



*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.*

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### *Emergency:*

#### **COVENTRY AIR CRASH** West Midlands Groups

W.L. Mahoney, G32TM County Controller West Midlands

**A**t 09:55 hrs. on Wednesday 21st. December 1994 a cargo version of the Boeing 737 crashed at Coventry. The event was well covered in the press and on television. The City's Emergency Planning Officer, (EPO) was alerted, but *on* arrival at the emergency centre in Coventry found that there was a power cut. Although they did not know it at the time, the aircraft had destroyed a pylon which brought about the power cut to about 35,000 people in the southern half of Coventry. The EPO and Chief Executive returned to the Council House from where control was exercised.

At approximately 10:40 hrs. Coventry RAYNET was called out. Madeley Smith, ZC9 set up RAYNET control at his main station. This was, as it turned out, a wise decision because the power cut also affected the Parkside area, from where the Coventry group normally operate. He used their paging system to call out the members but the result was a little disappointing as from the

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twenty called, only seven responded. He continued as controller for the rest of the day.

Solihull and Warwickshire County Groups were placed on standby. One of the Warwickshire group who was called to attend the crash site readily did so. Eventually a total of five RAYNET members were deployed at the crash site and two more at the City Centre. Those who had to pass through police road blocks said that they were waved through immediately police officers recognised "RAYNET" displayed on signs, tabards and membership cards. Local amateurs co-operated when asked to free GB3CV for emergency traffic by vacating the repeater. Some even volunteered to help.

At one time during the day, Madeley was experiencing difficulty having to operate both telephone and radio simultaneously. I was asked to go across from my office to assist him but it would have taken at least an hour to get there by the quickest means, so help was sought within the Coventry area. The team was eventually stood down at about 15:40 hrs.

Whilst there was little emergency traffic to handle, it was pleasing to note how many of the various Emergency Services' personnel thanked RAYNET members personally at the crash site. Coventry was one area in the county where a meeting between the local RAYNET group and its emergency services had been held earlier in the year, and it shows how much local liaison pays off.

I assume that the proximity to the major conurbation meant that there were many different sources of help and personnel available. Had this been a country location, I expect that RAYNET would have been required to attend for longer. It is sad that the accident resulted in fatalities, but I am grateful to those members of all groups who turned out and responded to the stand-by calls and particularly to Madeley for handling the whole situation and keeping me informed.

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## Group News: STAFFORDSHIRE EXERCISE "FOURTH STEP"

Martin Harrison, G3USF, Staffordshire CC.

**A** packed incoming airliner collides in mid-air with a helicopter, crash landing on rough ground; the helicopter comes down onto cars on a busy road. Fires break out, passengers are trapped in the aircraft's fuselage. Two die, many are injured, some seriously, requiring evacuation by air ambulance and a fleet of regular ambulances. More survive uninjured but are shocked and must also be evacuated and cared for. Crowds swarm to the scene and must be controlled. Happily this was just an exercise scenario, but one that could so easily happen at anytime. Staffordshire's Exercise Fourth Step, on 25 September, involved the entire range of professional emergency services, the voluntary ambulance services, the RAF, the local authority, the WRVS, the Casualty Union - and RAYNET. It was the biggest and most realistic exercise Staffordshire RAYNET has had to handle to date.

Its purpose was to test operational skills rather than response times so we had ample warning of the date and were consulted at the planning stage. In fact, there was only so much advance planning we could do, since we had no access to the exercise area before the day; probably the most useful was that we could take full stock of the equipment we could muster. Inevitably, on the day, much else turned out differently from what we had been expecting and we had to be prepared to change gear and improvise, as we would in a real incident.

At the request of the CEPO we provided 36 operators for two separate nets. One, on 70cm, linked everyone responsible for overseeing the exercise, operating from the county police caravan, adjacent to their comms and joining no fewer than nine different agencies. Most had their own comms but: RAYNET provided a dedicated common frequency so that all could keep in touch with each other. The second, on 2m, was for the 'players', linking operational controllers with the Rendezvous Point, BRCS and SJAB ambulances, the trauma centre, the

rest centre to which the uninjured were evacuated and Stafford District General Hospital A&E department.

