

2021 a year in numbers

Despite the restrictions implemented in the UK to respond to the changing landscape of Covid, the RSGB continued to support radio amateurs in the UK. In line with the Society's strategic goal to have an active and thriving radio amateur community, the RSGB provided high-quality information and resources to help people to get started in, or come back to, amateur radio.

In other pages in this month's *RadCom* (Committee Reports pages 62-76) you will be able to read in detail about the work of the committees and other specialist volunteers. Here we bring you an overview of the continued amateur radio success story we have seen over the last year, in which RSGB HQ staff have often led the way. The infographic on page 79 shows the highlights, whilst the fuller story and numbers are shared here.

Online Convention

The continuing restrictions led us to hold our second online Convention. Three tech teams provided two high-quality livestreams of presentations for over eight hours as well as a livestream from the RSGB National Radio Centre so we could bring in content from the Centre between lectures.

The streams had a combined total of over 5,000 views on the day – an increase of 38% on our first online Convention in 2020 – and the number of views had more than doubled just a month later. The streams and individual presentations are still gaining regular viewers. We were also pleased that the event attracted over 800 new viewers who hadn't watched content on our YouTube channel before. You can view the lectures at www.youtube.com/thersgb.

The event drew radio amateurs from countries as diverse as the US, Australia, Netherlands, Norway and Spain and showcased our youngest-ever presenters, who were just 11 years old.

We shared 35 posts and tweets on our social media channels throughout the day's event and reached nearly 41,500 people through those interactions.

RSGB President, Stewart Bryant, G3YSX used the presidential callsign, GB4RS, on the air to chat to radio amateurs from the RSGB National Radio Centre. He made nine QSOs on the QO-100 satellite, which was also the first time the presidential callsign has been used via a satellite. Stewart made 190 QSOs on various bands and was delighted to talk to so many people throughout the day.

Videos

Our YouTube channel has seen steady growth as radio amateurs have appreciated the high-quality content we have provided for them. We gained 2,500 subscribers and saw a 41% increase of views to 181,091. The number of hours people spent watching our videos and livestream presentations also rose significantly by 48% to 33,800 hours.

In response to the new EMF licence regulations, the EMC Chair provided two online presentations and a video guide to the new EMF calculator. Between them, those three resources had 19,791 views and have been welcomed by the amateur radio community.



Krassi and Dan operating GB3RS during the 2021 Convention.

Creating awareness

Whilst our media coverage hasn't reached the heights of the many millions we achieved during the 2020 targeted 'Get on the air to care' campaign to prevent social isolation, we have had good coverage both in local news and in specialist publications. We have also given advice to TV production companies about how to represent amateur radio in several drama series.

Tonight @ 8

Our popular monthly Tonight@8 webinars continued and we were delighted to welcome some overseas presenters in the schedule. We provided 11 free presentations which gained 33,000 views. Facilitated technically by David, G7URP and Tammy, MOTC and organised by a small team of HQ staff and volunteers, radio amateurs from across the world watched the webinars live on our YouTube or BATC channels.

The webinars covered a range of subjects including meteor scatter communications, the microwave bands, the journey from BITX to SBITX, and introductions to both amateur radio direction finding (ARDF) and VNAs/NanoVNA. Some of the topics were chosen specially to inform and encourage the thousands of new and returning licensees who got involved in amateur radio during the challenges of the last two years.

Being social

Our social media platforms have been very active. Our Twitter profile gained 1,000 followers and our tweets gained nearly 2,000,000 impressions through the year. The RSGB Facebook page grew in popularity and the specialist Facebook group for new licensees expanded from 500 to over 800 members. The group is seen as a supportive community for people who have recently gained their amateur radio licence, where no question is too basic.

Exams

The demand for amateur radio exams continued in 2021 with over 3,600 candidates sitting remote invigilation exams. A team of 25 invigilators handled just under 950 exam sessions between them, a

significant achievement that we would like to recognise.

In October the Society responded to the request to resume club-based exams and 43 candidates had taken advantage of that route to gain their licence by the end of the year.

Amateur radio continues to attract people of all ages, and the youngest candidate to take the Foundation exam in 2021 was just eight years old, whilst the oldest was 92. It is also encouraging that 199 Foundation candidates were aged 25 or under.

We were delighted to see people progressing through the licence levels, with almost 50% of those taking the Intermediate exam in 2021 having also passed their Foundation licence exam in the same year.

RadCom

RadCom and its supplements are still at the heart of the RSGB's communications. We send *RadCom* to Members in 117 countries each month. As well as the hundreds of pages of technical content and features, *RadCom* issues also contained over 151 pages of expert columns and 68 pages of review.

RadCom Plus continues to provide high-quality technical content whilst *RadCom Basics* is focused on explaining key amateur radio topics in a straightforward and accessible way. During 2021, *RadCom Basics* provided 29 articles across six editions and introduced five new contributors. It also gained over 600 subscribers from the UK, Europe and US.

