

Minutes of the AGM held at Newark on 29th Sept 2017

Present at the meeting were:

Council Members:

G3WGM, G4LRG, M0OIC, G4ETG, GW3KJW, M0GKD, GWOWEE

Members:

G0ZEP, G1LKJ, G2ABR, M0JHO, G6NHY, G4BZP, M0BDD, 2E0DAO, G4BZI, M0XVX, MOVNG, G0CWP, G7PNG, G0TBI, GU3UTX, G1HIJ, G3RWF, 2E0ERC

Apologies for Absence:

Council members:

G0SWY, Maj(Tfc) P.R.G. Tonks, G3VBE, G4KLE, MM0DKQ, G3RGE

Members:

G4JVJ, MM0KTE, GM4EMX, GM3KHH, G4BXQ, 2E0RKW, M0ACV, EA5AVL, EA7JVZ, CT1FFB, G0NVY, 2E1SIS, G8OFZ, G6UUR, M0WSN, G3YNT, M0RLO

The 59th AGM took place in the Sheldon Suite at the Newark Showground as part of the Annual Hamfest and was opened at 11am by the Vice President Maj(Retd) Jim Heck with a welcome to members followed by his annual report which is shown below:

Greetings from the President. I have recently been in contact with our President, Col Simon Hutchinson, the Corps Colonel, and he apologies that he is unable to attend the AGM, but has asked me to pass on his best wishes to all members, and is hoping for good DX in the next 12 months.

Members should be aware that Col Hutchinson will be relinquishing his post of Corp Colonel at the beginning of November, and his successor is to be Col Jason Gunning who will become our new President. Soon after he arrives I will be contacting him, and briefing him about RSARS

Many thanks to John G4LRG, and his helpers for arranging this AGM and setting up and manning the RSARS stand at the Rally.

This year's activities

Last year I reported on the possibility of establishing a live station in the Corps Museum in Blandford. From time to time we hear mention of this project, but in reality, there has been little progress. I have mixed feelings about this project. Given all the current rules and regulations concerning Health and Safety, and the constraints of using the MoD's contractor for any work, I think it would be quite difficult to establish such a station. Also, if a station were to be established, it might 'dilute' the activity at Cole Block. On the other hand, our presence in Cole Block, again in my opinion, is not guaranteed, and over the years we have had one or two 'scares' and a station located elsewhere might be a good 'insurance policy'. One idea we have had is to use a PC to connect to a system such as Hack Green to provide a live listening station which Museum visitors could use.

This brings me on to membership. In my contacts with the Royal Signals hierarchy I sometimes note disappointment in the numbers of serving soldiers we have as Society members. We should not forget that we should try and attract new members not only from the regular army, but also amongst Reserves and Cadets. So, I urge you consider these in the future.

I am happy to note that RSARS has been mentioned more than once in publications such as Radcom. We tried to get a short article in Soldier Magazine, but sadly their editor did not select it for publication.

It probably hasn't escaped your notice that, in 2020, the Royal Signals will be celebrating its 100th anniversary, and I know that RHQ has been spending some considerable time in planning events for that year. I strongly believe that it would be very appropriate for RSARS to organise some event. I have my own thoughts and ideas, but I know that this item is on the agenda for this meeting so I will not expand on them now.

Each year it is my duty to present awards to those members who are present, and it's a great pleasure to do so. I note that recently our Awards Manager, Mike GOSWY has asked to be relieved of his responsibilities. Mike has done a great job for many years as our Awards Manager; something of a thankless task, so I would now like to thank him publicly for all his work in supporting the Society over many years. I am very happy to be able to say that Pat GW3KJW has volunteered to take over from Mike, and I wish him every success in his new job!

Further on the subject of awards, I note that the Society has many, and there is a picture on the Society's web site of some (but I suspect not all) of them. There is one in particular that I hold in high regard, and that is the G3EKL trophy, which used to be known as The Chairman's Choice. I had the great pleasure of knowing Ray whilst he was still serving; actually, I think his last tour when he was Quartermaster of 8 Signal Regiment in Catterick. Many of you will have known him either personally or by reputation. He was the Society's Vice President for many years, and it was he who took me to my very first RSARS AGM in the days when it was held during the Granby Halls Rally in Leicester.

