



RAGCHEW

NOVEMBER 2022

From the Editor

Back in June I wrote that **2022** was an historic year for the nation with the Platinum Jubilee of the Queen, and for GARES our **100th anniversary**. Since then we have sadly mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth II, also celebrated our centenary at Down Hatherley Village Hall.

Also in the June "Ragchew" I said my farewell as Editor, but sadly no volunteer stepped forward to take over the role. I am pleased to report that **Nick M0NYY** has agreed in the interim to assist with producing "Ragchew" until a new Editor can be recruited.

In this issue **Tony G4HBV** continues his series "**A Brief History of Radio**" with Part 8 covering the period of the First World War.

Mike G4IZZ / M4N attended the RSGB Convention for the first time gives us his report in this issue.

In September **Leta G4RHK and I** spent our customary week on Lundy and as we were joined by some friends on their first visit to the Island which coincided with the 2m Trophy Contest, operating was limited. I did, however, manage some reasonable DX using my FT817ND and a small 3 element beam..

Best 73 and Stay Safe

Brian G4CIB

RAGCHEW NEEDS YOU!

The club has a wealth of experience in the many facets of our wonderful hobby, and it is sad that I have to regularly appeal for articles to publish.

So if you have done something new, built a piece of equipment, tried a new antenna, done some interesting /P work then how about putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboards. Other club members, particularly newer ones may well be inspired to have-a-go.

Handwritten or familiar computer formats (Word, PDF etc) are equally acceptable.

Submit copy to g4cib@outlook.com or by post to:-

Brian Woodcock G4CIB, The Larches, 2 Poolhay Close, Corse Lawn, Gloucester GL19 4NY

G4CIB and G4RHK on Lundy

September 2022

Our annual trip to Lundy took place in early September and on this occasion we were accompanied by a couple of friends on their first visit to the island. As they were only booked in for 3 nights, they wanted to explore as much of the island as possible, so operating in the **2m Trophy Contest** was very limited. Our property this year was the Castle with no space to erect any antennas. The only option therefore was outdoor /P operating and luckily enough the weather was kind for this to be done. Early on the Sunday morning, I erected my three element SOTA beam in a small paddock adjacent to the Castle, connected up my FT817ND and was highly delighted to work the following stations:-

TM5R JN19BQ 506km

G8T JO01KJ 385km

F6KCZ/P IN99PI 343km

F6KBO/P IN88FC 347km

G00DQ IO91MR 263km

G8SRC/P IO91CL 201km

I also took part in the 2m FMAC with just one QSO with 2E0VCC/P in IO70SP (local to IO71DQ) at 57km. Later on the same evening I had a go at the 2m UKAC, working 6 stations.

On the following weekend, **Jim 2E0GKN** and his friend **Tom M7YYF** headed up Churchdown Hill and it was great to have a QSO with them. We just about made it using my FT817ND and next year I plan to take a small 15 watt amplifier so hopefully we can get some better signals.

I also had the pleasure of having several QSOs on 2m with **Ken GW0RHC** who is the "leading light" behind the **Gower/Gwyr Contest Club**. As their members are drawn far and wide, they enter the **General Club** section in the VHF UKAC, and are currently lying in 13th place.

So what of 2023? We will be on the island for 5 days in early March and two weeks in June and nearer the time will give more details with regards to bands and modes.

RSGB Convention

By Mike G4IZZ / M4N

Reading RADCOM early in September of this year, my attention was caught by the short article on the RSGB convention taking place in the near future. Having never been before I decided that I'd give it a try. It was being held over the weekend of 8th/9th October, and I booked for the one day, Saturday the 8th. I had no idea of who might be there, other than a couple of members of CWOps (an organisation that promotes the use of CW) though I didn't know them personally. Arriving at 08:45am in time for the official opening, I wandered around peeking at call-sign badges thinking to myself, "I should have worn one of those!!" Anyway, I soon found my CWOps guys and got chatting. As you'd expect from a gathering of like-minded folks everyone was very friendly and keen to introduce themselves. The venue, in Milton Keynes, was excellent, being a purpose-built conference centre having large meeting/lecture rooms, a pleasant restaurant and acres of parking. And most importantly, easily accessible.

