

SOUTH DORSET RADIO SOCIETY

Promoting and Supporting Amateur Radio since 1961

THE CATSWHISKER - MAY 2009

*Keeping members and
SDRS events and news*



*friends informed about
since March 1967*

The next meeting of The South Dorset Radio Society will be held on Tuesday the 12th of May at the usual venue. John, MOBQO will be bringing along some of the kits he has built.

2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – HELD ON THE 14TH OF APRIL

The AGM of the South Dorset Radio Society was held at our usual venue in Chickerell. A much better attendance than last year meant that there were none of the problems we experienced then.

All of the committee members present were prepared to stand again and were re-elected unopposed. As a result the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer remain the same as last year.

The Treasurers report (see below) was read and accepted and as a result the annual subscription remains unchanged at £10.50 per member and £5.00 for students in full time education. As agreed last year, the special family/couples rate has been discontinued.

It was announced that the Society hopes to take part in a number of Special Events this year, including a new one to be held at the Nothe Fort on the 65th anniversary of D-Day. See the Forthcoming Events list below for more details.

Thank you to everyone who came, and of course to our hard working committee for their willingness to serve for another year. The meeting concluded with the usual excellent raffle and a fine selection of refreshments provided by Carol.

Geoff, G0EVW

TREASURER'S REPORT – APRIL 2009

There has been an ongoing decline in the Society's fortunes.

The closing bank balance is £1433.78, compared with £1570.46 in 2008. The income, £332.50, was less than expenditure by £117.31 - a rather worrying situation. It marks a trend that is likely to continue, as the popularity of organised clubs - of whatever interest - seems to be diminishing.

We have managed to reduce some of our expenditure with a revised format for *Catswhisker* and making it available on the Internet rather than sending a large number by post. We owe a debt of gratitude to our President, Geoff Watts G0EVW, who has assumed responsibility for the Newsletter yet he is frustrated by the lack of appreciative comment, and acknowledgement of receipt, shown by many members.

Normal attendance at club meetings has just about reached double figures - a far cry from the dozens who once lent their support; this has had an adverse effect on income from Refreshments and Raffles: previously, we could rely on at least £200 a year, but now we are lucky to raise £120 and the impact on total income is clearly dramatic.

A special thanks must be extended to Carol 2E1RBH who has generously supplied the refreshments and manned the kitchen (woman-ed?) and also to the members who have brought gifts as prizes in the raffles, again helping to boost takings.

The closing year has seen a falling membership roll, with 23 paid-up and honorary members - again a contrast with the thirty-plus of just three years ago. We believe this is due to some at the upper echelons of the age scale finding it physically difficult to get to the venue, coupled with a dearth of youngsters wanting more assistance in developing their interest.

As far as annual subscriptions is concerned. I feel it would be counterproductive to change anything (except to implement a decision made last year, to end the special family/couples rate).

The rates are £10.50 per member, with £5.00 for those still full-time at school. I will recommend that these rates continue.

John Rose, M0BQO.

INTERNATIONAL MARCONI DAY 2009

The South Dorset Radio Society has been taking part in this event since 1997. Once again GB0MBS (Marconi Beam Station) operated from the New Barn field Centre, Bradford Peverell, just across the fields from the original Beam Station site. This year the date of the event coincided exactly with the anniversary of Marconi's Birthday on April the 25th. A full report and pictures will appear in *Catswhisker* next month.

UPDATE ON USAF RINGSTEAD AND PORTLAND

Two more Hams remembered!

Since the original article about the Ringstead Bay Tropospheric Scatter Station was published in the March 2009 Catswhisker some interesting additional information has come to light.

George, G2DGB told me that he is still in touch with Larry, K7QDH who was also at the Portland station. I e-mailed Larry and after reading the article he sent me the following in his reply:

I have not thought about Portland Bill or Ringstead for years. Yes we keep in touch with George, G2DGB and family.

Your rendition of the history of the site seems correct to me. If my memory serves me correctly I never actually met Silas. He had departed the UK and a fellow by the name of Ken Gesland was in charge until I arrived.

We lived only a few blocks from George. I was licensed as G5ASF while there also as EI2VFK. I am still active on all bands chasing DX. My favourite band is 6 METRES.

