



## Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society

Hon. Secretary Joe Kirk G3ZDF 111 Stockbridge Road  
Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8QR  
g3zdf@btinternet.com

### MINUTES

#### Committee Meeting Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

##### HMS Collingwood

<b>Present:</b>	David Firth	2E0GLL	Chairman	
	Joe Kirk	G3ZDF	Secretary	
	Dave Lacey	G4JBE	Data Comms Manager	By Skype
	Wally Walker	G4DIU	Area Rep Coordinator	By Skype
	Colin Topping	GM6HGW	Newsletter Editor	By Skype
	Doug Bowen	G0MIU	Commodities Manager	
	Steve Legg	M6WVV	Shack Manager	
	Marc Litchman	G0TOC	Membership Manager	By Skype
<b>Apologies:</b>	Adrian Mori	2E0JVM	Treasurer	
	Mick Puttick	G3LIK	Hon. Vice President	

Tasks to be completed are underlined

The Meeting started at 19.14

#### 1. Chairman's opening remarks

- a. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

- a. As above.

#### 3. Minutes of the last two meetings

- a. Proposed by Doug and seconded by Wally and agreed unanimously.

#### 4. Matters arising

- a. Steps to get our message across to the Training Staff in Collingwood.
  - i. The Chairman will advise of the best time to invite them to the HQ Shack and perhaps provide refreshments.
  - ii. Secretary to get clearance from ex-Officio for making presentations in T5. DONE
- b. Secretary to advise Marc that the Committee agreed to the sale of the Barrett rig and the funds to be put towards purchase of an IC7300 provided the role of the RNARS in the purchase was recognised in any press releases or publicity. DONE
- c. The Committee authorised the payment of £60 to Doug G4BEQ who purchased the ramp originally. DONE
- d. Committee agreed to a donation of £50 towards YOTA. Secretary to arrange with the Treasurer. DONE
- e. Secretary to contact Marc to get Membership Reports for the Committee Meetings. IN HAND  
Dave said that confirmation of membership status was necessary for the running of the Yahoo Group.
- f. Shack Manager was asked to get estimates for the refurbishment and decoration of the Shack IN HAND

Secretary was asked to contact the ex-officio to confirm we could go ahead with the redecorating and to see if there was a source of volunteers we could call on.

- g. Secretary to establish if we could get sponsorship for some or all of the cost of the refurbishment from a charity or from one of the suppliers  
IN HAND
- h. The Chairman undertook to publish a statement about the kind of behaviour that was expected from all members. DONE
- i. AGM - Secretary to write to the Mess Manager and confirm arrangements for the AGM. DONE
- j. AGM Secretary to arrange the lunch with Mess Manager similar to last year. DONE but with alternative arrangements
- k. Shack Manager to prepare a plan for the lowering and checking of the tower with the VHF aerials. DONE  
The mast was lowered and inspected. No aerials were removed but the cables were tidied up and the raising cables were greased.  
The 'white stick' aerials were continuity checked satisfactorily but were found to be problematic on Open Day.  
Shack Manager to check both aerials with an antenna analyser.  
Shack Manager to establish maintenance records for both masts and for all the aerials.
- l. Secretary to contact ex-officio.to approach the flag store in Collingwood to see if they had bunting or pennants we could use as decoration in the Shack. DONE with negative results
- m. Commodities Manager will investigate cost and availability of personalised and branded caps. DONE  
One national supplier on examining our logo said it was too complex to embroider on a cap but could cope OK with a name and callsign.  
Secretary to contact member Paul G0VEP who does embroidery to see if he has the facilities for embroidering caps.  
It was also suggested we should consider having embroidered badges with a Velcro backing.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

- a. David said that some trunking had been installed in the Shack to tidy up the cables at the back of the operating bays. The work was done by Alan M6LFM and Joe M6VLL and thanks were paid to them.
- b. He said we needed to look again at both the HF and VHF aerials.
- c. As part of making the Society more visible Secretary to purchase 2 feather banners with the Society's logo and name. (Feather banners are the things that wave outside every garage and forecourt in the country.)
- d. David said we needed to get someone who could explain and demonstrate the D-Star rig in the shack so we could make use of it. (At the Open Day Andy 2E0REE said he had a similar rig.) Secretary to contact Andy to see if he would demonstrate the set up and usage of the rig. Steve mentioned that rig we had was early generation and did not have the full range of facilities available on current rigs.
- e. David said he would like to see a modern HF rig in one of the bays that could be used with a range of modes.  
Joe said that with the current set up it was difficult for 2 bays to operate simultaneously on HF because of breakthrough. We needed some way of filtering signals. One way of helping us decide what we could do would be to visit another club that had multiple HF bays. It

was suggested we visit the National Radio Centre in Bletchley Park to see how they addressed the problem. Secretary to progress visit to NRC.

