

# RSGB 2023 Committee Reports

**The services provided by the RSGB Committees, Honorary Officers and other RSGB volunteers are central to the operation of amateur radio in the United Kingdom as we know it.**

Between them they touch every aspect of amateur radio and provide much of the organisational infrastructure on which everyday amateur radio depends. As you will see from the reports below, the RSGB Committees and Honorary Officers are a core resource who play a key role in delivering the RSGB strategy ([rsgb.org/strategy](https://www.rsgb.org/strategy)).

One of the RSGB's four key strategic priorities concerns spectrum and licensing. I write this overview on the eve of the most significant changes to the UK amateur radio licence that many of us have ever seen. This is on top of a year that has seen the RSGB address significant threats to the amateur radio spectrum. We must thank the work of the RSGB Spectrum Forum and in particular its Chair, Murray Niman, G6JYB who has worked with Ofcom to ensure an excellent outcome for the UK amateur radio community. We also need to thank the Microwave Manager Barry Lewis, G4SJH for his work in defending our continued access to the 23cm band. The new licence will result in an increased workload for the ETCC committee, and I am pleased to report that they have preparations in hand for an increase in the number of co-ordination requests that they need to address.

Another of the four key strategic priorities is the growth of amateur radio. One of the teams that brings amateur radio to the attention of the public is the volunteers at the RSGB National Radio Centre. Another team working to introduce amateur radio to a wider audience is the Regional Team. In each case, please see their reports for further information. There can be no such growth without the important work of the RSGB Examination teams. Here I would like to make a particular call out to the remote invigilation team members who have enabled so many to take their examinations at a time and place of their choosing. Of course, there is much more work to do in growth and I direct you to the report on the RSGB Growth Workshop, on page 73 of this issue of *RadCom*, for more information on our activities in that area.

Whilst currently we focus on four strategic priorities, we must not forget the validity of the other objectives, of which participation is one. As you will see, the contest committees

have been working hard to provide a large series of popular events that encourage operation using as many amateur radio modes as possible, both at a personal and at a club level. Part of the joy of contest participation is being presented with a winner's trophy and we must thank Jacqui Goodey, G6XSY for her excellent work in that role, and take a moment to note that so far no one has come forward to replace her in her retirement. Hopefully someone will step into her shoes so that we can continue the long-standing RSGB trophy tradition.

Another strategic objective concerns technical innovation and I hope that you will be as impressed as I am at the scientific understanding of propagation that the Propagation Studies Committee (PSC) is developing to the benefit of us all.

There is of course too little space to highlight all the important work that has happened this past year. I therefore ask you to read the reports below and the relevant committee web pages for more details of the work that the RSGB committees have undertaken.

I hope that you will join me in thanking the RSGB Committee Chairs, Committee members and Honorary Officers for their work on behalf of the RSGB membership and the amateur community at large, and when you meet them either in person or electronically, I know that they would appreciate a personal thank you.

**RSGB Board Chair, Stewart Bryant, G3YSX**

## ARDF Committee

The ARDF Committee is a group of committed volunteers who have been driving forward the development of this aspect of 'sport radio' in the UK.

ARDF is still recovering very slowly from the effects of the Covid Pandemic. In 2023, competitions in the English Midlands were least affected by the pandemic, with the Region 13 summer series taking place. Nationally, events were staged at Reynold and Holcote, Bagworth and Bradenham.

2023 was a year of upheaval in IARU Region 1 when the Executive Committee took the very unusual step of removing the Chairman of the ARDF Working Group from office. This all happened against the background of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a result, the ARDF Working Group lost a long-serving and much respected Chairman who will be very much missed.

2023 was also a year for the triannual meeting of the Region 1 General Conference which was held in Serbia. The RSGB

submitted three papers in an attempt to mitigate the worst of the fall-out from the above decision of the Executive Committee (EC). Also, a second candidate stood for the election of the ARDF Working Group Chairman, in addition to the EC candidate.

We received excellent support from Murray Niman, G6JYB who was a member of the RSGB delegation. Our papers met with some success with postponing the ARDF Youth Championships, originally scheduled to be held in Russia in 2024, and obliging the EC to adopt a positive attitude to the links between ARDF and Orienteering.

The candidate for Chairman, supported by the Working Group (the much-respected Rainer Floesser of Germany), failed to be elected, largely because half of the Region 1 member Societies have no interest in ARDF and they preferred to support the candidate nominated by the Executive Committee.

With the war in Ukraine showing no sign of ending, this issue looks likely to continue into 2024.

The cancellation of Hamfest in 2023 acted against ARDF in that we were denied the opportunity to attract interest from many recently-licensed individuals. In the past this event has been a very valuable way to attract amateurs to ARDF.

The task facing the Committee in 2024 is to get ARDF in the UK back to the position it had prior to the pandemic. We are seeking to find individuals prepared to coordinate ARDF in RSGB Regions 3 (England North West) and Region 4 (England North East). We wish to establish a much wider number of events and need individuals in these regions prepared to co-ordinate simple half-day competitions with equipment, expertise and support provided by the ARDF Committee. In addition, we seek to re-establish ARDF with a vibrant programme in the south of central England.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the enthusiasm and contributions of the Committee members in running events and promoting the sport.

**R G Titterington, G3ORY**  
ardf.chairman@rsgb.org.uk

## ARISS

**What is ARISS?** ARISS stands for Amateur Radio on the International Space Station. It is an internationally-coordinated activity amongst the five 'Space Regions' (North America, Europe, Canada, Russia and Japan) that contribute to, and support, the International Space Station. The primary goal is to increase the level of interest in

STEM/STEAM subjects by offering a unique opportunity for pupils to talk to astronauts in orbit on the International Space Station through the medium of amateur radio. Outside of these school contacts, ARISS offers amateur radio facilities to the worldwide amateur community as well as competitions such as the successful SSTV events that are run throughout the year.

**Educational Contacts:** 2023 saw an active year for ARISS in the UK. Following the 2022 'random' contacts that were made by astronaut Kjell Lindgren, KO5MOS, who activated the voice repeater during his mission onboard the ISS, a very successful ARISS school contact was held at the school of St Peter-In-Thanet CE Junior School, Broadstairs, Kent. This is the school that young Isabella Payne attends. Isabella is the young girl who, with her father Matthew, MOLMK, achieved notable media coverage of her 'random' contact with Kjell Lindgren during the summer of 2022.

The contact at Broadstairs featured in the January 2024 issue of *RadCom*. This highlighted the extensive work that Hilderstone Radio Society; Matthew, MOLMK; and John, G7OHO carried out in preparation for the contact and is a model for other schools wishing to apply for an ARISS contact.

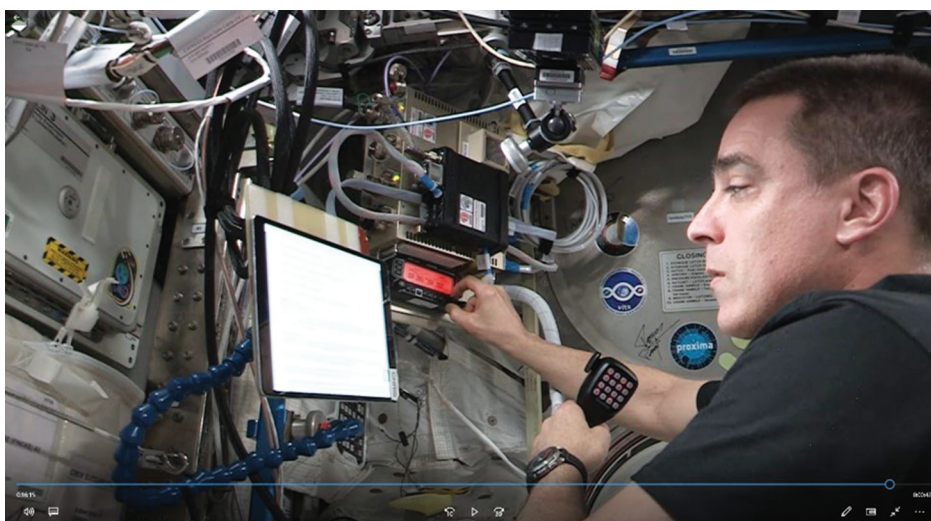
**New developments:** the Interoperable Radio System, or IORS, is now firmly established in both the Columbus and Russian Service Module.

The Columbus Module radio uses the callsign NA1SS and the new Service Module radio uses RSOISS. Aside from the callsigns, the radios are identical and packet operations are the same as before. You can use RSOISS, ARISS, or APRSAT as the packet path. Also, both radios are expected to be on full time, except during educational contacts, extravehicular activities, and dockings or undockings.

