

Gloucester Repeater Group Newsletter

GB3GH GB7GH GB7FD GB7GC G7NYP

Edited by: Stewart Wilkinson G0LGS

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Welcome to the first Gloucester Repeater Group Newsletter for the 1996/97 period.

1996 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was good to see an increase in the number of members present at this years AGM (held at the CIVIL SERVICE CLUB, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham on 15th April). Those Members present heard reports on the progress of work at our various sites, as well as information regarding planned expansion to other sites.

Contact details for the New (1996/97) Committee members appear at the end of this Newsletter. Due to Richard Bown (G8JVM) moving to Shropshire the Secretary's post is vacant at this time, but Stewart (G0LGS) has been carrying most of the Secretary's duties in addition to that of Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. If anyone would like to volunteer to take on the post of Secretary please contact any Committee member.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

As was outlined in the last Newsletter, plans were being made to relocate the 144.650MHz node access to a more suitable site. There have been a number of technical problems with the Ullenwood site, not least the aerial being at 270m ASL which allows it to hear everything all of the time and hence inhibits the transmitter!

Notification has just been received from the Estate Manager advising that use of Churchdown Hill by us has been recommended to the site owner and that the appropriate site sharing licence should be issued within six weeks. As a consequence work is now commencing to move the 144MHz node along with adding a new access frequency of 433.650MHz. Initially both of these will operate at 1200 Baud but discussions are underway

regarding a 9K6 port. It should be noted that 9K6 access is currently available from Malvern via G4FPV.

It is hoped that Churchdown will be on air by the end of the summer; However, this is dependent upon other matters rippling through the system. The new call-sign will (eventually) be GB7GC (Gloucester & Cheltenham) although G7NYP (currently in use at the Forest of Dean node) may be used initially. The 70cm frequency is presently used to link G7NYP and G7BTI on 1200 Baud. This will move and become 9K6 full duplex.

GB7GC will be some 100mts ASL lower than Ullenwood and therefore should provide better local cover. Aerials will be vertically polarized, omnidirectional.

Other changes due to be implemented include upgrading the link to G7AXC and GB7DXC to 9K6, and extending the 70cm 9K6 full duplex link to Swindon (and beyond). Some of these changes will be transparent to the user except that faster replies and less retries will be evident.

Following a request, exploratory discussions have taken place between GRG and FourPak concerning the amalgamation of the two groups. Following much discussion in individual and combined meetings, it has been decided by both groups not to merge. It was felt that the current level of inter-group co-operation and representation provided a balanced approach to network management in the respective counties. However, it was decided that each group should embark on closer liaison with other adjacent service providers and promote a better understanding of the groups' activities and recruit more members, by means of presentations to all local radio clubs and others who would be interested.

Nicholas Negus
G6AWT.

GB3GH VOICE REPEATER

The 70cm voice repeater GB3GH on RB5 (433.125 MHz) continues to function well, but despite the closure of the Malvern voice repeaters GB3MS and GB3MH there has been only a slight increase in usage of GB3GH.

Reports on the operation of GB3GH should be sent to Ken Eastty (G3LVP).

NODE LICENSING

As some of you will be aware the RSGB's DCC have been negotiating with the Radio-Communications

Agency regarding possible changes to the way Site Clearance and Licensing of packet Nodes are handled. They hope that in future NODE licences will, like those for a MAILBOX, be issued as a Notice of Variation (NOV) for repeater keepers own licence (instead of the licence being held by the RSGB). This change (if it happens) should make the issue of GB7 plus two letter NODE callsign possible within 4 weeks of the application being lodged with RSGB.

Some concern has been expressed on the packet network regarding both this change, and the RA's statement at SYSOP 18 that 'only one NOV can be issued to any person'. In view of the current arrangements in the Gloucester Repeater Group where a number of our sites have the same 'Nominated' repeater keeper, I wrote to the DCC Chairman asking for some clarification on this matter, the DCC's reply indicated that there is no such restriction on the issue of multiple NOV's and this will continue to be the case.

Stewart Wilkinson.
G0LGS

GB7GH PACKET NODE

Recent work at the GB7GH site has included replacement of feeders and the addition of an extra Transmitter and Receiver on 23cm. This work means that the links to the MLVN and FOD sites which used to share a single Transmitter and antenna feeder are now served by separate units.

In addition work on installing a UPS for the computer system as well as a combined 12/24V Battery backed power supply system for the radio equipment has been completed, this will enable full operation of the system in the event of mains failure at the site for at least 45 minutes.

An application to update the site clearance of GB7GH to include ALL currently operational ports has recently been submitted for RA Approval.

G7NYP PACKET NODE

We are still awaiting completion of the site clearance process for GB7FD which will be the new callsign for use at the Forest of Dean site.

Recent work at the site has included the installation of a computer system, and the changeover to G8BPQ software, as well as the installation of a new card frame that will accommodate the TNC's and high speed modems (G3RUH compatible) that will be used for the planned expansion of the system. The system now uses just a single Netrom ALIAS and CALLSIGN, but should still accept AX25 connections to previous port ALIAS's (i.e.: FOD22 on 2m).