#### **6. Secretary's Report**

- a. Thanks to Martin M0EHL the tap on the boiler in the kitchen has been replaced.
- b. On 30 May we had a visit to the HQ Shack by a group of Sea Cadets from HMS Sultan led by their instructor who is one of our members Ian 2E0SWI.
- c. One 50 year membership blazer badge, certificate and paper weight awarded to Paul G3VCN and sent to him.
- d. We had the offer of some equipment from the son of the late G7NEG. This was advertised on our website.
- e. As reported above when we contacted the Mess Manager of the WO & SR's Mess in Collingwood it was only to find that they could not accommodate us for our AGM as they had another booking. We then looked around for an alternative venue and found 3 possibilities, HMS Temeraire Sports and Social Club, HMS Sultan WO & SR's Mess and Royal Naval Association Gosport Club House.
- f. As a way of encouraging younger members it was suggested that we invite the Sea Cadets to hold a meeting in the Shack every month for example. Secretary to contact Sea Cadet Instructor to offer them the use of the HQ Shack for regular meetings subject to some minor restrictions.

#### **7. Membership Secretary**

Marc joined us on Skype at 20.17 from the sea cadet unit where he is involved.

- a. All the start of year Bank and PayPal renewals and direct payments had been processed.
- b. Marc asked if he could have read-only access to our bank account to simplify the processing of Bank payments. Secretary to contact Treasurer to make the arrangements for Marc to have online read-only access to our bank account.
- c. Marc said he would distribute the list of lapsed members in the next 2 weeks.
- d. Marc said he was concerned about some members paying their subs multiple times. Wally said that in the past we had advised members when they paid multiple times but if they did not change their payments anything over their subscription was taken as a donation. Marc was advised to follow a similar approach.

#### **8. Treasurer's Report**

- a. Balance of the Accounts;  
C/A £5,335.22  
D/A £13,164.18  
FTD £34,919.33

I have sent the society's donation of £50 to RSBG YOTA 2017 and I am in the process of amending all the out of date Pay Pal membership payments to reflect the new subscription. Apart from this things have been quiet for me RNARS wise of late.

Adrian

#### **9. Review of Collingwood Open Day**

- a. Joe reported that the Open Day had been moderately successful. Steve and Tony had set up a table with a scanner outside the front door in a

- bid to attract people's attention. However, the loudspeaker we used had to compete with all the other noise around the shack.
- b. The 4 ratings we had allocated to us were asked to try and attract visitors into the shack.
  - c. Immediately after the Open Day Joe asked everyone who had assisted for their thoughts about what we had learned. Reports from Steve, Tony, Colin and Joe attached with a mass of ideas to consider. All Committee members to review the comments and suggestions and give recommendations at the next Committee Meeting. We will be setting up a stall in T5 in Collingwood to try and attract new (serving) members and we should be able to learn lessons from what happened on the Open Day.

#### **10. AGM**

- a. As reported above we were unable to book the WO & SRs Mess in Collingwood and the AGM will be held in RNA Gosport. There is plenty of parking on site and no problems with security. HOWEVER – we will need to know in advance of members who will be attending so we can confirm the catering arrangements.

#### **11. Payment methods – Direct Debits (G4DIU)**

- a. Joe said we had investigated the use of direct debits for payment of subscriptions but the administrative costs would be quite prohibitive and would also place an unnecessary burden on the Membership Sec/Treasurer. Members can set up their Standing Orders with their banks or pay through PayPal.

#### **12. Family membership conditions & rates (G0TOC)**

- a. Marc asked for confirmation about family membership rates. It was agreed that the main family member pays the subscription for whichever type of Newsletter delivery they wish and the other family members do not pay anything but get an electronic copy of the Newsletter.