Details of the current mode, plus any upcoming changes to it are regularly posted online at <https://www.ariss.org/current-status-of-iss-stations.html>

The new IORS, pictured here installed in the Columbus Module and operated by astronaut Chris Cassidy, KF5KDR, has seen a significant uptake in use when in the cross-band repeater and packet modes with many reports of users making QSOs. As ever, competition to use the cross-band repeater is high on most passes so not all attempts have been successful. ARISS recommends a maximum uplink power of no more than 25W ERP (5W to a 7dBi gain antenna) to access the repeater or the packet system.

The installation and commissioning of the IORS is the result of several years of effort to build a new power supply suitable for use on either the US or Russian segments as well as a common radio solution that will give



The Interoperable Radio System, or IORS operated by astronaut Chris Cassidy, KF5KDR.

much flexibility in terms of crew training and operational capabilities.

The HamTV unit still remains on earth at the moment undergoing testing after its failure in orbit in 2018. After extensive testing and the fitting of additional filters to satisfy new NASA/ISS emissions requirements, the HamTV unit now looks set to be flown and installed again in 2024.

**Looking to the future:** 2024 will hopefully see the planning and carrying out of several ARISS contacts in the UK. More details on the contacts will be released closer to time as they are confirmed by NASA and the participating space agencies.

2024 also sees the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the first use of amateur radio in human space flight. This will be in the form of a special gathering at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, in February, and will feature many of the notable names and faces of those who worked to get Owen Garriott, W5LFL operational from the Columbia Shuttle STS-9 mission. It will also cover the SAREX, SAFEX, MIREX and ARISS programmes spanning the Shuttle, MIR and ISS years and hear from astronauts and other notable figures who have worked to make amateur radio in human space flight a reality.

**Ciaran Morgan, M0XTD**

[ciaran.morgan@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:ciaran.morgan@rsgb.org.uk)

## Awards Manager

The Operating Awards Manager receives and validates applications for the various awards available from the RSGB, encompassing HF and V/UHF operating. While validating applications, it is sometimes necessary to explain to applicants the details of award requirements and the application process, especially in respect of the requirements for QSLs or card-checking. It should be noted that the Awards Manager does not need to

be sent QSL cards in the post to support applications. He is quite happy to receive scanned images of the cards, or set up a short Microsoft Teams or Zoom call to check them visually.

The Awards Manager is also required to promote the awards schemes and look for opportunities to develop the Society's offering in this area, liaising with other teams, where activities cross boundaries. In 2023, we significantly revised the Foundation Awards, to make them more achievable by people who were HF- or VHF-only operators, and to be more progressive. We have also changed the rules for Short Wave Listener Award applications, recognising that Logbook of the World does not cater for listener reports. Now we will accept confirmations via eQSL for listener reports to support awards for heard stations, eg the IARU Region 1 award for stations heard (rather than worked) and confirmed.

Last year (2023) saw the total number of awards issued improve on the previous year's total, but not quite reach that of 2020. We are probably at a fairly normal level, given that 2020 and 2021 saw a significant jump in awards issued on the back of evidently increased operating activity during pandemic lockdowns and working from home. We did have a reduced number of VHF award applications compared to previous years. On the other hand, there was a big jump in Foundation awards since these were revised mid-year, and an increase in Radio Surfer awards related to a project that was run.

The Coronation Awards were very popular, especially with non-UK stations. Out of 187 certificates issued in total, 67 went to UK stations and 37 to German stations, amongst a total of 23 countries that were represented in the award applications. By any consideration, this was a successful activity and very enjoyable to both participate in and

to run. The Awards Manager struck up a number of new friendships through email dialogues about the award activity.

Routine RSGB award applications have continued to be popular with both UK and non-UK stations, with almost a third once again being issued to the latter. Here are the summary statistics for awards approved during 2023 compared with the previous three years:

Summary Stats	2020	2021	2022	2023
IARU Region 1 Award	34	35	16	13
IARU Region 1 28MHz Award	3	2	0	2
Foundation Award	0	2	0	10
Intermediate 100 Award	1	2	0	0
Commonwealth Century Award	7	8	10	4
Worked ITU Zones Awards	1	6	0	2
Worked All Continents Award	0	2	0	1
50MHz Awards	12	32	9	8
70/144/432MHz Awards	3	2	1	1
Youth Award	0	3	1	0
V/UHF Activity Award	0	2	3	2
Radio Surfer Award	0	6	1	11
Total	61	102	41	54
Non-UK Applications	23	32	11	14
% Non-UK	38%	31%	27%	26%

From these statistics, we can see that the IARU Region 1 Award continues to be the mainstay of award activity, along with the 50MHz awards. The revised Foundation awards scheme proved popular on its announcement. It is hoped that we get many more applications for various versions of the Foundation Award in the coming years as a result of planned publicity. We will also be looking for more opportunities to run special event award activities as these are clearly popular.

Looking ahead, the Awards Manager has been working with the Learning Team to incorporate awards chasing into the new Explorer programme for newcomers to the hobby. This, alongside regular features on awards schemes in the various RSGB communications channels, will hopefully introduce awards chasing to more amateurs as a nice way of decorating the shack whilst focusing operating activity onto targets for achievement.

**Lindsay Pennell, G8PMA**  
awards@rsgb.org.uk

## Beyond Exams

The past year has been very successful for the Beyond Exams scheme with eight new clubs submitting applications to join the Brickworks scheme.

**Brickworks:** following feedback from clubs taking part in the scheme, the team has reviewed the format which was relaunched in 2022 and seems to be going well. The team is always looking for ideas to help improve. Should you have any ideas please contact me via the email address below.

**Individual Scheme:** the Individual Scheme has had a total revamp and, instead of the 150 original tasks, the Scheme is nearly ready to fully relaunch in a simplified format known as the 'Discovery Scheme' which is split into three levels:

**Explorer** – aimed primarily at those just starting out in their amateur radio journey.

**Adventurer** – the next level for those looking to take their skills a little further.

**Master** – for those who are potentially a little more experienced and have successfully completed the other two levels.

We will be looking for feedback from anybody taking part in the new scheme.

We are also always keen to recruit new people to the team.

**Mark Burrows, 2E0SBM**  
be.coordinator@rsgb.org.uk



Read more at [rsgb.org/beyond-exams](https://www.rsgb.org/beyond-exams)

## Contest Support Committee

The Contest Support Committee is one of the three contest committees that are responsible for the administration of all RSGB contests. The other two committees are the HF Contest Committee (HFCC) and the VHF Contest Committee (VHFCC).

The Contest Support Committee (CSC) is responsible for the adjudication of all RSGB contests and, at the end of 2023, had thirteen members. The CSC also provides support and advice to the HFCC and the VHFCC. A list of the current CSC members is available at: [https://www.rsgbcc.org/vhf/committee\\_members.html](https://www.rsgbcc.org/vhf/committee_members.html)

This team of experienced and dedicated volunteers adjudicated 229 contests (50 HF and 179 VHF) in 2023. Over 25,000 logs were received and adjudicated during 2023. One contest (IOTA) received 2173 logs.

A comprehensive in-house developed website is run by the Contest Support Committee with links to all RSGB contest rules, results (past and present) and to the log submission robot. A list of the winners of past contest trophies – the Hall of Fame – is available at:

<https://www.rsgbcc.org/cgi-bin/trophies.pl>

The adjudication software used by the Contest Support Committee has been upgraded several times during 2023 to cater for minor rules changes and to further increase the scope of the fully automatic adjudication routines. All RSGB contests, including the IOTA contest, are adjudicated using this software.

The free Contesting Committees Newsletter has continued to be published during 2023. The newsletter has a current circulation of 1100 and is used by the HFCC, VHFCC and CSC to inform subscribers about notable contest-related events including new contests and major rules changes. To subscribe to this newsletter, please visit:

<https://www.rsgbcc.org/cgi-bin/subscribe.pl?subtype=news>

The Contest Support Committee also processes all special contest call (1+1 call signs eg, G0A, M9Z etc) applications and issues all special contest call Notice of Variations on behalf of Ofcom. There are 520 special contest calls and currently, as of at the end of 2023, 281 SCC Notices of Variation have been issued. Details of how to qualify for a special contest call are available at <https://rsgb.org/scc>

Please use [scc@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:scc@rsgb.org.uk) for all questions and enquiries about obtaining a special contest call.

**Ian Pawson, G0FCT**  
csc.chair@rsgb.org.uk

## Emerging Technology Coordination Committee (ETCC)

The purpose of the ETCC is to support UK amateurs in the development of repeaters, gateways, data communications networks, propagation beacons, and to promote and assist in the introduction and licensing of new technologies.

We process all proposals for analogue and digital voice repeaters and gateways, analogue and digital TV repeaters, data communication systems, and beacons. We assist the applicants for Notices of Variation (NoV) to operate these systems, by vetting the technical details, identifying suitable spectrum and completing the required documentation so that the final application to Ofcom is usually a formality.

ETCC processes around ten new NoV applications and renewals per week.

**Spectrum issues:** the demand for spectrum in the 2m band exceeds availability in many parts of the UK. Frequencies in the 70cm and 6m bands can still be found in most areas.