Initial indications are that the response time of the system is a little better than the previous arrangements, however it is now more apparent that the system has some problem with both 23cm links which results in higher retry rates at G6BIW and GB7GH than those shown at the G7NYP site, further investigative and corrective work will be carried out when time permits.

GB7GLO MAILBOX

GB7GLO located in Malvern continues to provide BBS facilities for users in Gloucestershire and Hereford & Worcester and beyond, as well as being an integral part of the UK's mail forwarding network. The system is currently handling 500 to 600 messages each day, this being a reduction from a peak last year of around 1000 a day, this drop in numbers is due to a change in forwarding routes used by a number of systems in the Northeast and Northwest.

A total of just under 300 users that have logged into the system in recent months, around 60 of these currently have password protected access to the system. The current password system uses a once only pad comprising a series of around 1000 passwords for each user (enough to be able to access the system up to 3 times a day for almost a year). Users requiring a new password sheet or further information should contact Steve Perkins (G4FPV) the Sysop of GB7GLO.

A recent addition is a 9K6 user access port on 433.675MHz, for further information on getting equipped for 9K6 please contact Steve.

TCP/IP NETWORK

Each of Gloucester Repeater Groups Nodes (together with most adjacent sites) have had TCP/IP routing capabilities for sometime. TCP/IP addresses conforming to the new regional allocations are in use at all our sites, routing tables are basically in place, but some updates are made from time to time as new routes become available.

Anyone Interested in TCP/IP should contact John Colley G4XJC (as Regional TCP/IP co-ordinator) or Stewart Wilkinson G0LGS, who will be pleased to pass on relevant information, and put them in contact with their local TCP/IP sub co-ordinator or allocate a suitable local TCP/IP address. Software for PC (DOS & Linux) as well as ATARI and other systems can be obtained from a number of local users if necessary.

GB7LGS TCP/IP MAILBOX

The TCP/IP Mailbox GB7LGS has been active in Cheltenham for a few months now, during which time a number of TCP/IP users in and around Cheltenham and Gloucester are now using it as their main BBS.

The system runs a number of separate software packages under the Linux operating system on a 386DX-40 PC with around 300 Mega-bytes of disk space, providing automatic forwarding/gating of mail (news) to/from the AX25 BBS system, as well as a convers server with links to Birmingham (GB7BIR) and Bristol (G6BIW). Various mail distribution servers are available to aid distribution of relevant information to TCP/IP users (both local and regional).

An increasing selection of information files and programs for DOS, Windows and Linux based systems are also available for FTP or for download using my REQDIR, REQFIL, UUENCODE and 7PSERV message server scripts. Most of the 7plus encoded material that appears on the BBS network is automatically decoded by the system and after review of its contents is made available in the public files area.

Local TCP/IP access is currently on 144.625 MHz, I hope to be able to add access on 70.4875 MHz, but I still have some work to carry out on the 4m Transceiver.

As I write this, I am in the process of making changes to the current system configuration which should allow the use of variations of the system callsigns (such as G0LGS, G0LGS-5, GB7LGS, GB7LGS-6) to permit access to different parts of the system. Further information on active callsign's and commands will be made available using the "HELP" command upon connection to the NODE (G0LGS).

Stewart Wilkinson.

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REPEATER CLOSEDOWN PROCEDURES

Under the Licensing arrangements for all packet NODES, MAILBOXES and voice repeaters the repeater keeper is required to provide the RSGB's DCC and the Radio-Communications Agency with an up-to-date list of those people that are authorised to shutdown each repeater.

As part of the part of a recent review carried out by G6AWT and G0LGS of the Groups close-down procedures for each of our packet sites ALL our close-down operators should have received a list of contact Names and Telephone numbers (24 Hours), which they are urged to retain in a safe place so that in the unlikely event that should they be called upon to close down the station, they will be able to obtain a set of keys.

In order that each close-down operator is aware of both the precise location of each installation and the appropriate procedures for closing down the station G6AWT and G0LGS will shortly be making arrangements for each person on the close-down lists to visit the site(s).

TREASURERS REPORT

First of all a thank you to those members that have sent me subscriptions and donations since the last news letter, without your continued support the group would not be able to carry on the work of maintaining and updating both the Voice Repeater and enhancing the local packet network.

The Committee has once again decided to book a table at this years Three Counties Radio Rally which will be held at the Three Counties Showground on Sunday 29th September. Last years event was well supported by group members, and we hope to see some of you at this years event. If you have any surplus items that you are willing to donate for the group to sell at the rally please contact the Chairman or myself so that we may arrange collection, or bring them along on the day.

Stewart Wilkinson.
G0LGS

WANTED

If anyone knows the whereabouts of a three port circulator for 435MHz (preferably free!) please let Ken G3LVP or Nick G6AWT know.

2 low power 2m FM rigs. Xtal controlled will do. Possibly old hand-helds? Contact Nick G6AWT.