

COULSDON AMATEUR TRANSMITTING SOCIETY

G4FUR



M1FUR

CATS WHISPERS

June 2008



Affiliated to the RSGB

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CATS Committee

Chairman: Steve Conway G7SYO
Secretary: Andy Jackson G8JAC
Treasurer: Derek Hands G1PGS
Members: Steve Beal G3WZK
Stuart Barber G6CJR
Dennis Noe M0NDJ
Frank Emery G3ZMF

CATS Whispers Editor: Andy Jackson G8JAC
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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 9th June – CATS annual DF Hunt
Mon 14th July - Repairing Amateur Radio by Tony Fell G7DGW
Mon 11th August – The annual CATS Bar-B-Q & social at G4RWW



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

May meeting report

Our May presentation was always going to be of interest to those who find the Internet a bit of a black art, and when it's combined with the very core of our hobby – operating on the amateur bands, then the subject gains extra interest. The title summed it up really – Drive your Rig over the Internet. Martin G4FKK spends a lot of time in Madrid on business and rather than be disconnected from amateur radio when he's away, uses the Internet as a "long mike lead" as he puts it. Not only that, but the various knobs on his home rig can also be remotely twiddled electronically by using control software on a remote PC and a suitable interface at the home end.

Martin's rig that he uses for this application is a Kenwood TS2000, which is equipped for remote PC operation as standard, and Kenwood also supply proprietary software for use with it. This provides both-way information transfer i.e. changing something on the rig shows on the PC screen presentation and vice-versa, and uses an RS232 connection between the rig and the controlling PC.



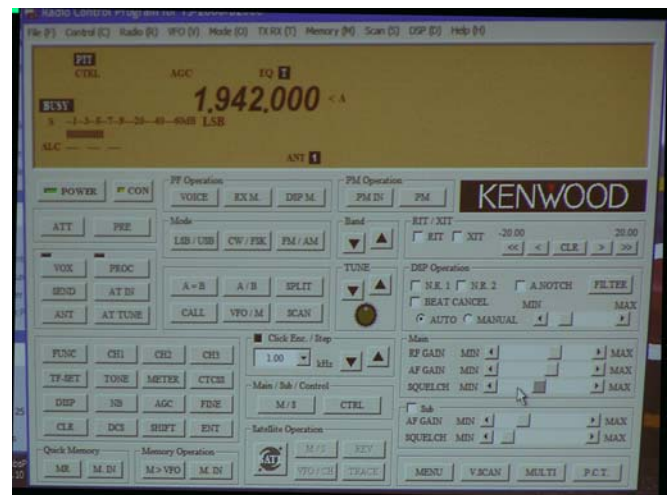
An attentive audience as G4FKK expounds on his remote system

Martin explained that the Internet merely extends the RS232 connection over virtually any distance. There is no technical reason why it couldn't be done from the moon!

The software that Martin uses to run the data link is Ham Radio Deluxe (HRD), which was developed by Simon Brown, formerly GD4ELI but now resident in Switzerland as HB9DRV, and Peter Halpin PH1PH. This program caters for the interface protocols of many commercial amateur rigs and is free for use by radio amateurs. More details and download information is at <http://hb9drv.ham-radio.ch>.

The program has built-in error checking routines that can cope with less than perfect links, and some somewhat rudimentary security features. To demonstrate the system, Martin went through the set-up procedures for the software by installing a new rig, which allowed us all to see what was happening on his PC via the projector and screen. Also running on the PC was a program called Hamachi, which creates a Virtual Private Network (VPN) between two computers. This allows internet-connected computers to function as if they were hard wired together and manages the allocation of a unique IP address. The purpose is to establish a virtual connection from the remote PC to the local PC, which is connected to the rig.

A third program that is necessary is IPSound which piggybacks onto Hamachi to provide a two-way audio connection over the Internet link so that the microphone and speaker functions are extended.



Screen shot of the remote control panel of the TS2000 as seen on the controlling PC.

Martin commented that while control commands are usually instant, there is often a slight lag on sound transmission caused by the processing delay of analogue to digital conversion and back again.

While the demonstration so far was convincing enough, Gerry G8NNT kindly loaned his 3G mobile which gave us a live Internet connection in the hall. Using a Bluetooth link from the 3G mobile into his PC, Martin linked up to a node in Scotland with an HRD-connected rig, and was able to go on-air as GM4FKK, and called into a contact between stations in Stafford and Manchester while controlling the station from Purley. A telling demonstration of how small our modern world has become.

