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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

As part of the relocation of GB7GH and GB3GH from the former County Council site at Ullenwood we have had to find new storage facilities for all of our spare equipment. Temporary storage has been located but we urgently need secure facilities of around 4m² of floor space. If you can help or know of someone who may be sympathetic to our need please let me or any committee member know.

During the last few weeks we have been informed that the mast at GB7FD is going to be replaced during August. I attended a meeting with the contractors in July and it would appear that we will lose service for 2-3 weeks whilst the work is undertaken. This will mainly affect the links to GB7MAD and GB7ST as well as the 2m-access port. It is hoped that traffic that passes through the system to Bristol will be routed via a different path through GB7RC. Users are asked to bear with us during the works.

We have a substantial amount of maintenance and new installation work to complete within the next few months. If anyone is available to assist with a few hours at a weekend or evening it would be most welcome. The present committee works very hard to keep the systems operational – for which I thank them – but some additional 'hands' would help!

Nick Negus
G6AWT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting took place at the Civil Service Club, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham at 20.00 on Tuesday 30th April 2002. The committee for the 2002/2003 session remains unchanged (see the contacts page for full details).

GB3GH VOICE REPEATER

Ken (G3LVP) and Stewart (G0LGS) visited the site a couple of months ago to investigate a reported 'crackling' on the transmitted audio. Although they suspected the outboard PA unit might be causing the problem and removed it, which reduced the 'crackling', it does not appear to have been totally eliminated. For the time being GB3GH is running on low power (about 2 Watts).

Whilst on site they found a problem with the Diplexer, which is used to feed the dual band antenna to both GB3GH, and GB3CG, this was repaired on site.

The group have acquired alternative radio equipment that is currently being programmed and configured, and will be used to replace the ageing PYE equipment. The G8CUL logic board that was purchased for the group some time ago has now been fully tested & configured and will be used with the replacement radio equipment.

Steve (G4FPV) has come up with an idea that should enable linking of the GB3GH and GB3CG voice repeaters, and which could also be expanded to include linking to other repeaters. He will be formulating his ideas in to more concrete plans over the coming months, and subject to RSGB / RA approval hopes to have a trial system in operation by the end of the year.

GB3CG VOICE REPEATER

See comments under GB3GH.

GB7GH NODE

Despite being repaired once since the move of site, the 19K2 link via GB7RR (to MLVN) is once again not fully working, due to problems with the receiver.

Similarly the link to the GB7WE node is also out of action due to problems with its receiver. However it is still possible to get to GB7WE via the KIDDER (G8PZT) Node.

The 1500VA UPS used at the site stopped working correctly following interruptions to the site mains during the thunderstorms in late July & early August, this means all equipment is currently operating directly from the site Mains supply.

Gloucestershire County Council has put the site on which GB7GH used to reside up for sale, see their Web site at:

<http://www.gloscc.gov.uk/property/ullenwood.htm>

(If you have £400,000 or so to spend it could be yours).

GB7FD NODE

As mentioned in the Chairman's report, GB7FD is expected to be off air for 2-3 weeks, whilst the Antenna Mast is replaced, it now looks as though this work will commence in late August.

The contractors carrying out the work are to remove our existing antenna's and feeders from the mast and re-install them (or replacements) on the new mast. The 23cm Antenna's will be replaced and we will also have a new dual-band (or perhaps Tri-band) vertical installed for the 2m user port. We hope to be able to re-use most (perhaps all) of the existing 70cm antennas.

GB7RT & GB7SR NODES

Once again problems with the cable connection between GB7RT and GB7SR in recent weeks have made this link unusable. Engineers (from the owners of the cable circuit) have now located a faulty line card, which has been replaced, and the circuit is working normally.

GB7GC NODE

The 70cm user port has been out of action for several weeks, this is due to a fault with the Transceiver. An alternative unit should be installed in the next few weeks.

GB7RC NODE

Nick (G6AWT) and Stewart (G0LGS) visited the site in early June with the intention of getting the system fully operational as well as carrying out the Annual Antenna check.

However as they were unable to determine why the system was failing to decode Transmissions from GB7WO and GB7WO was not decoding ours, they decided to remove some of the equipment for further checks.

Stewart (G0LGS) has been working on the Computer equipment and after some configuration changes is now confident that the system is correctly sending and receiving on each of the 9K6 link ports (it now works on the bench between GB7RC system and another 9K6 capable TNC). Steve (G4FPV) has checked and re-aligned the transmitter and receiver that are to be used for the GB7WO link.

It is hoped we will finally be able to install and test system with the 9K6 links to GB7WO and GB7TJZ before GB7FD is taken off air for the mast replacement.

NEW APRS DIGIPEATER

The group has obtained permission from the GB7RC site owners to install an additional Antenna and Feeder on the site. It is planned to use this for a further APRS digipeater, which should extend APRS coverage into South Wales and North Devon. Whilst this idea is still at the planning stage, it may actually be part of the same system as GB7RC, but will use a MB7Ux style callsign.

The latest Xrouter software from G8PZT makes it possible to operate AX25 / NETROM, TCP/IP and APRS systems using one computer system and one software package, yet restrict the traffic on each radio port to the appropriate formats.

