



# RAY~Link

Issue Twenty Five  
October 1996

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

- 1996 National Publicity - David Hicks
- 1996 Annual General Meeting - Durham
- The Poole Plume - Chris in Deepest Dorset
- RSGB Open Meeting - Your Thoughts Solicited
- Personal Accident Insurance - More Returns Please

## The 1996 Annual General Meeting.

This RAY~Link accompanies the calling notice for this year's AGM which will be held in Durham on Saturday 9th. November at 14:00 hrs. The doors will open at 11:00 hrs. and there will be three morning sessions dealing with current issues, including the RSGB open meeting, which is scheduled for the 2nd. of November 1996.

It is especially important that we get a large turnout of members at the AGM this year, as it is proposed to change the number of members who are required to be present at a general meeting to form a quorum. This is now necessary because the change was not made when the membership of the Network was increased to include every member. Please therefore make a special effort to attend so that we have the required number of members present to allow us to make the change.

The Committee of Management realises that every year some members will have to travel large distances to attend, and for this reason it has a policy of moving the AGM to a different part of the country each year. While it appears to be a fair way of dealing with the problem, there will always be a large number who have to make long journeys, possibly involving an overnight stay, and the Committee thanks those who can, and do, appear at the different venues each year. It is appreciated that some are unable to travel, and the changes proposed at this year's AGM will allow them to have their say by proxy when required.

Please put the date in your diary now. Saturday 9th. November at 11:00 hrs. for the informal meeting, and 14:00 hrs. for the AGM.

## RAYNET SUPPLIES

RAYNET Supplies will be at the Network AGM on Durham on 9th. November and at Picket's Lock on Saturday 16th. November. As well as the usual RAYNET items, there are some "end of line" items which are worth looking out for as Barbara will be selling off some of the last remaining items of some stock lines at reduced prices. For details of these, please telephone Barbara or Ray or go along to either of the events.

**All correspondence and membership registrations should be sent to:-**

"Hunter's Moon", Newton-le-Willows, BEDALE, North Yorks, DL8 1SX

**Emergency 24 hour contact line:-**  
(0141) 621 2121

**CHAIRMAN:** Ron Cowan, GM4SRL  
(0141) 620 1000

### ZONES:

- Z1:** Alan Wallis, G4YMU  
(01207) 520477
- Z2:** Contact Meantime Brian Tindill, (01677) 450387
- Z3:** Dave Hocking, G4FSS  
(0116) 239 3803
- Z4:** Dave Seabrook, G6HPY  
(01638) 750571
- Z5:** David Whiteman, G1ADW  
(0956) 299784
- Z6:** Cathy Clark, G1GQJ  
(01844) 351461
- Z7:** Chris Hampson, G8RXA  
(01425) 672002
- Z8:** Contact meantime via ZC 10  
(01244) 336639
- Z9:** Madeley Smith, G8KVU  
(01203) 579411
- Z10:** David Hicks, G6IFA  
(01244) 336639
- Z11:** Contact Meantime via ZC 12  
(01290) 421298
- Z12:** Tom Stewart, GM0BKX  
(01290) 421298
- Z18:** Contact meantime via ZC 10  
(01244) 336639
- Z22:** Iain Strachan, GM4FLP  
(01382) 580356

### SPECIALIST TEAMS

#### Emergency Planning:

Dave Seabrook, G6HPY

#### Publicity:

David Hicks, G6IFA

#### Registrations:

David Whiteman, G1ADW

#### Technical:

Madeley Smith, G3KVU

#### Training:

Cathy Clark, G1GQJ

#### Talk through applications:

Ian Jackson, G8RWH,  
5 Vivien Cl, Chessington,  
Surrey, KT9 2DE

© 1996 The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network.

## ***Exercise:***

## **OCEAN BLUE - Roger GM0GKR**

**F**or this event your scribe was in the enviable position of supervising the talk-through unit. All reports from other operators suggest that this was probably the only sane place on the whole event!

We arrived in the area of our proposed location but despite driving up and down the narrow road could not find the lay-by where we were supposed to be. Stan (GM8ZQY) then appeared and after a short discussion a location was chosen that seemed best to fit the description. The mast was put up and the cross-band box installed. We were to operate with 70cm links to the hospitals in Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, and 2m to the incident site at Burntisland.