**Emerging Technology:** the three main competing digital voice modes, DMR, D-Star and Fusion, continue to fuel demand for channels. Although multi-protocol repeaters and gateways are increasingly being licensed, single-mode repeaters still remain in demand. We continue to work with the VHF Manager over standards and spectrum for wider bandwidth, high-speed data, and with BATC to encourage narrower bandwidth digital video formats, which will be important if our access to bandwidth in the higher bands is reduced in the future.

**Data Communications:** 2023 has seen a resurgence in the use of packet data and the deployment of linked systems by a number of enthusiasts. So far, the demand for spectrum in this area has been met.

**Licensing and renewals:** Notices of Variation continue to be generated and renewed efficiently through Ofcom. In general, Primary User consent in shared bands has been efficient.

**ETCC membership:** 2023 has seen some reorganisation of the regions to even the workload and realign responsibilities, particularly with digital modes. My thanks as always to the regional and specialist managers for their hard work.

**The future:** 2024 will see some significant changes to the amateur licence and new opportunities to set up repeaters, gateways and beacons with minimal paperwork. ETCC is preparing to react and provide assistance with planning these, so those who set them up can be certain they have met the personal responsibilities emphasised in the revised licence conditions, and avoid interference to other users, by using the established tools and expertise the RSGB has developed for this purpose over the years.

**Andrew Barrett, G8DOR**

etcc.chairman@rsgb.org.uk

## Examinations Standards Committee (ESC)

This report covers the work of the RSGB Examination Standards Committee (ESC) and its sub-group, the Examinations and Syllabus Review Group (ESRG), during 2023. The role of the ESC is to ensure the standards of the Amateur Radio Examinations are maintained at a level that ensures the aspiring radio amateur has an adequate understanding of contemporary radio communications technology and can operate legally, safely and without causing interference to other services. It also ensures that the UK licence is broadly in line with HAREC and CEPT TR 61-02, so that UK amateurs can benefit from reciprocal licensing arrangements. The ESC monitors the work of the RSGB Exams Department, which organises the examinations, and it appoints and oversees the ESRG. The ESRG does the day-to-day work of maintaining the syllabus and exam

question bank and considers any candidates' challenges to exam questions.

The ESC considers the examination statistics, reports of exam irregularities, appeals against the outcomes of challenges and produces an annual report on the performance of the examinations system. The latest of these, covering the 2022 examinations year can be found at: [https://rsgb.services/public/publications/esc/reports/2023/examinations\\_standards\\_committee\\_report\\_2023.pdf](https://rsgb.services/public/publications/esc/reports/2023/examinations_standards_committee_report_2023.pdf)

The membership of the ESC can be found at: <https://rsgb.org/main/about-us/committees/examination-standards-committee/members> The membership of the ESRG can be found at: <https://rsgb.org/main/about-us/committees/examination-standards-committee/exams-group/members/>. During 2023, Dr Donard de Cogan, MOKRK, stepped down as acting Chair of the ESRG. Donard oversaw the change from twice-yearly face-to-face meetings of the ESRG to weekly online meetings during the Covid pandemic. The online meetings proved very effective and have continued following the pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all members of the ESC, ESRG and the Exams Department at RSGB for their work during 2023, and especially Donard for his work as acting Chair of the ESRG over the last four years.

The new chair of the ESRG is Andrew Lenton, G8UUG, who has joined at a busy time as the group is currently working on updates to the licensing and operating sections of the syllabus in response to the new Ofcom licence proposals (see below).

Due to the hard work and enthusiasm of the team of RSGB remote invigilators and club exam secretaries and invigilators, a total of 2232 candidates sat an exam in 2023. The exam data for 2023 (2022) are: at Foundation 1500 (1696) candidates and 1282 (1461) passes; at Intermediate 416 (534) candidates and 361 (450) passes; and at Full 289 (371) candidates and 191 (239) passes. That is a total of 1834 (2150) candidates who have achieved the standard necessary to obtain their first amateur radio licence or to upgrade to a higher class. Direct to Full (D2F) examinations began in January 2023. In 2023 there were 27 D2F candidates and 12 passes. The take up of the D2F exam during its first year is somewhat disappointing, especially given the high degree of enthusiasm for the development expressed in the consultation responses. However, this might just reflect the downturn in numbers of candidates at all levels in 2023 compared to last few years. Of the 2232 candidates, 1992 sat the exam online with remote invigilation, 82 sat the exam online in a club setting and 158 sat the exam on paper.

One of the main activities of ESC/ESRG in 2023 has been drafting a syllabus update (v1.6) and reviewing the exam question bank to align with Ofcom's proposals for significant changes to the licence, which were consulted on in 2023. As a 'heads-up' to the training community and potential

candidates, the draft revised syllabus sections have been posted on the RSGB website, here: [https://rsgb.services/public/publications/exams/syllabus\\_v1.6\\_sections\\_1\\_and\\_7\\_Dec\\_2023.pdf](https://rsgb.services/public/publications/exams/syllabus_v1.6_sections_1_and_7_Dec_2023.pdf)

It should be pointed out that there may be further changes to v1.6 after Ofcom has published the final version of the licence. In parallel to this, the regular work of monitoring the performance of the exams system through the year, reviewing and topping up the question bank and responding to exams challenges has continued.

Looking forward to 2024, work will continue on syllabus v1.6 and the exam question bank. At this stage it is planned to keep the changes to the minimum necessary to satisfy Ofcom requirements. Further down the line a more substantial review will take place which will fully consolidate all the licence changes since the introduction of syllabus 2019, and consider data on pass rates and progression through the levels.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank again everyone involved in the examinations process: the staff at HQ, members of ESC and ESRG and, most importantly, the tutors and invigilators that make the system work and so contributed to the health of amateur radio during 2023.

**Tony Kent, G8PBH**

esc.chair@rsgb.org.uk

## GB2CW

I begin the report for 2023 with the sad news that we have lost another GB2CW volunteer – Martyn Vincent, G3UKV. He passed away on 3 January 2024.

Martyn had been running GB2CW at 9am on 3605kHz every Thursday morning for many years. He was also an RSGB Morse Code Assessor and was a very valued Vice Chairman of Telford and District Amateur Radio Society. Martyn was District Representative 53 (Shropshire, North Worcestershire and West Birmingham), previously the Regional Representative for Region 5 and also a previous member of the Nominations Committee. Martyn was also a well-respected member of the microwave and contesting communities.

It is always difficult to replace people with such experience and to even maintain the status quo, so we are always looking to recruit new volunteers to the GB2CW scheme. With the advent of Zoom and Skype it is so easy to conduct tuition online these days but, although it is online and therefore no special licensing or indeed any licence at all is needed, it would be good to add this facility to the RSGB schedule, if only for the publicity it brings to the efforts of the volunteers. There are certain locations in the UK that are difficult to maintain an RF class in on the 2m band, so it makes sense to use Zoom or Skype or some other similar online program. This is preferred rather than have no class at all. So, if you are conducting such a class, please email me with the details and let me publicise it within the present GB2CW schedule. If you are running, or wish to run, a tuition class



Essex CW Amateur Radio Club Boot Camp 2023.

on the air, please also let me know so it too can be publicised.

Norfolk Amateur Radio Club is very active in providing Morse classes. We have made several changes in the last year and we have several students joining in each week. Classes are held on the local 2m repeater, GB3NB, as well as simplex. This has the advantage of catering for both tutors and students who might have an inferior 2m antenna, plus it attracts others from further away. We have dispensed with speed-range classes and just cater for whoever turns up at the time, so it could vary, but then we found that limiting classes to speeds also limited those attending.

The raw beginner's class has five students this year. We decided to run it at the level of the student with the lowest fundamental speed and just wait for all to catch up, rather than push too hard and lose students. This is working well at the moment. In my class I have a 12-year-old schoolboy, Frankie, M7EQR. He is extremely keen and has already mastered the learning of the code. He now has to wait for the slower students to catch up. However, this does have the effect of producing confidence.

Boot camps have not been so active in the last year or so and Covid still seems to be taking its toll on these. However, Essex CW Amateur Radio Club ran one again and it was very successful.

Certificates are still being issued and some of the new volunteers have done well in this respect. The schedule on the RSGB page is still looking reasonably healthy but I would like to add to it.

We are still maintaining the status quo but if anybody would like to volunteer, just one hour per week, please email using the address below. I will be only too pleased to add you to the list.

The schedule is on the RSGB website: <http://rsgb.org/main/operating/morse/certificate-of-competency/gb2cw-broadcast-schedule/>

FISTS and CWops have both been very popular in encouraging newcomers in their activity periods on the air. CWops has a CW Academy that you can sign up for. Take a look at their website:

<https://cwops.org/cw-academy/>

Finally, the picture shows the efforts being put into Morse tuition by the Essex CW Club. These people are undergoing the slow-speed session with Andy, G0IBN.