I would now like to read the description of the Award:

THE G3EKL MEMORIAL TROPHY (formerly The "Chairman's Choice" Trophy). A Shield presented by the Vice-President, Major R. A. Webb G3EKL for annual award to recognise ten or more years of dedicated service to the Society. To supplement the GW20P Trophy, and to be awarded to any member at the discretion of Council and now re-named in honour of G3EKLs unstinting and invaluable unequalled support for the Society in several roles over many years.

I would now like to break with tradition and present this award now, rather than at the end of the formal proceedings; and I can announce that Council has decided to make this award to John G4LRG. I will finish by thanking you all for coming to the AGM, and wish you good DX over the next 12 months

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A one-minute silence then took place in memory of all members who became Silent Key during the last year.

Acceptance of 2016 minutes as published in Mercury

Proposer GW3KJW
Secunder G1LKJ

Acceptance of 2016 Treasurers report as published in Mercury

Proposer Russ GOTBI
Secunder Rod MOVNG

Council Reports were read out by the General Secretary for those members who were unable to attend and the remainder were read by the Council Members who were present at the meeting.

GENERAL SECRETARY – G4LRG

Thanks once again to everyone for supporting me in my roles as General Secretary and Webmaster.

We still struggle with poor conditions but amazingly, we still manage to get on air and run some nets with the continuing hard work and time spent by our Net Controllers. The use of Hack Green and other SDR sites is a great help to keep members talking and some of our overseas travellers still take the time to look for us.

A lot of the RSARS Website activity is routine, such as updating membership lists etc but if anyone has something interesting that will benefit other members, I am more than happy to post articles/projects on the site so just drop me an eMail and we can take it from there.

I did manage to get an article into the Wire magazine earlier this year to try and attract serving members but the changing roles within the Corps does not appear to attract very many new members for us. We are always open to suggestions on how to recruit new members.

I am more than happy to continue as General Secretary for the next year.

Thank You.

AWARDS AND CONTEST MANAGER GOSWY

Hello and sorry I am unable to attend the AGM again this year.

From next year, the May contest dates will change to the following: -

0001 Hrs 1ST of May 2018 TO 2359 Hrs on the 14TH of May 2018. Two weeks only as many members were asking if I could reduce the length of the activity due to conditions and the fact that not many members were on for the 4 weeks

Congratulations to Bryan M0OIC on winning the May contest this year and to John G4LRG on him winning the 559 contests.

Finally, I will be standing down as Awards and Contest manager in the new year. I have been doing the job for some 11 to 12 years and feel it is time for me to get back into operating. The new manager will be Pat GW3KJW and I wish him all the best in the job.

One last comment, I would like to thank all members who sent cards and messages after the loss of my xyl earlier this year, thank you and thank you for your support over the years.

NSMR's Report

Suffice to say that conditions over the last year, especially on the lower bands have been dire. The consequence of this has been a lack of nets, even though the net controllers have been there every day calling for members. At times, the bands have been open yet few members have responded to the desperate calls of the controllers. This general malaise is self-reinforcing compounding the effects of propagation and further diminishing activity on the nets especially amongst new members.

What can be done? Some efforts were made to refresh interest in our nets, for example, the 'Get on Net' event. This was reported on in Mercury and did indeed generate some action. But it can be seen from the QSL Managers reports that very little interest in making new contacts has occurred.

Some activity has been generated by computer-minded members using the remote SDR receive capability at Hack Green receiving station in Cheshire. This has caused the users to be able to hear other members calling but not directly over the radio, but via the computer link. The opinion of this way of making contacts is varied. Even the NSMR's have divided opinions. One is all for it and the other completely opposed to the idea and will not use it under any circumstances.

Activity from overseas has been poor, the sad demise of Alan VK6PG has been a loss to us all, although Mal VK6LC has tried to raise some interest in DX contacts and we are promised activity from the West Indies in the later months of the year.

