

SRS Involvement with NARSA

Early days and the formation of NRSA

In the summer of 1958, Stockport Radio Society joined up with South Manchester and held a rally at Capesthorpe Hall. This was the first annual event organised jointly by the clubs and was advertised in "The Bulletin" later to be known as Radcom. Two years later, the adverts referred to a "Hamfest", and the event attracted other amateurs from clubs in the area. The success of these rallies and discussions with other radio clubs, particularly with Granada TV Radio Society, created a desire for a larger event. In 1965, together with other North West radio clubs, plans were developed to hold a convention in Manchester.



In January, 1965, a total of 11 North West radio society representatives gathered at Granada TV HQ, for discussions, led by Albert Evans, G3RMV, who was a member of both Stockport and Granada TV radio societies. At that meeting the name 'Northern Radio Societies Association' was agreed and adopted.

The radio societies represented were: Eccles, Bury, Liverpool, Ainsdale, Stockport, Preston, Granada TV RS, South Manchester, Manchester and District, Manchester Technical College, North West VHF Group.

The elected officers of the organising Committee were:

- ♦ Ian McArthur G3NUQ – Chairman, SRS
- ♦ Colin Fox G3HII – Secretary, Granada TV
- ♦ Bill Shaw G3SHW – Treasurer, SRS
- ♦ Albert Evans G3RMV – Manager, Granada TV and SRS
- ♦ Desmond Alimundo G4HK – Assistant Manager, SRS
- ♦ Fred Nicholls G3MAX – Exhibition Manager, North West VHF Group
- ♦ Ernie Wigzell G3RQL – Activities Manager, SRS

In October, 1965, The NRSA held their first annual convention at Belle Vue, Manchester in the 'Kent' Suite. Sunday sales were definitely not allowed and no traders were present. Radio controlled model aircraft gave a demonstration on the stock car racing track. Radio controller model boats were displayed on the boating lake. 10m Walkie/Talkies were used for the first time, nearly 1,000 people passed through the 'Kent' Suite during the convention

By 1968, the convention outgrew the facilities and it was decided to hold that year's Convention at the larger premises of the Cumberland Suite, which was located within the 84-acre zoo and fun fair of Belle Vue, with attractions for the whole family, and was the North's biggest showground.

Talk-in stations were operating on 2, 4 and 160 metre and were kept busy all day. A demonstration station, operating on 20m had been set up, in order to show the public how an Amateur Radio Station operated. Despite problems with aerials, many European stations were worked. All stations used the call-sign, GB2BVC.

The Convention as a whole was considered to have been a success with an estimated 4,000 people attending, many spending the whole day there. And many trade enterprises expressed their desire to attend the following year's event.

Over the next few years, with the popularity of Amateur Radio in the North growing, more clubs joined NRSA. Stockport RS members took key roles on the NRSA committee, attending group meetings throughout the year. In 1982, NRSA amended their name to NARSA (Northern Amateur Radio Societies Association).

Ideas for the theme of Stockport's stand became a recurring topic, so Des Alimundo, G4HK the SRS NARSA representative at the time, prepared a list of previous themes to avoid repetition. As technology changed, so did the themes, which ranged from Radio through the ages, to OSCAR Satellite and Digital Frequency Meter. Club projects were (and still are) a favourite topic and members were encouraged to put forward their homebrew equipment to display on the stand.

In 1985, after a couple of years at Pontin's, Southport, the rally returned to Belle Vue. The last convention there was held in 1987, the venue being a shadow of its former self - but nevertheless, historically significant in hosting 20 years of NRSA conventions. SRS won best stand and provided Stewards for the event. This earned the club a £60 share of the profits, which was, and still is, an incentive for clubs to attend and take on tasks at the exhibition. Sadly the Belle Vue site was demolished soon after and the site cleared for redevelopment.



In January, 1988, with some new faces in control, the rally moved from Belle Vue to a new venue at the Norbreck Castle Hotel Exhibition Centre, Queens Parade, Blackpool. All the attractions, for which 'Belle Vue was well known, were promised to be at Blackpool, Bring and Buy, RSGB Morse Tests — pre-booked of course, traders large and small. Talk in on

S22. Admission was £1 (OAPs 50p and under-14 free).

Regular NARSA meetings were held at Warrington RS Clubhouse in Grappenhall, and some 48 members' clubs supported the event now advertised as NORBRECK Radio, Electronics & Computer Exhibition. Stockport RS maintained a NARSA representative, but since the demise of the centrally placed Belle Vue site and the transfer of the convention to Blackpool, interest within SRS declined somewhat.

SRS involvement with the NARSA since 2010

In 2010, following a few years' absence, SRS re-engaged with NARSA.

