth Area scheme, I could hear Portishead coming through loud and clear on 22Mhz. I called GK for almost an hour with no answer. I then decided to tune around and I heard DAN also coming in well. I called DAN and got a reply on the second call. I then tried PCH, OST and FFL in quite quick succession, getting a reply from each of them on the first or second call. I went back to GK and called him for almost another hour without raising him. In frustration, I sent the traffic via Mauritius but I also sent a service message to Portishead asking him to make sure he scanned the whole calling band, and explaining that I had raised DAN, PCH, OST and FFL all within the space of ten minutes or so but I had not received a reply from Portishead after almost two hours of calling him. Of course, on my

next watch period, back came a service message from Portishead saying that they always scanned the whole calling band!

I decided I needed some semi-automatic keying system which would reduce the effort required to some extent. After leaving Hollybank I purchased one of the



mechanical 'bug' keys similar to the Vibroplex, but cheaper. This worked fine at home on the amateur bands but back at sea it had problems. It was ok if seas were perfectly calm but if there was any rolling or pitching I found the mechanical reed which gave the dots would sometimes hang over to one side and give a continuous key down instead of the string of dots

After leaving Hollybank, I was asked to do the Radar Maintenance course. Marconi were going to be paying me while I did it, so they didn't have to ask twice! So, back I went to Norwood for a term, this time delving into the mysteries of radar. While I was on the course I made an attempt at building an electronic keyer which had appeared in one of the radio magazines. I never did manage to make it work properly before I had to go back to sea. By now I had been with Marconi for nearly three years attached to East Ham depot during that time. After Hollybank, I was sent to MV Athelking, a tanker which was on the Gulf to Japan run. While in Japan I took the opportunity, with a fairly large sub from the Captain, to purchase a Yaesu, amateur bands, SSB receiver and transmitter (FR100 and FL100) at quite a reduction from the price in the UK.

After serving on a couple more ships I returned to East Ham depot and was told to fill in a form which would show the equipment I had experience with. One of the questions was; 'Have you any

experience of SSB equipment'. Of course I answered this with a 'yes'. The clerk asked me where I had used SSB equipment and I explained that I had some at home.

Sure enough the next ship I was sent to, a fairly new bulk carrier MV Buccleuch, had the latest Crusader SSB transmitter. Unfortunately the receiver it came with was the usual Marconi Atalanta which, although fairly advanced for the very late fifties and early sixties, had never been designed with SSB in mind and was so poor in frequency stability that it would drift as much as one khz if the front panel was pressed in. However, if conditions were calm and there was not too much vibration I could manage SSB telephone calls on it. The ship was trading across to the East Coast of the USA and while over there I managed to send off for a Heathkit HD10 electronic keyer kit. Again the price in the US was much less than the price in the UK. Having successfully built up the Heathkit keyer and practised with it, I found it worked very well and I could now comfortably use the WT with automated dots and dashes even if the ship was rolling and pitching.

By this time, I had been with Marconi for almost four years and I was getting a bit bored with cargo ships, tankers and bulk carriers. I decided to apply to P&O as I quite fancied a passenger ship. I was accepted for an interview with P&O and at the interview; offered a job with them. The only thing that concerned me was they were talking about me going to a cargo ship at first. When I got home from the P&O interview there was a message to call Marconi. When I called East Ham, I told them straight away that I had been offered a job with P&O. Marconi told me that they had organised for me to go to an Orient Line passenger ship, the Oronsay. After thinking about this for a minute, I asked Marconi if it was definite that I was going to the Oronsay. They confirmed that it was definite and that I would be going on a radar course for Oronsay's radars before I joined it. This made up my mind and, after considering P&O's 'threat' of a cargo ship or bulker again, I decided to stay with the old firm. I had to call P&O and thank them for their interview, offer of a job and expenses but that I had decided to stay with Marconi.

After doing the radar course, I rolled up on board Oronsay which was in Southampton. As I was a reasonably experienced RO, I

joined Oronsay as 3RO and was put straight on the 12-4 watch on my own. They simply said; 'you'll get the London press, then the American press and you'll also get some of the Dutch press'. I was left wondering, what is 'press' exactly? For the next six months life was hard as I could not type the press directly. Although I had learned to touch type at Norwood, I did not have confidence enough to try typing it as it came in. I had to write it down and then type it up afterwards, which meant I was usually in the Radio Room until after 6am and 11 hour days were the norm. Eventually, after six months on board, I picked up confidence enough to type the press directly on to a page or Gestetner 'skin' as it came in. Life became somewhat easier, only nine hour days, and I also began to enjoy the delights of a passenger ship; good food, frequent interesting ports and best of all, quite a few single women on board!

On one of the occasions when we arrived back in Southampton, we had the P&O head office radio people come on board, Mr Barnes, Mr Bendelow and Mr Geoff Arnold. It was Geoff Arnold I believe who said "Oh you're the man who came for a job with us, was offered the job, turned it down and then turned up on one of our ships anyway!" I explained to him that the definite appointment to a passenger ship straight away with Marconi was more attractive than one at some time in the future with P&O. Incidentally, Geoff Arnold, after leaving P&O, joined Practical Wireless and became editor of PW later on. At that time, most of the P&O passenger ships had ROs who were employed directly by the company but the Orient Line ships, Oriana, Orsova, Orcades and Oronsay which P&O had only fairly recently taken over, still used Marconi men.

Life on board a passenger ship was busy. Apart from the several hours of press to take each day, I got much more practice with WT, there being more than half a dozen telegrams to send per day compared to the odd two or three a week on a tanker or bulker. Also telephone calls were quite frequent on the two Crusader transmitters but this time with nice new solid state Redifon R408 receivers which were wonderfully rock solid in stability and specially designed with SSB in mind. The ship was doing trips out to Australia and round the Pacific. While I was in the Japan and Hong Kong area, I managed to purchase a new electronic keyer, this time a KE Electronics memo 512.

This had squeeze keying with twin paddles and also had two memories. It took me a little while to get the hang of squeeze keying or Iambic keying as it is known. I spent a week or two practising with it in my cabin before I dared to use it on air. This keyer made WT work quite a bit easier. Not only was the actual sending easier, but if I was calling a station I could just



record the call into the memories and then push the button to call him, this really helped when trying to raise a busy station where many calls were required before they responded.