Again, unfortunately we are experiencing a low and getting lower level of sun cooperation and even DX on the higher bands is tricky for those using a simple set up such as 100 watts to the standard wire aerial. A beam and power is a help in these circumstances. However, all is not lost, the digital modes are a way of achieving good DX although finding RSARS members is more problematic. Sadly, Bill GM3KHH has had to retire as controller of the PSK31 and RTTY nets – thank you Bill for your sterling service. These times and frequencies now operate more informally as meeting places. It is surprising that members have not been more active using JT9 and JT65 where 25 watts to a dipole on 40 metres will bring in DX during the evenings and early mornings. No doubt it is better through the night, but who amongst our ageing membership is likely to be awake, for at 10pm it's time for bed and rest up until the morning.

For those who wish to make their appearance on the nets, remember that at least one net is run every day except Saturday, times, frequencies and controllers are shown in *Mercury* and a listen at least will not go amiss.

The Society has been in being for many years and although membership is falling mainly due to old age it deserves to have many more years of active participation in its activities. Let's keep it active.

GW3KJW MM0DKQ

G4RS Station Managers Report – August 2017.

Our twice weekly meetings have continued regularly over the last twelve months and we have continued to participate in the FUNCUBE Project, downloading Data from the satellite and uploading to the Data Warehouse facility.

In the New Year, we found a Third-Party Internet Supplier who was able to provide a 4G service with a Fixed IP Address which enabled us to migrate the ECHOLINK on to the much better service and allowed us to cease the ADSL. We thank Council for approving the increased contribution to the expenditure for of this much faster service – from maybe 0.5 MBits/Sec if we were lucky, up to the 4G speeds of around 60 MBits/Sec.

Some of our members assisted the Poole Radio Society again with their support of JOTA in October 2016, providing a Rig including the KPA500 and operators for HF/SSB.

In the Spring, we received a very generous Donation from the Widow of Mike Taylor, G3UCT, a Retired Brigadier of the Corps who sadly had become Silent Key. We now have a YAESU FT1000 plus a YAESU

FL7000 Linear Amplifier, operational within Cole Block. The Tone of the associated Microphone is reported to be Exceptional. Our Grateful Thanks to Mrs Taylor.

We have recruited two new Members during the year: 2M0RMP from the Royal Engineers based in Scotland who happened to be "On Camp" for a Course, and a retiree from REME, – David, who now regularly attends Cole Block where he demonstrates his Mechanical Skills assisting with Maintenance and Electrical Skills by making good progress towards obtaining his Full Licence which he hopes to achieve before the end of 2017. He has made his debut On Air from Cole Block with his Foundation Callsign of M6IQX and more recently has been heard as 2E0RKW.

July of course we were focussed on Mast Inspections and I am pleased to report that both Masts have been cleared for another year and are once again at full height.

In August Stuart M0TBI (of VMARS fame) made what has become his customary annual visit with his XYL Anne, and made good use of the Cole Block facilities. This visit is timed to coincide with the Flight Refuelling ARS (FRARS) Hamfest which some of the Blandford Members also attend.

The South Mast has received some attention fairly recently with the fitting of a new Rotator. The Pro SIS one that has served for probably many years (before my time) had failed three times in the last than three years so it was time to be retired to less strenuous duty. It is now in Cole Block awaiting refurbishment and fitting to our 2 metre Beam which is on a much lower Tower. We have fitted a new YAESU Rotator to South Mast with a larger gauge control cable, and one which actually STOPS before any overlap damages the Coaxial Feeder, rather than relying on an alert Operator noticing a RED overlap warning light.

We quite often make contact with Ken (G3RGE) on VHF SSB on those days when he is unwilling to travel to Cole Block, and recently he has been heard on the UHF Repeater.