The exercise could scarcely have been more realistic. Angry flames shot up, smoke drifted across the site, genuine aircraft and car wreckage was used, with some casualties actually welded inside for subsequent rescue convincingly simulating gruesome and distressing injuries, with fire hoses playing and helicopters creating a crescendo of noise. Radio traffic was hectic and realistic (though, of course, carrying the 'exercise' tag to avoid alarming casual eavesdroppers). A hundred or so people were rescued and evacuated to the appropriate location before the exercise was brought to a premature conclusion when several make-believe casualties became real ones with hypothermia - even though it was a dry day with normal seasonal temperatures.

So what did we learn? Perhaps the most valuable thing was simply the experience gained from working so closely with the other agencies, particularly the police. We had been a little uncertain about our reception, but they could not have been more positive. They rightly pushed us when we started slowly but their final comments were favourable, particularly over our handling of the potentially tricky two-net operation. This biggest test of Staffordshire's now standard multi-frequency response to major events (a third, 'logistics' channel was not needed) generally went well. However, we found that although the two nets were supposed to be entirely independently it was essential that all Control points had enough operators to run both nets simultaneously. We also learned that we have to hit the ground faster on reaching an incident. We found how difficult it is to operate anywhere near a hovering helicopter - earpieces an absolute must! We confirmed our view that Control must be staffed as generously as possible to avoid overload and mistakes. We were relieved that despite all the RF flying around, we neither experienced nor caused interference - we had long been apprehensive about this. Fourth Step was 'only' an exercise, but it was so

realistic that we gained confidence in our basic training and the ability of our different groups to mesh well - in short, our capacity to respond creditably if a major incident does occur here.

## Past Chairman's Jottings.

One of my pet hates is the amateur who keeps coming back for a final final. However your editor insists so here goes...

### FINAL FINAL

First and most important, I want to wish all RAYNET Members wherever they are throughout the UK a very happy Christmas. Even if you see this copy of RAY-Link long after the festive season is over, no matter. I do hope that you will have (or did have) a most enjoyable break with your family or friends, and that you are refreshed and renewed ready to face whatever the new year has for us.

The New Year will certainly bring new challenges for all RAYNET members. As the communications capabilities of our users continues to develop, no doubt the new team will need to consider in what ways the very special skills which RAYNET members have can best be deployed in the service of the Community.

One thing is for sure, I know that members and groups around the country will continue to serve, and will carry on getting a great deal of enjoyment working together as a team, whether in fun or in need.

As for me, I shall be looking forward to settling back and enjoying concentrating on just being a member of the local team! (Although I suspect that the fiendish Controller has something saved up for me!)

Now where did I put my slippers.....?

73 de Geoff G3STG

## From the Chairman.

**Ron Cowan, GM4SRL**

I am writing this in our caravan at Aviemore, having just finished a long "Tour of Duty" over the past couple of weeks following the extensive flooding in the Kilmarnock, Paisley and Kirkintilloch areas of Strathclyde. What was to have been an easy run up to Christmas, turned out to be a series of long hours in the Emergency Communications Centre at work, (Strathclyde Emergencies Planning) where our team of EPOs provided a co-ordinating role for the emergency. The centre was manned 24 hrs. per day, with three overlapping shifts keeping everyone busy, and away from the last minute Christmas shopping! The centre was even manned during the four days of Christmas, (24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th.) although with a much reduced staff. Communications were good throughout the emergency, and RAYNET were not required, although the East Renfrewshire Group was put on standby for a short time when it was thought that local mobile comms. might be needed in the Paisley area. BT staff were marvellous throughout the whole emergency and were able to provide almost all that was requested of them without any delay at all. Mobile telephones were obviously used a lot, and I did not receive any reports of congestion on either Cellnet or Vodafone.

Aviemore is quiet, with about three inches of snow. Pity that there is not a lot more as I was looking forward to being snowed in for a few days! The high winds have been playing havoc with the ski-lifts, and skiing is restricted to the lower slopes. Locals and visitors are stunned by the fire at the Four Seasons Hotel which claimed the lives of two holiday makers in the early hours of New Year's Day. The death toll would have been more had it not been for the skills of the emergency services who battled against blizzards to reach, and extinguish, the blaze, as well as helping many people to safety.