After almost three years on Oronsay, P&O decided to put their own ROs on the ex Orient Line ships and we Marconi men were offered jobs with P&O. I had reached the dizzy heights of 1st RO by late 1969 when this happened. I think P&O would probably have offered me a 2nd ROs job but like an idiot I turned down the offer of a job with them for the second time. It may have been some loyalty to MIMCO but I think it was also I was not sure whether I wanted to remain at sea much longer. I soon found out that Marconi had no passenger ships left that they could offer me. I joined the Benarkle, a fairly small old cargo ship which was running between Europe and Asia. I found life back on board a cargo ship very dull and so quiet I even volunteered to take some press and type it out for the ships company. The Captain was most impressed with his daily newspaper. I was also allocated a young trainee RO to do six months with me.

Returning to the UK in 1970, although the Captain asked me to stay on (he could see his daily paper disappearing soon!), I decided I couldn't face staying with MIMCO any longer and again applied to P&O for a job. By this time, P&O had all the men they required and were not that interested in me. All they would offer me was a 3RO position and said I would be doing at least a year on their tankers or bulk carriers. After weighing things up I decided this

offer was the best I would get. I duly spent some fifteen months on two of the P&O tankers, MV Opawa and MV Talamba before, in late 1972, I was sent to the Himalaya an old, 1949 built, P&O passenger ship. Although I was 2RO, at least it was nice to be back on a passenger ship again, even though I was doing all the drudgery of cleaning batteries, testing both radio lifeboats each week as well as taking most of the press on the 12-4 watch.

From Himalaya, I progressed to Arcadia where I did four and a half months cruising up to Alaska out of Vancouver. Then I spent the next three years on Orient Lines newest and largest, the Oriana where I progressed from 2RO to 1RO – back to the original position that I had held when I left Oronsay some eight years previously!. Oriana had been recently refitted with radio gear which was Redifon. From either of the two operating bays it was possible to listen to any of five receivers and key any of three transmitters. At Christmas time when Portishead could say something like 'QTC 15' it was great to have two ROs in the two bays taking telegrams alternately. One would receive a telegram and QSL it and then the next one would be taken by the RO in the other operating bay while the first telegram was being put in an envelope and addressed etc.

During the latter half of the 70s, although my WT skills were now very good, there was less and less need for them. One reason being that Sitor; Simplex Telex over Radio had come in and most of the ships traffic was sent by this mode. There was still some WT but its use was declining as technology moved on. Also by the time I had been on Oriana for some time and was sailing as 1RO, I was involved in maintenance more than operating.

In mid 1978 I joined MV Sun Princess, (ex Spirit of London). One interesting WT QSO I had while on that ship was when we were docked in Ketchikan, Alaska. We had decided to take out the radio boat for a test of its gear while on the water. I called up KFS on 8364 to test the HF side and he said he had traffic for us - QTC2 !. He kept asking me to QSY to a working frequency but it took me some time to convince him that I was in a lifeboat and only had 8364 KHz. He eventually sent me the two messages.

After Sun Princess I was sent to P&O's flagship, the Canberra. As the new boy there, I did the first few months as 2RO but then went up to 1RO and after only some fifteen months I was even doing some spells as acting Chief Radio Officer. Who would have thought it, when I visited Canberra back in 1964 as a junior RO sailing on my own for the first time that some sixteen years later I would be sailing on her as CRO?

Although WT was beginning to take a back seat for me by 1980, I still did the occasional filling in spell or helped out a junior RO who was struggling. In the late 70s I had purchased a Katsumi electronic keyer model MK-1024. It was a twin paddle squeeze keyer with four memories. The paddles had a really nice action and the four memories could also be strung together to make one long memory. At last I had the almost perfect electronic keyer; just as Morse was about to disappear!

One memorable QSO I had on Canberra was late one afternoon when I relieved the 4-8 operator so that he could get changed ready for dinner. As I stood in front of the WT bay with the loudspeaker on 500KHz I suddenly heard KFS calling us. We had left San Francisco the evening before and



were heading across the Pacific. When I went back to KFS on the key, the first thing he asked me was - "are you alone in the radio room?" I confirmed that I was indeed alone there and he proceeded to advise me that they had received an anonymous message that there was a bomb on board the ship. The ship's company then spent the next two days searching every locker and space that

could be thought of but of course no bomb was ever found thankfully.

The next several years saw me sailing on Canberra and Oriana, mainly as CRO and then going to Sea Princess where I first sailed with satellite communications. WT operating had by now almost disappeared and there was now the world of telex and satcom. In the latter part of the nineties along came GMDSS where there was no WT fitted at all and no key. One amusing QSO I had, possibly my final WT QSO, was on a ship which Princess had chartered, the Golden Princess (ex Royal Viking Sky). I had joined the ship while it was being refitted in Mobile, Alabama, to be a GMDSS ship. Shortly after leaving Mobile we (myself and a GMDSS operator who knew no Morse) were informed by the bridge that Slidell Radio had traffic for us. Of course we had had no knowledge of this – not taking any traffic lists and not listening on 500KHz. I fired up on RT to call WNU and he said he had one QTC for us and could I transfer to WT. I informed him that I had no WT facility and asked him to dictate the message on the RT. He said he couldn't do this and insisted that he had to send it on the key. I finally agreed to move to a WT frequency as I had thought of a way to acknowledge the message without a Morse key. I simply used the pressel switch on the RT handset to QSL his traffic, though keying with a pressel switch was not easy! I presume if the ship had only had its GMDSS operator it would have never received the traffic. GMDSS still seemed to be a mystery to the US authorities.

With the onset of GMDSS, I lost the grand title of Chief Radio Officer and instead became a Senior Communications Officer or 1st ETO (Electro-technical Officer) . Most of the ship referred to me as the 'Senior Com'. Although by now I quite enjoyed a CW QSO and I did miss the operating side to some extent, the newly fitted GMDSS ships were bringing lots of exciting new bits of equipment along.

Apart from satellite communications, there was satellite TV, high speed data, fax, new digital electronic telephone exchanges and so on. Instead of CW keying skills I now needed computer keyboard skills (my touch typing skills learned at Norwood were of great benefit). On one of the Princess ships in the late nineties I counted 17 computers in the Comms Centre. The only bit of radio operating

still left was the regular testing of the GMDSS rack on the bridge to check its DSC and RT facilities once a week. Instead of three or four radio officers as my staff, I now had a GMDSS operator, a TV operator, a telephone and general electronics technician and a theatre technician, none of whom knew any Morse but all highly skilled Filipino technicians.

As well as the Communications Centre and bridge electronics, there was the ships telephone system, the TV system, ships sound system, theatre lighting and sound systems to look after. Most of the larger Princess ships had two show lounges and a cinema or on the biggest ships three show lounges including one used as a cinema. Quite a different world – but that's a whole different story.