Many thanks to Martin and Gerry for a most interesting lecture and demonstration.

CATS Future Activity News

Our **July** meeting will be a lecture by Tony Fell G7DGW. The subject will be Repairing Amateur Radio, presenting techniques and information on the repair of kit when it inevitably goes wrong, and maintenance to keep it in good shape. This promises to be an interesting presentation on something that most of us dabble in at one time or another. There will be handouts provided at the meeting.

If it's **August**, then it's Bar-B-Q and beer time and we will be gathering at Prue's for our annual summer social event. As her landmark tower no longer guides Croydon's commuters, incoming flights to Gatwick and local bird migration, make sure you know where her QTH is! Anyone want to volunteer to be cook this year?

Looking ahead to **September**, We have pencilled in a presentation on the GB3NS repeater by the repeater keeper Denis G0 OLX. This is subject to confirmation of the date at the moment.

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

The editor regrets that Ken Rosier G3DJK was incorrectly stated to have not renewed his subscription in the April *CATS Whispers*; Ken is still a member!

Unfortunately we have still not heard from Cliff Groves G6FPQ and can only conclude that we have lost him as a member.

There are no other changes to our membership to report, membership now stands at 32.

New callsign range

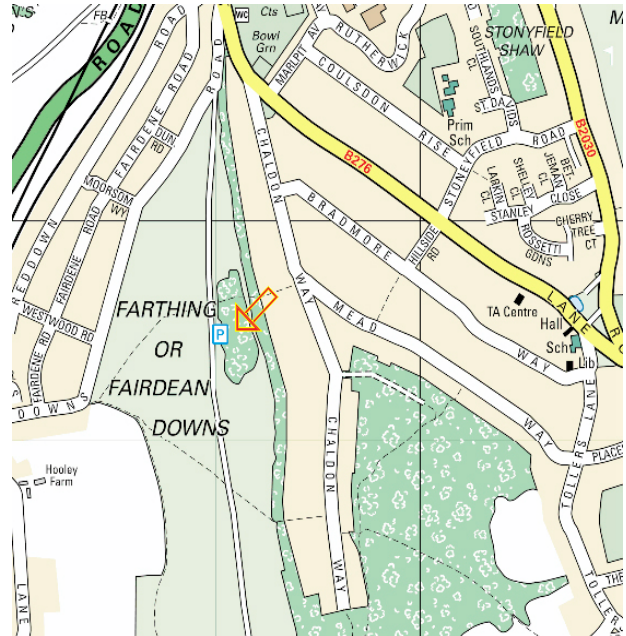
Ofcom have announced that M6xxx series callsigns are now available for issue to Foundation licence applicants. This new prefix came into use on the morning of Tuesday 13 May. A few remaining M3 callsigns are still available.

CATS Annual DF Hunt

This month we will hold our annual Direction Finding event or Foxhunt as some prefer to call it. This is again being run by Terry G4CDY (who will be the fox for the evening) 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. Other essentials are a portable rig, an accurate watch, a compass, paper, pencil and a good local map - Ordnance Survey 1:50000 sheet 187 (Landranger series) is suggested.

Start point for the event is the car park in the middle of Farthing Downs (TQ300582) and to make the most of the evening light, start time is 19.30A (i.e. BST/clock time) and final instructions e.g. frequencies, procedures etc. will be issued at the start by G8JAC.



The Fox will start transmitting at 20.15 with a 30 second transmission every five minutes on one of the 12.5kHz channels between 144.50 and 145.50MHz. A listening watch will be kept at both start and finish on 145.2875MHz for liaison and emergency purposes but no fox hunt information will be sent on this frequency until the end of the event.

The winner(s) will be the first team to find the fox. For those who get lost, the target location will be broadcast on the DF frequency at 21.45 to enable everyone to get to a pub in time for a pint at the end.

M3JXN has constructed the "tape measure" 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.

TransPONDer Net

Just for a change, you will probably see this column in time to remind you that the next monthly net with Crescenta Valley Radio Club members is on Saturday 7th June at the usual time (for us) of 17.15. Why not pop up on 145.2875MHz to chat to our friends across the pond. The MB7IPL Echolink node will be up and running for the link-up.