GB2RS

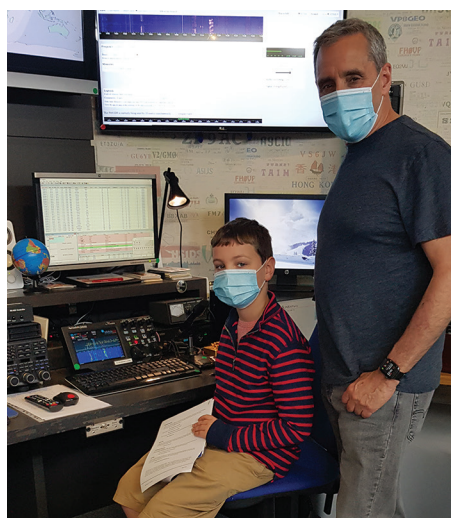
A dedicated team of 111 GB2RS newsreaders shared main and local news via the weekly GB2RS scripts throughout the year. We also welcomed 14 new newsreaders to the team. Thousands of people subscribe to receive the GB2RS script direct to their inbox and this number increased during 2021.

Transatlantic Tests Celebrations

These started a year of activities, celebrating the achievement of transatlantic communications by radio amateurs one hundred years ago.

In the ARRL 160m Contest that ran from 3-5 December, RSGB callsigns G6XX, GD6XX, GI6XX, GM6XX, GU6XX & GW6XX were representing RSGB from six home stations of RSGB Members. In total they had 740 QSOs with 369 unique call signs. They made contact with radio amateurs as far away as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

The 160m QSO Party took place on 12 December, the weekend of the centenary. Between 0200 and 0800, the operating team for GB2ZE were the commemorative station at Ardrossan activated by the Kilmarnock and Loudoun Amateur Radio Club, GM3YTS, GMOGAV, MMOZBH, MMOGPZ and GM4ZUK. They gained 235 QSOs with 31 countries.



Chris and Stewart visiting the NRC over a Bank holiday weekend in 2021.

Books and products

As interest in amateur radio continued into 2021, we sold nearly 7,500 exam training books. Early in the year, many of these were shipped out from the HQ office whilst the warehousing company closed during part of the lockdown. In total, we shipped 285 products including 18 new ones totalling 43,000 items.

RSGB National Radio Centre

The RSGB National Radio Centre at Bletchley Park (NRC) reopened to the public on 28 May 2021 following the initial phases of the pandemic. Initially, the NRC was only able to open for six days each week due to the number of volunteers who were still shielding. By mid-summer, we had enough volunteers back on duty to enable the NRC to revert to full opening on seven days each week.

In total the NRC was open for 182 days before closing again on 17 December, due to the rapidly rising number of new Covid cases.

During seven summer/autumn months, the NRC welcomed over 56,882 visitors and for many, this was their first introduction to amateur radio.

The school summer holiday period was naturally the busiest time, and although on several days there were more than 700 visitors, on one notorious day the NRC staff and volunteers did welcome over 900 visitors!

During this period, although more than 20 of our more senior volunteer team were still shielding, we did recruit an addition 12 volunteers to the team, without whom the NRC wouldn't have been able to open as fully.

Recognising volunteers

The Society understands the importance of its volunteers and we recognise that each

year with a new volunteer badge. In 2021 we thanked 720 volunteers for the time they give to amateur radio by being an RSGB volunteer.

Membership

We are delighted that the innovative support that the Society has provided has been reflected in a significant increase in RSGB Membership. Not only do we now have more Members than at any time in the last 11 years, but the last two years have been two of our best ever years for welcoming new or returning Members.

Behind the scenes

Making all of this happen have been our 16 very busy staff (ten full time and six part time), keeping the continuity of professional services whilst still working from home. They've made and received 42,419 phone calls, sent and received more emails than we can count, and been the friendly voice to thousands of new and existing Members, as well as radio amateurs seeking help and advice, sometimes from across the world.

Our website received 1,489,062 unique visitors and we have been steadily updating and streamlining information, for example to reflect the changing exam syllabus.

Our hundreds of fantastic volunteers have also been working hard to support this wide range of activities. Clubs have run nets and online chats to ensure their local radio amateurs don't feel alone, radio amateurs have met up for socially-distanced activities where possible, and individuals have encouraged newcomers on the air.

Looking ahead

As we move tentatively out of the Covid restrictions of the last two years, we are all finding ways to reconnect in a format that feels comfortable to us. We are seeing the move towards a hybrid way of meeting, both for clubs and large organisations, and the RSGB is planning a hybrid Convention this year.

As we look back and reflect on all that has been achieved over the last year, we are keen to build on this in the coming year. The RSGB remains committed to supporting new and existing licensees whilst sharing stories in the wider media to demonstrate the enjoyment that this wonderful hobby can bring to everyone.

Steve Thomas, M1ACB
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2021 - a year in numbers



Our online Convention had over

5,000

views on the day from across
the world



3,600 people took
remote invigilation exams
and **2,045** passed
their Foundation licence



Our tweets in 2021 had nearly

2,000,000

impressions



Our videos were viewed **181,091** times for a total of **33,800** hours

3 EMF video
guides had total of
19,791
views



RSGB National Radio Centre volunteers gave

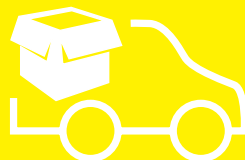
4,368 hrs of their time to welcome

56,882 visitors in the seven months Covid
guidance allowed it to open.

11 'Tonight @ 8' webinars
had over **33,000**
views



We shipped **285** products including



18 new ones totalling
40,000 items

RadCom

- **250** club stories
- **200** technical pages
- **109** feature pages
- **68** review pages

Membership of the RSGB reached
its highest levels for **11** years