Paul Barry G3RJS 4901



George Sweet - G3OZY RNARS 0067
8th March 1937 – 15th November 2011

George passed away on the 15th November after a fairly short period of ill health. Those of you who knew George, will know he suffered on and off with medical problems, but always bounced back with a smile. It seems George knew he had cancer but told no-one and did nothing about it, preferring that nature should take its course.



Eight people attended his funeral; including myself, (his chauffeur of late), Laurence M0LBK, his next door neighbour and five from the Baptist Chapel that George used to attend. A sad tribute to the passing of a person so well-known and liked throughout the RNARS.

Rest in peace George; Dave Lacey G4JBE 0434

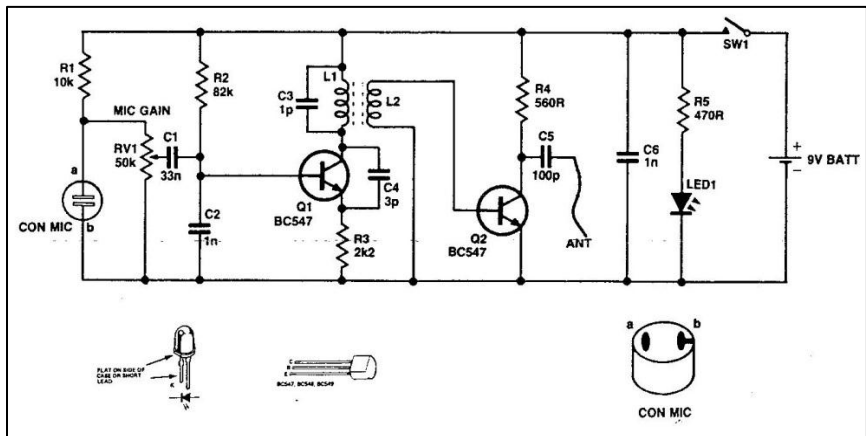
Wireless - Radio

I love our winters, cool at night, but mild during the day. It's the time of the year I can get out into my workshop and work comfortably. In the summer the high temperatures conducted from the steel roof and walls makes it unbearable. Winter is time to build some of those projects I was thinking about all last summer.

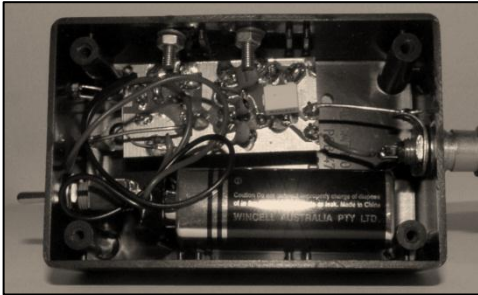
I'm a keen HF Contester, so my thinking tends to circulate around how to improve the ergonomics of my station. Things like easy antenna switching, good interface systems between rig and computer, etc.. This year I completed four small useful projects, all of which have found a place on or near my operating desk. I'd like to share them with you.

Project One: The lead on my headphones annoyed me. I tried various positions around the operating table for the cord outlet socket, but was never happy with them. My XYL would bring me in a cuppa and I'd turn to thank her and off would fly the 'phones!

So I purchased an Infra-Red transmitter with headphones for \$(A) 25. It interfaced well with my speaker selection system and was a great improvement, but it was directional. If I turned my head left or right the volume would change. So the solution was; don't turn your head, however, remembering my learning's of the pas, there must be a better way and project number one was born.



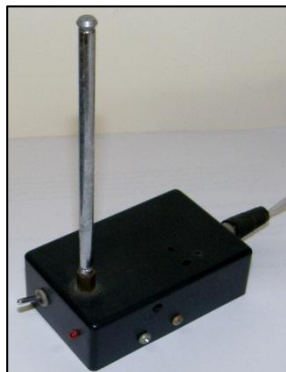
Some time back my granddaughter had given me headphones that had a built-in FM receiver, so why not build a simple FM transmitter? Searching through the handbooks and magazines there were quite a few circuits and kits offered by various suppliers at very low prices. I selected one that was described in the magazine ETI back in December '85. It was very basic and it all fitted into an 80x50mm jiffy box, including battery. The circuit used a pair of BC547 transistors and fitted on a simple one-sided PCB 44x22mm. A kit, complete with PCB, was available for \$(A)15 from a local electronic outlet. As you can see from the circuit, the design is simplicity in itself. The audio frequency from the microphone (or audio from your receiver) modulates a tuned circuit formed by the coil and some capacitors to derive an FM signal. Output from this is buffered and amplified by a single transistor amplifier and then fed to an aerial. The assembly time took about three hours, including the drilling of the case, which was minimal. It worked first time and was easy to tune to a frequency away from the general FM broadcast frequencies around 88 MHz



The infra-red transmitter was removed and the FM unit plugged in. Eureka. It worked! There didn't seem to be any problem matching the speaker output at very low level. Head turned left, then right, no change in volume. I left the shack with the head-set on and

was still able to hear everything clearly. It wasn't Hi-Fi FM quality, but what can you expect from a pair of transistors! I had expected it to go off frequency, but it seemed to hold. I used it for the next contest and was pleasantly surprised. I could even leave the shack to visit the "little room" and still hear what was happening on the frequency – even knew who stole my frequency!

Since making this unit I was looking in an "Under \$5" shop and found they had FM microphones on sale at \$(A) 2.99. So I purchased a couple and found they worked well on a single AA battery. The PCB inside is very small and could easily fit into a



small match-box. With a few very minor mods it worked great in the shack but I lost the signal in the “little room”. So decided it was not much good for the shack. However my granddaughter thought it great for Karaoke.

I'll tell you about the other projects later. What was your project during those cold months?

NB: All prices are in Australian dollars.

David A. Pilley VK2AYD
dvdply@midcoast.com.au



If Shakespeare or Robbie Burns had caught the radio bug they might have penned the following:

They CQ here, they CQ there,
They CQ every ruddy where.
The Amateurs are on the air,
Keen on finding who and where.
To this noble cause aspiring,
Never weary, never tiring.
They want a card sent to their station,
From every ham shack in creation.
On through the night while others sleep
Their CQ's on the air they heap,
Till at last the dawn will find them.
With lots of QSO's behind them.
Now this may be a pleasant way,
For some to pass the time of day.
But carried on into the night,
They're keen or else their mind ain't right.

