



This edition of RAY~Link has been sent to all registered members who have provided an e-mail address, and by post to Group Controllers who do not have e-mail facilities. Controllers are asked to ensure that all members of their group have sight of a copy of this edition

**Membership Fee 45p. per month.
PAI £1.50 per year or part year
(1st May - 30 April).**

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National RAYNET Convention

The National RAYNET Convention incorporating the AGM will be held in Zone22 Scotland North on Saturday 4th November 2006 and will be hosted in Glenrothes by the Fife RAYNET Group. The revised title reflects the Committee of Management's desire to provide an expanded opportunity for more specialised discussion and for interest groups to be incorporated into the event. In addition, the local amateur radio emporium will be open for late night shopping after the Convention.

The East of Scotland has a multitude of interesting venues within an hour's driving from Glenrothes for attached families and friends, so put the Convention into your diary for Saturday 4th November.

RAY~Link

The next edition of RAY~Link will be published mid May, and consequently all material should reach the editor no later than Sunday 30th. April 2006. All articles which would be of interest to other members will be welcomed, and should be sent as basic text files to raylink@raynet-uk.net Photographs are welcome, but should be sent as separate jpeg files, and not incorporated in the text item in any manner. Desk top publishing tools should not be used, as basic files are much easier to work with..

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EXERCISE BLACK DEEP

Jim Burke GM4TNP Group Controller Fife RAYNET 22/FF/317

Exercise 'Black Deep' was the name given to the 2005 Clearwater Forth Annual Oil Pollution Exercise which was held on October 5th 2005 and was designed to test the Clearwater Forth Plan. The Firth of Forth estuary lies between Lothian and Fife and is a very busy shipping area. Ships from the docks of Grangemouth, Rosyth and Leith share the waters with many leisure craft and tankers from the Hound Point and Braefoot Bay Marine Terminals. Ships carrying Crude Oil, LPG and many other cargoes pass daily along the waters.

The exercise involved many agencies, I counted about 30, with varying degrees of involvement. RAYNET was requested to attend by the Fife Council Emergency Planning Officer. Our task was two fold, firstly, to deploy the EPO Communications and Support Unit vehicle (CASU) to an area on the Fife coast where, notionally, spilled oil had come ashore, and secondly, to set up radio communications at the Emergency Coordination Centre in Fife House, Glenrothes to form a link with the CASU at the spill site.

Such exercises by their very nature mean people have to improvise and combine their different talents to make up an effective team. This is excellent preparation for a real incident. When the two locations were ready for action we were surprised at how good the radio signals were. Using VHF Low, VHF High and UHF radios connected to permanently fixed aerials on the roof of Fife House, all bands produced better signals than predicted. We attributed this to the location of the CASU directly below the famous Forth Rail Bridge. The massive metal structure must have been acting as a great reflector! Communication was possible on handhelds from the incident site back to Fife House even though the path of 16 miles crossed some very high ground. The Council VHF trunked radio system in the CASU was also used to patch into the public switched telephone network. (PSTN)

RAYNET members assisted Council Officers at the incident site with the completion of pre-prepared forms on GPRS enabled laptop computers and these forms were sent to the ECC via the GPRS network to the Council email system. Photographic images were also trialled using

GPRS but the transfer proved to be painfully slow. The image sending via this method was abandoned and the Kenwood VC-H1 camera was instead used to transfer images back to the ECC. Images were taken on an external camera which had an NTSC output. The images were fed into the VC-H1 via a patch lead and then sent using the Kenwood TM-D700 mobile transceiver as images produced this way gave more scope than using the VC-H1's dedicated camera. You can



EXERCISE BLACK DEEP (contd)

zoom, adjust light values and use flash if necessary. This also meant images could be recorded away from the vehicle without the VC-H1 and brought back for sending. The images received at the ECC were projected onto a large screen and were visible to all in the ECC. This gave the senior officials a good insight into what conditions were like at the incident site and so help them with their decision making. The images were also posted on an exercise web site set up especially for the event and used on the 'SmartBoard' that was being trialled during the exercise.