I'd decided to attend two 'talks' – the first being 'Stoking Bletchley', which was about the 'interceptors' during WWII, and later in the day, 'Antennas for an effective contest station'. They were very well attended and I enjoyed both. All the lectures/talks can be found via the RSGB website. I'd chosen the second talk because I'm a keen contester, and any imaginative ideas, or do's and don'ts based on experience, were going to be welcomed. I'm pleased to say that the talk contained both, so if contesting is something of interest, I'd recommend watching it. As I said, I was only there for one day, but I'd seen enough to know that I should have stayed overnight and taken in the Sunday programme too: perhaps next year.

Talking of contesting, you'll know from the table compiled by Martin, G4ENZ, and published in the club's Bulletin that there are around 15 GARES members who regularly enter contests. Some on H.F. and others on VHF/UHF. I know that contesting is not to everyone's liking, and many members simply enjoy the social side of 'having a chat' on various club nets or just calling CQ to see who'll respond. Occasionally, RSGB contests occur on a Monday evening, and that can present a bit of a problem when it coincides with a club night. That said, the RSGB administer a league for clubs that enter contests, so helping keep the club in as a high a position as possible is something that has to be considered too.

If you are interested in contesting but have never taken it further, then there are plenty of members who would be only too pleased to offer advice/assistance. A good starting point would be to listen to, or join in, the club's 'contesting and DX' 2m net held every Friday at 3:30pm on 144.550 (FM). Subjects discussed are; 'what occupied you regarding contests (or DX activity) over the previous week', and 'what's coming up in the following week that might (or not) be of interest?' There's a long list of modes a potential contester could choose from; there really is 'something for everyone'. So, if you'd like to help the club to raise its profile and maybe climb the RSGB's contest ladder (and have lots of radio fun), can I suggest that you consider giving contesting a try.

A Brief History of Radio – Part 8 by Tony G4HBV

The First World War was pivotal in the development of radio. At the start of the war, the few valves existing had a life expectancy of tens of hours. By the end of the war, valves had a life expectancy of a thousand hours or more. Armies had some transportable sets, but the main use of radio during this period was in the air and at sea.

First transmissions from aircraft had taken place in the USA in 1910 and in England in 1911, with ranges in the order of 15 miles eventually being achieved. Early in the war, the combatants realised the advantages to be gained by aircraft reporting the results of artillery fire. Such aircraft would use a primitive spark transmitter and of course no receiver would be necessary. Before setting out on its mission, the aircraft would test the transmitter while circling the airfield and only depart when it received a visual signal from the ground to inform the pilot that the transmitter was working. By the end of the war in 1918, two-way radio telephony had been developed by the British at Biggin Hill airfield.

At sea, radio was also important in the First World War. Early on, to the surprise of the British, Germany had fitted the first U-boats with effective radios. At the start of the war, there was deliberate cutting of under-sea cables, with the object of forcing Germany to communicate with its overseas territories by radio and so render them open to interception. The naval battles of Jutland showed that intelligence gained by monitoring German radio traffic had to be fully understood and acted on by naval high-command.

At this time in the development of radio, long-distance inter-continental traffic was achieved by long-wave and could only be carried out after massive investment in stations with huge antenna systems. Short wave, below 100 metres wavelength, was considered to be useless, so was "generously" donated to the amateur radio fraternity, but this was soon to change.

From the Archives



A happy group of club members at the Droitwich Radio Rally, summer 1982. This rally, organised by the Worcester Radio Club was for many years held at the Secondary School in Upton-upon-Severn before moving to Droitwich. L-R Leta G4RHK, Walter G0FEW, Pat G3MA, Steve G4HFT, Stan G3RNU and seated in the front, Tony G4HBV



Left: G4CIB/P operating in the September 2m Trophy Contest. I've just worked TM5R at 506km, hence the smile!

Below: On a sunny Sunday morning I'm enjoying a QSO with **Jim 2E0GKN/M** and **Tom M7YYF/M** both located on Churchdown Hill. Using just 5 watts from my FT817ND we just about made it on 2m SSB. Next year I'll pack a small 15 watt amplifier!

