

# **SOUTH DORSET RADIO SOCIETY**

Promoting and Supporting Amateur Radio since 1961

**MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER**

## ***THE CATSWHISKER***

*Keeping members and  
SDRS events and news*



*friends informed about  
since March 1967*

### **NEXT SDRS MEETING**

The next meeting is on Tuesday March the 11th at 7.30 for 8pm at the usual venue in Chickerell. There will be a selection of radio books available for just a small donation to club funds. Please come along, bring a friend and support your Society.

### **FEBRUARY MEETING**

At the last meeting, Carol, 2E1RBH gave us an interesting talk all about BYLARA. The British Young Ladies Amateur Radio Association was founded in April 1979 to further YL operating in Britain and so promote friendship, stimulate interest and, in particular, encourage good operating techniques and courtesy to all operators at all times. BYLARA is affiliated to the RSGB and membership is open to all. More details can be found on the BYLARA web site at [www.bylara.net](http://www.bylara.net)

### **ADVANCE NOTICE OF 2008 AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the South Dorset Radio Society will take place on Tuesday April the 8th. The Treasurer, John Rose M0BQO reminds present and intending members that subscriptions are due on that date, the amount probably being the usual £10.50.

### **NEW SERIES**

As promised last month; the first part of 'Beachcombers Story' written by the late Ray Shaddick, G1YRS starts in this issue of Catswhisker. I hope all our readers will enjoy Ray's fascinating autobiographical account of his life and work in the world of music and wireless.

## **SDRS MEETING VENUE**

The Society meets on the second Tuesday of every month (except August) at the Chickerell Youth Club Hall.

**Directions:** From Weymouth, proceed northwest towards Chickerell along the B3157 (Chickerell Road) from its junction with the B3156, Lanehouse Rocks Road (or the Marquess of Granby junction) for approximately one mile. Passing the Army Camp on your left, at the bottom of a dip, turn right into Glennie Way. Follow this road until you pass the Willow Bed Hall on your left. At the bottom of the hill, take the next turning left into Lower Way and then left again into Rashley Road. Ahead you will see the entrance to Chickerell Primary School with the Chickerell Youth Club building to the left. Please note that you have to use the entrance at the side of the building accessed from Fairfield.

## **COMMITTEE MEETING**

The next committee meeting will be on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March. As this is the last one before the AGM would all committee members please make a special effort to attend.

## **INTERNATIONAL MARCONI DAY 2008**

This will be the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of IMD and this year it takes place on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> of April. See [www.gb4imd.org.uk](http://www.gb4imd.org.uk) and [www.g3sds.org.uk/imd.htm](http://www.g3sds.org.uk/imd.htm)

## **SEBS ODYSSEY**

Sebastian Green, 2E1IHL who was an active member of the SDRS a few years ago set out from Weymouth on a round-Britain walk for charity with his dog Flash on the 1st of February. Full details of the journey, which is expected to take 10 months, can be found here [www.sebsodyssey.org.uk](http://www.sebsodyssey.org.uk) where you can also track his progress.

## **SDRS CLUB NET**

Please don't forget that a Net is held most Monday evenings from 8pm local time on the South Dorset Repeater, GB3DR on 145.7375MHz. The Net controller is normally our Chairman, Graham, 2E1GOQ but if you don't hear him please give a call anyway. All members, friends and visitors are welcome to join in of course.

## **LOCAL RADIO EVENTS**

Bournemouth ARC Rally/Sale at Kinson Community Centre is on March the 9<sup>th</sup>.  
Yeovil QRP Convention at the Digby Hall, Sherborne is on April the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Full details of all UK Radio Rallies 2008 can be found here: [www.hamradio-badarc.co.uk/radio\\_rallies.htm](http://www.hamradio-badarc.co.uk/radio_rallies.htm)

## BEACHCOMBER'S STORY

### PART ONE - FROM GASLIGHT TO PIRATE RADIO

My earliest recollection, although now somewhat hazy, is of a journey from my first home at Knowle in Bristol to another suburb in the Southeast of the City known as St Anne's Park. I remember arriving by bus with my Mother, Aunt and Grandmother and walking the short distance to my new home, a Grocer's shop in Newbridge Road. My Grandfather had gone ahead to prepare for our arrival, and was ready to greet us when we entered by the Shop door.

It was a new and bewildering world, full of strange sights and smells for a three-year-old boy to take in. Over the next 12 years I was to get used to these smells of sacks of Sugar, dried fruit, freshly cooked ham and chocolate biscuits.