I would like to thank all the volunteers for their dedicated work and effort in the continuing process of teaching Morse Code and letting new students master a unique mode of communication that will never die.

**Roger Cooke, G3LDI**  
gb2cw@rsgb.org.uk

## GB2RS

Every Sunday, over 100 volunteer Newsreaders broadcast the RSGB News using the special callsign GB2RS. The bulletins can be found right across the amateur bands, from 1.8MHz up to 10GHz. National readings take place on the lower HF bands, with more localised transmissions on VHF and above. The VHF/UHF broadcasts are both simplex and via analogue repeaters; they include club and local event news suitable to the nearby coverage area. An international version goes out via the QO-100 narrowband transponder. Whether your current operating interest is in phone, amateur television or digital modes, there's a broadcast to suit you. If you prefer to hear the news when it's more convenient to your busy life, both audio podcasts and catch-up video versions are available. The Broadcast Schedule currently offers around 65 transmissions spread across the UK, ranging from early morning through to late evening. The complete list can be downloaded from [rsgb.org/gb2rsschedule](http://rsgb.org/gb2rsschedule) and you are quite likely to find a broadcast within range of your station. You can find web links to our online resources there too. Many of our broadcasters are happy to take calls after the news has been read and this can be a great way to check out your signal if you are experimenting with new equipment or antennas. Listener reports are also most welcome.

In the past year, we have been able to add

a number of new broadcasts to the Schedule as we work to enhance coverage so that as many amateurs as possible can receive the weekly news. For example, we're delighted to now have a broadcast on the 80m band from North Wales which covers a wide geographical area. Also, digital voice (DV) is a mode that is developing rapidly within GB2RS. We offer a DV HF broadcast on the 80m band each Sunday morning and most of the popular DV networks deliver the News via both hotspots and on-air digital repeaters.

The GB2RS Newsreaders are a dedicated group who give their time to deliver the news every weekend. We are always happy to hear from RSGB members that are Full or Intermediate licensees, who would like to be part of the GB2RS team. This can be either to help with an existing broadcast or even to propose a brand-new transmission. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the GB2RS Manager using the email address below.

**Steve Richards, G4HPE**  
gb2rs.manager@rsgb.org.uk

## HF Contest Committee (HFCC)

2023 saw a combination of legacy contests, club-based contest series and innovative FT4 events. Participation was good; we saw a continuing improvement in HF propagation as we move towards the peak of solar cycle 25.

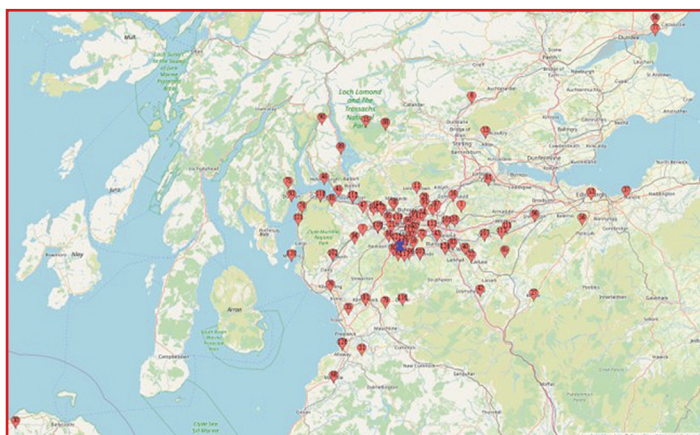
Many of our members continue to turn to radio to provide stimulation and contact with other radio amateurs which leads to increased participation in many of our contests.

We are encouraged that our historic contests are maintaining excellent numbers of entrants, particularly the Commonwealth Contest which has averaged well over 250 participants for over a decade. Our 'flagship' IOTA contest attracts around 2000 entrants each year.

2023 saw the RSGB join forces with the UK and Ireland Contest Club in partnering to promote two annual International 24-hour HF contests – CW on the last weekend in April and SSB on a fifth weekend in the autumn. The number of UK and Irish participants in the first two joint events was significantly increased, showing the value of this strategic alliance.

The FT4 Contest Series, which was introduced in 2019, has remained popular with over 150 entrants from UK and Crown Dependencies, plus over 150 non-UK entrants. This was the third year with a multi-band format, on the 80, 40 and 20 bands. For 2024, we are expanding to include the 15 and 10m bands to encourage activity from North America. The FT4 International Day is also being expanded to a 24-hour format in response to requests from overseas participants.

The committee has been discussing how best to accommodate the anticipated alterations to our licence conditions. We hope to implement changes that are encouraging to all entrants whether they are newcomers



This coverage map plots listener reports to the 145.525MHz FM GB2RS transmissions from Toby, MM0TSS located in the Scottish borders. Toby is part of the team that delivers the News each Sunday at 10am.

or experienced contesters.

The RSGB Contest Club continues to provide support to RSGB contesters and volunteer operators for the HQ stations that are part of many of our contests. The Contest Club provided support to the YOTA month RSGB activity in December 2023 which was coordinated by Jamie, MOSDV.

The Contest Club holds the callsign GR2HQ, as HFCC coordinates the UK's station in the IARU HF Championship in July each year. In 2023, the RSGB station achieved third place in the HQ competition – our best result for many years. Tim, G4FJK has joined the committee with a role to develop our GR2HQ station; he is particularly hoping to encourage more UK stations to call our HQ station during the contest. In 2024 the contest will be from 1200UTC on Saturday 13 July for 24 hours and we will look for UK callers on the six contest bands from 160 to 10m, on both CW and SSB with a 'GR2HQ Challenge' added to our calendar.

The core HFCC membership in 2023 were Nick, G4FAL; Tim, G4FJK; Gordon, MM0GPZ; Stewart, GW0ETF; Paul, G4PVM; Allan, GM4ZUK; Nick, M1DDD; and Graham, G0NBI. Chris, GM3WOJ has been authoring the *RadCom Contesting* column for the past two years in addition to helping the committee with the organisation of the GR2HQ station.

We work closely with the Contest Support Committee and VHF Contest Committee, with Ian, G0FCT and Andy, G4PIQ and with the technical and practical support of Pete, G4CLA on web resources and Mike, G0GJV providing adjudication software – we are very thankful for their contribution to the success of our calendar of contests.

We thank Jacqui, G6XSY for her splendid management of the RSGB Trophies and will greatly miss her contribution as she retires from the role of RSGB Trophy Manager.

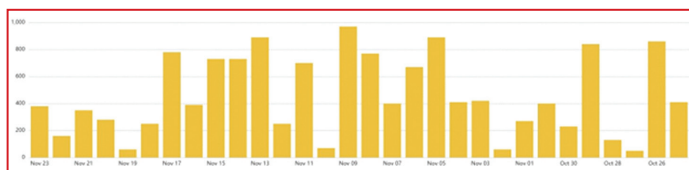
Thanks also to Stewart, G3YSX for continuing to act as our Board liaison.

**Nick Totterdell, G4FAL**  
hfcc.chair@rsgb.org.uk

## Intruder Watch

RSGB Intruder Watch (IW) collects reports from UK licensed amateurs about HF intruders. An intruder is a non-amateur transmission in an amateur band that is not entitled to be there, such as a military data link, over-the-horizon radar or broadcasting station.

Fortunately, most intruders disappear within minutes or hours of their arrival. However, when an intruder is regular and persistent and has been observed by UK amateurs on three or more occasions, IW may report it to Ofcom's Spectrum Management Centre at Baldock,



Daily listeners to the GB2RS podcast at gb2rs.podbean.com over a sample period from 24 October to 23 November 2023. There is a particularly strong following in the USA, Canada, Australia, Sweden and Germany. But this isn't exclusive – for example, the broadcast via GB3OC in the Orkney Islands often receives reports from amateurs in Norway!

which has engineering staff on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

During 2023, IW made several reports to Baldock about intruders heard on a number of frequencies.

Over-the-horizon radars, especially those in Russia, China and the UK Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus (Akrotiri) continued to be a nuisance.

The higher HF bands are mostly affected in the morning when the path from the east is in daylight. The 7MHz band is affected mostly during darkness.

RSGB Intruder Watch forms part of Region 1 of the IARU Monitoring System (IARUMS). Information about intruders is exchanged via an online database, and a mailing list, and is published in a monthly newsletter. Details of the IARU system can be found at:

<https://www.iaru-r1.org/about-us/committees-and-working-groups/iarums/>

Intruder Watch had a change of co-ordinator in November 2023 and, although Intruder Watch has no signed-up group of watchers, the new co-ordinator plans to develop a new recognised volunteer role of Intruder Watch Watchkeeper. This new role will allow for greater inclusion and hopefully more ears on the bands.