As usual with such exercises, the 'Endex' came all too soon, just as we were getting into the swing of things. Participants were provided with lunch in the Council restaurant and there followed a 'Debrief' in the Council Chambers at Fife House. This in turn was followed by a 'Press Conference' which proved very educational. Warning, never ever give a comment to the press regarding an incident. Always refer them to the proper authority. You may find you're off the cuff remark on the 'News at Ten' or the morning paper!

Exercises always bring up the following dilemma, everyone wants to be involved but you cannot flood the locations with RAYNET operators as the main players do not like too many volunteers hovering around. This is understandable as they may well be working under pressure and people watching your every move can be very unnerving.

Lessons learned. We were just a small cog in a very large wheel. Different agencies use the same abbreviations for different meanings. Always have some form of back up power supply in case of a major power outage. We used a Philips/Simoco transportable unit that could take the FM1000 series of radios. This meant we had battery powered access to VHF Low, VHF High or UHF should the need have arisen. Some form of headphone is essential in a noisy environment as speakers can disturb other people in the vicinity. It does not matter how many messages you pass, the important thing to remember is you are there and able to pass messages should the need arise.



The exercise went well with all participants gaining experience in their respective roles. As always there were areas where improvements could be made and these were noted for inclusion in future exercises.

Fife RAYNET maintains a very good relationship with the Fife Council Emergency Planning Unit and with their kind and generous assistance will be hosting the RAYNET Convention/AGM in November 2006. (See Page 1)

Registration Procedures

Registration Officers are reminded that registration procedures have been modified to allow re-registrations to be completed electronically. The relevant information can be found by clicking on the 'Paperless' heading on the right hand side of the Members' Area front page at www.raynet-uk.net

Details are as follows:-

For those who are connected to the Internet, you can significantly reduce the amount of paperwork which needs to be submitted and also increase the accuracy of your members details by updating information via the website. Up until now, you were required to submit a REG-02 (application to register / re-register a member) for every member being registered or re-registered. However, you can now dispense with all the REG-02's for existing members and, instead, update the details on-line. All Group officers have access to edit all details for the members of their Group via the RAYNET website.

So, what do we need to do, to re-register under this alternative procedure? It's very simple:

- Update details on-line for all members re-registering
 - Compile a one-page summary of callsigns and names
 - Complete a REG-01 (registration summary)
 - Submit the following to registrations:
 - REG-01
 - Photos
 - Summary list
 - Payment
- If you have any new members, you still need to complete a REG-02 and REG-06/06J (member's agreement) as the system will not yet know about them.

The benefits are:

- Reduced paperwork from the Group
- Reduced keying required by the registrations team
- Increased accuracy of information
- Reduced postage costs all round

You may also be interested to know that you can update member details at any time, thus keeping their on-line record as accurate as possible. Remember that membership is currently £5.40 per year, (45p per month) and the optional Personal Accident Insurance (PAI) is £1.50 per year or part of a year, running from when payment is received at Hunters Moon until the following 30th. April.

The Future of Amateur Radio Licensing

On 14th February, Ofcom announced its conclusions in the reform of amateur radio licensing which is intended to reduce the administrative burden on the UK's 63,000 amateur radio users.

Ofcom is responsible under Section 1 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 for the authorisation of amateur radio in the UK. After public consultation, detailed research and discussions with amateur radio groups, Ofcom has decided to:

- * issue amateur radio licences which will remain valid for life as long as the licence details remain correct or until the licence is revoked by Ofcom or surrendered by the licensee;
- * require licensees to confirm their licence details at least once every five years;
- * provide an online licensing service as an alternative to the postal service;
- * issue electronic licences to users of the online licensing service; and
- * continue to make paper licences available, subject to an administrative charge.

In addition to the formal consultation process, Ofcom commissioned MORI to conduct a survey of amateur radio licence holders' views of the Ofcom proposals. MORI received 1,572 completed questionnaires by 20 June 2005. When specifically asked by MORI whether they supported or opposed Ofcom issuing licences that remain valid for the life of the licensee, 58 per cent of respondents supported this proposal. At present, the Royal Mail processes amateur radio licences through the Radio Licensing Centre. However, from 1 October 2006 Ofcom intends to take over this function, which will include issuing, renewing and amending licences.

