



RAY~Link

Issue Seventeen
October 1994

The Regular Newsletter of The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network

RAY~Link is published for the benefit of all members of the Network. It is posted to all controllers who are requested to assist in ensuring a wide membership circulation.

In This Issue:

- **Sunderland Scouts** - helicopters help in the Lakes.
- **Chairman's Jottings** - the latest news from Geoff 'STG'.
- **Ex. Crossnet** - a large forthcoming CEPO exercise.
- **Far North** - almost out of sight, but not out of mind.
- **Can you help?** Professional skills sought.
- **Zone 5** - Ian Jackson stands down after 7 years as ZC.
- **National Training** - scheme launches in Oct.
- **Fife Chief Executive** - written thanks to Central Fife.
- **National Training** - packages will be available in Oct.
- **Bike Ride** - Zone 6 successfully handles 650 cyclists.

Group News:

Sunderland Scouts Mountain Advisers' Challenge

by Frank McLoughlin, G1GAD

The Scouts DMA challenge hike takes place annually in the Lake district early in July and planning begins about a year ahead. Once the area has been chosen, RAYNET works in close collaboration with Sunderland Venture Scouts at all stages. Teams of venture scouts are invited to plan a two day route in the chosen area. They may choose from a number of start points and arrive at one of the designated camp sites on Saturday evening. On Sunday they must arrive at the base in time for the finish around mid day. The area is divided into six sectors and a team may only pass from one to another via a radio controlled check point.

The 1994 event provided some exacting requirements. The base for the whole event was in Langdale, naturally enough on the floor of the valley. Radio path evaluation using the computer suggested that the best location for the talk through site would be the summit of Bow Fell. This is not particularly accessible nor is it hospitable for operators marooned there for the duration of the event. GOSVK from Cumbria RAYNET volunteered to visit the summit in advance of our operation to report on the site and best access to it. However, it seemed difficult by any standards to arrange for personnel and equipment to be on site on Friday evening, and so a request was made to RAF Boulmer to see if they could arrange an airlift for the equipment. They agreed to run a training sortie on the Friday, and to airlift our equipment in a Sea King helicopter which they did most efficiently. GOSVK again came to our assistance and waited on the summit of Bowfell to receive the consignment. However, when the helicopter arrived, it was unable to land on the summit but hovered a short distance away, and then flew in so that one wheel touched the ground. From this situation the RAF unloaded tents, water, radios, masts, aerials, batteries and a generator, and then instructed John to lie on top of the kit to stop it being blown away as they flew off!

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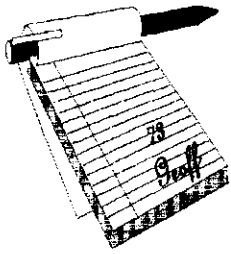
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Chairman's Jottings

Good heavens, where has the last two years gone?

I have suddenly realised that this is perhaps the last Chairman's column which I shall write, since my two year term of office is complete. A number of our Zonal Coordinators also retire at the same time, and grateful thanks go to them for all their extremely hard work and support.

The last two years has been a hectic period, seeing the establishment of your Network, progress towards the achievement of the goals we set ourselves in early 1993, and much else besides. Progress towards better understanding with Groups not affiliated to the Network has been good, with a lot of the original suspicion and mistrust on both sides having been worn away by your good work and cooperation in the field, and by a deliberate policy of cooperation and support from your management team.

I wish that I could report that our working relationships with the RSGB have also been smooth. I will reporting to members at the AGM details of some of the difficulties being experienced at this time, but we are finding it very difficult to work successfully with the ECO, and refusal to accept RAYNET copy for the new call-book by the President, and unfriendly letters from their solicitors certainly don't make our aim of reconciliation any easier to achieve.

I wrote in a previous edition of *RAY-Link* bemoaning the fact that we often seem to be subjected to bouts of political activity in Amateur Radio. We have all seen the interminable traffic generated on Packet about all sorts of matters which encourage us to get hot under the collar about a wide range of subjects, often either old-hat, or hardly worth the bother!

Often, there seem to be a number of topics raised which have been the subject of much intense debate and investigation in the past, and the last couple of months seem to have been no exception. Questions have been asked about the standardisation of power connectors. More senior members may remember that rigorous investigations were carried out into this subject by Mike, GM0ETC, under the team leadership of John G6BBW, as a result of which the 'Tee' shaped polarised connector for 12v based on the amphenol type was recommended to us all. This was extensively tested for reliability and repeated use, and seemed to prove the most acceptable of those on offer. It has therefore been the recommended standard within RAYNET for several years, and remains so. As new styles of connectors become available then the situation

will be kept under review, but in the meantime, contact Membership Supplies for details of pricing and availability. Incidentally, there doesn't seem to be much doubt about the CAIRO system as developed by Dr. Peter Best for standard interfacing between operators and equipment. It continues to be a comprehensive and flexible system which has stood us in good stead.