A warm welcome to our new members and membership up-dates

New Members	4897	MM1AWV	Bob Lynch
	4898	9H9MSG	Mellieha Amateur Radio Circle
	4899	M3TRC	Peter Lee
	4900	G0UZJ	Kevin Hogg
	4901	G3RJS	Paul Barry
	4902	M0GMI	Robin Woodbridge
	4903	IK0IXI	Fabio Bonucci
	4904	G7DSU	Chris Tong
	4905	GW3OQK	Andrew Fairgrieve
	4906	2E1HHA	Allen Gittens
	4907	2E0GGT	Graham Townsend
	4908	G0IUY	Julia Tribe
	4909	2E0PIL	Peter de Groot
	4910	G1UYT	Shelagh Tomkinson (Family)
Changes	4895	M0JAD	John Holland (was 2E0CIG)
	2662	G0IEY	Family Membership
Re-joiners	4626	M0CVR	Paul Gurney
Re-instate	1172	VK6AU	John Hawkins
	2887	PF9A	Martin Ouwehand
	4621	KB7NJV	Frank Gruber
	4819	M0HJO	John Brooks
	4761	M0SSC	TS Superb (Stafford & Rugeley Sea Cadet Unit)
Resigned	4108	G0TCQ	Tony Cudlip
	2278	G0ELZ	Bill Cross
	4776	WB2YIP	Chuck Comerford
Silent	0057	G3OZY	George Sweet
Keys	3771	VE7MAA	Doug Grainger
	1633	G3YWD	Eric Darlington
	0174	G2FFO	Dick Johnson
	2328	F8LPX	Richard Dandine
	2707	G3TN	Tom Noblet
	3806	G0RKO	Leonard Johnson
	1461	SM6JSS	Bengt Plessen
	0353	G8BJP	Allen Bond
	1922	G4MXO	John James
	2266	G3KGF	Sid Foster
	4210	G3GJY	Jim Yarker
	0280	G3OVT	Francis (Frank) Collett

RNARS CW Activity 2011 results

Pos'	Callsign	Mem' No	QSO's	Points	Multi'p	Total
1	HB9BQR	Non Mem	117	963	12	1156
2	GM3CFS	RN803	82	646	11	7106
3	OE4PWW	CA135	95	626	9	5800
4	GM4SID	RN1929	95	626	9	5634
5	G4PRL	RN4844	67	615	9	5535
6	G3RFH	RN175	59	528	8	4224
7	GM4GIF	RN805	45	414	9	3726
8	G0PSE	RN4831	62	574	6	3444
9	K7VV	RN4571	48	336	10	3360
10	PA0VLA	RN944	55	478	7	3346
11	PA3EBA	CA54	42	384	8	3072
12	HZ1PS	RN1440	62	336	6	2016
13	ON4CBM	YO128	34	304	6	1824
14	G3ZNR (QRP)	ROA213	32	293	6	1758
15	YO4ASG/LH	YO124	21	210	7	1470
16	GM4BKV	RN1418	28	244	6	1464
17	G0ELZ	RN2278	26	233	6	1398
18	G3PEM	RN1917	17	134	6	804
19	MM0CJF (QRP)	RN4593	13	121	5	605
20	OE6NFK (QRP)	CA58	10	100	6	600
21	HB9DAR	CA111	13	121	4	484
22	G3YAJ	RN3384	10	91	4	364
23	M5ALG	RN4869	13	121	3	363
24	RW3AI	N/M	4	31	1	31
	GB4RN (Check Log)	RN4	149	864	9	7776

Comments (Excuses)

G3ZNR: Enjoyed the contest but found the bands quiet without the INORC contestants, although I did hear K7VV but with my 5 watts and vertical antenna I was unable to make a QSO.

GM3CFS: High power LZ stations giving lots of QRM but where were the RN stations? I got tired of calling CQ Naval and getting no replies.

G4PRL: Grateful thanks to all involved. Plenty of activity this year although I did not find so many Italian stations this year. It was good to have the HF bands open this year, I think it helped to scatter the other contest QRM a bit wider but it was still a problem.

GM4SID: Only had a few hours to spare this year but enjoyed the contest.

K7VV: Got one opening to UK and EU, so tried to make the best of it. I could often hear many weak signals but could not make out call signs.

HZ1PS: Thanks to RNARS for the contest and to all for the contacts. As usual a lot of QRM from LZ Contest. Had a lot of 'non-naval' call me, occupational hazard with the HZ call. I missed working again late Sunday afternoon my time as I had a previous appointment so operations confined to the couple of hours on Saturday. Worked many members on 3 bands – only managed Roland HB9BQR on four bands.

M5ALG: A pleasant way to spend a few hours without any pressure.

HB9BQR: Nice HF openings 14 to 28. Sinking attendance, No GW, HB9, OH, SM. Once again strong LZ QRM.

OE6NFK: Only 2 hours Sunday morning with 3 watts QRP from a FT817.

G3YAJ: Sorry for small log, family commitments.

G3PEM: Sorry did not have much time this year.

PA3EBA: Pity there were not more members from other clubs. Conditions were quite good this year, The contest participation is far better than winning it, see you next year.

GOELZ: Very much enjoyed the weekend and gave my aerials a good work out. Good to work K7vv so my aerial was working well.

G3RFH: Had a PC problem for logging at first, had to do paper and pen logging for a while.

GM4GIF: Enjoyed the contest but could have done with a few more multipliers.

GB4RN: Some really good conditions HF this year but missed a few multipliers as I was sending CQ most of the time and not chasing. This was to get people to grab me for that extra multiplier. There were a total of twelve stations that gave multipliers, remember it is only RN signing members that qualify not IN, CA, YO, OH etc. Also remember G & M are all English.

G3LIK: The QRM from the LZ contest is putting a lot of people off, so I am programming the RNARS CW to coincide with the International weekend in 2012 to see what difference that makes. You can send in logs for both RNARS and the International Naval contest; the date will be the 8th and 9th December, remember the

International one does not start until 16:00(Z), therefore the RNARS activity will start at 12:00 (Z).

2012 RNARS CW Activity Contest

Date and time: 12:00(Z) 8th December – 12:00(Z) 9th December

Bands 3.5, 7, 14, 21 and 28 MHz

Exchange: RST and Navy Number (use only one throughout the contest).

Scoring: 10 points with each Naval Station - RNARS, MF, INORC, MARAC, YOMARC, FNARS, ANARS, BMARS, ACRS, ROA. One point for all non-naval contacts.

Multiplier: Each RNARS signing member's country worked - count only once regardless the number of bands worked on. VE, VK, W, ZL, ZS call areas plus GB4RN all count as a separate country for this activity.

Logs: Separate log for each band.

Paper logs to: Mick Puttick G3LIK

21 Sandyfield Crs, Cowplain

Hants, PO8 8SQ UK

Email logs to: mick_g3lik@ntlworld.com

Logs are to be received by 31st December 2012

Rally Round Up

Kempton Park Rally 6th November 2011

At the RNARS AGM in October 2011, I decided to stand down as a RNARS rep after twenty one years. So this rally was to be the first Kempton rally where I did not have a RNARS stand to sit behind after all those years.

