

COULSDON AMATEUR TRANSMITTING SOCIETY

G4FUR



M1FUR

CATS WHISPERS

May 2008



Affiliated to the RSGB

SYCOM – Official CATS Sponsor

Visit www.sycomcomp.co.uk

CATS Committee

Chairman: Steve Conway G7SYO

Secretary: Andy Jackson G8JAC

Treasurer: Derek Hands G1PGS

Members: Steve Beal G3WZK

Stuart Barber G6CJR

Dennis Noe M0 NDJ

Frank Emery G3ZMF

CATS Whispers Editor: Andy Jackson G8JAC

email address for contributions: cats@qsl.net

Regular Society Meetings

These are held on the second Monday in each month at:-

St. Swithun's Church Hall, Grovelands Road, Purley at 20.00 to 22.00hrs.

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 www.qsl.net/cats **Email** : cats@qsl.net

New website host: <http://www.sthost.co.uk/webpace/cats/>

Forthcoming Meetings

Mon 12th May – Drive your rig over the Internet by Martin G4FKK

Mon 9th June – CATS annual DF Hunt

Mon 14th July - Antennas Lecture by Tony Fell G7DGW



CATS is Twinned with the

Crescenta Valley Radio Club

Glendale California USA www.qsl.net/cvrc

April meeting report

Borrowing slightly from one of our neighbouring clubs' regular meeting activities, we held a "Test and Swap" event for our April meeting. Whether anything actually got swapped I don't know, but some items of members' kit were brought and tested on the range of test kit that we had available.



G3ZMF at work checking out a homebrew top band rig built by M0NDJ. A problem was traced to the well-known three-legged fuse.

Fourteen members either brought things to test or came along to see what was going on and we were pleased to have two visitors in the persons of Stan G4XXI and Tom G4DFA. Parameters such as frequency accuracy and deviation were easily checked and in some cases corrected. Not everyone has access to commercial grade test equipment and we were fortunate to have Marconi Instruments 2955A and IFR 1200S RF analysers on hand to see how various bits of kit were performing. Although Marconi Instruments is still thought of as being a British company and IFR is well known as American, both are now owned by US-based Aeroflex Inc.

The general move to digital transmission techniques in the professional telecoms fields means that there is currently quite a lot of high grade analogue test equipment appearing on the market, usually at a fraction of the cost when new. Several specialist firms advertise in Radcom and similar journals and of course there's always eBay although buying there requires some knowledge and not a little trust.



M3JXN and G0KZT checking out a hand portable rig.

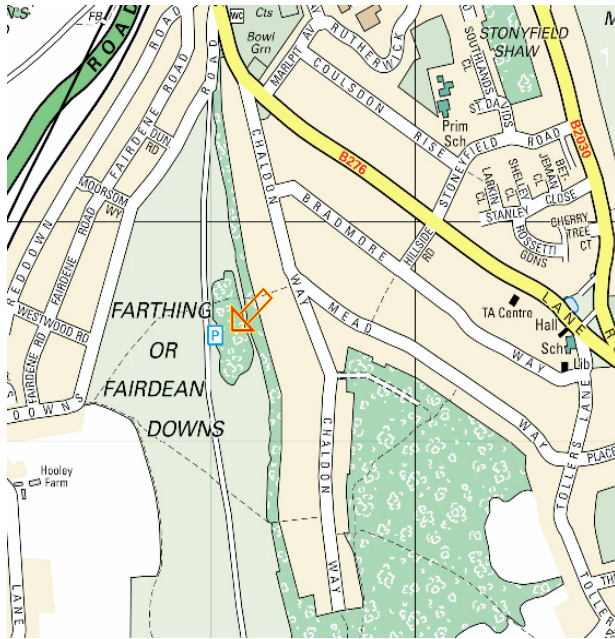
CATS Future Activity News

Many members will be aware that Martin G4FKK spends some of his working time in Madrid, but he keeps up regular operation from his station at home. How is this done? All will be revealed at the **May** meeting when he presents the techniques of remote station operation using the Internet as the connection medium.