#### **13. Managers' Reports**

- a. Shack Manager  
Steve reported on the work with the VHF mast (which is reported above)  
Authority was given to purchase:
  - i. HF filters to enable more than one HF rig to operate simultaneously
  - ii. A patch panel to enable any aerial to be connected to any rig/bay
  - iii. A new microphone for the Yaesu FT1000.
- b. QSL Manager  
Marc reported that the number of QSLs going through our bureau was down.
- c. Data Comms Manager  
Here is the report for the **RNARS Yahoo Group** June 2017;  
Very little to report in actual fact, the group is growing slowly, currently we have 145 members.  
New Society members are being mailed when their information is received from Marc.  
Take-up is slow however, also a lot of members opt for the "no mail" option on the group, so unless they visit on a regular basis they are missing out.  
The bulk of the mail on group seems to revolve around the Bedford

Club, so I guess they are not really missing much!!

End of report.

Dave G4JBE # 0434

d. Website Manager

Nothing new to report

Joe

e. Area Rep Co-ordinator

Nothing to report

f. Newsletter Editor

The summer Newsletter is ready for distribution and printing, bar AGM info'. Once I get the information, the required changes will be made.

Doug Bowen and his wife are presently on holiday. As they organise the printing and postage of the Newsletter, I will await their return before distributing the Newsletter.

Last minute items of urgent committee news can still be sent in, I can resize pictures to accommodate. As always I'd rather have items sooner than later, in other words, send it in NOW, not the day before publication.

Colin GM6HGW

g. Commodities Manager

Nothing further to add to the comments about caps above.

**14. Date of next Meeting**

7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 19.00

The Meeting closed at 20.50.

## Reports

### Collingwood Open Day 2017 lessons

1. Aerial stuff
    - a. Replace/fix G5RV
    - b. Check out why the beam was giving inconsistent results
    - c. Erect Doublet
    - d. Have a selection of HF aerials in addition to the ones we have. They don't have to be high gain, simple verticals would be enough for receiving
    - e. Buy/make a set of bandpass filters so that we can operate multiple HF bays even at the cost of keeping output power lower
    - f. Install a method of sharing the various aerials between the different bays. We missed out today by not having an aerial to connect to the FT857 for digital modes
  2. PC stuff
    - a. Change the passwords on all the PCs to be the same
    - b. Make sure we have a designated person to look after the PC
      - i. Update the rnars wordpress blog which appears on the RNARS website
      - ii. Monitor Skype
      - iii. Run Echolink
    - c. Look at the possibility of having a small computer (laptop, Pi etc) to feed the main TV screen with any videos we want to show in order to free up the PC on the digital bay for use with digital modes.
  3. Find a gazebo/small tent we could erect outside the shack to have a simple station to attract passers by.
  4. Have a tent on one of the greens with a small (battery powered?) set-up running to attract attention of those who may not pass by the entrance to the shack
  5. Have multiple morse buzzers in the shack and in any outside set ups
  6. Create more periscope.tv clips
- Joe

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Tony

My random thoughts and flights of fancy.

- "Feeder" site on the road at the west corner of club plot.
- With table (and awning) with a PSK receiver on FLdigi showing all sub-band activity with Loop antenna. so no operator needed but people to explain ask, dressed as ??) Lots to see/hear happening on a big TV
- Famous Amateur Radio Ops such as King Hussein of Jordan (If it is good enough for them...)
- Follow the code, treasure hunt from feeder round the main door. Letter+code in random order. You win if you get the order correct. (I havent thought that through)
- "Brass rubbing" of code tree, bigger than the one I showed you. Something done to remember the day and take away.
- Table in the centre of the room divided into 4? Maybe themed as "It is not expensive". with a "bedroom" receive setup (tablet+SDR dongle), a minimalist TXVR (BITX40?),
- Simple/Stealth antenna examples.

- Maybe a CB setup.
- Radio Magic, communication with light/microwave, Yagi demo, bounce of moon/ionosphere.

And, and.....

Tony

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Steve

Yesterday was ok, a steady flow of Radio Interested people came in but we never managed to attract the normal public. This was probably due to:

- Signage: our banner was up but there was nothing to attract them into what they see is just another building that they walk past.
- No attractions / activities outside to bring families over and in.