Further Information about Xrouter, or to download the latest version see Paula's web site at:

<http://www.g8pzt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/software/software.htm>

GB7RR REGEN

Appears to be working well. Hopefully will shortly be passing large volumes of traffic to GB7RC whilst GB7FD is off-air.

MB7UC A.P.R.S. DIGIPEATER

MB7UC has now been operational on 144.800 MHz for several months. We had a problem a few days after the initial installation whereby the transmitter went off frequency, this appears to have been due to overheating of the co-located GB7RR equipment, the problem has however not re-occurred.

MB7UC works well on receive, hearing much traffic from Northeast, through East to the South / Southwest, but coverage to the West & North is not as good. We believe this could be due to the shielding effects of the mast on which the antenna is installed and the effects of the other masts on the site.

However the system is not received well by other stations, this we believe is because most APRS stations are operating around 25W ERP (the maximum permitted), but MB7UC is currently operating at about 5W ERP.

It is proposed to improve transmit coverage by installing a higher-powered transmitter (A suitable radio has been acquired for this). Ken (G3LVP) has reminded the rest of the committee that the adjacent area is used from time to time for 2m (& other) contests, with this in mind the committee agreed that we will be willing to turn off MB7UC for the duration of any 2m contest activity from the site. Dave (G4GVZ) and Stewart (G0LGS) can do this remotely on request (but will need to visit the site to restore normal operation).

Stewart (G0LGS) who runs a Linux APRS program (Xastir) has made a current APRS map, from the 144.800 MHz activity heard by his system, most of it via MB7UC, available on the Web at:

<http://gb7lgs.dynup.net/aprs.shtml> or

<http://gb7lgs.co.uk/aprs.shtml>

The map is updated every 5 minutes during periods when his APRS system his active.

GB7GLO AND MLVN NODE

GB7GLO was out of action for a couple of weeks earlier in the year due to a faulty power supply, Stewart (G0LGS) obtained and installed a replacement unit and also updated the FBB software.

The MLVN node was off air for one day in late July, due to the failure of the Computer PSU Fan and consequent thermal shutdown of the PSU. Steve (G4FPV) was able to repair / replace the Fan and restore the system to normal operation.

GB7LGS

GB7LGS now has a full time Internet connection available (using Broadband Cable). This means the AmPRNet World Wide convers system is now available 24hrs a day / 7days a week.

Stewart Wilkinson.
G0LGS

GB7DXC

GB7DXC was out of action for a week in early August due to a fault with the computer system, which was noticed just one hour before Martin (G0HDB) who runs the system went off for a weeks holiday. Martin has rebuilt the system, and hopes that it should now be stable once again.

WEB SITE MOVE

Following Stewart's (G0LGS) change of Internet service provider the groups main web site has now moved to:

<http://www.g0lgs.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/grg/>

And his FourPack site has moved to:

<http://www.g0lgs.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/fourp/>

Both sites will however remain available at the previous location for a couple of months.

TREASURERS REPORT

As reported at the AGM, last year was the most expensive the group has had in its history, with the cost of moving GB7GH being the major factor. Despite this and the fall in subscription income over the last 2 years, it was decided to keep the suggested minimum subscription at £10 for 2002/2003. (The year was also a bumper one in terms of income generated from donations of surplus equipment too).

To help reduce the overall costs for the coming year, and indeed future years, the Committee decided to reduce the amount of equipment actually insured on the group's ARIS Insurance policy.

This was done in agreement with FourPack (as their sites and equipment are also covered by the policy) and the insurance agents (ARIS).

Stewart Wilkinson.
G0LGS

WANTED

Robert Day (G1LOA) requires to borrow / purchase a workshop manual for a Kenwood TS940S. He is also interested in purchasing a 19" Computer monitor.

Stewart (G0LGS) needs the Channel Number & Frequency Information for AKD 6m (6001) FM Transceiver (Contact information on last page).

CHANGING 70cm ALLOCATIONS

News is being received that the MoD (the primary user) are restricting use of parts of the 70cm band. Applications for GB7xx/x clearances are currently being 'bounced' as the MoD is reserving certain 25KHz channels for emergency use across the UK.

These restrictions specifically hit the band ends, which are traditionally used for packet linking. MoD has refused to publish a list of the frequencies and applicants are being forced to 'negotiate' with Denise Carter at the Radiocommunications Agency to find a suitable frequency.

Those stations already allocated with permission to use the restricted frequencies will not (currently) be affected. The "ban" does not affect manned stations. It should be noted that Steve Morton (RSGB DCC Rep) advised all packet (node) operators two years ago to apply for a GB7 callsign. Some wouldn't or couldn't be bothered. They have only themselves to blame.

RALLY NEWS

We have just been notified that the Worcester Rally will be held on Sunday December 8th at a venue close to M5 Junction 6 (Worcester North).

FOURPACK NEWS

GB7WE node system is now fully operational with the link from GB7WE-11 to GB7CH (and GB7OAR) near Chester now being operational. At present to access that part of the network you must first connect to GB7WE-11 and then to GB7CH or GB7OAR.

GB7WR's 2m-user port radio has been fully repaired and is now operating on the correct frequency (It was a few kHz off). Also the agreement to operate the node has been renewed with the local council.

FOURPACK Meetings: 20.00 on the 4th Wednesday of the month. These are currently being held at 'The Swan', Whittington, Worcester, close to M5 Junction 7 (Worcester South). (Non-members are always welcome).