In **June**, as is traditional, we will hold our annual Direction Finding event or Foxhunt as some prefer to call it. This is again being run by Terry G4CDY and will involve a somewhat longer distance than the previous couple of years. Think 10 – 12 miles. You can be reasonably assured that the target will be located conveniently within reach of a suitable hostelry to refresh the contestants at the end. Bearing in mind the distance involved, you will need a car.

M3JXN has constructed the portable antenna as described and demonstrated by Terry at the February meeting and has been getting some good results with it. The basic antenna has been enhanced with a compass and that essential accessory for DF-ing – an RF attenuator. The basic design is easy and cheap to make so drop a message to Terry if you haven't already got a copy of the construction plans.

Start point for the event is the car park at Farthing Downs (TQ300582) and to make the most of the evening light, start time is 19.30 and final instructions will be issued at the start.



G6MFM wins the prize!

Those of you who were at G3WZK's presentation of his 40 years in Amateur Radio will remember a mystery object being passed round for identification. This was an artefact that Steve had picked up in his working career and was radio related although this was not too obvious from a brief examination.

Various guesses were made but the one nearest was from Derek G6MFM, his verbal guess that it was the cover of a radome came closest to the truth.

What was it? A piece of the covering from one of the famous horn antennas on the BT Tower. Weatherproof but transparent to SHF radio frequency.

Congratulations!

Congratulations go to Andy G0 KZT and XYL Dawn on the safe arrival of their second harmonic. Jessica Ellen arrived at 07.15 on 22nd of April weighing in at 5 pounds exactly.



The Briers Sisters featuring new arrival Jessica Ellen.

We are pleased to report that mum and baby are doing fine. Not too sure about dad though.....

Our **July** meeting will be a lecture on antennas by Tony Fell G7DGW. The exact content has yet to be finalised but it promises to be an interesting presentation on something that by definition we all use.

Is there something that YOU would like to see as an activity for our meeting evenings? Could YOU present something that would interest other members? Got an idea for something that we could present? Tell a committee member!

Membership Matters

We are pleased to report that CATS has a new member. Actually not quite a "new" member since Tom Ellinor G4DFA was one of the founder members of CATS back in 1975 when CATS was formed from the fallout from the Purley & District Radio Society. Although Tom needs little introduction to most of our members, he lists his interests as construction, operating on HF, and 2m & 70cms both fixed and /M. Outside of radio he is interested in music, public address and sound systems. We are extremely pleased to welcome Tom back into the fold.

One of the two members listed in last month's CATS *Whispers* that we could only assume had resigned by default, has also re-joined, all of which brings our membership for 2008 to 34.

An up-to-date membership list will shortly be distributed to members who receive this newsletter. Please remember that members' personal information should be treated as "In Confidence".

TransPONDer Net

Our monthly contacts via the medium of Echolink with our sister club in California continue to prosper. The latest one coincided with their planning meeting for this year's ARRL Field Day which caused a small delay but we were able to chat with the current club President, "Elle Presidente" Leah KE6MMU with the link hosted at their end by Mark KE6ZRP. The "other Mark"

W6MW is currently in Columbus Ohio but by the magic of Echolink and the Internet, called in to the net.

At this end the link was handled by Martin G4FKK with G8JAC, G0KZT, G3ZMF and M3JXN calling in. Anyone can do this, either using radio on our usual frequency of 145.2875MHz or by calling in through Echolink.

Contesting latest

VHF NFD – 5th & 6th July 2008 1500 – 1500hrs

CATS will be part of a four-club team operating under the collective name of the North East Surrey Contest Group. The other clubs are the Surrey Radio Contact Club (SRCC), the Wimbledon & District Amateur Radio Society (WADARS) and the Addiscombe Amateur Radio Club (AARC). CATS are running the 70cms restricted (antenna 10m agl max with single antenna) station with SRCC. Our new pump up mast is being utilised along with the newly refurbished rotator that Frank G3ZMF undertook to do.

Overall: Mix & Match;
6m, Restricted, G4ALE, AARC;
4m, Low Power, G4ALE, AARC
2m, Restricted, G3WIM, SRCC/WADARS
70cm, Restricted, G3SRC, SRCC/CATS

The site is the same one that we used last March and August 2007 but to remind you it is Warren Barn Farm, alongside Croydon Road. Warlingham, Surrey. NGR: TQ 538525, 156543

Checking the rules, operators must either be members of the RSGB or that of an affiliated Society. That allows all paid up CATS members to take part. Set-up will be taking place on Friday 4th July from “mid afternoon”. So, please support the contest group before and during the contest. Although our responsibility will be primarily to the 70cm station, I don't doubt that assistance for operating the other stations will be welcome.