Two of my family got Mercury Minicall numeric pagers for Christmas, and two local RAYNET controllers have played Santa to themselves and have purchased their own. Dave Seabrook, ZC4 is exploring the possibility of a bulk purchase of these pagers for RAYNET use. Once purchased, there are *no* ongoing rental costs, and they are funded solely by the caller who is charged about 20p a time, national coverage, subject to the usual paging area restrictions, is provided. Even if used several times a month, these pagers would work out much cheaper than those taken on a rental basis. On dialling the number a recorded voice invites the caller to leave a number to contact. This can be expanded by following the number with a star and then a series of numbers, i.e. \*1111, "not at all urgent", \*4444 "as soon as convenient", \*7777 "urgent", or \*9999 "Really Urgent, phone now, even if it means leaving the motorway." You can, of course, invent your own codes, but it would be useful if RAYNET members who purchase these pagers could adopt a uniform code from the start. The reason for the \* is to input a space, and the figure is repeated four times to ensure that it does not look like a continuation of the number. BT have a similar system, although in their case, the pager is combined with a rather large watch which requires special batteries at almost £1.00 a time. If Dave's discussions are fruitful, RAYNET supplies would be the obvious point of sale.

The Committee of Management, now with several new members, will be meeting in Beaconsfield in January, with a "handover" session in the morning, followed by a "Where are we now, and where are we going" session in the afternoon. One of the subjects which will definitely be discussed is Dave Whiteman's new database system, which will be receiving a "hand's on, lets get the bugs out" session at the end of the month. Dave has worked tremendously hard on the system,

which has taken into account all the points raised in his pre-work survey. Dave stresses that there is still a lot of work to be done, but this "hands on" session means he is making definite progress!

There are several specialist RAYNET jobs which would benefit from help from people with specialist knowledge. In the last issue of RAY-Link I asked if there were any members who would be willing to supply details of their specialist skills, so that the Company could call on them when necessary. The result was disappointing, and I repeat my request for those who might be able to help to give me a phone on 0141 -620 1000. Currently the company is looking for a Secretary to replace Brian Tindill who is having to retire on health grounds, and for a team to take over from Barbara Slater who wants to retire from RAYNET supplies. This is not to say that those who are specialist in other fields should not telephone too, as it would be nice to have a list of "advisors" in all areas of our work.

RAYNET has been invited to attend a one day Scottish Office seminar in March for voluntary organisations which is to be held in Perth, and the "home" Zonal co-ordinator, Iain Strachan, GM4FLP, will give a presentation on our behalf.



<i>Group News:</i>	<b>OPERATION FROSTBITE</b> Cheshire RAYNET - D.A. Bevan G4XUV
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FROSTBITE is one of the major events in the Cheshire RAYNET calendar. It takes place on what is statistically one of the coldest weekends of the year. It is, for the competitors, a gruelling test of stamina. For RAYNET operators it can also be a test of stamina. Behind the scenes it is a test of organisation!

The main event organisers are the Cheshire Police. The event, first run in 1990, was conceived to provide a physical challenge and to raise funds for charity by sponsorship. The challenge is to race along the South Cheshire Way and Sandstone Trail over a weekend, sleeping on the Saturday night in a school. The distance covered by the competitors is approx. 27 miles per day. The terrain varies from muddy fields to the steep hills around Beeston and Frodsham. Not only does this provide a challenge for the contestants, it provides a communications challenge as well. Cheshire RAYNET has provided emergency communications for this event since its inauguration. This ensures that Police frequencies are fully available for normal Police duties. In addition to providing RAYNET operators at each checkpoint, some 35 each day, operators are required to act as "leeches" to the

Medical Team, the event organiser and each of the supplies and transport vehicles.

The RAYNET Control station is the nerve centre of the operation. It has been found essential to "tie down" the Event Organiser to a desk alongside the RAYNET Event Controller. On earlier FROSTBITE Events, before this was regarded as essential, we experienced some difficulty in getting quick operational decisions, in spite of the extensive use of "leeches". Another valuable lesson learnt concerns the role of the RAYNET Controller. He must stand back from Net Control and all Field Operations so that he can liaise directly with the Event Organiser and think through complex logistical problems before initiating action.

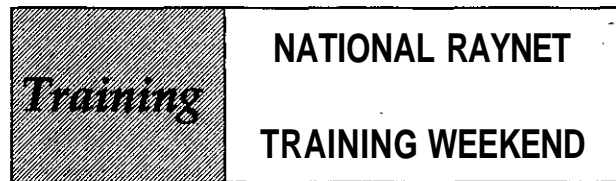
One of the other problems in the early days was "Information Overload". We tried to collect real time data on competitor status, which clogged up the network. It also caused intense frustration to the outstation operators queuing to send their data. Outstations now do their own logging of competitors and are prepared for status requests from Control if they are required. Reports are sent in only if competitors appear to be excessively delayed. This has reduced

congestion on the network and has increased the responsibility on outstations to maintain a *good* log of competitors.