Jackie was not with me this time and I left home at about nine o'clock for the relatively quick journey to Kempton Park racecourse in Sunbury, South West London. A fair number of people had already started to queue by the time I got there but as I was not setting up a RNARS stand I did not bother to join them but stood to one side and followed everyone in at 10:00.

The intention was to go to the rally as a social event rather than to really buy anything but I had a notebook in my pocket to record the number of RNARS members I ran into during the event and I was not to be disappointed. Marc G0TOC our RNARS qsl manager and

John G1DJI, Secretary of the London Group, Alan 2E0VAV an ex London Group Chairman, Simon G0IEY and Julia G0IUY from the Horndean Club, Barry G0MPJ. Keith G1GXB and Wally G0PPH RNARS committee members, Tony M1AFM, Jim G3VRY, Fred G3GJY, Harry G4JSW, Joe G3ZDF RNARS Secretary, Frank G0LFI and Chris M6UBI, his XYL and try as I might, I couldn't find our Chairman Doug G4BEQ. I met two former members Alan G4GJV and Tom G0NSY though.

Harry G4JSW presented me with a box of chocolates to give to Jackie as he has done so for some time at this event, thanks Harry. The event was hugely enjoyable and reasonably well attended in my opinion. I was asked by Ray Howell G4FFY one of the organisers what I thought and told him it was very enjoyable

Phil Manning G1LKJ 2954

Luton

A warm, but blustery day. There were 200 plus stalls at this very popular rally. The beauty of this event is that it's all amateurs selling to amateurs, with none of the professional traders attending.

I ran the stall in conjunction with the Bedford Club, and we set up an 80 M station, using the existing rugby posts as antenna supports. As the wind was very strong we did not erect the club gazebo, but surrounded the temporary shack with our cars to give shelter.

Nobody signed in and no commodities were sold. Come on you people support this rally. as its one of the best in the country.

Glenn G0GBI 3841

Milton Keynes

A small club rally, which was well attended. There were people bartering and haggling over deals, all friendly might I add. I met a lot of old friends that I hadn't seen for a while.

The stand was again run in conjunction with the Bedford Club, with a display for the RNLI. Donation to this were place in a model life boat. Four members signed in, but no commodities sold. We packed up at 13:30 as most punters had left.

Glenn G0GBI 3481

Huntingdon

This rally is held at St Neots College very close to Tesco. The outside spaces were all taken, however only half the tables on the inside were taken up. I had a wander round and spent nearly a fiver, which worried me until I got home.

The rally was well supported, with most people buying the smaller additions for the shack. Five members signed in and I sold; wait for it, ONE KEY RING. I packed up at 14:00

Glenn G0GBI 3481

Malata's best kept Secret

London had some in World War II. They were so secret that only a few people knew about them. Churchill spent many hours in there; where? In the War Rooms.

What many people don't know is that Malta had War Rooms too which are located deep in the bastions of the capital city Valletta.

If proof were needed that they were so secret, back in the 1990's a German visitor said that Germany thought they had the A to Z of the Mediterranean but only had the A to Y because they didn't know about the Lascaris War Rooms. They also featured in the film *The Malta Story*.

Originally dug out of the rock by the French knight Jean Lascaris around 1650 it was initially used to house Turkish prisoners who built the fortifications around Grand Harbour & Valletta. The site has had a chequered history since which culminated in them becoming operational as the War Rooms in mid1941.

An old communication tunnel, built by the Knights of St John, was used and further chambers were excavated deep into the rock and converted into a Sector Operations Room by the Royal Engineers for Royal Air Force use. From here the movements of enemy aircraft could be tracked and plotted on large maps to facilitate air and ground defence coordination. With the intensity of the war, additional space was excavated to make more room underground for communications and radar tracking facilities. Late in 1940, the

Royal Navy war room at Fort St. Angelo made its way to this complex along with that of the artillery's anti-aircraft defence. The coast artillery room remained where it was in the crypt under the then Garrison Church now the Exchange Building at Castille Place, Valletta.

During this period, the situation under the Upper Barracca was described as cramped and unbearable. This led to the authorities converting a massive underground tunnel across from the Lascaris Tunnel in the Main Ditch into a new and modern war room complex. This tunnel was originally excavated by the Royal Engineers as an underground dormitory for those working at the War Rooms. The long tunnel allowed for the placing of all necessary operation rooms parallel to each other supported by as many offices as necessary. Each one of them was provided with a separate entrance to preserve secrecy.

In the new war room complex there were Operations Rooms for the Royal Navy, Anti-aircraft Artillery, Royal Air Force and a Combined Operations Room along with a Filter Room for the sifting of radar traffic and a Combined Operations Room for all services.

The new complex opened for business in February 1943 in time for Operation Husky - the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. These new Lascaris War Rooms served as the joint Allied HQ under the Command of the US General Eisenhower. Assisting him were Generals Montgomery and Alexander, Admiral Cunningham and Air Marshal Tedder in command of the allied navies and air forces respectively.

Following the end of the War it became the Mediterranean Fleet Headquarters. In 1967 it was taken over by NATO to be used as the strategic communications centre for the interception of Soviet submarines in the Mediterranean. It remained in that role for the next ten years when it was finally closed down.

The War Rooms played an active part in the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt during the Suez crisis in 1956 and went into full alert for a number of days during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 when a Soviet missile strike against Malta was expected.

In 2009, a Maltese Heritage Trust called Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna embarked on the restoration of this historic complex. Since then its volunteers have spent many selfless hours in painstakingly getting it back to its former glory for the enjoyment of the visiting public.

Visitors are able to:

- Enter into the most closely guarded underground spaces in Malta
- Learn how the air defence of Malta was minutely controlled from here combining the use of optical observation, radar, aircraft, searchlights and artillery
- See from where the first stages of the invasion of Sicily – Operation Husky was directed.
- Enter the very rooms in which the ultra-secret Enigma information was received and processed.
- View original film footage of the time that shows how the Fighter Operations Room functioned and from which modern flight control has evolved.
- Share even if for a while the same space which once saw the presence of some of the wartime allied top heroes such as Field Marshall Montgomery, US Generals Eisenhower and Spike, Admiral Cunningham, Royal Navy and Air Marshall Tedder, Royal Air Force.

Heritage Pass:

You can buy a multi-site Heritage Pass from here that will give you access to this attraction along with entry into Fort Rinella and the 100 tonne Gun, the Saluting Battery in Valletta and the Malta at War Museum in Vittoriosa. This ticket lasts for a whole week. Guided tours and film shows take place every hour.

