



# RAY-Link

Issue 62  
January 2008

The Regular Newsletter of The Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network



South Sussex Group Receive the RAYNET Shield from our Chairman at the AGM (*page 4*)

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## The 2007 Conference & AGM in Eastbourne



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**Revised Subscription Rate.** As advised at the AGM all subscriptions for new registrations and renewals from 1st Jan 2008 will automatically include PAI, and be paid as a single sum of £7.20 pa (60p/month).

## Editorial

It's a new year, a new RAY-Link and a new editor, sneakily lured into volunteering by conspiracy, subterfuge and general skulduggery.

I think the first act of the year is to thank Ron GM4SRL and Mike GM0ETC on behalf of the Committee of Management and our members generally for starting the magazine and keeping it going for 16 years which certainly will not have been an easy task.

This publication is not designed for domestic printing but if you *really* insist, please note that it is designed for duplex (double-sided) printing so you can help to save the planet and still staple the pages together without encroaching on the text. If you are keen to print your RAY-Link but don't want swallow up your colour ink there are various solutions — see page 3.

Meanwhile, how about you helping out? You don't necessarily have to write articles. Little snippets of information, tips and quips, useful web sites, a note on something your Group has done recently or on a lesson learned are all appreciated and break the magazine up nicely which helps a lot to make it look less like a formal document and more readable. Should you just have a stunning photo related to your Group's activities then send it in with just a short note saying what, where and when—Ron GM4SRL can always do with them for publicity too. If you have more to say but don't think your authoring skills are particularly good don't worry, I can edit it, make it look and sound good providing the content is there. No one will see the original except you and me! Even rough diagrams are fine, I can electronically redraw them. If you do write an article a little portrait of you—ideally similar to the one provided for your RAYNET pass adds a nice touch. The amount of information given in the article heading is up to you.

Let's keep RAY-Link going, not just for another sixteen years, but for another generation or two! I may not be producing it in 16 years but I would still like it to be going. For that, I need your help!

Don Kirkwood G3Y00

## A THIRD OF OUR MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE EMAIL— REALLY!?

It was revealed at the AGM that one third of our members are not on email! Some cannot receive attachments or have limited downloads but it is likely that others have just not opted into receiving email from RAYNET. Perhaps this dates back to when they were on dial-up and only wanted minimal downloads. As most members will now be on broadband and our long documents (such as RAY-Link) are distributed as *pdf* documents in any case, this should no longer be a problem even for dial-up users.

If you are a Group Controller or other Group Officer with access to your members' records it would help if you can persuade those members that are fully opted out to at least opt into 'Occasional Announcements.' This would notify them of the AGM electronically (and very little else) and save *The Network* a lot of money and some tedious work by our chairman and her husband! The other options available are a) to receive the weekly news and b) to receive RAY-Link. As RAY-Link only comes out a maximum of four times a year and always as a *pdf* document (*e.g.* this one is only 600kb) they may wish to consider opting into this as well.

➤ *Send in your little snippets, tips and quips. It can be humorous, informative or just an interesting fact.* ◀

## G3STG—50 Years of RAYNET Service!



The year before last RAYNET awarded Geoff Griffiths G3STG the RAYNET Shield. In June the RSGB awarded him the RAYNET Cup. So was there anything left that might have Geoff's name on it?

There certainly was. At the AGM, our Chairman Cathy Clark G1GQJ handed out Certificates of Service to a number of members present, several for completing 30 years service. We thought that was it until Cathy picked up a framed certificate. Who was it for? Geoff, of course. Not for 35 years service, not for 40 nor even 45 but for 50 years!

We believe this to be the first 50 year certificate and don't envisage that there will ever be very many. Even now Geoff remains a very active member, running the RAYNET New Service and still one of the RAYNET News Readers on the HF Net (3.663MHz which starts 08:30 clock time every Sunday).

He continues to write articles and to be a very active member of RSGB too; and in his spare time. . . !



## EAST COAST GROUPS IN FLOOD ALERT

RAYNET Groups in Norfolk and Essex were placed on standby on Thursday 8th November, following Met Office warnings of potential severe flooding in the region.

