

Newsletter

2005

A number of things have been happening recently so this seems the best medium for updating you.

Council Roof-Top Aerials

Firstly, the aerials on Milton Keynes Council roof. As you are all aware, John Stephenson the acting EPO obtained the agreement of his boss to pay for a mast, power supply, a couple of band pass filters and two aerials – one tri-band collinear for us (6mts, 2mtrs and 70cms) plus a collinear covering their own frequency (169MHz) and 200 metres of low loss co-axial feeder with appropriate connectors. The quid pro quo is that we had to do the installation.

We had one stroke of luck in that there was a vacant set of mast brackets on the council roof, crying out to be occupied! Nevertheless there was still a fair amount of work to be done. As a man of leisure(ish) Don set about doing as much work as he could in advance of getting a team together to do the really tricky bit of routing the two, pretty rigid, feeders back to the EPOs office.

The Current Situation

The picture shows our mast and aerial erected with the EPO's aerial teed-off to the left. The feeders have been tested for continuity as Don had never terminated this type of feeder before and was disinclined to pay £70 for the special tool! Instead everything was measured with a micrometer and standard tools used – i.e. a mole wrench and spanner, the connectors being of the non-solderable type. The feeders are coiled up just out of site to the right of the picture. The 'distant' ends are obviously not yet

Milton Keynes Raynet

terminated as any excess will need to be cut off first. Well; sawn off to be more precise – preferably after we have identified which is which! All connectors are N-type. The EPO's office end will be terminated in N-type sockets with drop-leads down into the EPO's office. We have a couple of these about 2.5mtrs long that were made up by Dave so we know they will be sound. A new EPO, Michael Boscotte has come on board and we are hoping to have contact with him in the late Autumn.



The Co-axial Feeder

Next Steps

John is going to let Don have a list of dates when their Building Services staff are working on a weekend and then roll this on until we can get a team together to finish the work.

A minimum team of four are necessary but six would be better. The feeder has to be carefully routed into, and around, the plant room and then through the false ceiling. The initial stage requires care in not kinking

the feeder as it has to be fed through two relatively small apertures. Once we are in the false ceiling it will be fiddly work but not too difficult to avoid kinking.

A BNC termination is required for the EPO's radio so an N-type to BNC adapter was included in the equipment purchase. We will not need any other adaptors if we use our new rig (see overleaf) unless we have to use the band-pass filters. Using these will be rather messy as it will require back-to-back

triplexing with the filters in between the two triplexers incurring losses we would rather avoid.

New Rig

One thing that the aerial installation will give us is the capability to work with our adjacent counties in the event of a cross-county or area-e emergency.

To this end the committee agreed the purchase of a Yeasu FT-8900R, which is a quad band radio (for 10, 6 & 2 mtrs plus 70cms). Ten metres is of no interest but the unique thing about this rig that it has a cross-band talk-through facility (any band to any band) without the need for any modification.



The Yeasu FT-8900R

How Snazzy is This

At our last committee meeting Ted suggested that we purchase a trailer in which to keep all our 'field' equipment. We established that at least three of us have vehicles equipped with tow bars (Ted, Paul and Don) and at least two of us can store the unit. We would like to know if anyone else in the Group has a tow bar fitted?

We determined acceptable dimensions and after some research both on the Internet and physical viewing came up with this model which was available locally at a competitive cost. Its internal dimensions are about 2mtrs x 1mtr. A very useful feature is that the top is effectively a platform with a 75mm (3¾ ins) surround with anchor points so if we acquire a reasonably substantial mast, which does not fit inside the trailer it could easily be secured to the top.



Although not apparent from the pictures, there is a spare wheel stowed underneath. It is rather important that having a spare wheel we are able to use it so we have purchased a 17mm long reach socket and together with a socket wrench this will be permanently stored inside the trailer. We have also purchased some accessories for security when we are 'in the field' comprising a wheel clamp, tow ball lock and chain and lock.



The sign writing, which serves the dual purposes of flying the flag and making the trailer a little less attractive to the casual thief was done free of charge by Don's next door neighbour!

The trailer can take a load of 550kg (1200lbs) giving it a gross weight of 750kg.

Barbeque

Towards the end of the July we had a barbeque at Don's place. The weather was fine and reasonably warm. Hayley and Jim were the only members who could not make it.

Events

We received £100 from the Scouts for doing the Scout night hike. Hopefully this will be a recurring event but it is likely to be held in April next year which will suit us much better.

Barnardos cycle ride (normally held in September) did not take place this year (2005). We are hoping it will be reinstated in 2006.

We are delighted that the 24-hour Scout Endurance Hike will take place again in 2006. This is planned for 18/19th June.