This new role will be in addition to anyone who can still report suspected intruders on a one-off occasional, as they wish, by email to the address below. Please state the date, time and frequency (not just band) of the offending transmission when doing this. While input from other countries provides useful information about intruder activity, IW can only make reports to Ofcom on the basis of intruders heard by licensed amateurs in the UK and Crown dependencies. Amateurs in other countries should report intruders to their own national coordinator.

Please note, Intruder Watch does not 'police' activity that is likely to have been carried out by licensed amateur operators – this is outside IW's remit.

**Vaughan Ravenscoft, MOVRR**  
iw@rsgb.org.uk

## Legacy Committee

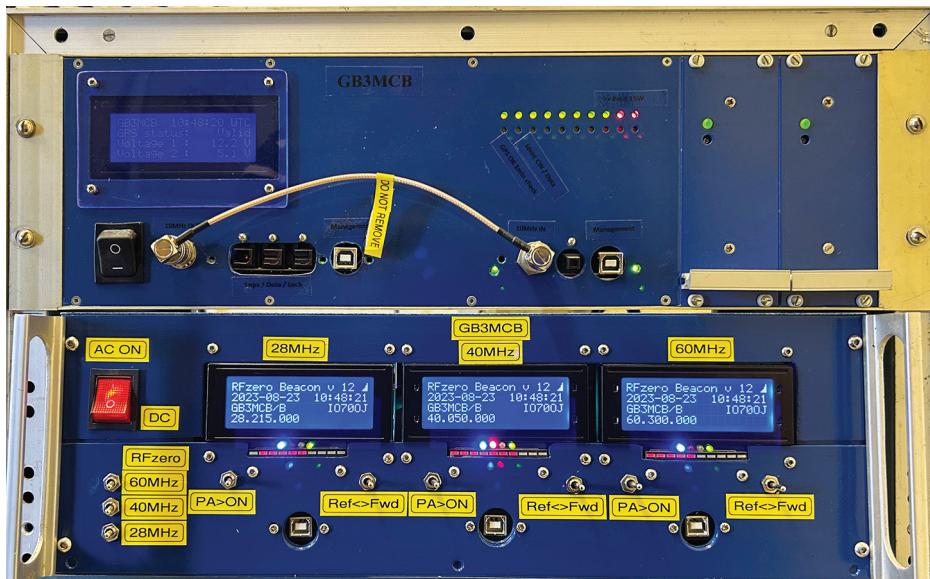
The Legacy Committee is responsible for considering applications for funding from the Society's legacy funds.

During 2023, the Committee approved three applications for a variety of projects. The largest grant was for £11,900 to provide a solar array for the GB3MCB beacon cluster. Other grants included support for a special event station to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III and funding for a UHF port for a 2m packet node in Scotland.

**Richard Horton, G4AOJ**  
g4aoj@rsgb.org.uk

## Microwave Manager

The Microwave Manager represents UK amateur interests above 1GHz on the RSGB Spectrum Forum. These frequencies are home to a wide variety of innovation and operating modes – including narrowband, beacons,



The GB3MCB beacon.

contests, satellite communications, ATV and Earth-Moon-Earth (EME) activities. Digital mode experimentation continues to grow especially in the higher frequency bands. Active microwave band user groups in the UK include data and repeater groups, the UK Microwave Group (UKuG), BATC and Amsat-UK.

The RSGB and the UKuG have continued to schedule contest events encouraging activity in all bands up to 248GHz. The most popular continue to be those in the 1.3GHz and 10GHz bands. The RSGB UKAC events continue to be popular, encouraging activity in the lower microwave bands at 2.3, 3.4 and 5.6GHz, on a monthly basis. The BATC arranges TV contesting that includes operation in these bands.

This year saw a consultation issued by Ofcom to review and update the amateur radio licensing framework that included new privileges, enabling increased transmitter powers for Intermediate licence holders and additional access to the lower microwave bands from 2.3GHz (13cm) up to 5.7GHz (6cm). The aim is to encourage newcomers to these bands. Other proposed changes simplify the beacon transmitter licensing process for lower-power beacons and streamline the process for higher-power beacons.

Towards the end of 2023, the ITU-R World Radio Conference (WRC-23) took place which tackled the 23cm band agenda item (WRC-23 Agenda Item 9.1 topic b – adopted at the previous conference in 2019). This agenda item triggered four years of study on the use of the secondary 23cm band by the amateur and amateur satellite services in the same frequency range as the primary radio navigation satellite service (RNSS) users across the band. The outcome identified a new footnote in the Radio Regulations that mentions a new ITU-R Recommendation, M.2164, that provides guidance to administrations. This ended four

years of uncertainty about how amateurs can continue to use the band, although regulations in the European region will continue to evolve throughout 2024 based on the WRC outcome. The amateur community was represented by a global International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) team of which the RSGB is an active member. During the year, presentations on the developments, as they unfolded, were provided to UKuG meetings as well as at the RSGB Convention.

Unexpected users in any of our bands can be troublesome especially when disruptive interference occurs preventing amateur operation. Such a case troubled 23cm band operators in the Midlands area but it was successfully resolved following negotiation between the RSGB and Ofcom. The offending signals were moved to a less densely used part of our band away from the amateur weak signal operations.

The pressures on our valuable microwave spectrum bands for commercial and governmental usage is not letting up. For example, mobile cellular technology proponents have eyes on bands around 10GHz and even the millimetre-wave bands at 76GHz and above are increasingly coming under the spotlight for new technology developments (especially sensing and radar applications). The RSGB Spectrum Forum and the Microwave Manager collaborate with the IARU to monitor and directly contribute to UK and international spectrum discussions.

If operating in the bands above 1GHz is of interest to you then the UKuG has a growing range of loan equipment available to encourage newcomers onto the bands. As ever, it remains vitally important to demonstrate and publicise any experimentation and use of the microwave and millimetre-wave bands to ensure their retention by the amateur service.

Finally, a thank you to the RSGB HQ staff,



UK Activity Contest, SHF portable (image courtesy of G1DFL).

contributors to *RadCom* and the Spectrum Forum members for their collaboration and support throughout the year.

**Barry Lewis, G4SJH**  
microwave.manager@rsgb.org.uk

## RSGB National Radio Centre (NRC) at Bletchley Park

The NRC, located within the grounds of the Bletchley Park Museum, remains an ideal venue to introduce and demonstrate amateur radio, enabling volunteers to engage with many visitors. With its flagship amateur station, GB3RS, it is able to demonstrate both the traditional aspects of amateur radio (such as CW and SSB QSOs on the LF and HF bands) through to the newer modes including FT8, D-Star, DMR and communication via both polar-orbiting and the QO-100 geostationary satellites. As a visitor attraction, the NRC has continued to see increasing footfall over the past three years and in 2023 had welcomed over 79,800 visitors. The International AI Summit hosted at Bletchley Park meant that the NRC was closed for nine days in late October and early November 2023 and, as a result, fell just short of its predicted 80,000 visitor target.

The NRC is primarily intended to introduce amateur radio to those who have little previous awareness of this technical hobby. However, it also enables volunteers to engage with visiting radio amateurs and those who previously had held a licence but let it lapse. The volunteers inspire interested newcomers to gain a Foundation licence whilst encouraging many lapsed licensees back into the hobby. In addition, the volunteers are always keen to discuss the importance of wireless

technology, especially with young students, explaining that there are many exciting career opportunities in radio communication. The NRC now has a team of 60 enthusiastic volunteers who between them help to keep it open seven days per week.

In terms of radio equipment, little has changed in 2023. The Flex6500, with a Gemini amplifier and SteppIR antenna, comprise the main HF station. The FT-5000 is used on LF for UK/European SSB/CW QSOs and demonstrating FT8. The IC-9700 station is used primarily on 2m SSB and for demonstrating D-Star (digital) communication. The TS2000 remains the main radio for local FM QSOs and for polar-orbiting satellite QSOs. The QO-100 station continues to prove a success in demonstrating geostationary satellite communication. The main additions this year were introduction of digital amateur TV (DATV) reception, utilising the wide-band segment of the QO-100 satellite and three radios previously belonging to the late King Hussein of Jordan, JY1 donated by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Several special events were held in 2023. A Build a Morse Tutor event ran in March; in May a special event station to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles II was in operation; in September the NRC participated in Bletchley Park's 1940s weekend; in October the International Enigma Reloaded event took place; and the NRC ran a GB23YOTA station for two days in December.

It is anticipated that we will restart the Arkwright Scholarship (licence) training again in 2024. As well as welcoming more than 40 visiting radio amateurs as part of the RSGB Convention weekend, the NRC took the initiative to offer clubs the opportunity to enjoy, by prior arrangement, a private visit. 12 amateur radio clubs and two cadet/scout troops were welcomed for evening visits and many more amateur radio clubs visited the NRC during normal daytime opening.

Regular maintenance work has again been undertaken during 2023 on the tower supporting the SteppIR antenna and throughout the NRC to ensure it continues to be a safe and fully-functioning venue for the visiting public to enjoy and for the NRC volunteers to actively and enthusiastically engage.