The storm surge—a combination of gale-force winds and a high tide—hit the coast at about 0800 GMT Friday with levels nearly 8in (20cm) lower than originally feared, according to the Environment Agency.

Although the tidal surge was lower than expected, hundreds of residents in Yarmouth were evacuated to rest centres as a precaution, with three of these being full or over capacity. Residents started returning home on Friday morning.

Meanwhile, the Essex RAYNET team no sooner than having been on standby for an oil storage depot fire in Thurrock, were issued with life jackets and placed on flood watch around the Maldon area.



*Common sense is not as common as you think!*

Paul Farrar's G8SJA Skype comment

## Too Much Colour to Print?

*Don't Panic!*



Should you wish to print this (which is not the intent!) with text only to avoid using vast amounts of ink, please email [raylink@raynet-uk.net](mailto:raylink@raynet-uk.net) requesting a text only copy. The pictures will then appear as white space. If you have a colour printer and want to preserve the pictures but print in grey-scale your printer will almost certainly have this as an option.

If there is the demand a list will be compiled of those who require picture free copies and in future this format will either be placed on the web site or sent automatically. You will still receive the colour version and it will arrive first.

Such copies are for **personal use only**. Please do not distribute these non-standard copies nor show them to any non-RAYNET member.

*Talking of panic. . .*

*It's OK to panic so long as you are the first one to do so, and nearest to the exit.*

Dick Jeffries G4KAR  
at the National Conference & AGM

# The Year in Review—2007



Geoff Griffiths G3STG  
14 Mansion House Gardens  
Melton Mowbray  
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**P**roducing the Annual Review during the (hopefully) quiet period around the Christmas and New year is a task both loved and hated by your reviewer!

But this year there is so much to report upon in a short script that it becomes difficult to know what to leave out, rather than scrambling around for items to include. So apologies if your event is not mentioned this time.

Firstly, how busy has RAYNET been? Well the National Diary reports a total of 514 Events, exercises and call-outs, despite Foot and Mouth Decease and Avian Flu resulting in quite a number of cancellations. This figure includes a larger than usual number of LIVE operations, thanks mainly to Mother Nature! This compares with the record figure in 2006 of 432, an increase of around 19%. Some of this increase is due to more information coming from non-network groups, and we are grateful to them for reporting their hard work for the community.

January saw high winds around much of the country and, as a result, Groups in Cheshire were placed on standby during the month. Hard work was going on meanwhile during the "quiet season" on testing communication networks in Zones 4, 5, 6 and 10 whilst other groups made the most of the month by carrying out training for the coming year.

Meanwhile the usual round of support work continued in Shetland and Fife, in East Anglia, the South East, the North-East and the Midlands.

➡ *2007 saw a 19% increase in activities over our previous record year in 2006; despite cancellations as a result of Foot and Mouth Decease and Avian Flu.* Ⓞ

In February, lots of hard work to promote a better understanding of RAYNET's role came to fruition with television programmes being aired featuring the work of RAYNET in Norfolk and SE Hampshire. In Cleveland, four User Services worked with RAYNET on Exercise Codfish, whilst the annual programme of support for Marathons, runs, walks and motor cycle enduro events got under way.

A large scale test of communications from Guernsey to the mainland took place in

March, and other network tests took place around Eastbourne, North Wiltshire, Aylesbury, Richmond Yorkshire and Leicester. Groups throughout the UK gave support to charitable events such as Half Marathons at Fleet in Hampshire, Bath, Liverpool and Wilmslow with other events being assisted by members in Keighley, Thanet, Wellingborough, Sheffield, Wimborne, South East Dorset and Beaulieu.

Meanwhile on the emergency front NW Hampshire were placed on standby following the discovery of an unexploded shell near Basingstoke and the North Anglia Group were called out to assist with an evacuation and the provision of communications for a rest centre during a period of high tides and strong winds.

In April the unthinkable happened! An earthquake in Kent? Members in Kent were placed on standby following this unusual event, and West Devon members went to standby following the discovery of an unexploded bomb in Plymouth. Meanwhile the Greater Manchester

Group continued their work on Underground Communications with further tests at Standedge Tunnel. Members across the UK supported a wide range of events including walks, runs, races, horse rides, cycle rides, rallies and all the rest!

