

COULSDON AMATEUR TRANSMITTING SOCIETY

G4FUR



M1FUR

CATS WHISPERS

March 2006



Affiliated to the RSGB

SYCOM - Official CATS Sponsor

Visit www.sycomcomp.co.uk

CATS Committee

Chairman: Rob Cole 2E0AYT
Secretary: Andy Jackson G8JAC
Treasurer: Derek Hands G1PGS
Members: Steve Conway G7SYO
Stuart Barber G6CJR
Dave Young G8VXB
Ian Peck M3IGP

CATS Whispers Editor: Andy Jackson G8JAC
email address for contributions:

Regular Society Meetings

These are held on the second Monday in each month at:-
St. Swithun's Church Hall, Grovelands Road, Purley at 2000hrs to 2200hrs.

Society Nets

1st Saturday of Month - 1715hrs Crescenta Valley / CATS Net on Echolink
Normally via MB7IPL node on 145.2875 MHz.
Sunday mornings - 1100hrs. Call on S20 (V40) then to 145.2875MHz.
Sunday evenings - 1700hrs. 3.700 MHz +/- QRM
Wednesday evenings - 21.00hrs. Call on 70.425 MHz

CATS Website

Email:

Forthcoming Meetings

Mon 13th March – Spring Bring & Buy tabletop sale

Mon 10th April – Colossus, the first computer. A talk by Ken Myers

Mon 8th May – GB200T: Celebrating Trafalgar by Bob Treacher



CATS is Twinned with the
Crescenta Valley Radio Club
Glendale California USA www.qsl.net/cvrc

February Meeting Report:

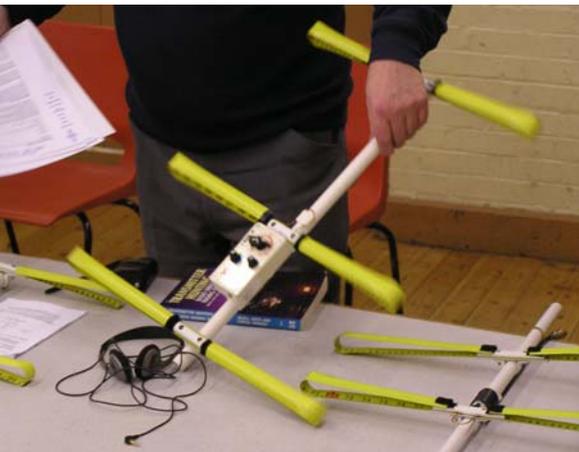
Our February meeting was all about DF. The aim of the evening in particular was to construct, test and practice with, 2m antenna systems with the annual CATS DF contest (Monday 10 July) particularly in mind.

The evening was presented by Dave G8VXB, who brought along some antenna kits that are available from G3ZOI. These feature a 3-element Yagi design for the physical antenna, that is constructed from spring steel tape-measure stock for the elements and PVC tubing for the boom.



Three variations of the DF antenna on show.

The elements in the picture above are $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength for 2m and are shown folded back for ease of carriage and storage, and secured with Velcro strips. To the basic antenna may be added a 2m AM receiver also available in kit or ready-built form from G3ZOI. The kits are quite simple to construct although the receiver module requires require some work on PCB assembly and soldering.



The antenna with receiver module installed.

Steve G7SYO installed a signal generator in the kitchen terminated in a dummy load and this radiated sufficient signal for the antennas to be tested at various points in and around St Swithun's Hall and several people familiarized themselves with the various effects on the signal.



We look forward to seeing these antennas in action at the CATS DF hunt and our thanks to Dave G8VXB for the interesting presentation.



The attentive audience

Your scribe was surprised to find out how popular and how organised Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) is. At international level, the simple club DF hunt is expanded to incorporate elements of orienteering and there are serious international competitions. To find out more, have a look at:

www.ardf.btinternet.co.uk

To find out more about the antenna kits and receivers available from G3ZOI, go to:

<http://www.open-circuit.co.uk/home.php#basics>

CATS Activity News

CPREC spring sale

A reminder that CATS will be having a table at the Crystal Palace Radio & Electronics Club Spring Sale on Saturday 11th March. Details were in last month's *CATS Whispers*.

Fancy a beer?

At various times, members have commented that with our regular Monday meetings being relatively far apart, we don't really meet up together that often and others have mentioned that they would appreciate some more "social" meetings. A few years ago a small group of members regularly used to meet in a pub for a more social meeting – and of course there was always the beer.....