Ofcom believes that this new approach to amateur radio licensing will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy with this popular international hobby.

The policy statement can be found at: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/aradio/statement/>

NEDSAR

John Hindmarsh G8XGS, Northumberland RAYNET.

After many years unsuccessfully trying to tie up with "Rover Rescue" in this area we now have our very own 4x4 rescue group called "NEDSAR", (Northeast Discovery Search & Rescue) and I have spent some time with them along with other members of "RAYNET" from the zone.

More information can be found at <http://www.nedsar.co.uk> where there is a forum which RAYNET members can join.

NEDSAR has already had one exercise which indicated that relying on 27mhz was going to be a problem, and after a discussion with the group I now hold a "UK General PBR" licence giving access to frequencies more suited to "local comms"

During the coming year Terry (G0EHX) and I will be undertaking formal radio training with NEDSAR to bring them up to an acceptable standard with the view of requesting access to the national "SAR" allocation.

The Civil Contingencies Act

The Civil Contingencies Act, which is now in place, lists two categories of agencies which are tasked to respond to emergencies and puts a duty on these bodies to prepare for their role during major incidents and disasters. Category 1 responders, which include the emergency services and local authorities, have to take account of the capabilities of other responders, including the voluntary sector, when planning their response to major incidents. The Emergency Planning Team of The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network has been aware of this new responsibility for some time and several important high level meetings have already taken place. The Committee of Management is keen to progress RAYNET's contribution to this new challenge, and, together with the Emergency Planning Team, will work at national and regional level to ensure that responders are made aware of our capabilities.

Ripon Bonfire Plot

Richmond RAYNET Pass Donation to Air Ambulance Members of the Richmond RAYNET Group in North Yorkshire have been absent from the national AGM for the last three years because they have been providing safety cover at the Ripon Bonfire Plot. The 2005 event raised £7,000 for charity and the North Yorkshire County Controller, Brian Dooks, G0RHI, was asked by the organising committee if he would accept a donation to the Richmond Group as a token of thanks. But after consulting the Richmond Group Controller, Gerald Brady, G0UFI, Brian told the organisers of Ripon's public fireworks display that RAYNET would prefer the donation to be given to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

As a result he attended the presentation evening to hand a cheque for £250 to the air ambulance charity. The Bonfire Plot organising committee gave the Yorkshire Air Ambulance a further £750. Brian said: "The Richmond Group operates across the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors and we are frequently working in difficult terrain where road ambulance access would be difficult if not impossible. "It is reassuring to know that the Air Ambulance can be with us in a matter of minutes and evacuate a casualty to one of the local hospitals within 10 minutes. Last year, when a fell runner who had retired from the Three Peaks Race was involved in a collision with a motorcycle, we were grateful for the Air Ambulance's attendance." The Air Ambulance costs £1m a year to operate - averaging £340 on each mission - but has ordered a second helicopter, which will be based in North Yorkshire. Unlike the present helicopter based at Leeds-Bradford Airport, the new air ambulance will be able to fly at night.

Did you Hear the Signals?

Zone 4 Exercise "Fawlty" caused the level of radio activity to increase in the south east on Sunday 29 January, when the yearly path finding exercise was held. Seven well sited control stations attempted in sequence to contact as many RAYNET out stations as possible both within Zone 4 and adjacent zones, starting at 09:00 with North Anglia (G7RNA/P) and finishing in Hertfordshire (G0MHR) at 11:30 - 12:00.

Signal reports would be welcomed by G8KLC@raynet-uk.net

RAYNET's Year of Publicity

The Committee of Management has designated 2006 as the 'Year of Publicity' and as part of the initiative, new display materials are to be purchased.

Although the final form of the display boards has still to be decided, the search is now on to find suitable photographic material to put on them. What is needed is a series of good, clear, sharp, colourful action images showing RAYNET members providing service for the User Services. Most likely taken on digital cameras, these photographs should somehow show that the subjects are RAYNET members, and the photographs should look unposed. Please search through your archives and see if you have anything suitable, or, better still, take a camera along to your next event! If you think that you have anything suitable, please send a small file to photos@raynet-uk.net and we will keep it on record, and contact you if we need a larger file to print for the display boards.