This month the RSGB announced the appointment of Robin Bellerby GM3ZYE as National RCVS coordinator, but sadly Robin didn't feel able to continue in the role for very long, and a replacement appointment is awaited. At the RSGB AGM in Edinburgh, the RSGB RAYNET Cup was presented to Geoff Griffiths G3STG.

In comparison with all this activity, May gave us a brief respite and we were able to get on with our normal workload.

Members in Zones 5, 6 and 7 carried out successful communications tests during this month, whilst the Great East Anglia Run, the Heritage Coast Walk, the Macmillan Walk across Watership Down, the BHF Cycle Ride in Dorset, the Woodbridge Horse Show in Suffolk and the Railcare Team incident exercise in Yorkshire give just a taste of the wide range of 75 operations supported during this month.

Finally in this first half of the year June was another "quiet-ish" month with 65 events being reported from Scotland, Wales and England. These included Bristol Docks Fun Run, a VW Classic Show in Dorset, a canoe race around the Cheshire ring, a Roman Day at Chester Races, The "Ironman" half triathlon and "Royal Windsor" Triathlon, the Red Kite Challenge in North Dyfed, night and day cross country walks and a host of other important support for charitable events. Ⓞ

➡ *Kent was put on alert for an earthquake, whilst Greater Manchester Group conducted further underground tests.* Ⓞ

June still had a few tricks up its sleeve though. Rotherham and Sheffield Group were called out towards the end of the month amid fears of the collapse of the Ulley Dam which would have caused major flooding of surrounding areas. Later in July, the Floods Minister was given a briefing of the work done by RAYNET during the emergency.

July began with forecasts of heavy rain for the West of England and for Wales, and these concerns proved well founded. Groups throughout the South of England were placed on standby during the month, with Berkshire, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire threatened by the Thames.

The Nation's attention was focused on the flooding of the Severn, and in particular the isolation of Tewkesbury, and flooding of Gloucester. Members in Zone Seven worked tirelessly throughout this period providing vital communications between the tri-service Control Centre set up outside the City at Quedgeley, to also cover Tewkesbury, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Cirencester and Stroud, and later with water distribution points throughout the City.



**Flooding in Tewkesbury**

Of course whilst all this was going on, routine RAYNET activities were continuing elsewhere for the Summer's events like RIAT and the Tour de France opening leg in Kent, with no less than 63 major events being supported throughout the UK.

Just to add to the Nation's misery, Foot and Mouth came back to haunt us all in August, joining wet weather to result in many duties being cancelled, only 26 events in the month appearing in the National Diary.

September saw another major incident involving RAYNET. The South

Sussex Group were at the Shoreham Air show when a fatal crash needed prompt and professional work to help manage the emergency, and their efforts were acknowledged later in the year by the award of the RAYNET Shield.

RAYNET Supplies attended a noisy Donington Rally this month, and more than 70 other events benefited from RAYNET support, including the usual mixture of horse and bike rides, Marathons, walks and races and air shows in all corners of the UK. The continuing wet weather and difficult ground conditions did however lead to some events being cancelled.

On the last day of October, a major fire at Coryton Oil Refinery brought Essex RAYNET to standby. They were tasked with preparing communications support for the setting up of Rest Centres in the event of evacuations from the affected area.

Fortunately, this support was eventually not required.

Volunteers' work continued however with 46 other events needing them, including a major Oil Pollution exercise in Scotland, the usual multi-Group effort supporting the Tour of Mull Rally,

and the, by now familiar, mixed bag of walks, rides, runs and support for charity fund raising.

Eastbourne and Wealden Group gave a great welcome to those members who were able to escape from firework duty and attend the AGM and convention in November. There they were treated to a fascinating programme and the usual Q&A session in the afternoon, as well as good food and company.

The month was another busy one of 29 events, with the 3rd EMCOM

Party on the Air adding to the activity. Norfolk and Essex Groups were on standby during a major storm surge on the South East Coast, but fortunately large scale flooding did not follow. As a result of their work, Essex RAYNET received commendations from their Emergency Planning and Police authorities.