Our friends over at Sutton & Cheam are doing this and it's proving very popular.

With this in mind, we are thinking about re-establishing the practice – perhaps on the last Monday in the month, which would put it around half way between normal meetings. We would need a pub that has a good amount of room, *doesn't* have large-screen TV or Muzak, was accessible to members, preferably near a bus route, and most important, that serves decent beer. Oh, and we would need a few people to take an interest and turn up.

So, what do you think? If you're interested then say so. Suggest a suitable pub or some other venue that you think would be a good idea.

CATS Visits

At the February meeting, those who attended were invited to express their interest in some suggested visits. So far, a visit to the naval communications museum at **HMS Collingwood** near **Fareham**, Hants is the suggestion that has attracted the most interest. If you've not made your preference known yet, the list will be available again at the March meeting or you can let the secretary (or any committee member) know direct.

The current suggestions are:

Amberley Working Museum
HMS Collingwood

Brooklands Museum of Motoring.

To the above, we have also added a trip to the well-known Dunstable Downs rally on 14th May. This is quite near M1 J10 and is one of the major rallies in England.

The member who suggested a visit to a lap dancing club has had no other takers yet! Whatever takes your fancy, **do something about it! Register an interest.**

What's coming up

For our **March** meeting, we will be holding a members' Bring & Buy tabletop sale. Rather than the traditional auction-style junk sale, members (and non-members are welcome) can present and sell any items of surplus or unwanted kit and do the haggling themselves! Tables are £1 each payable on the night.

In **April** we have a really interesting talk by Ken Myers on the construction and use of the Colossus machines used at Bletchley Park for code-breaking operations during the war. Ken worked with the famous Tommy Flowers keeping what was the world's first electronic programmable computer running, and has many interesting practical stories to pass on to us. Those CATS members who have previously been to see the exhibits at Bletchley Park will find this fascinating.

For **May**, we have a visit by well known SWL Bob Treacher and colleagues who were behind the highly successful **GB200T** project to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar. If you've ever wondered what goes into putting on a special event station and how much work is involved, this will be the place to find out.

For **June** we have a **Test and Measurement** night when we will have some top grade professional test gear on hand to test your rig. We will be able to measure receiver sensitivity, signal to noise ratio, SINAD, squelch threshold, display accuracy etc, and for transmitters, frequency accuracy, power output (up to 400W), deviation, modulation percentage etc. If you want to do any servicing adjustments, then we have to know which pot to adjust so bring along the manual or circuit diagram. If you want to do any specific tests or test something unusual, drop a line to the secretary and we'll do our best to accommodate you. You can also enter the results in your log, which looks very good if you have a station inspection! We will also have a **valve characteristic meter** on the go so if you have any valves you're not sure about, bring 'em along!

July brings our annual DF hunt. Last year's winner G4CDY will be looking to defend his title and we expect to see some practical results from the antenna building project. No doubt we will end up in a pub somewhere as usual! (Sigh)

For **August**, Prue G4RWW has kindly offered to host the annual CATS Bar-B-Q again.

Ofcom licence proposals

Ofcom published its proposals for the future of amateur radio licensing on 14 February 2006. Unfortunately, this was just too late for inclusion in the February edition of *CATS Whispers*. The summary of the changes is as follows:

Reform of amateur radio licensing

1.1 This Ofcom statement sets out our new approach to the licensing of amateur radio.

1.2 It follows on from Ofcom's consultation on amateur radio licensing that was launched on 26 May 2005.

1.3 As a result of the consultation, Ofcom has decided to implement the following reforms:

- To issue lifetime amateur radio licences which will remain valid for as long as the licence details remain correct or until such time as the licence is either revoked by Ofcom or surrendered by the licensee. There shall be no end date on the amateur radio licence. Such licences will be personal to the licensee and will not be transferable.
- To provide an online, web-based, self-service licensing service as an alternative to the postal service.
- To issue electronic licences (probably PDF documents) to users of the online, web-based, self-service licensing service. Users of this service would print a hard copy of the licence which must be kept at the main station address.
- To continue to make paper licences available (but subject to a small administrative charge).
- To modify the original proposal by requiring licensees to validate their licence details at least once every five years in order to maintain their lifetime licence.

Ofcom's full policy decision is set out on page 7.

1.4 At present the Radio Licensing Centre (RLC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Mail Group plc, processes amateur radio licences. However, it is Ofcom's intention that from 1 October 2006 (the intended implementation date), all amateur radio licences will be issued by Ofcom. Licences issued, renewed or

amended on or after the implementation date will be subject to the revised licence terms and conditions (above).