This will be an excellent chance to be part of a competitive contest group. Accuracy of logging and the use of computer software (Super Duper as used by CATS) are desired criteria. But experience comes with practice and there will be plenty of experienced operators to help you. So please, get involved as much as you can. I would be happy to collate interest from CATS members if there is a preferred time you would like to operate (I expect a shift rota will be drawn up to allow everyone a chance to operate and to allow operators known break times for essential R & R).

Low Power Contest – 2nd & 3rd August 2008

CATS are entering this series of contest again. More details in next month's newsletter but the essential information is that we're operating from the same site as above and that we're going to have an enjoyable weekend!! As this will (hopefully!) be high summer, we will plan to have an evening cookout/BBQ if there are sufficient numbers of members interested.

Andy G0 KZT

Remote control by G4FKK

To support and enhance his presentation for the May meeting on the techniques of controlling a rig over an Internet link, Martin G4FKK has prepared some notes. If you are coming to the presentation (and if not, why not?) these notes will give you some useful background, which will enhance your understanding.

Ed.

These notes are intended to be read along with and after my presentation at CATS on the 12th May 2008. They're adapted from a letter I sent Pat, G4FDN, and will make more sense once you've sat through the presentation (really!).

If you want to have a go at remote controlling some of my equipment then the first thing you'll need to do is to download and install the following pieces of software. They're all free and written by Radio Amateurs. I've been using them for a few years now; they're stable and appear to cause no ghastly problems!

Ham Radio Deluxe – Remote Control software. I'm currently using Beta Version 3.5, build 1686. Simon is constantly updating the beta version and, so far, they've all been pretty backwards compatible. You can find it here...

<http://www.ham-radio.ch/kits/beta/3.5/1686/>

Hamachi – Virtual Private Network software. When you install this it will allocate you a 'Hamachi' IP number starting with 5. A group of us all use this software and have set up various IRB groups, which I'll let you know about later. You can get it here...

<https://secure.logmein.com/products/hamachi/vpn.asp?lang=en>

IpSound – A very simple but reliable VOiP programme written by a Swedish amateur. I'm using Version 0.57. We tend to use the G711 codec which provides good comms quality at low bandwidth. You should be able to find the software here...

<http://www.visit.se/~pointless/> Or here...
<http://www.svenstedt.se/ip-sound/>

Update: Christopher, the guy who wrote the software, has now got himself a full-time job and no longer has the time to support IpSound so if you can't find it on the web, feel free to drop me a line and I'll email you a copy – g4fkk@qsl.net

How to Get it Going

Once you've installed all the software you'll need to join or create a Hamachi group. Let's start by joining the CATS-IRB group I've set up. The button second from the right in the bottom right hand corner of the Hamachi window is the one you need to click. You'll need the following...

Network Name = **CATS-IRB**
 Network Password = **topbandisgreat**

Assuming all goes well, you'll see something similar to Fig 1. below...

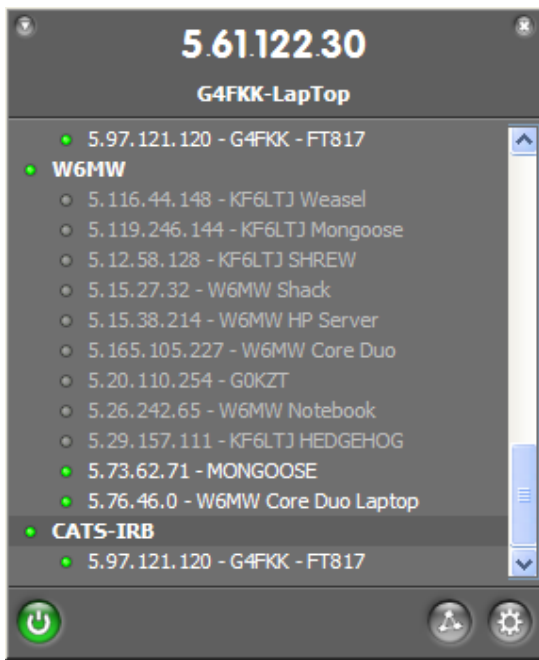


Fig 1. Hamachi Member list

A handy facility is to be able to right-click on a member's entry and choose 'Copy address', which will put the remote ip number onto the Windows clipboard.