➡ *The number of call-out events was up this year and it was not all down to the floods.* ⤵

December saw a gradual reduction in activity in preparation for the winter season of training and equipment checks in readiness for 2008.

So we come to the end of the year's review - not an uneventful one!

It only remains for your reporter to mark the loss of old friends during the year. Alan Stanley G10MH (Kent and Medway), Dougie Corkhill GD8KWM (Isle of Man), John Jones GW3IGG (Pembrokeshire), Tony Compton G1SHH (South Sussex) and Henry Kaminski G1MBX (Chichester) will all be sadly missed. ⤵

### Tony Compton G1SHH Silent Key

Tony, a very enthusiastic, active and humorous member of Eastbourne & Wealden Group since the early 80's passed away on 27th October 2007 after a short illness, exactly a week before the National Convention and AGM, which the Group hosted.

Tony loved events and anything to do with horses. He also liked being the SJAB ambulance operator for the Beachy Head Marathon and 2007 was the first in over 20 years that he was not on board. He had planned to monitor the event from the hospice and actually passed away as the event finished. He did manage to make it to his son's wedding only two days before his death, hopefully bringing a little solace to his family.

# The 2007 Convention and AGM

At the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Headquarters in Eastbourne

The RAYNET Convention took place on Saturday, 3rd November, 2007 at the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Headquarters in Eastbourne and was attended by over 70 people.

After a welcoming address by Eastbourne's Group Controller, Dick Jeffries G4KAR whose Group undertook all the organisation, Captain Tom Talbot gave a presentation on the role of 2 (National Communications) Signal Brigade, including the ongoing interoperability tests with RAYNET.



Capt Tom Talbot

Further tests are expected to be carried out in September 2008. Yeoman of Signals Shackleton then spoke about the equipment currently being used, and attendees had an opportunity to view various items of communications equipment. The presentation was concluded with a short demonstration of the ICRI interface unit by Alasdair Keir of Resilience Communications Ltd.

After the coffee break, Max White MOVNG of Gloucestershire RAYNET gave an interesting presentation on their involvement in the summer floods in their area and the lessons learnt from the incident.



Brisk RAYNET Sales at the AGM

As usual, the afternoon session was for the AGM. Cathy Clark G1GQJ gave her report. After detailing our activities during the year Cathy outlined the future projects that the various voluntary teams will be un-

dertaking in 2008. This was followed by the presentation of the annual accounts to the membership by Brett Rider G4FLO and voting on a number of Special Resolutions which had been notified to the membership in advance. These were all carried after questions and debate.

Long Service Certificates were presented to a number of attendees, including a special framed "Fifty Years of Service" certificate to Geoff Griffiths G3STG—the first such certificate to be presented by the organisation. Zonal Co-ordinators are in possession of those certificates for members who were unable to attend and will make their own arrangements to present them.

**The RAYNET Shield for 2007 (see front cover)** was presented to Paul Steadman G6LMB, Group Secretary of **South Sussex RAYNET**, for the way the Group handled the tragic accident at Shoreham Air Show in the summer.

In recognition of their hosting of the 2007 Convention, Eastbourne and Wealden RAYNET Group were presented with a RAYNET flag, which was duly hoisted atop the mast on their new emergency communications unit, which was parked at the front of the building.

The final act of the AGM was the formal announcement of the 2008 Convention and AGM. This will take place on Saturday 1st November at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool.



Assembling for the Evening Dinner

A short Open Forum concluded the activities.

RAYNET Supplies saw brisk sales throughout the day, and in the evening nearly 40 members attended an excellent dinner at a local restaurant.



## John Jones GW3IGG Silent Key

It was with sadness that we reported in December the death of John Jones GW3IGG, who had been Controller of Pembrokeshire RAYNET for over 20 years.

John had run a large and enthusiastic group of RAYNET volunteers in Pembrokeshire, and had been involved in numerous exercises and training activities with the EPU and User services over the period of his very professional stewardship of the group.