Seen the light?

The question of lights on vehicles and uniforms is course a vexed conversation piece which never seems to go away. Let me only remind you that the question of showing beacons on moving vehicles on the highway is the subject of clear regulations which the police usually enforce fairly. There is no blanket permission for RAYNET vehicles to operate under beacons, since they are not identified by regulation as being vehicles permitted to do so. There may well be understanding in some Constabulary areas which permit this, and I know that on a certain Offshore island, the Controller is even permitted to show BLUE lights when called out for an emergency. This is definitely the exception. Don't forget that what is acceptable in your County may result in an uncomfortable interview should you stray over the County line or down the Motorway. As for the impersonation of a Police Officer!!! I hope that any Group would soon talk seriously to any of their members who went that far.

The idea of a tidy and 'uniform' appearance when working for a user service or when appearing in public is only a matter of common sense. Whether this then develops into a Uniform to assist recognition is a matter for individual Groups, and the standard of blue shirt and pullover worn with grey trousers is one which has long been promoted by your Committee. This is simply about not believing that tee shirts and jeans promote a professional image, and particularly not when we are working alongside St. John, St. Andrew or Red Cross in public view. However this is a matter for groups to decide for themselves. Why not let us know what you think? Interestingly enough, most members attending the AGM last year attended in 'uniform' dress. Will you this year?

The Annual "Bun-fight"

Our Annual General Meeting will be taking place this year in the centre of Coventry where we will the guest of Groups in the West Midlands. Elsewhere in this mailing, members will find their invitation to attend, and a form of proxy for those members who won't be able to join the

meeting. Coventry is an interesting city with an excellent shopping centre for your family to visit. Don't miss the cathedral either, rising alongside the ruins of the war torn older one, and full of challenging architectural and artistic interest. The City is very conveniently situated to the Motorway Network having good access from the M1, M5, M6, M40, M42 and M45. Parking is convenient to the meeting place, although not as inexpensive as we would have liked.

The meeting will be held on Saturday 29th October, and we believe that we have avoided the clash with the popular Leicester Show weekend this year. If you can't come to Coventry, then please don't forget to let us have your proxy vote in good time. There will obviously need to be some formal business to be done, but we will be looking forward to hearing about the work of the organisation, and sharing with you a draft of our new manual publication, and encouraging your comments and suggestions.

Sad Losses

You will have read in the stop press of the last edition of *RAY-Link* of the sad loss of Trevor Emery, and I am sure that we will all miss his hard work, especially on the *RAY-Link* production team, and as our minutes secretary. A full appreciation of his work will be appearing in the next edition. I was also saddened to hear of the death of George Taylor G3GWT in June. George was one of the original RAYNET team and wrote to the Yorkshire Post following the Lockerbie disaster in 1989. He wrote about the formation of the network in 1953, saying that 'A group of amateurs in the Hull and Lincolnshire area realised that Humber Radio was not operating because of flooding and total immersion of the power supplies. Two of our Group were Marconi trained Merchant Navy operators, so we broke the terms of our amateur licences, and went onto the shipping frequencies, going to the assistance of those ships which needed help to enter and berth in the Humber ports'. 'We were glad to be of assistance'.

Events

What a busy summer! Thanks to all who have sent details in of the events they have been involved with this year so far. Details of some of the more spectacular ones have appeared on the 80m news net (Sundays 08:30 3.663MHz), and they have included the operations in support of 'Le Tour' along the south east coast, and the helicopter lifting of RAYNET equipment onto a hill-top in a Tyne and Wear event. No less important was the support given to the

Alexandra Hospital in Redditch during the replacement of their internal telephone switchboard. As usual. Groups faced with major tasks have known that they are able to call on the support of other members when needed.

The regular support and service given by RAYNET members throughout the land continues to be a remarkable feature of amateur radio, and is indeed the best justification for the continuation of your hobby.

Keep up the good work, and enjoy it!