Use my FT817 number and load it into IpSound – I arrange the screen to look something like this...



Fig 2. IpSound screen shot

A little green square means that IpSound is running and waiting for a connection. Assuming no one else is logged into it, you should be able to listen to my FT817 by highlighting the entry and clicking the green 'play' button at the bottom right of the window. I use the default UDP port 4444. You may not hear anything straight away because I sometimes switch it off remotely. It will switch on automatically when you connect to it using Ham Radio Deluxe.

HRD Stuff

To make HRD work you'll need the same ip number as before. Other stuff you'll need is...
 Port number – 7805
 Com port – Com 1
 Data rate – 4800
 DTR & RTS
 Username – cats
 Password – cats

The need for these will become apparent as you work through setting up HRD.

The login page looks something like...

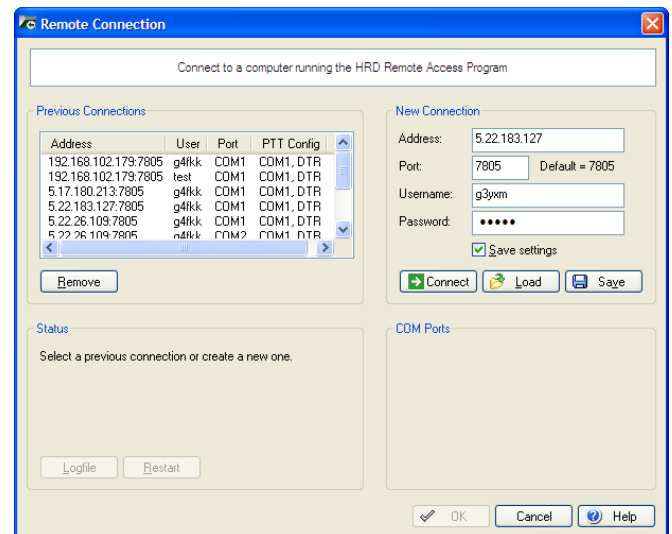


Fig 3. HRD login window

A couple of tips for HRD –

I'm sure you'll be able to work out how it works but if not just drop me a line or text me using the Hamachi text facility (another useful feature).

- a) when logging in make sure NOT to check the remote PTT com port box.
- b) it can appear a bit clunky but it usually gets there in the end HI.

The screen for the FT 817 looks like this...