There were a number of actual emergencies where the Group, under his leadership, had been involved, including severe flooding in Carmarthen in 1987 which resulted in the telephone exchange failing, and the Sea Empress oil spillage disaster in February 1996 which involved more than three weeks activity.

John was a chemical engineer in the oil industry and so had considerable experience to bring to this incident.

# HELP!

Use *your* skills to enhance the image and competence of *your* organisation



Brett Ryder G4FLO  
Treasurer  
Member of the Committee of Management

New faces bring new ideas and we always require more human resources. Have you been in RAYNET for a little while now? Do you have some skill which you would like to use to the common benefit, or have spare time maybe because you've now retired and want to do something worthwhile?

If so, then maybe you would like to give us a hand! Believe it or not, there's nothing special about those who do things at national level. We're just regular RAYNET guys 'n gals who either got (nicely) press-ganged or didn't step back fast enough.

We're always on the lookout for more volunteers. There's a lot to do at national level, and our biggest single limiting resource in doing more for the membership is volunteer time. As they say *many hands make light work* as we, the organisation moves forwards.

➡ **Zonal Co-ordinators are elected for a three year term and can be re-elected.** ⬅

There are basically three types of posts:

- Zonal Co-ordinators
- Team members
- Associates

## Wanted—Associates

Whilst the Committee does a fair job of doing its own research, there are times when a friendly eye, expert comment or professional guidance would be extremely useful. We are therefore looking for occasional help in the following areas:

**Trademarks, product/service licensing and general intellectual property protection**

**Legal, especially company and charity matters**

**Human resource management**

**Zonal Co-ordinators** are elected by all the Network Controllers in their Zone. They serve for a 3 year term and can be re-elected. The ZC's plus the chairman form the trustees of the charity (and also the directors of the company). Collectively they are ultimately responsible for the management of the organisation and control its overall direction. They also have the legal responsibilities of trusteeship/directorship to fulfil. They are expected to represent the views of their zone at Committee of Management (CoM) meetings (as well as working collectively together for the organisation) and to represent CoM to Members. They are required to hold periodic Zonal meetings as part of their democratic role.

Committee of Management meetings are normally held 3 times a year in Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire starting at 9.00am and finishing usually by about 4pm. Beaconsfield has easy access by car, and neighbouring ZC's can

usually divert via various airports to collect the more distant members flying down for the day.

**Team members** belong to one of seven teams:

- Emergency Planning
- Finance
- Information Services
- Media Relations
- Supplies
- Technical
- Training

Members are appointed by the Chairman at any time in the year. They work under the direction of Team Leaders who have the responsibility of liaising routinely with the Chairman and meeting the CoM annually usually in September.

There is no term of office - mem-

bers stay in post for as long as is mutually agreeable.

## Zonal Co-ordinators Needed in the Following Areas

**Zone 2 - Yorkshire and North Humber-side**

**Zone 18 - North Wales (Gwynedd and Clwyd)**

**Zone 12 - "Lowland" Scotland (Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway, Lothian, Borders).**

The basic idea of the teams is that they get on and do the work of making sure the national organisation delivers its goods! Hence the members are appointed, not elected. Individuals normally bring a skill or time to the post and fulfil a specific role. Whilst the occasional team meeting happens, they are not committees.

The only essential requirements for ZCs and team members are really:

A computer, ideally with broadband as virtually all the communication is by e-mail with some Skype conference calls.

A firm commitment to make the time available to fulfil their role (and so not to let their colleagues down) so as to complete projects in a reasonable time.

Be willing to travel to the occasional team meeting.

To be a current member of the Network.

ZCs have to be elected by County and Group Controllers in their zone.

**Associates** are individuals, probably professionals, who empathise with the Network and who are willing to give their free advice on the odd

## Be Sneaky!

If you know someone who under estimates their abilities and could hold down one of these roles—let us know. We will soon see if they can resist Cathy's charms!

It is also true that some members would be happy to help if asked but are too modest to actually volunteer believing that there are others who will; and who would do the work better. On that basis none of us would ever do anything as there is always someone, somewhere who could do it better.

occasions that the Network is in need of their expertise.