I told Bill, G3EAT about Larry and he says that the Marconi Company built the Portland station. Apparently one of the engineers involved in the construction was a New Zealand amateur who erected a V-Beam for 20 metres supported from the top of the tower and used to make contact back home to ZL. Bill is unable to remember his name or callsign and lost touch with him after he moved away.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(Events where the SDRS are taking part are in red text)

6/7 June - WW2 Extravaganza at the Nothe Fort. (Possibly a Special Event Callsign)

This event runs for 48 hours and by prior authorisation individual SDRS members can have free access to the station from Friday evening until closing time on Sunday. Please contact Carol or Rob for more information.

20/21 June - Museums on the Air weekend at the Nothe Fort. (GX3SDS)

21 June - Newbury Radio club boot sale and rally.

28 June - West of England Rally at Frome (the old Longleat event).

9 August - Flight Refuelling's Hamfest at Wimborne.

15/16 August - Lighthouses/Lightships on the Air at the Nothe Fort. (GX3SDS)

ATTENDING THE 2009 QRP RALLY

As usual the 2009 QRP rally, at Sherborne, was a memorable event. Those interested in this low-power mode were able to hear talks and see demonstrations of a very high standard and go away suitably refreshed.

The Digby Hall was well attended by stallholders and visitors and at one time it was a question of elbowing your way to the tables!

Mainly, though, once business and buying are out of the way these rallies are social occasions - meeting old friends, catching up with gossip etc.

You'd expect most of the Yeovil crowd to be there - and they were, like genial hosts; but others came from far and wide including some of our own SDRS.

There was Carol 2E1RBH presiding over the BYLARA stall ably supported by her OM Rob, G0RYL. They had been hard at work on the International Marconi Day just hours before, so both seemed to need matchsticks propping up their eyelids! And I met at least half a dozen more members.

Nicky and Tony Marriott were busy looking after the Blackmore Vale table, trading when possible but everyone wanted to talk to Nicky about her DX trip to the Falklands.

Amongst others I met were old (= ex) SRDS members Ken Heathfield G3SDO who is still living in the area but hasn't 'done' radio for some time and Peter Mason G0PLJ; and Paul Hawkins G4KHU, writer of a booklet about the Dorchester Beam Station and who has visited our club on a few occasions. Ken O'Brien the Eddystone collector is still around, deciding *not* to buy an Eddystone S-meter (too expensive).

I can't say I was disappointed in the trading stalls: there was an abundance of components and kits - pretty well whatever you needed. But while some trays were clearly labelled with the types and attributes of the components, others just had reference numbers with no idea of their characteristics. Perhaps sellers could be more helpful.

What's next? Well, for most of us in South Dorset it's the Hamfest at Wimborne on August 9th when we will all convene once again for socialising and re-stocking.

Yeovil ARC are to be congratulated, and thanked, once more for this nice occasion.

John Rose, M0BQQ

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Unless you have already paid, the annual subscription to the SDRS for 2009/10 is now due. The rates are £10.50 per member, or £5.00 for anyone still in full-time education. Payment should be made to our treasurer please. Cheques should be made out to 'The South Dorset Radio Society'.

SOUTH DORSET RADIO SOCIETY 2009/10

G3SDS G8SDS M2Z

CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN: Graham Webb, 2E1GOQ 2e1g0q@g3sds.org.uk 01305837356

SECRETARY: Carol Hodges, 2E1RBH 2e1rbh@g3sds.org.uk 01305820400
Marine Cottage, 1a Clements Lane, Chiswell, Portland, Dorset. DT5 1AS

TREASURER: John Rose, M0BQO m0bqo@g3sds.org.uk 01305832057
45 Ringstead Crescent, Weymouth, Dorset. DT3 6PT

Arthur Werrett, M0VAW
Fred Talmage, G0LVF
Jamie Wrightson, 2E0WON (Pending confirmation)

President: Geoff Watts, G0EVW
Vice President: Robert Hodges, G0RYL

SDRS Web Site: www.g3sds.org.uk Pictures here: www.sdrs.zoomshare.com

SDRG (GB3SD/DR) Web Site: www.gb3sd.radiouk.com

WORDS OF WISDOM

“The wireless telegraph is not difficult to understand. The ordinary telegraph is like a very long cat. You pull the tail in New York, and it meows in Los Angeles. The wireless is the same, only without the cat.” Albert Einstein

THE CATSWHISKER

Our Society's 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 in Catswhisker to Geoff using e-mail 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 07502198447. Please note that news material needs to arrive *at least* 10 - 14 days before each meeting.