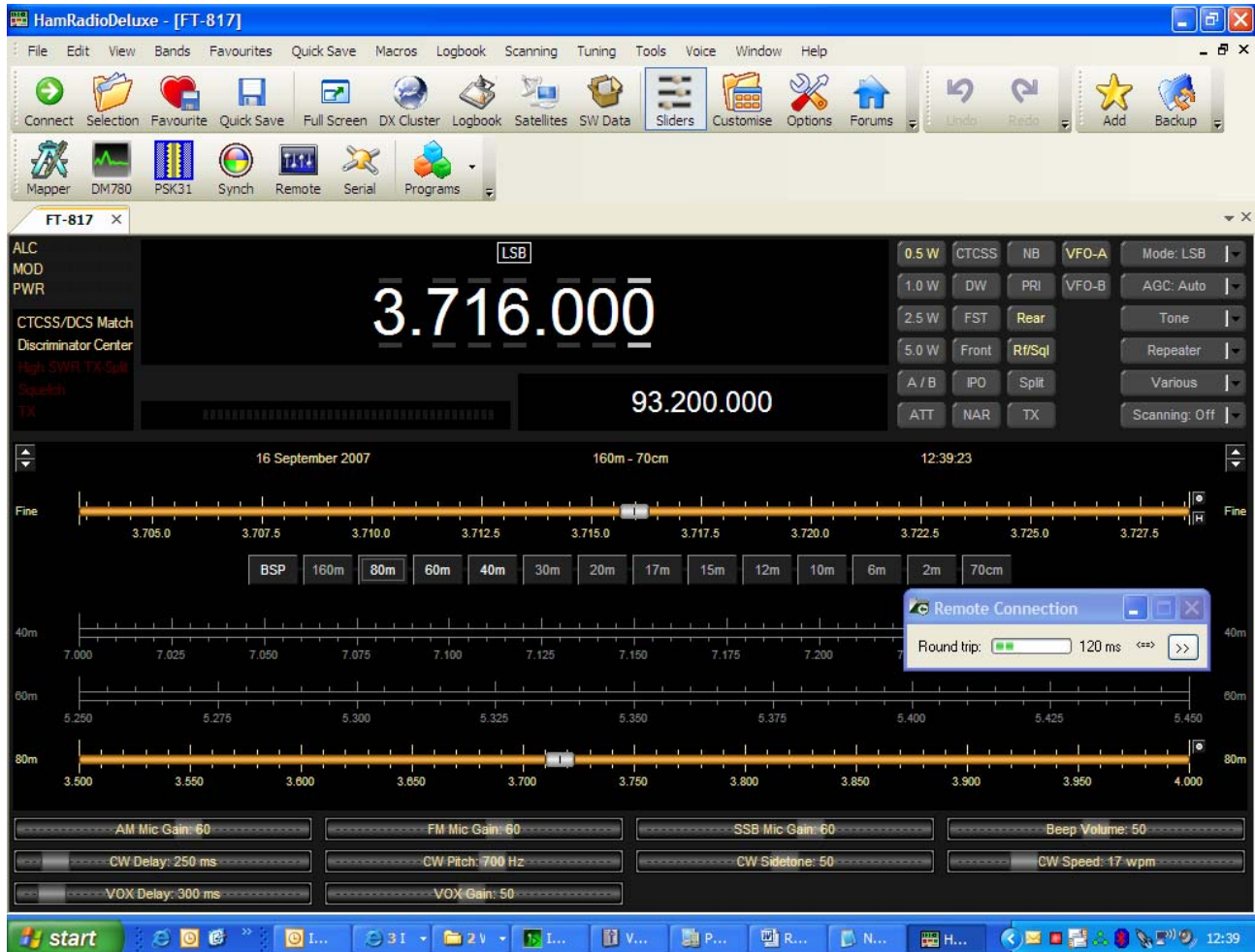


Fig 4. HRD FT817 screen shot

The FT817 lives in my loft and is controlled by a mini ITX PC which runs continuously (touch wood). The front aerial connection has a 6m/2m/70cms tri-band vertical connected to it – the aerial is in the loft with the gear so it's a bit screened. The rear connection has a home made e-field probe connected which, again, lives in the loft. It seems to work OK from LF right up to 70cms but picks up a bit of noise – especially when my son, Alan M3ZMA, is running his PC gear in the room below the loft!

1.942MHz. We have set up equipment at a number of locations across the UK and one in California (W6MW). Due to the free version of Hamachi only allowing 16 live connections, we've set up three groups; UK-IRB- 1,2 & 3. Once you've practiced with my FT817 and are interested in using gear further afield let me know and I'll ask the chaps to let you join the group.

Martin G4FKK

As I mentioned earlier, there is a group of us who meet up most Sunday nights at 21:00 on

Elvaston Castle Rally is CANCELLED

Although somewhat distant from our area, members will be disappointed to hear that one of the major annual amateur radio events, the Elvaston Castle Rally, has been cancelled. The organizers explain their decision as follows:

“The organizers of the Rally have had to take a difficult decision to cancel. There are a combination of reasons, including spiraling costs, reducing attendance, reducing support to organize and run the Rally. Whilst the heart said continue, the head could not countenance the risks associated with continuing. The last thing we wanted was to see the Rally sink into little more than a 'car boot' sale. We want to remember it for what it was, what is offered, and the high standards it set. We would like to thank all that have supported us over the years, and helped to make the Elvaston Rally one of the best in the country”.