In particular we are looking for people with expertise in the following areas:

**Trademarks**, product/service licensing and **general intellectual property protection**

**Legal**, especially company and charity matters

**Human resource** management

There is no requirement to attend any regular meetings or indeed to be a current member.

We will pay legitimate out of pocket expenses for all volunteers at national level according to CoM's current Expenses Policy.

So, if you would like to do something more within RAYNET, please don't feel embarrassed in making contact with us. Just drop an e-mail to Cathy G1GQJ our chairman, or contact one of our ZC's or Team Leaders (see inside front cover for contact information).

You'll find an enthusiastic and friendly bunch of people all trying to do the same thing as you—put something back into the hobby! ☺

## National Vacancies

In this edition we are publicising a number of vacancies that we know we need to fill. If you think there are other areas of expertise that would enhance our image, improve our profile or the service we provide, please let us know your views.

### *Training Team Vacancies*

The Training Team is looking to expand its activities in 2008 and to this end is looking for volunteers to add their skills to the team. Projects for the New Year include:

- On-line Learning
- Remote Audio Visual Tutoring
- Interactive media.
- A RAYNET Game

We look for the following skill areas to help us achieve these objectives.

#### **On-line Learning:**

Experience with **Moodle**, **DrupalEd** or similar free on-line learning resources to take training material and convert into this format.

**Remote Audio Visual Tutoring:** - Using free tools like Skype, there is the potential to run short (1 hour) training modules on-line.

**Presenters** - People who can present material, and ability to be confident with material being presented. If we had one presenter for each module, and each module was one hour long, then just one hour a week could cover 50 groups in a year.

**Web development**, with tools to support audio with graphical/pictorial presentation materials.

**RAYNET Game:** - the current outline is for a "Monopoly" style board layout

People with creative ideas for development

Also there could be a possibility to run this as an interactive on-line game if someone has the appropriate skills.

Interactive media: - for those not on broadband but have access to a computer.

People with skills to be able to convert material into this format.

We also require people to generate content and format the presentations to a style standard. There is a fair amount of material around at the moment, but it is not uniform in its style.

We would also like some volunteers to assist with testing the materials/delivery methods to help debug them before general release.

Ideally people interested should be on broadband and have the resources to communicate via a VoIP - Skype for preference - or possibly others.

Please send a brief resume of your skills/knowledge, contact details, and area(s) where you would like to help, to [training@raynet-uk.net](mailto:training@raynet-uk.net).

If you have any skills not mentioned which you feel could benefit RAYNET training please do not hesitate to get in contact.

### *Emergency Planning Team - External Group Liaison Officer*

We need a person to liaise with non-Network groups so as to maintain the effectiveness of the national call-out scheme - the candidate will likely have RSGB experience.

# More National Vacancies—*Oh Go On!*

## Information Services Team - Assistant Webmaster

### Introduction

Over the years Jim G1HUL, has developed our website into an Aladdin's cave of web and database goodies and now underpins much of what happens at national level. We need an assistant to Jim to help him maintain and develop further our website.

### Role

To assist in the development of the RAYNET website, within the guidelines set down by the Webmaster and Committee of Management.

To share duties connected with day-to-day maintenance tasks and user queries.

To report to the IS Team Leader.

### Skills

Ideally currently employed as an IT systems developer with a working knowledge of:

Web development using IIS6, HTML, ASP and JavaScript

T-SQL and MS SQL use via ADO Relational database design

Maintenance of MS SQL databases (including query optimisation and triggers)

Have experience of developing:

Web-based response forms  
Data-driven page content  
Forms validation using JavaScript

Ideally, experience of using Adobe/Macromedia Dreamweaver

## RAYNET News Readers (80 metres)

The News service on 80m provides the latest news to HF listeners every Sunday morning of the year, and presents a very public face of RAYNET to many short wave listeners, and Amateurs who come across the transmissions.

The news is read by a team who take on either a net control or stand-by reader duty about once a month. They are provided with a script by email plus operating procedures and lists of regular callers, their names and locations, to help them with the task.

The service is always looking out for new volunteers to join us. Have a listen on 3.663MHz at 08:30 on Sunday mornings.