Cole Block now has a Long Wire Antenna with an appropriate Auto ATU for no other reason than to experiment in true Amateur style. Although not used "in anger" yet it gives us something to use now when the Doublet (ZEPP) or 40 metre dipole (or both) are not available because of Mast Maintenance. Colin (G0JII) enjoys the extra Height and Power of the KPA500 driving the 20 metre South Beam. Rich, G0ZEP and Alex, M1LXM tend to look after the Repeaters – well they are young enough to sprint up the 30 metre Tower when needed. !!

My thanks again to Phil G3XBZ who provides unerring support for Maintenance tasks far too numerous to mention

Alan Mockford M0GKD
G4RS Station Manager

Serving Members Report and Royal Corps of Signals Update

Once again Society wise this has been a quiet year for the SMR; dealing mainly with routine Council business and proffering advice when asked for. However, working in the Joint Operations environment has been at pace. As a member of the Standing Joint Force Headquarter (SJFHQ) and supported by 30th Signal Regiment, the year has been spent preparing the HQ to be at readiness to deploy worldwide in support of any operation that might be launched. This preparation has seen the HQ staff take part in a number of training events that culminated in Ex JOINT VENTURE held in St Mawgan, Cornwall in late Jun/Jul. The staff will be involved in a number of training events over the coming months that will see the HQ reach operating capability. What is striking from the training is

that the 'skills and drills' of the 'Cold War Warrior' are more relevant today than they have been since the early 1990s.

Within R SIGNALS there has been the announcement of Army 2020 Refine. This announcement builds on those measures that were implemented across the Corps in 2013 – 2015 and will shape the Corps to support both the raising of the Strike Brigades within Defence and allow the Corps to lead in the digital and information warfare arena. It will see the move of a number of units over the coming 3 years and closer integration the Reserve and the Regulars to support the One Army Concept. Once the finer detail has been worked through I intend to write a further piece showing the structure of the Corps.

Members of the Corps remain committed to operations across the globe and as this report is being crafted R SIGNALS personnel are readying themselves to support the Hurricane Irma relief effort.

Maj (Tfc) P.R.G. Tonks

Bureau Notes – AGM 2017

Not wishing to bore members with statistics (are they sighs I hear) but wishing to put bureau activity in perspective I add. During our RSARS 50th Anniversary activity we had to regularly send cards to members. No, not because they were needed urgently but to avoid having to add more storage drawers. As an example, members sent to the bureau during June 2012 (one month only) a total of 915 cards. Other months during this Anniversary period were not dissimilar. By comparison the 12 months (one year) to date has produced a grand total of 485 ignoring cards received from the RSGB. Yes, 915 cards received during one month in 2012 against 485 cards received in this last year (12 months) we see how things are, or are not, going in the bureau.

Reasons for this, in my view, are two-fold. One, how often do we hear new members, or in fact old members joining nets these days – not a lot. Two, we no longer require cards to support claims so this would have reduced input a bit. However, I do think the general lack of member activity is to blame for this?

Yes, we need a reason to get our members radio active again.

The subject of advertising in RADCOM was raised at the AGM last year. This was noted and the RADCOM editor Elaine Richards G4FLM was contacted. She was happy to assist but made a point of saying that she had more than enough medium to large articles and would prefer 'newsy' type items. Members will have seen these in their copies of RADCOM so no need for me to publish. However, as a reminder RSARS got fair mention covering the visit of Rick AI5P to our AGM and RSGB convention. Of importance, he was shown with the RSGB President, our member Nick G3RWF as well as our VP Jim G3WGM. This item was followed up, two magazines later, by an article answering questions from readers as to who could apply for RSARS membership. This was followed up two months later covering, in advance, our May Activity month showing a few of our excellent RSARS trophies and rosettes.

In addition to having RSARS mentioned three times, over a four month period in RADCOM I was also able to get a photo, and a small few words, covering Jim G3WGM, our VP, presenting Rick AI5P with an award in appreciation at our AGM in ARRL QST. This was published twice in December and January editions of QST. Bearing in mind the size of ARRL membership I was very pleased to get this small mention. I doubt it produced any new overseas members but we tried.

Any member feeling that they have an item worth publishing that could include RSARS feel free to send it to me and I will liaise with RADCOM Editor.