Local Rally & Event Calendar

- 18 May** Dunstable Downs Rally
Stockwood Park, Luton, Beds.
<http://www.ddrcbootsale.org/>
- 15th June** – Newbury Radio Rally & Boot Sale
Newbury Showground next to M4 J13.
rally@nadars.org.uk
- 15th June** – East Suffolk Wireless Revival car boot sale.
Trinity Park (formerly Suffolk Show Ground)
Felixtowe Road, Ipswich IP3 8UH
09.30 start, admission £2.
- 13th July** McMichael rally & boot sale.
Reading Rugby Football Club
Holme Park Farm Lane
Sonning lane, Sonning on Thames
Reading, RG4 6ST
<http://www.radarc.org/MMRally.htm>
- 10 August 2008** Flight Refuelling ARS Hamfest.
Wimborne, Dorset.
- 16th November 2008** CATS Bazaar at the Scout Hall, Lion Green Lane, Coulsdon.

GB3OK & GB3LK Closure

As of about 27th April it appears that Tony G1HIG has pulled the plug on the two repeaters that he has been running. Due to what appears to be personal matters that have been broadcast on the Internet and on the repeaters has led to this action.

GB3OK became a popular VHF repeater that initially took the place of GB3SL after that closed from the site at Crystal Palace. Later, GB3LK was added on UHF. GB3OK was also linked to Echolink and was used several times for the TransPONDer net.

The following extract was placed on the GB3OK.COM -: “The repeaters are off air and will not be coming back! Due to a long string of events and what went on this afternoon, Tony & Jeanette have made the above decision. The repeaters have encroached in their personal life for too long with the personal abuse & aggravation. Tony & Jeanette have found they are in an impossible situation, this will never stop all the while the repeaters remain on air. We can all be thankful, to one. They would like to thank all those who have supported them over the last few years. All those who have donated to D-Star project listed will be fully refunded in due course.”

Internet linking via GB3NS

Since it returned to operation in February 2007, GB3NS located in Banstead has been adopted by many CATS members as our favoured local repeater.

In the last few weeks the functionality of the repeater has been enhanced with the addition of internet linking which means that any licenced amateur in the world with a computer and access to the internet can connect to the repeater. This has already led to some very interesting callsigns being heard. It's quite fascinating driving home from work and being able to chat to an Australian amateur who is driving to work in Sydney where it's already tomorrow!

RF access to GB3NS requires the use of CTCSS with a frequency of 82.5Hz. The repeater TX freq (downlink) is 430.9125 MHz, the RX freq (uplink) is 438.5125 MHz. The repeater's Echolink node number is 383403.

We hope to have a presentation by the repeater keeper Dennis GØ OLX later in the year.

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

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.gsl.net/g30ou/

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.

DORKING & District RS

Club Nets –
Sunday 0815hrs 3.770 Mhz
2030hrs 144.775 MHz
Meetings are held at the Friends Meeting House, Butterhill, South Street Dorking at 1930hrs.
Contact: Walter Blanchard G3JKV
Email: wb@g3jkv.co.uk
Web site:- <http://www.ddrs.org.uk>

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

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 – www.msars.org.uk

MITCHAM & DISTRICT ARS

(G3HFY) – Last Wednesday of each month 1930hrs at ATC HQ, Commonsides West, Mitcham.
Details Mike Knott G0 WCR 020 8764 4716

REIGATE ATS

Club Net –
Thursdays 2000hrs 145.500 MHz Sundays 2000hrs 3.740 – 3.760 MHz
Website www.gsl.net/rats
Email rats@gsl.net
3rd Thursday at RNIB, Redhill College, Philanthropic Road, Redhill for 7-30pm
Note change of meeting day

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 Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon CR9 7AT 7.45pm for 8pm

12 May – Project construction evening

SUTTON & CHEAM RS

John Puttock G0 BWV 020 8644 9945
Club Nets –
Monday 20.00hrs 145.500 MHz
Saturday 11.00hrs 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.

15 May - Annual General Meeting & Constructional Contest

THAMES VALLEY A.R.T.S.

Trevor Farris M0 CDB 013 7245 767
Club Net Only – G3TVS
Saturdays 1400hrs on 40m

WIMBLEDON & DISTRICT ARS

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.

9th May - 'The 3B7C DXpedition' by Justin Snow G4TSH.
30th May – club fox hunt.

CATS Whispers is published monthly by
A Jackson G8JAC on behalf of the
Coulston Amateur Transmitting Society. © C.A.T.S. 2008