The link to the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy was not good. So, with Stan holding the mast, we moved the vehicle forwards by about a foot and the S-meter moved smartly up toward the 9 mark when signals came from the Victoria. The mast was re-stabilised, Stan went off to help on the incident site, and we settled down to the serious matter of morning coffee.

From then on the comms worked fine with only one station in Burntisland occasionally being unreadable by us. Since we had spare radios with us, we decided that we would listen in to the other side of the exercise on the marine band - it was, after all, a maritime incident that was the basis of the exercise (passenger ferry with 200 passengers on board, fire in the machinery space now spreading to the lower decks).

The first action was when Queensferry and Kinghorn Lifeboats arrived and were tasked with finding a 'man overboard'. This casualty was found and taken ashore. It was a far from dead gentleman with a notice attached saying 'Exercise dead', which caused a number of side-effects. Somebody on the RAYNET net reported his arrival and, on-air, that was the last we heard of him. However, he turned up later drinking tea at the rest centre! Something had gone wrong with the casualty handling system, methinks.

There were one or two little oddities where things on the ground (well, air and water in fact) were not quite the same in reality and in the exercise plan. At one point the 'ferry', when asked what fire

fighting resources it had, reported 'The standard equipment carried on board, only. Sir'. (The Irish-spoken radio operator on the 'Ocean Blue' ended all transmissions to the coastguard with 'Sir'). It was then pointed out by somebody from Forth Ports that they had in fact two notional fire-fighting tugs alongside and three more on stand-by. In a similar manner, when the helicopter was asked how long they could stay, they said that as far as the exercise plan was concerned it was two hours, but in real life they had about half an hour left before they would have to go and re-fuel.

While little incidents are what we remember an exercise for, we must consider how the comms worked. In short the answer is 'quite well'. There were the apparently normal hassles with getting one of the ARESdata packet stations started, but once up and running it shifted the require data efficiently. There was the set-up problem with the link to the Victoria Hospital I have mentioned. After that most problems were related either to ambient noise occasionally causing problems with operators not hearing their radios, or to operators who needed to talk to one of the hospitals from that part of the docks which had a poor path to the cross-band unit. We had the odd occasion when a PTT got sat on briefly. The marine channel had a similar problem when one of the lifeboats was stood down; its microphone must have fallen to the deck shortly after setting off back to its station. We were then treated to the sounds of an Atlantic 21 at full speed. This stopped shortly after the sound changed to those of a boat coming alongside in calm water. Interestingly, this did not cripple the channel, very little traffic was lost and no stations became unworkable.

In the end the exercise seemed to turn into a veritable shambles with casualties going missing, or to the wrong hospital. RAYNET carried more traffic finding what casualties were at which hospital (and please would they get on the bus that is waiting for them) than during the whole of the rest of the exercise.

Finally, Stan reappeared to collect the cross-band unit, joining us for a cup of coffee before helping (thank you) to take the mast down. We enjoyed the day, but feel that in any major incident the best place for RAYNET is probably somewhere on the sidelines picking up any bits that fall off!

## **Personal Accident Insurance.**

**A**n item on Personal Accident Insurance was printed in the June edition of RAY~Link, and members were asked if they would be prepared to pay an increased subscription which would include the necessary premium. While there was a large majority towards one of the options given, the total number of votes cast was low. Consequently, the Committee of Management felt that it was unable to make a decision in such an important matter which would affect the entire membership.. Consequently members who did not return a voting form are asked to do so this month, in order that the thoughts of a much larger percentage of the membership can be

taken into account when deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

The Committee was particularly pleased to see that a large number who voted took the trouble to say why they voted that way, and consequently several other options for certain members will be explored. Please vote today, and also, if appropriate, let us know of any circumstances which cause you to vote the way you do. Your comments will be most welcome, and really will be taken into account!

The Radio Society of Great Britain is to hold an open RAYNET meeting in London on 2nd. November 1996. Following comments from our User Services, including the Home Office, and Emergencies Planning Officers, expressing concern at the current confusion about RAYNET, the Network has been asking the Society for a joint statement on RAYNET for over eighteen months, and so far this has been refused. The Chairman met with the President in May of this year, and it was agreed that a joint working party be formed to look into the future of RAYNET, and report back within six months. The Network's Committee of Management ratified this at their June meeting, but RSGB Council refused authorisation for it to go ahead, and said that an open meeting would be held in September. The meeting was not held in September, and has now been planned for November.