Contact details:

Tel: 21234717; e-mail: info@wirtartna.org

Web site: www.wirtartna.org



Coventry Social Meeting

A social gathering and fun weekend is being arranged from the 14th-17th September at the Coventry Hill Hotel, Coventry. Warwickshire. Those who attended our Fiftieth Anniversary at the hotel will be fully aware of what an excellent weekend it was and many could not believe the excellent value for money.

This year it will follow the same pattern. I should stress that this is a gathering of friends and non-members are more than welcome. The cost of the weekend will be 3 nights £125, 2 nights £105 & 1 night £80. Free parking is available and we will have our own room for socialising.

Provisional programme

Friday 14th

14:00	Reception open for arrivals
18:00	Drinks reception
19:00	Dinner

Saturday 15th

07:30-09:30	Breakfast
10:00	Coach trip (possibly Leamington Spa)
18:30	Up Spirits - Other beverages available
19:30	Gala Dinner with entertainment

Sunday 16th

08:00-10:00	Breakfast
10:00	Day free to explore Coventry (Motor Museum highly recommended)
19:00	Dinner followed by social evening with entertainment

Monday 17th

07:00-09:00	Breakfast
10:00	All rooms to be vacated – End Ex & depart

Times and programme may be subject to change nearer the date to suit our requirements. In order that I can firm things up, it is essential that you contact me as soon as possible and prior to any deposit being paid to the hotel. Please e-mail me **g4beq@btinternet.com** or phone **02392504096** or write; address inside front cover.

It is intended to run a special call celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee during this weekend as we have permission to set up a station, but I would emphasise that this is essentially a social weekend to enjoy with our wives, partners and girlfriends, radio is only for the dedicated or those looking for a fast separation/physical injury.

Digital Explorations

Since I was first licensed in 1971 I have operated on HF CW and SSB with the odd detour on to 6M. For the last 10 years or so I have read about and occasionally listened to digital signals even though I was not really sure what the digital modes were, apart from RTTY which I had come across as a lowly RO3 during basic training in Mercury and on my first draft; Hermes. Digital modes seemed complicated and slightly exotic.

I downloaded a (free) copy of DigiPan and ran a simple cable from the phone socket of my Yaesu rig into the sound card on my PC. Once I had found the frequency assigned for digital use and selected the correct mode on the rig I started to see a mass of activity on the 'waterfall' which is one of the main displays on DigiPan. The latest band-plan from the RSGB shows the frequencies on each band where you can find digital activity.

For some time I had used TRX-Manager, a control and logging program that I had bought specifically for use with my FT920. That necessitated the use of a CAT cable between the rig and my PC. CAT in this instance stands for *Computer Assisted Transceiver*. Put simply this allows a PC to control many of the functions of the transceiver and it can for example change frequency, change mode or switch to a particular memory location. More importantly it can copy the frequency and the mode the rig is set to and write them into an electronic log. However, you don't need this cable if you only plan to use DigiPan.

And then the Spring Edition of the Newsletter came through the letterbox and it had a very informative article about digital modes by David VK2AYD. I decided to bite the bullet and try transmitting digital instead of just being a lurker and only listening. There's one school of thought that says the connection between the PC sound card and the transceiver needs to have some isolation element in it and there's another that says this is totally unnecessary. I have had a number of discussions about this with Ray G3KOJ my fellow committee member but in the end I went for the former and looked for another (cheap) cable or device to link the PC and the transceiver. There are lots of them out there that do the job but I opted for a simple interface from MOAQC. You can find a selection

of interfaces in the small ads in RadCom or in the ads from the usual range of suppliers. Incidentally I see that the latest QRP rig from Elecraft the KX3, allows you to operate digital modes without a PC. According to their literature you “*transmit in data modes using (the built in) CW keyer paddle.*” Now that sounds interesting.

In addition to the free software David mentioned in his article there are two packages that I use for PSK. The first is AirlinkExpress and the second is Digital Master 780 (DM780) which is part of the Ham Radio de Luxe (HRD) suite of programs. The first is quite comprehensive and offers a wide range of modes. The second is one of the most sophisticated and feature rich programs I have seen in a long time but takes a little bit more effort to set up. Both offer all the flavours of PSK and also RTTY. DM780 integrates with the other programs in the HRD suite. Both have got electronic logs that can be exported in Cabrillo format.

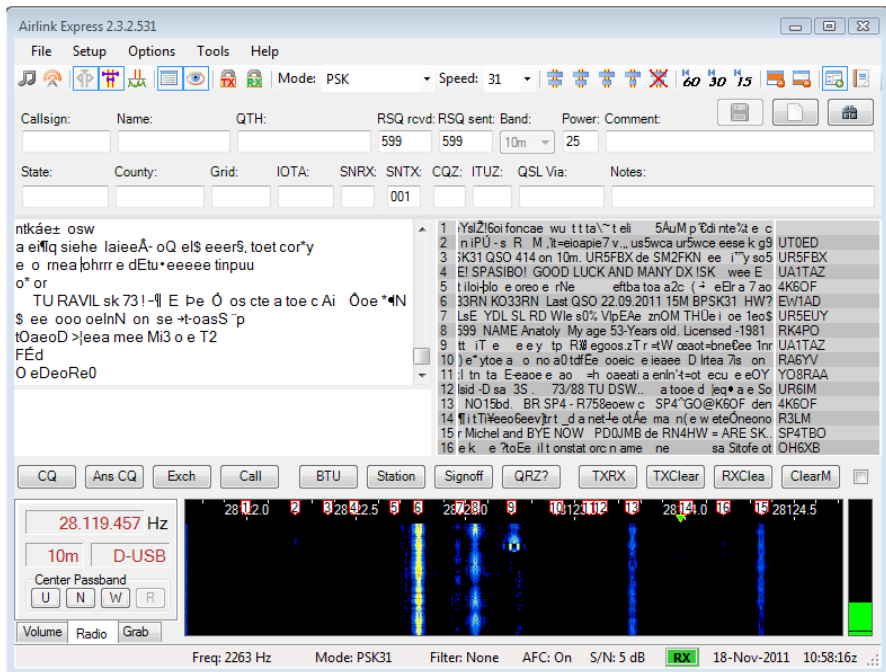


Figure 1 - Screenshot of Airlink Express on 10M

Working digital modes has a number of benefits. The maximum power needed on PSK for example is about 25 watts although you can run on much lower power. This obviously reduces the possibility of TVI. For anyone who has to operate in a quiet environment the only sound may well be the clicking of the keys on the computer keyboard and even that can be reduced by defining and using the macros or predefined chunks of text which are available in all the software packages. The narrow bandwidth of the signals also mean that signals will often be readable long after the other modes have disappeared into the QRN. Finally, anyone whose hearing is starting to deteriorate may well find it useful that they will be able to read what the person at the other end of the QSO is saying/keying.