73 de Geoff, G3SFG

RAY-Link for All

RAY-Link is produced on behalf of the Management Committee of the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network. About six issues are produced each year, each one usually being made up of six or eight pages. This edition has been especially produced to accompany the notice of the Network's AGM which will be held in Coventry on Saturday 29th. October, and therefore has been mailed to all registered members of the Network, and not only to Controllers, which is the usual method of distribution. Controllers are normally asked to ensure that all members are given the opportunity to see each edition of *RAY-Link*.

It is however, now possible to get your own copy direct from the printers. Just send a supply of A4 or A5 envelopes, stamped at 19p, to the Company Secretary at Hunters Moon, Newton-le-Willows, BEDALE, North Yorks., DL8 1SX and your own copy will be sent directly to you when the usual copies are dispatched to the controllers.

Contributions are always welcome, and should be sent to Ron Cowan, GM4SRL, 85 Eastwoodmains Road, Clarkston, GLASGOW, G76 7HG. Those on disk, stating the format used, are especially welcome!!

Continued from page 1

The area included 55 peaks, 8 'gates' (from one sector to another), 4 start points and 5 campsites. We received assistance from Cumbria, Leicester, Calederdale, and Derby and invited GOMAM, the RSGB ECO as a guest.

During the event, one of our scout checkers came across an accident. A Scout leader (who was not part of our event) had fallen, seriously injuring his leg and had sent two of his team to summon help. Meanwhile our checker provided highly competent first aid, and then ran to the nearest RAYNET check point. There was also a mobile phone deployed at this point, and it was used to contact the mountain rescue team. A RAYNET operator was deployed to the accident site and was able to inform the MR team of the patient's condition, exact location, and to confirm that there was only one incident to deal with. The Sea King was again deployed and the casualty evacuated. The remainder of the scouts who were with the casualty were shepherded off the mountain by members of our event.

On Saturday evening, one team, following a very ill defined path was late descending the hill, but there was also a checker and a RAYNET operator on the same part of the hill. Resources were deployed to the area so that if assistance was required the response time could be minimised. At this time, we received a call from Furness RAYNET with an offer of assistance which was not required, but never-the-less very much appreciated. When the team arrived at the road, there was a Land Rover waiting for them, and the RAYNET operator and the scout checker were also picked up at the same time.

We did experience some difficulty with the talk-through device. One of the WX1 aerials had suffered some handling damage, and this resulted in a high VSWR on the 2m receive side. However, with a bit of effort from all concerned it was made to work. ○

County News:	Exercise Crossnet By Chris Hampson, G8RXA, CC, Dorset
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Planning is well advanced for a multi-county exercise on Sunday 4th. December 1994. Counties taking part will be Avon, Dorset, Gloucester, Hampshire, Oxford, Somerset and Wiltshire. The exercise is being led by the Wiltshire CEPO and RAYNET Controller. It has the full support of the other CEPOs and RAYNET (Network, RSGB, and independent) Groups in the named Counties. Operation will be from all the installed county and district centres and will test both internal County links plus those between Counties using 2 m and 70 cms.

The scenario is that of severe weather conditions resulting in flooding and structural damage over the area. Many rivers have burst their banks and trees are down, causing travel problems. The emergency services are fully stretched and the armed forces are facing growing problems with some remote communities cut off, farmers unable to reach stock with feed, shortage of food and medical supplies and requests for boats and helicopters..... ○

Group News:

Far North RAYNET Gp

By Dave, GM1AHC

Reproduced from Scotland (North) Zonews

Hello there! Roger (GM0GKR) has asked me to write a small piece on the Far North RAYNET Group. To find us you keep travelling north until you fall off the end of the UK mainland, *kidding I'm not* to the town of Thurso.

Who am I? My name is Dave, and I'm controller of group 12/HL/169 called Far North RAYNET Group which has seventeen members. The professions of members include housewives, a minister and a Deep Sea Master who happens to be in the middle of the Pacific Ocean just now. We are quite a diverse bunch!

The area we are responsible for is from the Pentland Firth in the north, Golspie in the south. Isle of Lewis in the West and north again to Cape Wrath. Well this is what I have been told! As the saying goes 'Nothing but the hills and heather' - but the hills are very very big and give lots of problems for radio coverage.

Our nearest RAYNET groups are Orkney 'a 2.5 hour trip by P&O Ferry' to the north, and Inverness 'a 2.5 hour trip by road to the south'. If ever the big one comes it will be "HELP!" to you folks in the Deep South! And I would suggest that you bring *everything*, including the kitchen sink!

Most of our callouts are by the Red Cross to give them cover for the various hill climbs, marathon. etc. Our big user is the Highland Region EPO who calls us out to give comms cover when they have their nuclear exercises 'Downreay' etc..