Next month may be a little different as CVRC will be participating in the annual ARRL Field Day event over the weekend of 28/29 June from a parking lot in Deukmejian Park which is a public park in La Crescenta (near Glendale), so we thought it might be a fun idea if we brought the July net forward a week to co-incide with this event and add an extra dimension to their weekend. If this comes off we will email details direct to members so that they can participate. Hopefully, we'll also have found out how to pronounce Deukmejian Park by then.

Contesting latest

VHF NFD – 5th & 6th July 2008

Our role in VHF NFD this year is to join with SRCC, Wimbledon & District ARC and Addiscombe Amateur Radio Society in running a composite effort under the title of North East Surrey Contest Group. More detailed info was published in the May issue of *CATS Whispers* and the CATS members who are involved are G0KZT, G8JAC, M3JXN, G3ZMF and G0 KZT. G0 KZT is co-ordinating our efforts so if you would like to be involved or can help in any way, get in touch with him.

Where? At our usual site at Nore Hill, (aka Woldingham Ridge) next to the B269.

It's about half way between Sainsbury's and the Botley Hill Farmhouse restaurant and pub; now you can't get much more convenient than that!

144/432 MHz Low Power 2-3 August 2008

This is the only other field contest that we are planning to be involved with this year. More details next month but it's not that far away! As above, talk to G0 KZT if you can help or want to be involved. This will be purely a CATS event so (weather permitting!) we can make a family event of the weekend. We will be using the same site as above.

CATS on the Web

If you type "Coulsdon Amateur Radio" into Google, one of the first things to come up is our new web site, which is managed for CATS by Steve G3WZK. Steve is updating and putting new content on the site almost every week now so if you haven't looked for a while, there's going to be something new to see. One area that has had a lot of attention is the Links page where you can find links that will take you to various pages of radio interest. So far there's nearly 200 on there and it's growing fast. Got a good link that would interest or be useful to members? Let Steve know and it can be added. Other stuff on there is a young peoples section and an electronic copy of this newsletter although we are taking care to remove any members' email addresses or telephone numbers to defeat the web crawlers and spammers. The web site is there to give CATS publicity but it's also your site; if there's something that you think would be useful or interesting to have on there, talk to Steve. There's also a Sales and Wants section that you can use.

Local Rally & Event Calendar

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.

27 – 29 June - Hamtronic show, Friedrichshafen.
Note: CATS members are attending this show.
We look forward to reading a report!

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 annual
Hamfest. Merley, near Wimborne, Dorset.
Note: this year there will be extra tables
devoted to telephones and telephony.

16th November 2008 CATS Bazaar at the Scout
Hall, Lion Green Lane, Coulsdon.

For Sale & Wanted

This facility is available to all CATS members (and non-members subject to approval) to advertise items they have for sale or are looking for. Submit all items to the Editor G8JAC.

For Sale

Practika 35mm SLR camera with telephoto lens £20 o.n.o.

Holiday for two in Europe valued at £400 - £600. Asking £60. No lectures, no sales pitch, just 7 days of fun in either Paris, Italy or Switzerland.

Call Frank G3ZMF QTHR, for details.

Wanted

Mitsubishi M57745 RF power module.
One of these:



Or a pointer to a cheap supplier.

I'm also still looking for an old-style table-top rack cabinet. It needs to be ventilated as it will have 23 valves inside it! Something like this:



It needs to accommodate a 10½ inch high x 19 inch wide panel and be minimum 15 inches deep.

Andy G8JAC QTHR

Technical Support

You know how you have to ring up the technical support department of a big computer company, or BT for instance, and they've out-sourced the job to India where those young whiz-kids in a technically proficient, dynamic new-world country will diagnose your problem and offer rapid solutions?

What it's really like in India:



Now, doesn't that make you feel confident about the quality of technical help?

Other clubs' newsletters

Members will have noticed that we try to have copies of other clubs' newsletters available at our meetings. These are mostly emailed to us and we reciprocate with our own *CATS Whispers*.

If you would like to have email copies forwarded to you as they arrive, just let the Editor know and you can have all the local amateur radio news and gossip at your fingertips

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.qsl.net/g30ou/

6 June – How things Work by Bob G30OU and Don
G3WDY

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 GØ WCR 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 **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

SUTTON & CHEAM RS

John Puttock GØ 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.

THAMES VALLEY A.R.T.S.

Trevor Farris MØ 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.

June 13th - Loops and other 'impossible'
small antennas. Dr M. J. Underhill G3LHZ

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