This event appears to be a good opportunity for the effective use of Packet Radio. We carried out a very successful trial in 1994, using a shared Voice/Packet Radio channel on a separate frequency from the main Control Net. One station set up a fixed digipeater station *so* that the mobile Packet Stations could rely on a good path back to Control. A Packet Station was set up next to the main Control Station and used to provide printout for the RAYNET and Event Organiser. Next year, we anticipate a doubling of the number of competitors to about 500. We anticipate that Packet will be essential to process the large amount of data into a form that can be readily assimilated by the Organisers.

Finally we have found it essential to expect ~ and plan for - the unexpected. The control station is set up to operate from float charged batteries. This ensures freedom from mains supply problems. This was fine till we experienced a complete mains supply failure. Our Event Organisers were complaining about the unreliability of our Electrical Supply Company, and were amazed when we started up our generator. The Control Station had survived uninterrupted while the catering station in the local village hall were struggling with candles. FROSTBITE enables RAYNET to demonstrate their capability to the User Services as well as establishing many links at different levels in both organisations. For Cheshire RAYNET it means we need to call on about 50 members who put in a total of 700 man-hours over the four days needed to set up, operate and then dismantle the Control Station. The members cover approximately 2500 miles in preparing for and covering the event. The Police have said *on* several occasions that they could not stage FROSTBITE without the assistance of RAYNET. We were very pleased to receive a donation to National RAYNET from the Police in recognition of our assistance. This was in addition to a donation to Cheshire RAYNET.

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Julian Goodhead. G7RSH. East Cheshire RAYNET Group.

Firstly may I say that, for being given the privilege and opportunity to attend the first National Training Course, my thanks must *go* to my Group Controller Bruce Williams G1ORS & County Controller / ZC10 David G.C.Hicks G6IFA, and commiserations to Chris Scrivens G3TPY due to ill health he missed a most valuable and enjoyable weekend which was summed up by ZC12S Ron Cowan GM4SRL most aptly when (tongue in cheek) he called it "Cockup Weekend", but we all had learned so much from our mistakes and could now plan for a better future.

The forward plan is for us all to have an opportunity to train and improve our own procedures and skills but in a way that is standardised through out the U.K. Hence the launch of The National RAYNET Training Scheme. The scheme is voluntary and members will only *get* out ~ what they put in I but boy oh boy its great fun. The scheme is open to all members from S.W.L. to the National Chair. *So* look out for the scheme in your group.

During the weekend I was most impressed by the sterling efforts and enthusiasm of the National Training Team, who have been working on this project for approx. 2 years. I listened to lectures, took part in table top exercises, played RAYNET games and discussed various problems with all the other members on the course. I enjoyed the course with constant anticipation of "What will they think of next"!! That was the BIG question. The team had outlined in the Itinerary that the final exercise would be before breakfast on Sunday with a debrief at 09.00 hrs prompt, *so* it seemed an early start lay ahead for us all.

I awoke around 05.00 hrs to the sound of movements in the corridors at the accommodation block. The adrenaline began to

flow or something did anyway. Then came the knock on the door, this was it, the chance to put all we had learned into practice, I was to report to the main building ASAP, to contact RAYNET control 145.200 MHz on leaving the accommodation block. An aircraft had crashed, the pilot ejected but needed to be found quickly. Within a short while, waterproofs on, 2m handheld, torch, map and grab bag at the ready I was despatched with Team 1, a search and rescue to find the missing pilot Flt Lt Ronald McDonald (alias ZC12S Ron Cowan GM4SRL). Team 1 were accompanied by Wing Cmdr. Biggies (alias ZC10 David G.C.Hicks G6IFA). Yes things went wrong - we found Ron Cowan and couldn't lose David Hicks in the woods! Seriously there were problems and parts of the exercise did go wrong as of course they so often do in real emergencies but we all learned by our mistakes and had Fun along the way.

The food and drink wasn't bad either. HI I It only costs a little in time and effort to learn new skills but their value is incalculable. I had fun learning about the scheme ~ I hope you do too I

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## Reprints from the "Training Observer".

### Easingwold Weekend.

The weekend at the Emergency Planning College, Easingwold, at the beginning of November was deemed a great success by the twenty three delegates and five Committee of Management observers who attended it.

The course, which began on the Friday evening and continued until Sunday lunchtime, was filled with presentations on the scheme itself and how to evaluate the membership, table-top and practical exercises, games and a final exercise "out in the field", starting at 05:30 hrs. The weekend concluded with a discussion on work for the future and the development of training aids.