I am happy to continue as bureau manager if the members wish it.

Bryan MOOIC

From the Membership Secretary's Desk

RSARS membership numbers have fallen again this year, at the cut-off date the number of active members on the database is 587, (year 2016 it was 596). I decided that I wouldn't extend the renewal period as was done last year.

Members who take Mercury electronically has fallen to 49, including some of our overseas members though not renewing membership or becoming a "SK

The RSARS Database software is functioning with "TLC" under Windows 10. I have, in addition transferred data to a standard Microsoft database to provide a back-up source of member's details and continue to update details as required.

Total lapsed members at cut-off date: 49. New & Re-joined members (2016-17): 25.

I am happy to continue as your Membership Secretary for the next twelve months.

George G3VBE (Membership Secretary)

RSARS Stores Report 2017

Stores activity has been slow again this year, even with the continued "Summer Sales" order form launched at the 2014 AGM.

Stores Sales for the period from the AGM last September was

- September 2016 – September 2017 = **£ 120.80**

No new stock has been purchased this year, as we do still have a large holding of Polo Shirts, Ties and Baseball Caps. I would like to look for NEW items for the stores, but with the current financial review on all departments, I shall await guidance from the Council and Members. I conducted a stores condition report for the Council on all holdings in March 2016 and confirm that all items are still in a saleable condition

I am happy to continue as Stores Manager for the coming year.



Mervyn S Foster
G4KLE #315 – Stores Manager RSARS

Treasurers Report AGM 2017

The accounts for the year 2016/2017 show that we have an excess of income over expenditure again this year, roughly £1600 more than last year. Hopefully this will be a continuing trend.

Voluntary donations this year are up on last year's figures but subscriptions are down by £150.

Several members who pay by direct debit have still not updated their bank mandate from £8 to £10. This causes considerable work, and inconvenience, for the Membership Secretary who has to chase individuals for the extra £2.

Postage and administrative costs are up compared to last year but this was to be expected with the increase in postal charges during the accounting period.

Mercury printing costs are slightly down again this year.

Sale of stores continues and income is about the same as last year.

The miscellaneous expenses are two returned cheques, the money was then paid by bank transfer, and a floral tribute.

The deposit account has not been raided this financial period and gained a very small amount of interest.

With the changes made at the AGM two years ago regarding rallies and the reducing Mercury bill I see no need to increase membership fees at present.

I am willing to continue as treasurer for another year.

D.B. Humphries

Dave Humphries G4ETG
RSARS 0963

RSARS Treasurer

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An open discussion then took place regarding the forthcoming Corps' centenary in 2020 to encourage activity and participation from as many members as possible.

G0ZEP advised that there was a possible special event station as part of Blandford's celebration

GWOWEE suggested activity from the various Royal Signals stations around UK and Germany that could be extended further if conditions allowed. To be a success agreement should be sought from HQ RS in Blandford. Mention was made of Cyprus as additional venues.

It was suggested that the Blandford Museum be approached for historic equipment to work between France & Belgium back to UK.

It was suggested that we look at what RAFARS were doing for the RAF's centenary in 2018.

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Annual Trophy Presentation/winners:

559 Overall, SSB & CW – G4LRG

May Anniversary – M0OIC

May Anniversary Asia – 5B4AGQ

N2DAN – GW0WEE

GW2OP – GW4PUC

G8VG Cup – GI4JTF

G3DSS Data Award – GI4JTF

Most Overall Progress – I5EFO

May Anniversary – Oceania – No entries

May Anniversary – North America – No entries

QRP – No Entries

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Any Other Business:

GW3KJW – asked for a receipt/acknowledgement of his voluntary donation to the society each year. It was agreed that an eMail would be acceptable for these donations from all members which should be sent by the MemSec.

G2ABR – thanked Council for their hard work in keeping the society running.

MOVNG – thanked Barry/G3YEU for the professionalism and regularity in which his “Solar Conditions” emails were presented.

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There being no other business the meeting was closed at 1215.