I hope that has given you an insight to FNRG, if you are ever up this way when we have an exercise you will be most welcome. It's not been unknown for me to press gang visitors, just ask Les, GM0TKB, and Terry, G4NHL!

When in this area, please use the OC repeater (145.650 MHz) to get a contact as S20 is of no use due to the topography. The repeater has no timeout but please leave a break 'there are 2 pips 5 seconds apart' between overs.

Well, that's it from FNRG. I can be contacted QTHR, or by packet at GB7INV#76.GBR.EU.

All the best from Dave, GM1AHC, (a happy chap,) well, most of the time, and the gang at FNRG. ○

Be part of a
Co-ordinated team

Be part of
- The Network

National:**Can You Help?**

By Ron, GM4SRL

Amongst all our members, there must be a host of potential help providers for the Network. Even in individual groups, it is not always known what other members do for a living, or how they could help in a professional way.

If you think that your professional skills could be used by the Network, and would be willing to help, or at least listen to a plea for help, could you please drop a brief note to the Company Secretary at Hunter's Moon, Newton-le Willows, BEDALE, North Yorks., DL8 1SX or give me a ring on (0141) 620 1000 any evening.

Your offer will be kept confidential, and will not be released to groups, Counties, etc., without your express permission. Please contact us, there is a lot to do, and with your help, we might do it quicker and a lot easier! ○

Zone News:**Thoughts of a Shy and Retiring ZC (Well, retiring anyway!)**

by Ian Jackson, G8RWH

My initial two year term of office as Zonal Coordinator expires at the end of this year. Having previously served six years as Zone Rep., I now think it is time for someone else to carry the torch for London.

Zone 5 is probably the strangest of the zones, comprising just one county and only five groups. It has the lowest ratio of RAYNET members to amateurs, or to put it another way, the highest concentration of apathetic amateurs in the country! Never-the-less, Greater London RAYNET has a dedicated and active membership of around eighty, which is just as well as the London diary is always quite full.

A mixture of all the favourite events are covered in London, walks, cycle rides and, of course, the London Marathon where we support the wheelchair competitors. Have you seen us on the television coverage? We're always there to be seen!

During my time in office, London groups began to work closely together, and now do so regularly. London has developed its own identity with its diamond logo incorporating Tower Bridge. Controllers decided that London should not become a "uniformed" organisation, but to further the idea of unity, smart pullovers and sport shirts with the London logo are available to members.

So what of the future? Well that will be partly up to my successor, but as I intend to remain as controller of my local group for as long as they want me, I won't be disappearing altogether!

So for now, Best Wishes, from the nearly ex ZC5! ○

Team News:**National Training**

By Cathy Clark, G1GQJ

The national Training Scheme will be published in time for the AGM this month. The final draft has now been proof read, and preparations are underway for various training packages to support the scheme. The Scheme is in A4 loose-leaf format in a presentation binder, so that updates can readily be inserted. The completed document will cost £10.00, and a form will be enclosed to allow the purchaser to register for free updates.

The Easingwold weekend was heavily over-subscribed, and it was unfortunate that not everyone who applied will be able to get on this time round. However, further courses are planned, and those who have registered an interest will be offered places first. ○

Region News:**Regional Thanks for Central Fife RAYNET Group**

Dr. John Markland, Chief Executive of Fife Regional Council has written to Group Controller, Jim Burke, GM4TNP, thanking the group for all its sterling efforts helping the Emergencies Planning Unit to install an Emergency Radio Network throughout the region. The system will be used by RAYNET in emergency situations within Fife. In his letter, Dr. Markland praised the technical capabilities of the Group, and congratulated the members for providing unstinting voluntary service to the community. ○

Zone News:**Bike Success for ZONE 6**

By Cathy Clark, G1GQJ

Members from Bucks and Oxfordshire were involved in the British Heart Foundation's Oxon-Bucks Bike Ride on September 18th. Three RAYNET groups were involved, Mid Thames, Aylesbury and Oxford, working for the Red Cross. Over 650 cyclists were involved, and the two routes, one 25 miles and the other 50 miles, covered some of the most scenic parts of the two counties. Control was based at Otmoor Park, near the Beckley mast, with a talk-through unit on Muswell Hill. Cover provided by RAYNET also included impromptu cycle repair, and roving sweep vehicles to search out cyclists unable to tear themselves away from the many watering holes on route.

It was the first BHF cycle ride in the area, and they hope to repeat its success next year. ○



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