1.5 Any licences which are due to expire before the implementation date must be renewed by contacting the RLC. Licences issued, renewed or amended before the implementation date will be subject to existing licence terms and conditions.

1.6 Ofcom believes that the new approach to amateur radio licensing will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and cost associated with this important hobby. Ofcom regards the amateur radio community as a key radio spectrum user group and wishes to see amateur radio prosper.

1.7 This policy statement summarises the views expressed during the consultation, provides Ofcom's response to these views and sets out our decision regarding the future of amateur radio licensing. The statement also summarises the results of the research carried out by MORI and describes how this has been balanced against the views expressed during the consultation process.

1.8 The 12 week consultation closed on 18 August 2005. Ofcom received 1,466 responses during the consultation period, many of which were in favour of Ofcom's key proposals although the majority were in favour of maintaining the existing licensing regime but with a proposed extended renewal period of five years.

1.9 In addition to the consultation process, on 26 May 2005, MORI sent a questionnaire and accompanying material to 4,500 amateur radio licence holders. The survey sought licensees' views on Ofcom's proposals and also gathered other information such as membership of societies.

1.10 MORI received 1,572 completed questionnaires by the closing date of 20 June 2005 which showed that when licensees were asked specifically whether they supported or opposed Ofcom issuing licences that remain valid for the life of the licensee, 58% claimed to support this move.

1.11 Ofcom has carefully considered representations about the proposals that it has received from stakeholders. Each consultation response was considered with equal weight, regardless of whether the response was attributed to an individual or organisation,

published anonymously or submitted as a confidential response.

The complete document is available at:
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/aradio/statement/statement_amradio.pdf

Although it shouldn't concern most of us, Ofcom is also proposing to take powers to levy £100 fixed penalty fines for infringements of the radio regulations. Details can be found here:

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/about/account/pg/>

Membership news

The current membership of CATS stands at 34 including two life members. Despite efforts being made to communicate with members having renewals outstanding (in some cases from 2004), the following have not renewed their memberships and after review by the committee, are therefore, with regret, deemed to have resigned from the society:

Clinton Brown G7CAK
Brian Cannon G8DIU
Alvin Challen M0BRX
Trevor Gibbons G7BWE
Andrew Maish G4ADM
Ken Rosier G3DJK

We gained two new members in 2005, Paul M3JXN and Steve G3WZK. A membership list for 2006 is being distributed separately to members only.

TransPONDer net news

Although CATS was busy with the weekend VHF competition, time was set aside to link up with our friends in the Crescenta Valley club in the monthly TransPONDer net. Unfortunately, the MB7IPL node was not available, so a link-up using the GB7OK repeater (which has internet connectivity) was attempted. Although we were able to hear transmissions from Glendale, the reverse direction was not possible and the cause was thought to be an interaction problem due to the three repeaters involved in the setup.

The next scheduled net is on Saturday 1st April when we will again fool around on the Transponder net.

Contest Time

Almost a dozen members braved the sub-zero temperatures over the weekend of 4/5 March to put G4FUR/P and M1FUR/P on the air for the RSGB March VHF competition. Although we avoided the snow and high winds that affected the north of the country, it did get a little chilly with temperatures dropping to -5°C (23°F) overnight. Three hardy (or should that read mad?) souls even camped out in it. A full report on the operation and how we fared will appear in the next edition of *CATS Whispers*.



Setting up under way for the March VHF contest.

Local club news

CATS has had a close relationship with Wimbledon & District Radio Society for many years, stretching back to the days of the old Purley club. Many members will be aware that they have experienced great difficulty in maintaining an active club over the past year or so because of Draconian parking restrictions imposed by Merton council on the area around their meeting place in Herbert Road. (Croydon council have implemented similar measures in some parts of central Croydon). The parking regulations impose "double yellow" restrictions unless you have (and of course pay for) a resident's permit. They are enforced by motorcycle-borne "hit squads" of attendants, extend until 11pm and have made social use of the church hall in Herbert Road impossible for older people and the disabled, who need the use of a car. As a result, W&DRS has been forced to move to a new venue at Martin Way Methodist Church, Buckleigh Avenue, Merton Park, SW20. This has ample free parking. For anyone visiting, the location map is here:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/streetmap.dll?G2M?X=524712&Y=168634&A=Y&Z=1>

Contest News from G0KZT

144MHz Low Power Contest - August 2005 - Debrief

The results of this contest were noticeable by their absence until I sent a request for an update. Bingo! Now they have been published..... So how did we fare? Well, out of the 13 entries, we came 9th which is about our normal position. Below is the summarised results table for our section.