**Martyn Baker, G0GMB**

[martyn.baker@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:martyn.baker@rsgb.org.uk)

## Operating Advisory Service (OAS)

During the course of 2023, OAS dealt with a wide variety of issues. These issues included, but are not limited to, interference to individual amateurs and club or other nets, complaints about call signs being pirated, repeaters being jammed, and suspected unlicensed operation by persons who are not radio amateurs.

Each contact made to OAS was treated as confidential and tailored specifically to individual circumstances. In most circumstances, OAS responded within 48 hours, with considered advice, but in a few cases an acknowledgement



To read more about the NRC, visit [rsgb.org/nrc](http://rsgb.org/nrc)

was sent while other officers or committees were consulted.

**Ian Suart, GM4AUP**

[oas@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:oas@rsgb.org.uk)

## Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)

2023 continued to be a quiet year for members of the Planning Advisory Committee.

The RSGB Planning Guidance booklet, downloadable free of charge from the members area of the RSGB Website, gives advice on how to make a planning application, the planning appeals process and what to do should you receive a planning enforcement notice. Members should read this guide before making a planning application or appeal, and contact the Planning Advisory Committee for one-to-one advice if additional help is needed. PAC can also provide a letter of support, to accompany your planning application, for your local planning authority.

Whilst most applications that cross PAC's table are measured and have a good chance of success either on the initial application or appeal, we are unfortunately seeing a number of enquiries from members who had ignored the planning rules by erecting overly-large antennas/masts in postage-stamp-sized plots then expecting an instant service from PAC. There has also been, on occasions, an expectation that PAC would act as their agent in discussions with their local planning authority. This goes beyond the service provided offered by



Visit [rsgb.org/oas](http://rsgb.org/oas) for more information.

the Planning Advisory Service which is provided by volunteers in their spare time.

Whilst PAC has lobbied the relaxation of planning rules for smaller installations on a number of occasions, both central and the devolved governments are so far unconvinced by the need for change. As such, PAC can only give advice on existing planning legislation and not campaign for a change in legislation to allow a particular installation proposed by members.

PAC is always on the look out for new volunteers. If you have experience of the planning process and wish to help others, please contact [pac.chairman@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:pac.chairman@rsgb.org.uk)

**Len Paget, GM0ONX**

[gm0onx@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:gm0onx@rsgb.org.uk)

## Propagation Studies Committee (PSC)

The purpose of the Propagation Studies Committee (PSC) is to promote interest in radio propagation amongst amateurs and shortwave listeners, to enable them to make better use of the amateur bands and encourage research into the subject.

Peter Duffett-Smith, GM3XJE has been developing an automatic Long Delay Echo (LDE) sounder, with the ambition of providing software (WSTJX-style) that any radio amateur may use to search for these elusive events. Peter gave a talk about it at the RSGB Convention and, as a result, Heather Nickalls, MOHMO has volunteered to produce the software.

John, G4BAO has plans for a 24GHz WebSDR for the Essex coast. Its intention is to study trans-North Sea propagation at 24GHz using the Dutch and Belgian beacons. The hardware and software have been completed and tested for well over 12 months and has been trialled from John's QTH in Cambridgeshire. There are plans to add it to the Martello Tower Repeater Group's site at Holland-on-Sea. Installation is on hold until the better weather arrives.

John has also continued to help produce the GB2RS weekly propagation bulletin and write about GHz matters in his monthly *RadCom*



column.

Jim, G3YLA had a busy year again with his research into Sporadic-E and work on the website [propquest.co.uk](http://propquest.co.uk). He gave five talks on the subject to Telford and District ARS, Norfolk ARC, Harwell ARS, Mid-Sussex ARS and at the RSGB Convention.

The Propquest website, kindly hosted by Weatherquest, continues to provide near real-time displays of ionosonde data. During the main Es season, Jim also prepared a daily blog on the likely importance to Es of various weather features on upper air charts. Further work will be done on the refinement of the EPI map and possible inclusion of detailed ionosonde time-domain plots of Es events.

Jim also hopes to be able to add data from the RSGB meteor beacon project by Brian Coleman, G4NNS into the Es database in the future.

Gwyn, G3ZIL has completed a study of two-hop sidescatter at HF, with talks, a *RadCom* article and a poster at the American Geophysical Union (AGU). Work in progress includes documenting the October 2023 annular eclipse propagation changes using FST4W data and an AGU poster.

Chris, G4IFX had a busy year. Firstly, Chris and others contributed sections to US-based HamSCI's Nathaniel Frissell, W2NAF's "Heliophysics and Amateur Radio" article and work by other PSC members was also featured (read more about this below).

Chris continued to run the PSC Science Workshops via Zoom for the extended PSC membership and they've generated some very interesting and useful discussions, with topics including long-delay echoes, moonbounce propagation, and ionospheric ray-trace modelling.

Lastly, Chris got his PhD! The thesis title is "Radio propagation through ionospheric sporadic-E" and PSC wishes to congratulate him on this achievement.

Ron, G3SVW, PSC's man in the northwest, has been maintaining an interest in propagation with a small group in the South Manchester area. One subject of discussion has been the categorisation of fading for signal reporting.

Sam, G4DDK continued to push 9cm EME paths with a smallish system and says the threat and challenges to 23cm EME are still of concern.

Barry, G8AGN had three articles published in DUBUS and one in *RadCom Plus* on 30THz. He also gave two talks and demonstrations of 30THz operating at the Fittingly Round Table in June.

And finally, I (PSC Chairman Steve, GOKYA) continued my work on the HF section and compilation of GB2RS, wrote an HF propagation update for the RSGB Yearbook and gave several online talks to clubs around the UK. I also ran the PSC stand at the RSGB Convention and managed the online Propgy and VOACAP versions of the *RadCom* HF predictions.

**Steve Nichols, GOKYA**

[psc.chairman@rsgb.org.uk](mailto:psc.chairman@rsgb.org.uk)



Gwyn, G3ZIL being interviewed for video by David Palmer, G7URP on the PSC stand at the RSGB Convention.

### Propagation Studies Committee members contribute to international scientific paper

Several RSGB Propagation Studies Committee (PSC) members recently contributed to a paper in the USA entitled "Heliophysics and amateur radio: citizen science collaborations for atmospheric, ionospheric, and space physics research and operations".

The paper, prepared by HamSCI, was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers of Astronomy and Space Science* (see: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspas.2023.1184171>).

HamSCI is a US-based organisation that aims to advance scientific research and understanding through amateur radio activities, encourage the development of new technologies to support this research, and provide educational opportunities for the amateur community and the general public.

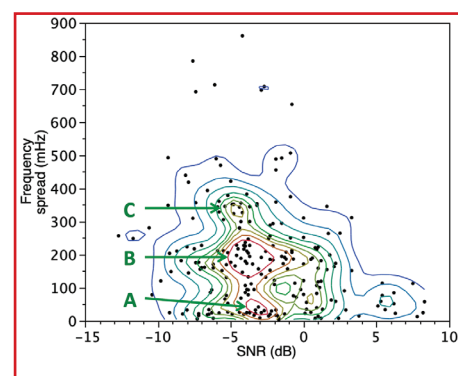
The paper demonstrates convincingly the value of citizen science activities based around amateur radio and makes a strong case for more formal collaboration and funding for such initiatives.

The paper's UK authors and subjects include Cathryn Mitchell, MO1BG on "Ray Tracing", Chris Deacon, G4IFX on "Sporadic E", and Gwyn Griffiths, G3ZIL on "WSPR and FST4W in amateur literature". Associate members of the PSC involved in the project included Bill Liles, NQ6Z on "HF Doppler observations of travelling ionospheric disturbances".

Other PSC members whose research was referenced in the paper included Marcus Walden, G0IJZ on "Near-vertical incidence sky wave links at 5MHz"; Steve Nichols, GOKYA on "Recent grey-line research"; Jim Bacon, G3YLA on "Sporadic-E studies in amateur literature" and "Online prediction tools under development"; and Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA on his work for *The CQ Shortwave Propagation Handbook*.

Finally, Peter Martinez, G3PLX is referenced for his 2007 work "Long delayed echoes: A study of magnetospheric duct echoes".

The paper reviews the history of amateur radio and science back to 1912, with the greatest emphasis on results that have come out in the past ten years. It resulted from expanding and combining two white papers submitted to the National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey for Solar and Space Physics (Heliophysics) 2024-2033, which



To read more about the Propagation Studies Committee visit [rsgb.org/psc](http://rsgb.org/psc)

helps the United States establish research priorities for the next ten years.

As such, this paper not only reviews past results but also provides recommendations for amateur radio/professional science collaborations in the future.

The paper says the amateur radio community is a global, highly engaged, and technical community with an intense interest in space weather, its underlying physics, and how it impacts radio communications.