Committee member, Peter Ridley, M1PTR was appointed the SRS NARSA Manager responsible for preparing an SRS stand and liaising with the NARSA committee. Together with a small team, he co-ordinated SRS members to provide items for display, construct illuminated display boards showing SRS activities, bought a few metres of cloth as a table cover and offered the services of SRS members to help with tasks at the Exhibition.

On display at the SRS stand was a bandpass filter designed and built by Bernard Naylor, G3SHF. This filter inserted a minimum of 35 dBs attenuation to adjacent contest bands, allowing two stations to operate without cross band interference. It was still in use at the SRS Contest Group station 10 years later. Jeff Hunt, G6XRL offered a rare Paros 22 transceiver, thought to have been designed by engineers who later joined Yaesu. The stand proudly displayed the Club of the Year shield, awarded earlier that year. A continuous newsreel film of the club's outdoor activities held visitors' attention at the stand allowing Alan Gurnhill, G0ROW, to offer them SRS membership forms while they watched.



From a QUA Report of the 2010 NARSA Rally – “It’s been a long time since the Society has participated in this event in an official capacity. However, following a recommendation from Dave Wilson M0OBW, the society applied once again to affiliate itself to the Northern Amateur Radio Societies Association (NARSA), and as a result, we became entitled to a stand at this year’s rally and some free tickets to the event held on Sunday 11 April at the Norbreck Castle Hotel on Blackpool’s sea front.

Peter M1PTR, Christine, 2E0LMG, took up the challenge of designing and producing an eye-catching stand which advertised Stockport Radio Society and its activities to the masses. Aply assisted by a number of members, including: Jeff, G6XRL, Steve, G8YTP, Alan, G0ROW, Chris, 2E0CBS, Stuart, M3UTJ, Peter, 2E0LKC, Anne, 2E0LMD and Bernard, G3SHF, an excellent stand was produced and seemed to go down well with all those visiting the event At our society meeting on the 20 April, those members who did not attend the rally had an opportunity to see the stand along with an explanation by Peter and Jeff, as to how it was put together, the process leading up to the event and how the day itself unfolded. Well done to everyone involved in particular, Peter M1PTR, for the time and effort put into to making the event a success from SRS’s point of view.”



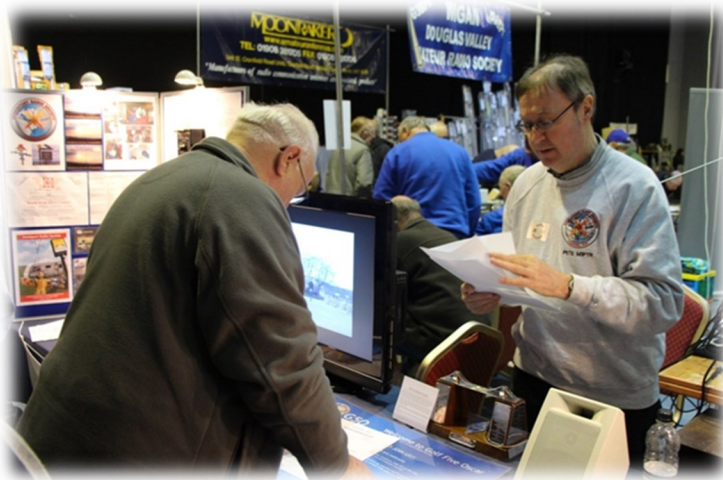
In 2011 QUA reported - “For many years, Stockport Radio Society was an active member of the Northern Amateur Radio Societies Association, most notably when the rally was held at the Belle Vue site in Gorton, Manchester. Indeed, for a time, Society Treasurer, Bill Hayes, G4RLD, held a similar position within NARSA. In more recent times, our participation waned, that is until 2010, when we returned to the fold.



“Having been invited to attend the 2010 event by Dave Wilson M0OBW, Committee member Peter Ridley M1PTR, picked up the reins and put together, with the help of members, an attractive and informative display. Buoyed with the success of 2010, Peter has again taken up the mantle to develop a display for 2011 - but this time doubling the number of tables to two. The theme of the display will be to advertise the Society’s activities, and those of its members both collectively and individually. This will not be the last time the display is aired, as one could say it is a ‘dry run’ for the Stockport Rally, previously known as the Reddish Rally which was held on the 1st Saturday in July later in the year.“

On the display was a homebrew Mag loop antenna built by Ray King, M1REK, that towered above the stand, and a second bandpass filter designed and built by Bernard Naylor, G3SHF. Also featured was a data mode radio demonstration given on the stand by Evan Duffield, M0TJU, at scheduled time slots throughout the day. This proved to be very successful and attracted assorted audiences, some of whom were distracted from one of the larger trade stands opposite.