I overheard many people saying they thought amateur radio was dead, no one did it any more, it needs to come out of the shack so they can see it happening, maybe a operator outside next year, invite/find some lady operators to show that it is not just the elder man that does it. (It was good to see a lady come in and ask questions). I also heard some adults wanting to look in but their kids were not interested so they walked on by.

It was good to see the Sultan cadet come back in to visit, could we get some more of them or scouts involved so families can see that it is for children and young adults to?

We could run simple competitions outside or in, maybe use pmr 446 radios and get them to call other stations around Collingwood, maybe set up the cadets at different stations and they have to find them and call in to the shack, once they have found and used all the stations they can get a prize (The RN had people all over Collingwood that had to be found and then were handing out Ship Trump cards that children and adults were seeking out and collecting, this was very successful).

Some technical issues with antennas and filters but this can be addressed. Maybe a working day / BBQ /operating day or two could be arranged for a weekend so with man power we can resolve some of the issues.

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Colin

I noted the comments about the open day. Having run GB2SFM several times for the Scottish Fishery Museum, here's a few guidelines myself and two others have come up with and seem to work and which you may wish to consider. I have also operated special event stations at other venues as well along the following lines.

**CW**

There are many dedicated CW operators who operate nothing but CW. However, ask yourself what's the attraction to visitors when all they see is an operator sitting hammering away on a key or paddle and hear a string of incomprehensible beeps coming from a speaker; even worse if the operator is using headphones. The answer from experience of running demo stations is NONE. Remember it is a public demonstration station that is being operated.

Demo' stations I have been involved with only run CW when there is a station operating voice to allow visitors to hear voices. In other words, voice first, CW secondary.

This has caused wailing and gnashing of teeth, but as pointed out to the CW diehards, they have 364 days of the year to operate CW and the station is being run for the public, not operators' favoured modes.

### **Visibility**

GB2SFM is a call used to operate from the Scottish Fishery Museum, mainly for Museums On The Air but at other times as well. Although we set up one station in a static display of a trawler wheel house with a radio room to the rear, in the courtyard we rig a gazebo and run an HF and VHF station in the open courtyard. This is visible to visitors as they enter the museum and is often the first port of call for visitors with a person and not necessarily an amateur to welcome visitors and explain a little about amateur radio with a slant towards the maritime implications. To this end we produce short laminated A4 information sheets. Four sheets with no more than two paragraphs each seems to work best, more and there's too much reading.

If possible, turn the operating positions away from the wall. What is more interesting, the back of a head speaking into a microphone or seeing a face and being nearer to the speaker on the radio? I think the answer is self-evident.

### **Hands On**

Children and adults like to touch and use display items. To accommodate this a small display of radio through the ages has worked well. A basic crystal set, valve re-gen receiver and a 1970's portable transistor radio is sufficient. Interestingly, the crystal set and valve receiver has proven to be the most popular hands-on exhibits. Again, a none amateur with basic knowledge of radio rather than a lot of technical knowledge is more advantageous to assist the public.

I have also taken along components to make up ten or so basic MW receivers based on the 484 chip with pre-wound coils on ferrite rods, polycon vary caps' and drawing pins set into a small piece of wood to act as solder points. All that has to be soldered are the chip, two resistors and two capacitors. Most kids have medium impedance ear plugs for their phones and which work well with the 484 chip and acts as the ON / OFF switch when plugged in or removed. Within fifteen minutes kids have made a crude but simple working radio. It never fails to amaze me the look on their faces when the radio springs into life and all we ask is five pounds to cover costs. See attached pictures.

Another consideration, is playing recordings of Tim Peake from the ISS. I have three recordings and the public in general are unaware that amateur radio was used by Tim to chat to schools. The clips were received on a simple hand-held.

### **Publicity**

Get in touch with a local paper and if possible a radio station months, not weeks in advance as features are often planned far ahead. Round here GB2SFM is competing with agricultural shows, highland games and many others. If you are asked to supply copy, get a non-amateur friend or wife to write the copy. Amateurs have a tendency to write as they see the hobby, not as a lay person will on arrival at the station. This plays dividends, I know from experience.

In one example, a reporter became so interested he took up the hobby.