The future of RAYNET was agreed at the UMIST meeting in Manchester, and thereafter, the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network was formed as a Company which would seek charity status. This was achieved in July 1995. As soon as the Network was formed, the RSGB moved the goal posts, and agreed to provide insurance for groups which did not want to join the Company. This had the effect of splitting the available membership, consequently increasing costs all round. The Network continued to organise itself in Zones around the country, and carried on the work which RAYNET had been doing since 1953. It was agreed that the Network would work with RSGB affiliated groups, and also with any that wanted to remain independent.

A lot of the Committee of Management's time was spent undoing damage caused by the RSGB's Emergency Communications Officer, who wrote to Government departments and user services, stating that he was the UK contact for RAYNET. The confusion increased until some people refused to talk with, or use, RAYNET until it sorted itself out. The Committee of Management continued to ask the RSGB for a joint statement, but, as this was not forthcoming, was unable to progress the matter satisfactorily. That is where we are today.

While the work of groups continues largely unaffected by the politics, the user services are confused and want RAYNET to come together under one banner again. The Committee of Management believes that the RSGB does not want to lose touch with the excellent PR aspect of our hobby which is provided by RAYNET. We would be pleased to deal with the day to day running of RAYNET, and also continue our affiliation with the Society, discussing any major policy decisions which affect both organisations. The funding previously provided in the past by the RSGB is sorely missed, with each member currently having to pay £3.60 per year to cover insurance and administration costs. Any help from the RSGB with funding would be greatly appreciated, and perhaps the Society would see this as a major way of helping RAYNET, and keeping in touch with the Network. It certainly is not economical for two organisations to separately insure the membership, as we have at present.

The Network does not at present know the reason for calling the open meeting, but we would like to know how our members see the way forward, and what they see as the role of the RSGB in RAYNET. All members are therefore invited to put their thoughts in writing to the Network at Hunters Moon, Newton-le-Willows, BEDALE, North Yorkshire, DL8 1SX, marking the outside of the envelope "RSGB Meeting." Please take a few minutes to pen your thoughts, so that the Committee of Management can take them into account at the open meeting. Should you be able to attend the RSGB open meeting, we will be delighted to see you, but, please, do not make it at the expense of missing the AGM the following week!

As this is being written, various comments regarding RAYNET are again starting to appear on packet. It is obvious that many of the authors were not at UMIST, and one wonders if some of them have any RAYNET connections at all. The mis-information being spread on packet is disgraceful and while we would like to "put the matter straight", we refuse to enter "packet wars" and the Committee of Management has therefore decided that it is not in the interests of our hobby (both amateur radio generally and RAYNET in particular) to start arguments on the air and we will not use that

~~to reach the radio amateur population.~~  
**Help your Controller.**  
A full report of the RSGB meeting will be given during the morning session, (11.00 hrs. start) which will precede the AGM in Durham on 9th November.  
A plea has come in from a controller who wishes to remain anonymous as he does not wish to embarrass one of his members, but feels that the problem which affected him might cause problems for others in the future.

He was organising a small exercise which required about twelve operators. As there were other events on during the same weekend, he asked for assistance from neighbouring groups and got the required number of operators, plus two "spares." Fine, or so he thought! Then two operators called off through illness at short notice but he was still able to fill every location as he had the two spares.

Unfortunately a third operator called off too, but instead of finding a replacement himself, or phoning the controller directly, he sent a packet message! The controller, who uses packet a lot, did not on this occasion get the message until after the event because he was busy with the event organiser on the day before, making last minute checks and changes, and did not switch his packet on when he got home as his transceiver was already disconnected ready to go to control the following day.

The lesson to be learned is not to send call-off messages by packet, as no matter how often someone may usually read messages, he might, for a whole load of reasons, not get the message until it is too late. If you cannot get to an event, please get in touch personally with the organiser and, if possible, find a replacement yourself. Everyone at some time or another will more than likely have to call off for a whole variety of reasons. Please make it easy for your controller if that person is you next time!