Well-established amateur radio networks like the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN), WSPRNet, and PSKReporter already provide rich, ever-growing, long-term data from ionospheric observations.

The paper discusses the scientific and technical capabilities of the global amateur radio community, reviews methods of collaboration between the amateur radio and professional scientific communities, and summarises recent peer-reviewed studies that have used amateur radio data and methods.

RSGB Propagation Studies Committee chairman Steve Nichols, GOKYA said it was great to see radio amateurs and scientists joining together on research.

"This shows that the research work completed by PSC members is both valued and relevant to a wider scientific audience," Steve said. "We fully intend to collaborate with HamSCI in the future on projects that could be beneficial."

"By extending PSC's reach to the USA we

have made valuable contacts, including Carl, K9LA; Bill, NQ6Z; and Peter, AE7PD, whose help and work has been invaluable for UK radio amateurs.”

**Steve Nichols, GOKYA**

psc.chairman@rsgb.org.uk

## Regional Forum

This year has seen the members of the Regional Forum (RF) respond to the request from the RSGB Board to explore ways to expand the RSGB's outreach and help promote the hobby. The RF has done this in various ways. For example, Regional Representatives took part in British Science week. They also collaborated with other organisations to provide radio experiences, either through talks, presentations, or practical sessions like buildathons, many of which have been featured in *RadCom* during the year. We have also been present at the RSGB Convention where a presentation was given about outreach. The Regional Team also ran the very busy and successful Buildathon there too. In addition to this work, the Regional Team has attempted to reach out to clubs and visit them during the year, and have provided advice and information for club members and individuals alike regarding the Ofcom consultation. The team encouraged everyone they met to take part in the response. A big success this year was the rollout of the RSGB's Regional Club Facebook pages. This was implemented by and is moderated by the Regional Team and has become a popular method for clubs and individuals to promote activity and ask questions.

This year sees an unprecedented number of changes of Regional Representatives (RR). These posts are now subject to a 'churn' in order that the posts are refreshed. An RR is only now permitted to have two consecutive terms in office before they must vacate their role for a minimum of one term before being eligible to stand again. This was initially staggered over three years to even out the number of changes in one year but, due to co-opted RR positions that need to be formally elected, and three of the team not seeking a second term, this year becomes quite a busy year with eight Regional Representatives up for election: Regions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13.

We encourage anyone that has a good set of 'soft skills', a passion for amateur radio and wants to contribute to the hobby to put themselves forward. Please check out the volunteer pages on the RSGB website at [rsgb.org/volunteer](http://rsgb.org/volunteer) for more information.

The Regional Team would like to encourage the amateur radio community to think if their District or Regional Representative might be able to help and to call them first before HQ. You would be surprised how much they can help. This year it was great to get out and about to rallies at which the team supported the RSGB bookstall. It was noticeable that nearly all the rallies noted a substantially greater attendance this year – no doubt driven by the fact the National Hamfest did not take place this year. We look forward to supporting rally organisers in the coming year and have already accepted several bookings. Organisers need to be aware that you must request an RSGB bookstall from your District or Regional Representative. We don't just automatically turn up, so please book us well in advance!

The aim for 2024 is to further pursue opportunities to promote the hobby more widely and to continue with our club and rally visits and provide *ad hoc* assistance to the amateur radio community both by phone and email.

I would like to thank the following Regional Representatives, who are stepping down this year, for their invaluable service: RR5 (and RF Secretary) Neil Yorke, MONKE and RR6 Liz Cabban, GWOETU.

**David De La Haye, M0MBD**

rr12@rsgb.org.uk

## Spectrum Forum Report

The Spectrum Forum brings together the Spectrum Managers with an extensive range of participants from both inside the Society and external specialist groups. This broad membership brings with it a wide range of experience to the array of matters it comes across. It also facilitates a number of RSGB awards for QRP, VHF/UHF, Propagation, Space and Microwaves.

The Forum has a focus on spectrum, licensing and related issues,

nationally and internationally. 2023 saw an unprecedented workload with the major Ofcom Licence review, IARU Region-1 General Conference and ITU WRC-23 all occurring in the same year.

The first major activity started in the spring when the first signs of Ofcom's annual plan appeared. The Ofcom consultation launched in the June week that key folk were away attending Ham Radio exhibition in Friedrichshafen. Nonetheless, a series of Microsoft Teams and online/video engagements were run to raise awareness and work through the raft of licence and policy matters that the Ofcom consultation covered. Ultimately, around 1400 amateurs responded. It was also pleasing to see that the RSGB's detailed reply, developed with Spectrum Forum help, also received careful consideration. Overall, the result offers considerable opportunities for amateur radio development and outreach that can underpin other aspects of RSGB strategy. Whilst the new licence conditions are now clear, several aspects and additional guidance remain to be worked through during 2024.

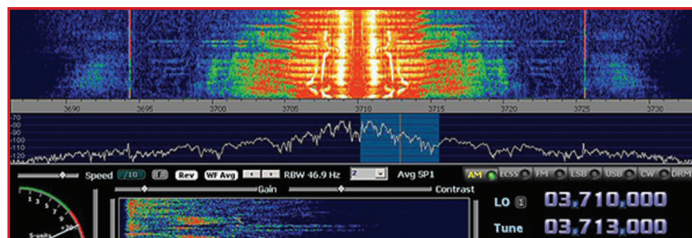
The summer period also saw a response to an Ofcom consultation on eLoran adjacent to our 136kHz allocation and preparation for the IARU Region-1 Conference that was held in Zlatibor in Serbia in early November. The IARU event was the first face-to-face conference to be held since 2017, due to the pandemic. Despite some arduous travel, this was well attended by others. The results saw caution prevail on HF band plan reform, whilst progress was made at V/U/SHF and more general/development matters, including and ARDF and ATV contests, based on RSGB proposals.

Over four years, ITU-related work since WRC-19, had seen ongoing effort to prepare for WRC-23. This was notably led at IARU level by Barry Lewis, G4SJH as Agenda Item 9.1b presented a major challenge for any viable amateur and amateur satellite operation in the 23cm band, where we are secondary. In parallel, I (Spectrum Chair Murray Niman, G6JYB) had joined the UK Ofcom-led delegation in CEPT-PTA preparation meetings, and ultimately in WRC-23 in November and December. In conjunction with other IARU areas, and other volunteers, this major effort proved to be successful for both 23cm and numerous other amateur bands in scope from current/future proposals from LF to beyond 300GHz. Notable amongst new demands (or threats) has been VHF/UHF spectrum demands for climate change ice sounders, space weather sensors and lunar communications – not just mobile broadband. Whilst declines in AM broadcasting are occurring, we have witnessed new demand for eLoran, wireless power and HF-high-speed financial trading.

As had been expected, a busy autumn schedule meant that a traditional single Spectrum Forum annual meeting was not practical and a series of Microsoft Teams sessions were organised instead, initially around the licence consultation, and latterly around its results as well as normal business.

RSGB Spectrum managers continue to facilitate 'Innovation bands' via Ofcom NoVs at 71MHz, 146MHz, 2300MHz and >275GHz. Despite ongoing component availability issues affecting some developments, we were pleased that ongoing technical progress led to Ofcom renewing 146MHz access for a further year. Also of note was the retirement of Richard Lamont for Intruder Watch, with Vaughan Ravenscroft returning to the post. The past year also saw the unusual and welcome event of being invited to Baldock and supporting a new Ofcom propagation research project.

Looking ahead, 2024 will see ongoing activity related to licensing and Band Plan changes, 23cm planning and the start of the new ITU WRC-27/31 preparation cycle.



Read more about the Spectrum Forum via [rsgb.org/spectrum-forum](http://rsgb.org/spectrum-forum)

## Technical Forum

The Technical Forum (TF) is responsible for the technical side of RSGB's activities and is a reflector and email-based group allowing rapid response and discussion with all the forum's members having access, and being able to contribute immediately. There have been no annual meetings this year.

Technical review of articles for *RadCom* and the other RSGB published electronic magazines forms the bulk of the activity we perform. Any technical article being considered for publication is sent by the Technical Editor to the Forum for review. We look at its suitability, technical merit and for any safety implications. Articles are sent out as general release to the TF and members respond individually as appropriate within their areas of expertise. Occasionally a few have to be 'pushed' in the direction of individuals for their particular area.