If you have a good 80m signal, especially if you are located in the North of England or in Scotland or Wales, and would like to work on this important team, then please drop a note for further information to

Geoff g3stg@raynet-uk.net

## Media Team - News Feature Writer / Web Content Editor

### Introduction

Key to making any web site or newsletter interesting is the flow of new material. Both Jim G1HUL (webmaster) and Don G3Y00 (RAY-Link editor) need a news hound to help with new material for their respective publications.

### Role

To write, edit and publish articles for the RAYNET website and for inclusion in the RAY-Link newsletter.

To report to the Media Relations Team Leader and liaise with the webmaster.

### Skills

Able to write and edit articles to an acceptable standard of English.  
Experience of managing web content and producing professional web pages using a web layout tool.

Understand the requirements of preparing photos and other images for publication on web pages and printed newsletters, plus working knowledge of a graphics package to produce such images.

Be able to work to publishing deadlines (normally four times a year for the RAY-Link members' newsletter).

# NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK— RAYNET IN SHROPSHIRE

Eric Howells GOGAL

Email:  
erichtelford@aol.com

Eric is Shropshire County  
RAYNET Group Secretary.

The Group have recently  
joined *The Network*.

The Shropshire County RAYNET Group, (G1SCR) Zone 9, covers RAYNET activities in Shropshire. Shropshire is the UK's largest landlocked County covering 1,300 square miles with a population approximately 450,000 people. The County has varied geography with remote and hilly terrain, especially in the South and the Welsh border areas, compared to the more open Northern half of the county. This presents both operational and technical challenges to our activities.

person to the Northeast of Shrewsbury. The Group was put on standby during the recent Shrewsbury floods and last year during the London bombings.

Recently requests for our services have increased. Our "flagship events" are the Derwen College in late March. This event is a sponsored walk where the resident special needs students walk a circular 10 mile route near Oswestry, Shropshire.



Picture by Jim G7LXI

Left to Right, Ron - M1D0G, Joan - 2E1JCM, Alec M1D0H – Deputy County Controller, Mark M1D0I - County Controller, Tony - GORVE, Matt - M1EQV

The "Longmynd 50 Mile Hike", a demanding event, takes place on the rugged hills in the area of Church Stretton, Shropshire, much of it over 1,200 feet ASL, over a weekend in October. Poor weather conditions are often the norm.



Matt M1EQV makes a final check before the start on the Derwen Walk

Shropshire RAYNET, first formed in the Mid-Seventies, has about 30 members. We have a very good website, [shropshire-raynet.co.uk](http://shropshire-raynet.co.uk), maintained by our Deputy County Controller and webmaster Alec M1D0H, also a Yahoo Users group by County Controller Mark M1D0I,

We have a good demographic cross section in terms of age, gender and skills. The youngest member is fifteen and the oldest members are over seventy. At present, there are six male – female married/partnership couples in the group, three of whom are both licensed.



The author, GOGAL, manning a checkpoint on the Lake Vyrnwy Half Marathon

In recent years, Shropshire County RAYNET members have been called upon to help search for a missing

This year, Shropshire RAYNET assisted Powys RAYNET as they supported the LDWA. Hundred Mile Walk near Landridnodd Wells. We later supported the Lake Vyrnwy Half Marathon. We have also covered a St. Georges Day parade and a Sealed Knot event in Shrewsbury.

Shropshire County RAYNET Group members now look forward to the future participating as members of the Network.



# Time for a Recharge!

Our regular contributor, **Geoff Griffiths G3STG** gives a timely reminder and useful advice on being prepared for the 'new season'

At this time of year, RAYNET member's thoughts surely turn to thoughts of ....power supplies. Not only is there need to think again about standby batteries, but also about managing the power supplies for our handheld and portable equipment in readiness for the busy months ahead.

I have recently been involved in working with the EPO staff in my County in the equipping of two major control centres with antennas, base stations, TNC's and all. In both cases, this has been part of a relocation of the Controls due to reorganisation and relocation. And, again in both cases, these moves have brought about changes in coverage patterns, not for the better, and not helped by exchanging antennas on the top of a six storey, well sited, office block for an antenna at 1st floor level in a back street in one case, or in a significantly lower location in another. And in both cases this lead to County coverage problems not foreseen by the planners, but foretold by RAYNET operators!