A repeat of the course for training co-ordinators is provisionally booked for 2nd. to 4th. June 1995 at the same venue, although, as yet, the exact cost is not known, owing to a review of the pricing structure at the College.

## The Training Scheme.

This was launched at the AGM in Coventry in October, and copies are available to Company groups at a discounted price of £10.00. Cheques should be made payable to RAEN Training Team. The 107 page scheme comes in a ring binder and consists of 18 modules, (with further modules planned as updates) covering such topics as map reading, navigation, welfare, personnel management, callout and many more. All copies are numbered and the purchase registers the buyer for updates as and when they are issued.

The cost of posting such a volume is over £3.00 per scheme, and a donation towards the postage would be welcome. However, copies can be paid for and collected by your Zonal Co-ordinator at Committee of Management meetings.

## Training Exercises.

The team is hoping to build a library of off-the-shelf exercises for Training Co-ordinators to use within their own groups. Some Easingwold delegates have already kindly supplied copies of these, and more have been promised. Please enclose full documentation, and details of any necessary maps etc.

Those who attended the Easingwold course were given copies of the various exercises undertaken during the weekend to take back to their groups, as well as details of the photography game and other training aids.

## Can You Help?

The Training Team is currently looking for willing volunteers to help with specific tasks to help with the development of support to Training Co-ordinators. One of the projects we would like to undertake involves the use of video

training packages. A separate working group would need to be set up, guidance would be given by the Team, but the rest would be up to the group. Someone suggested that a local college with a media studies course might like to take on a project of this sort. If you have any contacts within the local further education college, or would like to undertake this challenge yourself, please let us know.

## Computer Presentations.

Two new sets of computer presentations are now available, covering the Training Scheme introduction to the Scheme and Assessment Evaluation. These were used at Easingwold and are suitable for group sessions as an introduction to the use of the Scheme and how to evaluate members to assess their training needs. They require a 386 computer with VGA/SVGA graphics. These are available from the usual address. The cost is £1.00 per presentation or a 25p stamp if you provide your own discs. A HD 1.44Mb disc is required for each presentation, and no additional software is required.

The Training Co-ordinator's Pack is also available to registered Co-ordinators on disc in WP6.0 format, or paper copy for those unable to use this version. Just supply a disc and postage for your copy. Paper copies require a 25p stamp.

## Team Members.

Pete Leng, GOSVO started this series in the last newsletter, but he is off with the TA having a fun(!) time, so it is up to me to compile the newsletter; unfortunately I do not have a black and white photo to scan in, but I think most people know me! I am Cathy Clark G1GQJ and have been Team Leader of this project for 12 months. I was originally involved as Secretary, as I was the only one who could type and write in reasonable English! I am the *one* who designed the layout of the Scheme, and my 486 computer worked overtime! As well as being Team Leader, I was Group Controller for Aylesbury RAYNET for seven years and am currently County Controller for Bucks and Zone 6 Co-ordinator. I have been a teacher for 15 years, and teach in a large middle school in Aylesbury. In my spare time, (yes, I do have some), I enjoy working on

the computer and I play bowls for relaxation. To contact the Training Team :~  
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PO Box 2,  
CHINNOR,  
Oxon. OX9 4SR 01844 351 461

## **TREVOR EMERY , G3KWU**

John Witts G6BBW

With the passing of Trevor *on* the 1st. of September 1994, RAYNET has lost one of its dedicated workers and a person who added enthusiasm to every task taken on and it is difficult to list Trevor's contribution to RAYNET. I knew him for his dedication to accuracy, his minute taking being an example. The hours spent listening to tapes of NRC meetings to ensure that every point was covered and noted. Throughout all the changes to RAYNET in the past few years, Trevor was a controlling influence over all of us. He had a realistic approach to the problems coupled with a determination to give the membership what they requested.

I have spent many hours in Trevor's company both at NRC meetings and at home discussing the future direction of RAYNET. We did not agree a lot of the time, but always respected the other's viewpoint. His ability to discuss any subject sensibly and then support and promote the agreed action was one of his greatest assets.

Trevor was involved with RAYNET before I met him, promoting the organisation both locally and nationally at events and rallies. It has been difficult to write these notes as, along with our working relationship, respect and friendship developed. RAYNET has lost a dedicated supporter and I have lost a *good* friend.

# **RAY~Link**

Your Network's Newsletter