As usual, this popular event at Blair Athol, this year held on the 24th. of September, attracted a good turnout of RAYNET operators - not just from the local Perth & Kinross group, but from as far afield as Inverness and Fife. It's a great opportunity for some socialising among those who are able to arrive the night before, either at a B&B or taking advantage of a free campsite.

The organisers had asked for only a limited number of points to be manned by radio, such as the start and finish of the steeplechase, and a few strategic points on phases A and C (the Field and Track sections), along with the control bus.

In fact, there were so many operators on site that Martin, GM8KPH wasn't able to give them all jobs at the start of the day! However, with 150 horses at 3-minute intervals it was obviously going to be a long day, so it was good to know that relief would be available. Unfortunately, no firm arrangements were made for this at the beginning; later on, when the call went out for relief operators, some of them could not be contacted. The result: some operators who were stuck at their posts all day, and others who felt that they had come a long way and then never been used. In future, it might perhaps be better to assign each operator to either the morning or the afternoon?

Roger and Fiona (GM0GKR and GM0GKF) were sent to a checkpoint on phase C, along with Norman GM4JNB and Alex GM7IIL. A special problem here was that the riders left the road and turned down a narrow track - and later came back up the same track. The marshals were concerned about the possibilities of collisions in the narrow section. So the GKR/F vehicle was parked at the far end of the track, and used 70cm to liaise with Norman or Alex at the entrance. (Thanks to Phil GM8SNE for providing a vital electrical connector which made this feasible).

A back-of-envelope calculation suggested that perhaps one rider in 6 or 7 might meet another one in the narrow section. In fact, at one point we had six meetings in a row! It was never made clear what we should do when a collision seemed imminent. Where possible, one or both of the riders would be warned as they entered the lane, but this wasn't always feasible (if nothing else, not all the riders were English-speaking!). However, most of the riders were so good-humoured and courteous that there never seemed to be any problem.

The weather started well, with early morning mist giving way to sunshine. However, a spectacular thunder-storm in the afternoon sent the spectators scurrying for shelter. The thunder was too far away to cause radio problems, but it turned our narrow track into a sea of mud.

So far as we know, there were no "incidents" of any kind throughout the day. Some operators - at the steeplechase, for example - were kept busy passing competitors' times to the organisers, but others had nothing to do except watch 150 horses trotting past at three-minute intervals. On these occasions we have to remind ourselves that, if anything had gone wrong, our presence could have been vitally important. And most of us did get a chance to look round the trade stands (it seems to be a very good place to get your waxed jackets). Most of the Inverness team stayed another night on site, and provided a barbecue for anyone not in a hurry to leave. See you all next year folks!

**Zone 4  
Report**

**Dave Seabrook  
G6HPY**

All Groups in the Zone have had a very busy schedule this summer, the number of events and exercises has increased in some Groups and have dropped a margin in other Groups.

The team spirit in all the Zone has been excellent, and members of adjacent Groups have willingly given assistance when things were too busy for an individual Group to handle on their own, in a number of cases an adjacent group has taken on the event for the originating Group. I find this a very good sign in the area.

There has been unfortunately a number of incidents in the area including a plane crash at the Duxford Air Show and RAYNET was called out to man Emergency Centres and monitor the tides and rivers in the area during the high tides around the Norfolk coast.

There have been a number of large events, all carried out successfully in our area. These included the Mildenhall Air Fete, (Members from all over), The POP Concert (Herts), (we now have a number of rather deaf operators), the Scout Fell Orienteering in Derbyshire (Herts). Bicycle Runs (Cambs-Herts-Suffolk), Horse Events (Suffolk-Norfolk-Cambs) to list but a few.

At the last Zone Meeting it was proposed, and agreed, that the number of Zone Meetings is reduced from four a year to two a year with the proviso that an additional meeting could be called if required. It was pointed out that all the Groups were very busy during the summer months and it was extremely difficult to attend a meeting during that time. The numbers attending bore that out, so all meetings will now be held out of season, Sept/Oct, and Mar/April - trying to avoid the bad weather period as well.