However, this has provided the stimulus to look again at standby battery provision, and I have found one of the ARRL publications very useful in gathering thoughts. This not only gives clear advice on the selection of appropriate lead-acid type batteries for standby power in Control Centres which may not be activated very often, and which are then required to work efficiently at the touch of a button, but also on how to set up, charge and maintain their performance to ensure that they are good when we really need them.

And don't forget to be very wary of that old car-battery in the local district that has been on trickle charge for a couple of years. This can provide ideal conditions for a build up of hydrogen gas in the battery casing leading to spectacular and highly dangerous consequences when you throw that switch, or light that cigarette.

So if you want to explore the mysteries of lead acid bricks, how they work, how to recharge them, this may be the reference

for you. It will also reveal the secrets of the different types available such as deep cycle batteries, what kills them, how to install and charge them, where to locate them and, most importantly, essential safety notes.

Beg, borrow or steal a copy of "Emergency Power for Radio Communications" ISBN 0-87250-953-1, obtainable from RSGB (or direct from Newington!)

Time for thoughts to turn to standby power supplies & power for our handheld and portable equipment

It will also share with you the info on rechargeable cell types like NiCd, NiMH and Li-ion batteries which we all take for granted and help to decide which is best for the job you have in mind. There is even a chapter on building

your own generator. And in addition, you will get the low down on Solar Cells, how to manage and install them and regulate their outputs, and even help with an insight into wind power too. Don't forget that "only the rich can afford to buy cheap batteries".

Lithium Ion is reported to be the safest and most reliable of the battery chemistries. Furthermore, they hold twice the energy of nickel based batteries and four times that of lead acid!

CQ Magazine carried an article on "Are Lithium Ion Batteries safe?" last year. This reminds us that when Sony introduced the Lithium battery type in 1991, it knew of the potential safety risks as well as the advantages of such a high energy-dense type of cell. Lithium in its metallic form is a highly unstable material, but the development of the lithium ion battery overcame the problems and li-Ion batteries are reported to be the safest and most reliable of the battery chemistries. They hold twice the energy of nickel based batteries, and four times that of lead acid. They are low maintenance and have no "memory" effect, don't "sulphate" leading to failure and don't need scheduled recycling. However heat related failures are taken very seriously, and despite a 1 in 2000,000 failure rate, 6 million battery packs were recalled in 2006. So if you want all the "current" thinking on this ubiquitous battery type try "CQ Amateur Radio February 2007 pp 13-16."

## Going out

The other thing we will all be doing in this season is thinking about our equipment for mobile and portable duties - if not, perhaps we should be!

I hope you won't get stuck out in the cold, but if you might, then you may find an article in QST for January 2008 of interest. This issue contains one amateur's approach to constructing a VHF antenna capable of operation in severe icing conditions. This reports how one American amateur in Grand Rapids has challenged the problems of operating throughout the severest weather, constructing an 8 ele Yagi for 222Mhz from aluminium stock materials. His design is reported to translate Well to the other VHF allocations. (QST January 2008 pp42-45)

And when you are out on that lonely check point waiting for riders to emerge from the dusk, have you ever thought how good it would have been to get the antenna up just that little bit higher. Have a look at this Radom Article on operating portable for the author's ideas on how to organise your equipment in the car and a simple low-cost base mount for a short mast. If you use your car battery for your power supply, don't forget to keep an eye on the voltage, and if you can, park facing downhill, just in case! (RADCOM January 2008 p30)

## And Finally...

Don't forget, we need *your* input to produce this magazine. You can write short or long pieces (don't worry about formatting, straight text is best) although you should *always* put two spaces after a full stop (a universal typographical practice) and never a space between text and punctuation. Interesting photos with suitable comment or caption; little 'fillers' and URLs with funny, useful or interesting comments are all appreciated. Or write a controversial letter and stimulate debate! Send what you have to [raylink@raynet-uk.net](mailto:raylink@raynet-uk.net).

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