Posn	Group	Callsign	QSOs	Score	Mults	Total score	Best DX	Km
1	A1 CG	G4ZAP/P	155	38399	106	4070294	DF0CI	834
2	Colchester RA	G0VHF/P	130	33083	91	3010553	DC6GF/P	707
3	Five Bells CG	M1MHZ	93	21688	90	1951920	F5RMY	663
4	Ipswich RC	G4IRC/P	82	18955	69	1307895	DC6GF/P	731
5	Otley RS	G3XNO/P	75	11162	62	692044	F5SGT/P	670
6	Hadley Wood CG	G4STV	65	10805	60	648300	EI5FK	606
7		G0TMT/P	54	11187	53	592911	F5RMY	592
8	S.Derbys & Ashby Wolds	G0SRC/P	56	7,571	51	386121	PA0PVW	531
9	<u>Coulsdon ATS</u>	G4FUR/P	46	6,492	47	305124	F4CQY/P	503
10		2E0EBV/P	62	6,119	47	287593	F5RMY	547
11	Braintree & District ARS	G3XG/P	43	6,983	38	265354	F1ERG/P	588
12	Burnham Beeches	G3WIR/P	40	5,759	42	241878	F5UTN	348
13	Dacorum ARTS	G7RIH	41	4,657	39	181623	F4CQY/P	562

The usual three leading contest groups were streets ahead as they always are. As far as the contact quota, we are in the bottom 3rd of the table with our multiplier quota being mid-range. Conditions were not particularly good, but according to the adjudicator, the contestants in the south were helped by the presence of a French contest. Without that, I think our score would have been dismal!

Checking on the original debrief that I published in CATS Whispers September 2005 edition, you will see by how much our score suffered from adjudication. Our QSO count of 64 reduced to 46, points reduced from 9050 to 6492 and multipliers reduced from 55 to 47. The total of this was a reduction of 192626 points from our original entry but at best that score would only have given us 8th place! I spotted as many of the errors I could see before sending in the entry but as our entry is checked against all the others, the software the adjudicator used obviously found some more. As the exchange from each station is a simple swapping of information, either we're copying the information wrongly or else we're being given the wrong information in the first place!

I guess we can only keep plugging away and as long as we enjoy taking part, I consider that to be more important. More CQs, possibly using an auto caller or means to repeat our call could be an advantage. I am working on a simple method (a tape machine with our callsign repeatedly recorded) to solve this. I have thought of a PC based system but it could be complicated trying to run the contest software at the same time. Another method would be a small electronic recorder. I wonder what the Maplin catalogue has to offer? (*Sounds like a very useful club construction project – Ed*).

Full details of these and other contest results (VHF) are available from:

<http://www.vhfc.org/results/resindex.htm>

73 de Andy G0KZT
Contest Secretary

Other Club News & Contact Information

BROMLEY & DISTRICT ARS

Website – www.bdars.org.uk

Email bdars-news@talk21.com

3rd Tuesday at Victory Social Club,
Kechill Gardens, Hayes, Kent
7-30pm for 8pm

21st March – Contests – love ‘em or hate ‘em
Richard G8ITB

18 April - Quiz Night

The Crystal Palace Radio and Electronics Club

Meets on 1st Friday of every month at
7.30pm at All Saints Church Parish
Rooms, Beulah Hill.

Club Net – Wednesdays 2000hrs
145.525 MHz

www.qsl.net/g3oou/

7th April – G3FZL memorial lecture:
Planning law for beginners - Jo Tansley

CRAWLEY ARC

www.carc.org.uk

Club Nets –

Tuesdays 2000hrs 145.550 MHz

Fridays 1900hrs 1.970 MHz

Every Wednesday at Hut 18 Tilgate
Forest Recreational Centre, Tilgate
Forest, Crawley from 7-30pm, and
Sundays, 10.30 until 13.00.

22nd March - DF receiver design
Derek G3GRO

DORKING & District RS

Club Nets –

Sunday 0815hrs 3.770 Mhz

2030hrs 144.750 Mhz

Meetings are held at the Friends
Meeting House, Butterhill, South Street
Dorking at 1930hrs.