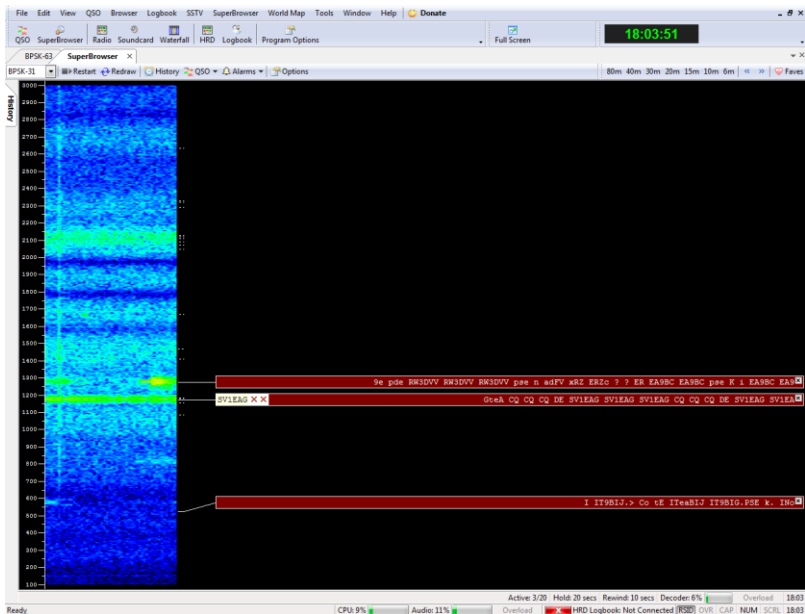


Figure 2 - Screenshot of DM780 (on a very quiet band)

I can do no more than echo David's words in his article, download one of the basic software programs, hook it up to your rig and you will be surprised just what and who you can hear, see and hopefully, work.

Joe G3ZDF RNARS 585

HMS Corfu – Ken Lown

In 1943 I flew reconnaissance sorties from HMS Corfu, an armed merchant cruiser. The ship's officers and engineers were MN on T124X engagements but the seamen, gunners and communicators were all RN.



HMS Corfu was originally built for and operated by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O). She was launched in 1931 to serve the company's India and Far East Mail Service, along with her sister ship, RMS Carthage. Both ships were built by Alexander Stephen & Sons Ltd in Glasgow and in service from 1931 until 1961 when they were both scrapped in Japan.

Our flight consisted of two pilots, two observers and twelve maintainers who kept the three Kingfisher floatplanes in working order and also on returning from patrols.

HMS Corfu was 15,000 tons with a beam of about eighty feet. An athwart-ship catapult was used to launch the aircraft. As the Kingfisher had to be at "air speed" when it reached the end



of the catapult ramp, a 2,500 pound charge of cordite was used to assist the launch producing 2.5 G of thrust.

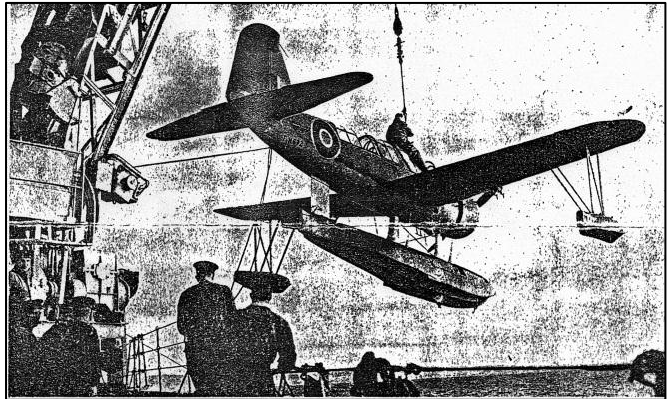
Corfu patrolled the South Atlantic looking for blockade runners from Japan or the East Indies as well as “milch-cows” supplying German U boats.

Intelligence services gave us details of likely shipping to investigate and as we approached, I would “flash” “OE” (identify yourself) on my aldis lamp. Their ID would be run up in the form of flags codes and I had to learn both the naval and international codes. If the vessel was slow in responding, we flew over them so they could see our two 250 lbs bombs, not surprisingly, the relevant flags were hoisted quickly.

As you would imagine, radio silence was the order of the day, only once did I have to send a radio report of a suspicious vessel. Our patrols were normally of three and a half hours duration, mostly in the mornings and afternoons scanning many miles of oceans. As the observer I had to log the details of all vessels sighted including course and speed. I was also the navigator and had to trust my skills to return us to HMS Corfu and hope that the ship’s intended course and speed had not been altered in our absence.

On one occasion in heavy squalls, Corfu was nowhere to be seen on our return. We started a search and eventually I prepared to send “INT QDM” via CW just as she emerged from a squall.

On our return the ship made a ninety degree turn to starboard to flatten out the water. The ship then trailed a floating cargo net on to which the pilot taxied towards



to engage the six inch hook on the central float of the Kingfisher. This meant we were moving at the same speed as the ship. The

recovery crane lowered a hook to which I attached to the aircraft's lifting strop.

Ken Lown G4PTE 2008

Closing Down

Kicking off with an apology for the late distribution of the Winter edition. Just as I was putting the finishing touches to the layout, my father was rushed into hospital after suffering a slight stroke. As you can imagine my time was taken up with hospital visits and other family matters. Fortunately Dad has made a very good recovery. If you like pictures of older merchant vessels, I have a slide show on YouTube of most of the ships my dad sailed on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Je_S85_rfoE



The e-mail distribution of the Winter edition went well, bar a fair number of returned e-mails! This is the first time it has happened. The mails were returned due to changes of address or insufficient space in the recipient's mail box. The Newsletter is sent out as a PDF file and is normally just over one Meg' in size, so please ensure there's space in your mail box for it. And if you change your address, please **re-subscribe from your new address.**

To subscribe to the e-Newsletter, send an e-mail from the address you wish the Newsletter delivered to: **rnars@colinsmagic.com** and **only** enter **Newsletter Subscription** in the subject. In the body of your mail, please enter your name, call-sign and RNARS number so that I can forward the information to the membership secretary and Doug Bowen who manages the printing and postage of the hard copy.