In 2013, on the centre stand was a 15M portable vertical antenna built by Ray King, M1REK, and an antenna analyser kit build project by Tom Spence, M0DCG. The SRS Contest Group displayed the Bristol Trophy, having won the RSGB National Field Day CW contest the previous summer. An audio/visual of club's activities provided by Tony Smithers, M0SAV, was displayed on a large (and heavy!) monitor supplied by Chris Spencer, G8HCB. It was at this rally that Nigel Stanley, 2E0CKA, and Heather Stanley (later to become M6HNS), helped set up the stand. Soon after they became key members of the team attending meetings and supporting SRS at NARSA meeting.



Applying her wide experience of producing publications and advertising Heather, M6HNS, with assistance from Nigel, 2E0CKA, arranged for SRS contact and social media information to be present on the stand. The SRS website underwent a facelift and promoting SRS became a key action supported by the committee.

Two years later in 2015, SRS won trophies for best stand and best website. On display was the SRS SWRMega, Club Project. This SWR/power meter was jointly designed by Bernard, G3SHF, and Pete, M1PTR, as a modular kit that could be configured with different couplers for HF or VHF and QRP to QRO. It was built over a few sessions by members of the club. The SRS website, that had undergone a major facelift by Heather, M6HNS deservedly won the best Website award. Although with it came the onerous task of reviewing all club websites for next year's winner!



L-R Alan G0ROW, Heth M6HNS, Peter M1PTR & Tony M0SAV

By now, the 21st century SRS NARSA team were well versed in what makes a good eye catching display, and so a selection of what to show had to meet strict approval. What was clear to them from talking to stand visitors, was the interest shown in club projects. It followed therefore that club should encourage members to build projects. So, at the club's regular skills nights, construction activities known as 'burn finger' sessions were organised by Tom, M0DCG.



In 2016 SRS won the Colin Fox Construction trophy for the "Sudden 2 receiver built by Phil Hodges, 2E0XYA. On display was a 6m 1/2λ Dipole Antenna also built by Phil. The 'highlight' of the stand was an illuminated SRS Logo made by Nigel, 2E0CKA consisting of 176 LEDs flashing randomly in a loop. Two large popup displays and a banner advertised SRS activities and contact information completed the stand.

Continuing the club's aim to raise awareness of Amateur Radio and promoting interest in SRS, the special events group used some of the NARSA stand display material at their outdoor activities such as the Avro open day planned for summer 2017. So it made sense that SRS invest in some new display panels as the old ones were starting to show their age.

For the NARSA event that year, SRS chose to display a 6m antenna built by Stephen Brown, M6ISB, radio kits built by Bob Smith, M6TMA, a KN-Q7A Single Band SSB Transceiver kit, built by Dave, M0IEF, and 9:1 UnUn and RF chokes built by Neil Rydings, M6NAE. The Club of the Year Region 3 shield was won by SRS and again appeared on the stand.

By 2018, with some more investment in the form of a full size printed table cover displaying the club's logs and contact details, the stand had another facelift. On display was QQRP Labs 40m 5 W CW transceiver with Class-E PA built by Dave Clark, M0IEF. The TXCVR was configured as a WSPR beacon with a GPS module. A selection of radio kits built by Bob, M6TMA, was also on display. In comparison to the new technology, John Shufflebottom, 2E0GCX, kindly loaned a vintage radio from the 1920s.



In 2019, some ten years after re-engaging with NARSA, the stand displayed a KN-Q7A Single Band SSB Transceiver kit, built by Dave, M0IEF, a 4 square antenna controller build by Bernard, G3SHF.

In centre stage was a Portable FM/ Fusion radio station built by Neil, M6NAE, that won the novice construction competition. Heather, M6HNA, again won the award for the best Club website.

When asked by the judges why he built it, Neil replied: "I simply advised them that there are many senior members at our club who live in flats or members who can't put any antennas up. This C4FM digital kit needs no antenna, just 5 watts into a dummy load, and they can work the world. The station also has its own internet hub, with a pre-paid sim card for internet, so with the dv-mega bluestack, a member can play radio at home and not be left out."



In 2020, as plans were being drawn up to celebrate the Stockport Radio Society Centenary, the country was put into lockdown due to the covid-19 pandemic and as a result the NARSA rally was cancelled.

The NARSA rally has been, and will continue to be, an opportunity to share what we do at our club with others, see what other clubs are doing and encourage visitors to join our continually developing hobby. Stockport Radio Society has always been proud of its role as originator and supporter of the event and look forward to many more years as a member of NARSA.

Pete Ridley, M1PTR