### **EMERGENCY PLANNING SOCIETY CONFERENCE**

The Network attended the EPS Conference in Scarborough at the end of June. Brian Dooks N Yorks CC, and I, manned the stand over the 3 days, and great interest was shown by the delegates, especially by the "Elected Members" in attendance. The Mayor of Scarborough opened the conference, stating that his first experience of emergency planning was with RAYNET! That got us off to a very good start. Next year's conference will be at Llandudno in N Wales, we already have a verbal invitation to attend.

### **BLUE PUBLICITY LEAFLET**

The new leaflet has been printed, and is available. The principal changes are the card on which it is printed, is of lighter weight, and also a less glossy finish making it easier to over-print. The leaflet is also more "national", with space available to print-in or to stick "able-labels" with local details. Two minor errors have unfortunately crept in on the final print, despite several proof corrections, but these have not prevented zones from making good use of the material! Perhaps we will get it right on the reprint when the original order is "sold out!"

### **DISPLAY MATERIAL**

I am still seeking photographs for display, very little is forthcoming. (I remember Ron Cowan having the same moan time and time again when he was PRO!) I have some new photographs but this is not enough! You may remember my display-boards from last years AGM, I have now obtained another similar set, which almost doubles the display area available.

### **RAYNET HISTORY**

The short history is now close to its final draft for addition to the information pack. I have also been pursuing data for a booklet of RAYNET history, and I have researched several avenues of information. Ray Hills GOBDA has produced data from RSGB Bulletins and Radcom from May 1953 until November 1994. All this data needs editing and in certain areas requires expansion. There are some rather cryptic comments which need explanation, and where access to RSGB Council records might throw some light, Official Secrets Act allowing!.

### **PRESS RELEASE**

I have issued little in terms of press release recently, mainly because of the lack of newsworthy items. What I have distributed, Staffs Rail Crash etc., may appear in the Autumn editions.

For the second year in succession, Dorset had an operational call-out. Although not as time consuming as the Portland bomb, the Poole Plume proved to be a short lived affair but nevertheless a real live incident. The County Controller was alerted by the CEPO and by the BRCS of a requirement to assist in communications at 2100 on Saturday 23 March. A County wide call-out was initiated and 18 operators responded within an hour. The task was to provide communication facilities from a Rest Centre to the Local Authority incident officer and both the District and County Emergency Centres for the CEPO. The BRCS required an ambulance fitted with radio, an operator with their incident officer and one at the Rest Centre. The Rest Centre had been set up due to a fire in a plating works in Poole causing toxic fumes to be emitted. Six operators were thus despatched to the incident area, the rest being put on standby until further details were known. A mobile operator was sent to a high point to act as relay as the incident was in a difficult area for communication with the County Controller. Further operators called in giving their availabilities and by 2245 contact had been made by the operators on site and the necessary stations set up. At 2300 the Police decided there was no more danger and the CEPO stood RAYNET down with grateful thanks. A total of 25 operators (50% of the total membership) offered their assistance - not bad for a Saturday night!!

The resulting wash-up has been an outstanding support for RAYNET from both the CEPO and the BRCS. A more important result is the establishment of a database of information relating to the materials which are stored in commercial premises throughout the County. Investigations have found that many materials on sites not covered by the CIMA regulations could react together to form dangerous or toxic substances. These could be stored and utilised by adjacent works without each other's knowledge and certainly without knowledge of the authorities such as the fire brigade. This information will now be shared by all emergency services and by plant owners in order to provide a fast and accurate response to such a potential disaster should a similar situation occur again.

## **80metre Net**

Members are reminded that the Network holds a national net each Sunday morning at 08:30 hrs. clock time on 3.663 MHz. + or - QRM. Items of news and diary dates are read by the duty net controller at 08:30 hrs. and 09:00 hrs., and reports of RAYNET activities are received during the net which usually finishes about 09:15 hrs. If you are up and about on Sunday mornings, please call in, even if it is just to say "hello". The pre-net starts about 08:20 hrs. and, depending upon conditions, be prepared to look a good way up and down the band. Two or three weeks ago, we ended up at 3.645 MHz., although, most weeks we manage to stay in the 3.660 MHz. to 3.666 MHz. segment.

<i>Forest Exercise</i>	<b>Brian - G0RHI</b>
----------------------------	----------------------

A

<i>New Training</i>	<b>Cathy Clark G1GQH</b>
-------------------------	------------------------------

*Course*  
T