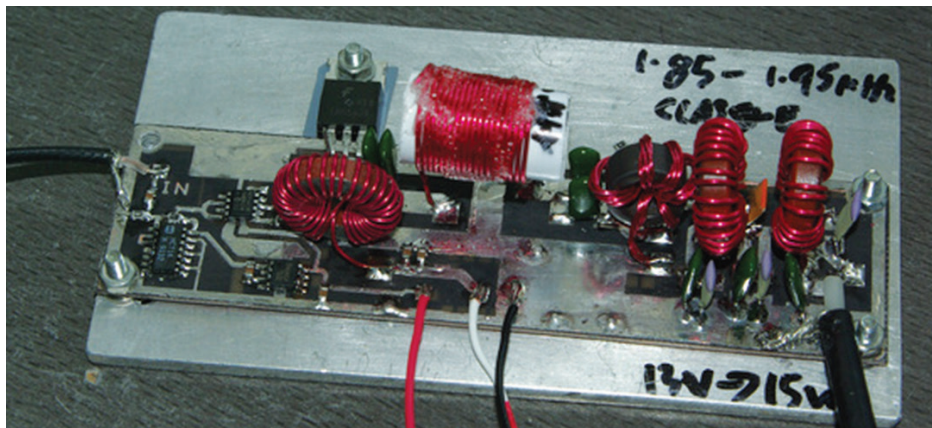
Absolute technical correctness in certain areas is not always challenged, especially for *RadCom Plus* where it is realised that experts and beginners will approach some areas in a different light. Certain articles have been 'allowed through' in spite of a few concerns and in such cases it is left to readers and the correspondence columns to discuss them.

The members of the Forum have a breadth of specialist knowledge to cover many of the areas needed for detailed review. Software Radio and the new data modes and 21st century techniques are rapidly moving into the hobby so it may be necessary to use external experts, particularly if there could be safety and legal implications involved; advice on earthing is one particular point that has caused some problems and which still raises its head from time to time.

Another task we perform is the selection of award winners for the five RSGB technical awards. The winners are selected through a voting system by Forum members after a list of all suitable publications and candidates is first drawn up and circulated. They are then sent to the Board for approval.

Increasingly, comments (and complaints and criticism) on published articles are appearing first on various independently run social media platforms and groups. In an attempt to streamline online discussion around *RadCom*, and other RSGB publications, the *RSGB-Workshop@groups.io* group was set up under the auspices of the Technical Forum in order to try to concentrate online activity into one place. It is hoped, although hasn't happened in all cases, that the writers of the technical articles, as well as columnists will join the group so that the fastest feedback and turnaround can be achieved.

As with all such online forums, subjects and posts often turn into a long discussion, frequently veering way off topic, but so far it has seldom been necessary to step in and cut off further posts. The breadth of subjects has covered too huge a range to even begin to list here, going from basic construction right through to advanced and



For more information about the RSGB's Technical Forums visit: [rsgb.org/main/technical/forum](https://rsgb.org/main/technical/forum)

specialist techniques being discussed. Antennas, EMC matters and licensing issues continue to dominate and are easily the most popular subjects. As is often the case, some seemingly quite trivial subjects often generate a huge discussion thread. Some *RadCom* articles generate a huge response and discussion, and members of the Technical Forum keep an overview of the threads and can respond with an official view if needed. With the wide range of expertise and experience amongst the subscribers, most questions soon get answered to the satisfaction of their originator.

It is difficult to know where the Technical Forum could go on developing technical expertise amongst the society's members. Technical expertise is not something that is really open to guiding – individuals make their own progress. However, the TF may be able to make some contributions in this area via *RadCom Plus*. If you have any ideas on areas you would like the Society's publications to cover, or any direction you think we should take, please let us know.

Please note that the TF is not a 'member-facing' group, and should not be seen as a point of call for individual technical assistance. The best approach for that is on one of the many specialist groups such as the independently-run RSGBTechnical Group.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Technical Forum for their time and the support provided.

**Andy Talbot, G4JNT**

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## RSGB Trophy Management

Trophy Management is responsible for the care and maintenance of the RSGB trophies and organising their presentation at both the AGM and the RSGB Convention.

Although 2023 was free of Covid-19, in that there were no mandatory restrictions imposed, the AGM was again held as a virtual event. This lessened the work required to prepare trophies for the event, with just the engraving needing to be done. The end of the summer saw the annual RSGB Convention at Kents Hill return to more normal levels of attendance and the associated number of trophies to be presented to the contest winners was increased, along with lots more elbow grease being required to polish the trophies.

There were two new trophies this year. One was donated to the society by the family of Bill Somerville, G4WJS (SK), who was a member of the development team for WSJT-X software. The other was donated by Camb-Hams Contest Group



The Trophy Room before the RSGB Convention.



The Trophy Room during the RSGB Convention weekend.

in memory of Gavin Nesbitt, MM1BXF (SK). This was awarded in the Beginners Category in the Construction Competition. Three trophies were retired during the year, as the RoLo Contest was discontinued.

There are now a total of 125 trophies, split between 72 HF contest trophies, 35 VHF contest trophies, 16 AGM trophies, and 2 construction competition trophies. Of the 72 HF contest trophies, 26 are non-returnable trophies, 17 of which are donated by IOTA Ltd, GMDX and CDXC and several other individuals. For which many thanks are due.

The Trophy Management Team would like to congratulate all trophy winners and wish them well for 2024.

**Jacqui Goodey, G6XSY**  
trophy.manager@rsgb.org.uk

## VHF Contest Committee

The VHF Contest Committee is responsible for setting the strategy and rules for the RSGB's contest programme on 50MHz and above.

With our aim to reach out and encourage as many members as possible to participate in VHF contests, our key measure of success is the number of entrants who we have participating in each contest. Covid-19 brought a big bump in participation levels during 2020 and 2021. Subsequently, the first part of 2022 saw activity levels retrenching somewhat as people spent time doing all the activities which they been prevented participating in during the previous two years. But 2023 has seen a rebound, which started being sustained at the end of 2022, and entry levels are broadly on the increase again.

The short weekday evening UK Activity Contests (UKAC) with their friendly, but competitive club rivalry, continue their success, with 109 clubs and 652 entrants taking part this year. To some, these events are their main radio activity during the year, to others they are just another part of their radio repertoire, and to most they are a way of joining in club/group activities. The short 2.5-hour format of these contests proves popular and fit people's modern lifestyles better than 24-hour long events. We strive for a wide variety of formats, sections and contest structures within our calendar, and to make them all as accessible as possible through, for example, 6-hour sections within the 24-hour events.

Our longer weekend events are also generally gaining in activity and these events, often co-ordinated with wider European contests, provide great opportunities for good DX to be worked due to the large number of very well-equipped and very well-sited stations active across Europe. Contests now provide far and away the best opportunity to make substantial numbers of QSOs on SSB and CW on the VHF and UHF bands.

The success of digital contesting at VHF continues and we maintain our position of consciously not mixing it too tightly with the traditional events. There are a significant group

of entrants who are keen on digital contesting, but we don't yet see the volume of digital entrants that are associated with the CW/SSB events. The Wednesday evening 2m and 70cm FT8 events are proving very successful with around 200 entrants.

Going into 2024, we have made a change to our 55-minute-long FM activity contests on the 70cm and 2m bands, which run prior to the UKAC events. We've split the entry sections by license class, so Foundation licensees will compete only with Foundation licensees, Intermediates with Intermediates, and Full licensees with Full licensees. This is an experiment, which is based on feedback received, and which we hope may encourage more newcomers to enter.

The VHF Contest Committee role is to set the rules and the strategy for events. The really hard work of adjudication is done by the Contest Support Committee which, as ever, has done an amazing job of getting the results for around 180 events in a really timely and accurate fashion. We could not run these events without them and I thank them for their enthusiasm and commitment. Pete, G4CLA and Mike, G0GJV do fantastic work on the software needed to automate our website and adjudication and are critical to the speed and accuracy of adjudication.

This year, I should make particular mention of Jacqui, G6XSY who looked after our trophies. Jacqui has done an amazingly thorough job making this work so effectively over many years, but finally retired from the role during 2023. Our sincere thanks to her for the tremendous work that she put in. We continue to seek a replacement for her. Thank you all on behalf of all our entrants.

**Andy Cook, G4PIQ**  
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## Youth

The annual YOTA camp in Hungary was represented by a team of four young members Alex, Jake, Henry-James and Hanna. Following the camp, the team members made a presentation at the RSGB Convention and wrote pieces for the RSGB website and *RadCom*.

During the year, several queries of what to do with licensed young people have been replied to. Most often the answers have been to encourage and enable frequent use in simplex or repeater conversations.

There were also conversations with clubs setting up within schools, providing help with funding and ideas for activities. It's great to see these clubs now well established and flourishing with good interest from the pupils and excellent leadership from the teachers.

It was good to see several clubs taking part in the Scout's JOTA event. A good number sent in reports to *RadCom*. We're looking forward to next year's event and hope to have some coordination between participating clubs.

This year the Youth Team is hoping to grow with the introduction of Country Youth Representatives and more on-air events organised in the UK.

British Science week in March will see the RSGB supporting activities at the RSGB National Radio Centre (NRC) at Bletchley Park, and around the UK, trying to attract more youth members to join the Society and play radio.

**Liam Robbins, G5LDR**  
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Visit [rsgb.org/youth](https://www.rsgb.org/youth) to read more about what the RSGB does to support young people in amateur radio.