Regrettably, certain well intentioned members have compiled a list containing the e-mail addresses for several of their friends and sent them in a collective e-mail. **Please appreciate and I repeat once again; I need individual e-mails from each subscriber.** What I

will never understand, is that all our many overseas members for whom English is not their first language, have all understood and complied with the instructions. Yet certain others in the English speaking world just can't follow a few simple instructions. I don't want to name and shame, but may consider as a last resort.

Thanks as always to all who've been in contact with articles. I can't stress strongly enough that I am always in need of articles. For the first time since I took on the role of editor, I actually had a couple of items left over from the Winter edition to use in this publication. However the "pending" tray is empty and if you want a Summer issue, I'll need articles; now!

As always a reminder, the address for Newsletter correspondence and articles is **rnars@colinsmagic.com** and remember to **ONLY** put **RNARS** in the subject.

Contrary to the AGM minutes in the last edition, I don't live in the far north of Scotland; I live just a few miles from historic city of St Andrews sometimes better known as the "Home of Golf" in the south of the country. If you happen to be in the area, feel free to give me a shout, my mobile number is listed on the inside front cover and normally my VHF radio is listening on: 145.725MHz (GB3AG). For anyone with SKYPE, my ID is; **colintop** if you want to call me on this mode.

Closing date for items to be included in the Summer edition will be **14th July 2012**.

Hopefully, the coming summer will be kinder weather wise than that experienced last year and I can do a lot more sailing than in 2011 when the weather was very unseasonal. As always I will be taking along my SG 20-20 transceiver which I mainly use on 80, 40 and twenty meters. So if you hear me on, give me a shout.

Regards and have a good summer, *Colin*
GM6HGW
1870

RNARS Nets: all frequencies +/- QRM. DX nets are all GMT, UK nets are GMT or BST as appropriate. Contact Mick G3LIK with any changes or up-dates: mick_g3lik@ntlworld.com **NOT** the editor.

UK Nets

	Time	MHz	Net	Control
Daily	2359-0400	145.725	Midnight Nutters	M0WRU
Sun	0800	3.667	SSB Net-News at 0830	G3LIK
	1000	7.088	Northern Net	GM4BKV
	1100	145.4	Cornish VHF Net	G0GRY
	1100	7.02	CW Net	G4TNI
Mon-Fri	1030-1330	3.74 / 7.088	Bubbly Rats	G0HMS-G0GPO
Mon	1400	3.575 / 7.02	QRS CW	G0VCV-G3OZY
	1900	3.742	North West-News at 2000	G0GBI
	1900	3.528	CW	G3LCS
Tue	1400	3.74 / 7.088	White Rose	Vacant
	1930	3.743	SSB & News at 2200	G0OAK
	2000	145.4	Stand Easy	Vacant
Thurs	1900	3.542	Scottish CW	GM3XGX
	2000 GMT	1.835	Top Band CW	G0CHV-G4KJD
	2000	145.575	Scottish 2M	GM0KTJ/P
Fri	1600	10.118	30M CW	SM3AHM
Sat	0830	3.74 / 7.088	G0DLH Memorial Net	G0VIX

DX Nets

	Time	MHz	Net	Control
Daily	0800	14.303	Maritime Mobile	G4FRN
	1430	21.41	DX Net	W1HMY/EA5AVL/K4XAT
	1800	14.303	Maritime Mobile	G4FRN
Mon	0930	3.615	VK SSB	VK1RAN-VK2RAN
Wed	0118 – 0618	7.02	VK CW	VK4RAN
	0148 – 0648	10.118	VK CW	VK4RAN
	0800	3.62	ZL SSB	ZL1BSA
	0930	7.02	VK CW	VK5RAN
	0945	7.09	VK SSB	VK1RAN-VK5RAN
Sat	0400	7.09	VK SSB	VK2CCV
	1330	7.02	VK CW	VK2CCV
	1400	7.09	KV SSB DX	VK2CCV
	1430	21.41	RNARS DX	WA1HMY
Sun	0800	7.015 / 3.555	MARAC CW	PA3EBA/PI4MRC
	1230	14.335	Isle of Man	GD3LSF/OE8NIK
	1430	21.36 / 28.94	RNARS DX	WA1HMY
	1900	E-QSO	When cond' poor	VA3ICC
	1900	14.33	N American	WA1HMY

RNARS activity frequencies:

FM	145.4								
CW	1.824	3.52	7.02	10.118	14.052	18.087	21.052	24.897	28.052
SSB	1.965	3.66	3.74	7.088	14.294	14.335	18.15	21.36	28.94

Special Offer – RNARS Personalised Shack Clock

The clock is nine inches total diameter and has a quartz movement (battery not included).

Each clock is personalised with your callsign, and the old 500KHz & 2182KHz silence periods. In place of the GMT reminder, for RNARS members, the new RNARS logo can be inserted; as per the front cover.



Each personalised clock costs £12 and £3 postage and packing. Regrettably I cannot supply out with the UK due to the high postal charges. To order, please use the order form below, photocopies are acceptable. Any questions, please e-mail me: **rnars@colinsmagic.com** and remember to only put **RNARS** in the subject, or call me on 07871959654.

Orders normally processed within fourteen days of receipt of your order. Send your order together with a cheque or postal order to the value of £15 made payable to “**Colin Topping**” to the following address:
17 Mount Melville Crs, Strathkinness
St Andrews, KY16 9XS

I would like to order a clock personalised with the RNARS logo and my callsign. **(Please print carefully)**

Telephone number: _____

Name: _____

Call & RNARS No: _____ | _____

Postal Address: _____

Post code: _____

RNARS Commodities order form

Feel free to use a photocopy of this form
Please write clearly and use block CAPITALS

Call-sign & RNARS No: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Phone number: _____

Item	Qty	Size	Price	P & P	Total
Sweatshirt (Grey or Navy) with small logo			12-50	2-50	
T Shirt (Navy blue) with large logo			6-50	1-00	
Tie (Navy blue) RNARS logo			5-50	0-50	
Logbook (if ordering one)			3-10	1-40	
*** Logbook (if ordering two) ***			6-20	2-30	
Baseball cap with RNARS logo			4-50	1-00	
Car windscreen sticker			0-40	SAE	
Blazer badge with logo in gold wire			8-50	SAE	
Tea / Coffee mug with logo			1-50	1-00	
Coasters with logo			1-00	0-45	
Lapel badges			1-50	0-45	
50 th Anniversary lapel badge			3-00	0-45	
Total enclosed					

***** Buy two logbooks and save fifty pence! *****

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Overseas members, please add £5-00 to cover additional postage.

Please allow fourteen days for delivery and while these prices are
correct when going to press, prices do vary and are subject to
change.