

HORSHAM AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

HARCNEWS

Coming Shortly

Sept 2nd Club Evening Radio Scouting and Contesting

Sept 4/5th Club Event SSB Field Day

Oct 7th Club Evening Junk Sale

September 2004

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Club Generator

Our old generator has over the past years has been showing signs of age. Bought new about 25 years ago the old club generator having been stored unused for 364 days a year and then run very hard (when driving the club linear) for 24 hours before being stored again, has served us well.

But over the last few years has at times has caused us a few problems. Also being a vintage machine, it used (depending on load) copious amounts of petrol, costing ~ £40-£50 a weekend.

The committee made a decision, that if and when an opportunity came along we should, funds permitting, replace it with a newer model. An offer was made for our old machine and accepted. The hunt was on for a new machine.

After trawling all of the usual places for information and quotes for a new 2.5- 3.5 Kw

generator (and taking a sharp intake of breath as the prices came in), 2 budget of £400 was set.

So I set to the task of finding a suitable unit. Then after speaking (over a pint) with the 'old sage' of The Haven (Robin G3OGP) Ebay was mentioned.

A quick trawl through Ebay at Robin's found pages dedicated to generators. What a choice, we found a new generator being sold by a dealer, A subtle bid was placed and an eye kept on the web for the next few days.

Success, our bid was accepted and a few days later a large heavy box was delivered containing a new 5.6Kva single cylinder 337cc 4-stroke petrol generator. List price £822 Ebay price £368.... My thanks to Robin for his assistance in acquiring the club generator, I'm now an Ebay convert!!!

August Meeting: The Secret Wireless War

This month's meeting was a video from the RSGB about how amateurs were involved in WWII.

The authorities quite correctly realised how important intelligence was, and because the Nazis had to use radio communications because they had invaded many countries; land-lines were not appropriate.

They (the government) wanted to obtain this information without spending any money! The answer was to ask the RSGB to help, as amateur operations had ceased, to get amateurs to listen on hf and intercept enemy communications. About 1,500 amateurs were effectively mobilised.

Each station was allocated a frequency band to listen to, and their logs were sent by post to a PO Box. These logs were checked for missing blocks as most messages were sent in Morse code as 5 letter cyphered blocks. Because of skip distance, amateurs over a large geographical area listened to the same frequencies so that a complete message could be reconstructed.

All incoming logs were checked and the amateurs were told which transmissions were important and which were our traffic so that soon only enemy nets were tracked and the information subsequently sent to Bletchley Park for decoding.

We heard some simulated typical messages and it was

very much like being under contest conditions; the very weak received signal was surrounded by many much stronger signals on either side of the pass-band.

Some of the operators were only 16 at the time and used home-brewed 2 valve regenerative receivers. One had to have three hands to operate tuning, regen control and write down the text. Later some were called up to operate at receiving sites and had to lie about their age! The sites used commercial receivers such as the HRO and AR88.

Another group set up mobile stations in Packard cars as there was a real threat of invasion at the time. Luckily this did not happen. These groups used large American vehicles and were sent into France after D-Day. The purpose of these mobile units

was to emanate intelligence information from Bletchley to the generals in the field. RAF operators used one-time pads for complete security. The greatest worry was if the code books were destroyed, all intelligence being fed to the front would stop.

An amusing anecdote was when one of these mobile units was being bombed during the last Nazi offensive in the Battle of the Bulge, and the operator had to send the Q-code for I am being bombed. An operator back in England received this message and had to look it up!

This video was of very high quality unlike some others we have seen and it was most interesting. Many of those interviewed still had their marbles intact and explained what they went through eloquently.

September Meeting: Radio Scouting and Contests

A two-parter this time, before the SSB Field Day Steve G4TPO does a lot of station operating on behalf of the Scouts. He will be given an opportunity to let us know how much activity there is during events like Thinking Day on the Air, Jamboree on the Air etc. Also we should be able to gauge what conditions are likely to be like on SSB Field Day.

Adrian G4LRP will give us some idea about the best band to be operating on at various times during the 24 hour contest. In the past, an interesting Novice course test was to look at the countries worked on different bands.

It seemed that most countries were worked on all bands, but conditions do change. This year (only) we are entering the restricted section to allow 'M' callsigns an ideal opportunity to see what 100 Watts can

achieve.

The site is Christ's Hospital. Antenna setup is Friday at 7pm with tent setup Saturday morning. Vehicular access is getting difficult, so the easiest approach is to take the Two Mile Ash road and stop in the layby about 30 second drive (at 40mph) south of Christ Hospital main gate, and walk down the bridle path, where the tent will be visible.

Otherwise the East gate entrance (often locked) is by the railway bridge on King Edward Road, which leads to Itchingfield. If open, drive through the gate and turn first right and follow the single track road along the railway, past a cricket pavilion, and follow the road to the tent. Next time it will be back to full power but probably a new site.

Fancy a day out on a Tall Ship?

Although the modern world's tall ships are mainly engaged in youth and cadet training, they usually provide opportunities for a wider age range to join in the experience for some of the time.

Here in Sussex we are close to the Portsmouth and Southampton bases of two of Britain's tall ship organisations. Besides extended voyages, they offer day sails and the HARC committee wondered whether there would be interest in an outing based around a tall ship day.

This season's programme includes day sails in September, October, and November.

The cost from Portsmouth is £79 and this includes lunch, afternoon tea, and refreshments. Waterproofs, harnesses, and safety training are provided. The age range is restricted to 18 – 75.

For more background visit www.tallships.org or talk to David G4FQR if potentially interested.