Remember what we need are action shots, not posed groups of presentations, hand-shaking, etc., and the photographs must be in focus, and reflect RAYNET in action.

All photographs used on the display boards will be acknowledged, and we might even be able to find a prize or two! This will be a rolling search programme throughout the year, but the first selections will be made on 1st. May, and your help in providing material by then would be most appreciated.

Antenna Discounts

Panorama Antennas Ltd. have been offering a discount scheme for voluntary sector groups for a couple of years, and a number of RAYNET Groups have already taken advantage of it, but Panorama have never got round to formally publicising it within RAYNET. RAY~Link is pleased to report that, with this article, the situation has been rectified! Panorama Antennas Ltd has a range of antenna products suitable for RAYNET applications in the 6m, 4m, 2m and 70cms bands. Antennas available include a discrete 2/70 dual band mobile antenna, dual band 6m/2m mobile and robust portable or fixed base station antennas. These are all of professional quality and are currently used by a number of RAYNET and Mountain Rescue Groups in the voluntary sector.

In support of these groups, Panorama are offering a 50% discount on their list prices, subject to a minimum order "net value" of £20 + VAT and it should be noted that the discount does not apply to any delivery charge. They can also supply "VAT exempt" if groups have charity status and an exemption certificate.

For product information see www.panorama-antennas.com or contact John Thomson (G8SYD) at Panorama on 020 8877 4444

Radcom

Following the discussion at the AGM last year, we can confirm that the first of what is hoped to be a regular series of columns will appear in the RADCOM April issue. The column will be appearing under the title of "Emergency Communications" three times a year initially, and is being compiled by Geoff G3STG.

It is hoped that it will include items of interest to communications volunteers throughout the UK, and hopefully where space permits will also include news of overseas volunteer activities. The first column will include an item about talk-through development, and news from Lancashire RAYNET about the way in which they deal with the organisation of support for rest centres in their county.

The column will only be a success if a regular flow of news reports come from RAYNET Groups, and Geoff will be looking for pictures and reports of duties and activities, or any other items of interest. Please send them to g3stg@raynet-uk.net or to rcvs@rsgb.org.uk by 20th May for the August issue.

RAYNET Supplies

RAYNET Supplies will be at the Norbreck Rally in Blackpool on Sunday 19 March when a selection of RAYNET items will be for sale. As it is not possible to take the full stock 'on safari', members are asked to order from RAYNET Supplies in advance if they wish to take advantage of post-free prices, and to uplift their order at the Rally. A RAYNET Supplies stock and price list was included with the January edition of RAY~Link and although one is not included with this edition, full details can be found on the Network's website at www.raynet-uk.net. For convenience, a members' order form is included at the back of this RAY~Link.



RAYNET Supplies

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 e-mail: supplies@raynet-uk.net Phone 0141-638 0732 Fax 0141-621 1000

Supplies Order Form for use of Network Members.

Purchaser's Details (Please print clearly!)

Name	Date
Address	Callsign
	e-mail address
	Telephone
Postcode	Group code (e.g. 12/SC/321) (Printed on the back of your membership card.)

Please supply the following (State size and colour if appropriate)

Qty	Ref	Description	Size	Colour	Members' Price

Cost of Order	£
DEDUCT 10% Members' Discount	£
	£
Add Post & Packing (See note below)	£
Cheque / PO enclosed with the Order Total	£

Postage Banding:- For an order of one item, please add the postage amount shown against the item.

For orders of multiple items, please add postage as follows:-

Band A:- Up to four items for £0.75 or up to ten items for £1.50.

Bands B to K inclusive:- Add all postages and deduct £0.25 per item in bands B to K.

(No deduction for one single item in bands B – K if ordered with a free postage item in Band A)

Orders will be dispatched as soon as possible, but please allow 21 days for delivery.

RAYNET Supplies reserves the right to alter specifications and / or prices without prior notification.

All orders deducting 10% will be checked against the national registrations database.