For the next two years I was free to wander and explore this new world of commerce, the comings and goings of strangers who came to visit briefly while they bought their essentials of life. Life for many people was very hard in those days; the year was 1925, just a few months away from the General Strike that meant so little to me then, as our standard of living was comfortable, we suffered no shortages. Unlike some of our Customers who would queue to buy the Ham bone when my Grandfather had cut as much meat as possible from it. This was a prized item, and a source of soup for the fortunate buyer.

There seemed to be a great divide between those who had, and those who had not. On balance, I think that there were more of the latter. When the Strike started, the only thing that I remember was that some of the buses were driven by Volunteers, who did not wear the usual uniforms, just an armband. Even in those far off days, we had choice in buses. We had the Council owned vehicles, and at least two private companies who competed in price and quality of service. Some drivers were not averse to making a detour to collect passengers from a point nearer to their homes.

Back in 1926, the street lamps were lit by gas, and I well remember the lamp-lighter who came round every day at dusk on his bicycle, armed with a long pole which he pushed up through a hinged door at the top and lit the gas by operating a trigger at the bottom end of the pole. The top end of the pole not only turned the gas tap on but also created a spark to ignite the gas.

Our house was also lit by gas, but the following year a local man installed electricity. The improvement was amazing, gone were the fragile mantles that glowed in the flame, and the smell of gas, which sometimes escaped when lighting it. Now at the touch of a switch, the light was immediate and steady, and never needed adjustment. Cooking was still by gas, as the new electric cookers were very expensive, and also consumed large quantities of electricity.

My Grandfather had bought a very modern Wireless Set; it used valves, not Crystals or a 'Catswhisker', and the sound came from a large horn, which was carefully covered over when not in use. I was fascinated by this new invention, and some years later I discovered how to connect a crude microphone (a pair of headphones the wrong way round) to the set, and was then able to 'Broadcast' to the family in the next room. I subsequently found that this unauthorised activity was also being heard on some of our neighbours' sets. Could this have been one of the first Pirate stations?

Thus was created an interest in Wireless and broadcast music that was to last me the rest of my life.

## SOUTH DORSET RADIO SOCIETY 2007/8

### G3SDS G8SDS M2Z

#### CONTACTS

**CHAIRMAN:** Graham Webb, 2E1GOQ [2e1g0q@g3sds.org.uk](mailto:2e1g0q@g3sds.org.uk) or 01305837356

**SECRETARY:** Post vacant - please contact the Chairman or Treasurer.

**TREASURER:** John Rose, M0BQO 45 Ringstead Crescent, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 6PT [m0bqo@g3sds.org.uk](mailto:m0bqo@g3sds.org.uk) or telephone 01305832057.

Janet Dean, 2E1NRQ

Arthur Werrett, M0VAW

Tony Wormald, M0TRW

Fred Talmage, G0LVF (co-opted to replace Jamie Wrightson, 2E0WON who has moved away)

**President:** Geoff Watts, G0EVW

**Vice President:** Robert Hodges, G0RYL

**SDRS Web Site:** [www.g3sds.org.uk](http://www.g3sds.org.uk) **Pictures here:** [www.sdrs.zoomshare.com](http://www.sdrs.zoomshare.com)

**SDRG (GB3SD/DR) Web Site:** [www.gb3sd.radiouk.com](http://www.gb3sd.radiouk.com)

#### WORDS OF WISDOM

*'A wise man learns by the mistakes of others, a fool by his own'* – Latin Proverb

#### *THE CATSWHISKER*

Our Societies Newsletter has been called 'The Catswhisker' since its inception. The word is defined thus in the Oxford Concise Dictionary.

*cat's whisker n.*

*a fine adjustable wire in a crystal radio receiver.*

*the cat's whiskers (or pyjamas) slang an excellent person or thing.*

#### NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Until a new editor/producer can be found the SDRS Newsletter is being produced and edited by our President, Geoff Watts, G0EVW. Please send any material for inclusion to him: e-mail [g0evw@g3sds.org.uk](mailto:g0evw@g3sds.org.uk) or by post to: 46 Links Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0PE. You can also phone or send a text message to Geoff on 07882063782. Members who have not provided an e-mail address to the Society should still receive a copy by post although we would appreciate it if everyone who has access to the Internet receives it electronically, as printing and postage costs are a drain on our meagre resources.