HORSHAM ARC

Club Nets –

Saturdays 2130hrs 144.725MHz

Sundays 1000hrs 3.722 MHz

Meetings: 1st Thursday at The Guide
Hall, Denne Road, Horsham.

Latest news – www.harc.org.uk

12 March – club 2m F hunt.

MID SUSSEX ARS

Club Nets –

Sundays 0800hrs 3.740 MHz

Sundays 1100hrs 145.350 MHz

Wednesdays 2000hrs 145.350 MHz

Daily 1330hrs 21.330 MHz

Every Friday at Cyprus Hall, Cyprus
Road, Burgess Hill West Sussex for
7.45pm

Info – <http://www.msars.co.uk/>

17 March – Radio night/Table Top Sale

24 March – Surplus Equipment Sale

MITCHAM & DISTRICT ARS

(G3HFY) – Last Wednesday of each
month 1930hrs at ATC HQ,
Commonside West, Mitcham.

Details Mike Knott G0WCR

Tele: 020 8764 4716

REIGATE ATS

Club Net –

Thursdays 2000hrs 145.500 MHz

Sundays 2000hrs 3.740 – 3.760 MHz

Website www.qsl.net/rats

Email rats@qsl.net

3rd Tuesday at RNIB Redhill College,
Philanthropic Road, Redhill for 7-30pm

21st March - TBA

SRCC

Ray Howells G4FFY 020 8644 7599

Club Nets –

Sunday 0930hrs 29.111 MHz

Friday 2030hrs 144.325 MHz

Thursday 1900hrs 145.500 MHz

Website – www.g3src.org.uk

Meetings: 1st & 3rd Mondays at T.S.

Terra Nova, 34 The Waldrons, South
Croydon 7.45pm for 8pm

20 March – Fix it – move it on & Advice

3rd April – AGM.

SUTTON & CHEAM RS

John Puttock G0BWV 020 8644 1614

Club Nets –

Monday 2000hrs 145.500 MHz

Tuesday 1030hrs 3.700 MHz

Tuesday 1500hrs 144.300 MHz

Friday 1100hrs 433.500 Mhz

Saturday 1100hrs 3.700 MHz

Saturday 1200hrs 145.500 Mhz

Website – www.scrs.org.uk

3rd Thursday at Sutton United Football Club, The Borough Sports Ground, Gander Green Lane, Sutton 7-30pm for 8pm

THAMES VALLEY A.R.T.S.

Trevor Farris M0CDB 013 7245 767

Club Net Only – G3TVS

Saturdays 1400hrs on 40m

7.070 – 7.085 MHz

WIMBLEDON & DARS

Website – www.gx3wim.org.uk

Club Net –

Mondays 2045hrs 145.500 MHz

2nd & last Friday of each month at Martin

Way Methodist Church, Buckleigh

Avenue, Merton Park SW20.

7.30pm for 8pm.

Note: New location.

10 March - The Power of PIC,
by Peter Jenner M0PDJ

Local Rally & Event Calendar

Dates for your diary:

7 May - West London Electronics Show, Kempton Park (Radiofairs). **Note revised date.**
CATS participation in this event.

14 May – Dunstable Downs rally.

18th June - The Newbury and District ARS
Boot Sale.

16 July - Mc Michael Rally, Reading RFC,
Sonning, Berks.

13th August - Flight Refuelling ARS
rally, Wimbourne, Dorset.

8/9 September – Leicester Amateur
Radio Show, Donnington Park.

15th October – Rusty Radios rally, Cottered
village hall, Nr Stevenage, Herts.

12th November - West London
Electronics Show, Kempton Park
(Radiofairs). **Note revised date. Radcom is still
carrying an incorrect date for this event.**

19th November – CATS Bazaar

International:

May 19 – 21 – Dayton Hamvention
Dayton Ohio USA

June 23 – 25 International Radio
Amateur Exhibition, Friedrichshafen,
Germany.

And Finally.....

Amateur Radio songs

There can't be very many popular songs devoted to amateur radio but one that I've come across is called *CQ Serenade*. It was made in the 1950s, the orchestra was conducted by Don Barette VE2QS and the singer is Joyce Hahn. There's also a French version, sung by Raymond Girerd, and both versions can be found at:

http://f5ad.free.fr/NON-CQ_CO%20SERENADE.htm

Follow the link to the version required.

The recording is actually titled: Dah Di Dah Dit, Dah Dah Di Dah and is on the "QSO" label! Does anyone know of any other amateur radio related songs?

CATS Whispers is published monthly by
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Coulson Amateur Transmitting Society