

GLoucestershire Repeater Group

March 2007

Edited by Stewart Wilkinson GOLGS

EDITORS COMMENTS

Members will no doubt be aware that this is the first newsletter that I have produced for sometime; this is partly because so little has been happening with our various systems over the last 12-14 months and partly because those few items of news there have been are published on the groups web-site (<http://www.grg.org.uk/>).

Stewart Wilkinson
GOLGS
Editor

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

'Another day, another dollar'. Well maybe not entirely correct for GRG, but we are coming to that time of year when the AGM will be held and the review of subscriptions will take place. During the last year the committee has reviewed income and expenditure, and has taken measures to reduce outgoings. These measures have included moving some equipment and closing down the Forest of Dean packet site. Other ideas are being considered to consolidate our financial position.

We will also be looking for a new Chairman this year. I've chaired the group - with the exception of one year - for over 20 years and, despite trying to hand over the job in recent years, no one else has been willing (or is that mad enough?) to take on the role. However, my family and work circumstances have really dictated that I will not stand for re-election this year.

We also need one or two other people on the committee, particularly to help with some of the engineering issues. So do come along to the AGM and both stand for a position and cast your vote! You can also use the opportunity to pay your annual subscription.

Nick Negus
G6AWT
Chairman

2007 AGM

Please make a note in your diary that AGM will be held at 20:00 on the 24th April 2007 at the Civil Service Club, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham.

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Present
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of last meeting (held 25 April 2006)
5. Chairman's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Technical Manager's Report
9. Determination of Subscriptions
10. Election of the New Committee
11. Election of the Accounts Examiner
12. Appointment of Managers
13. Other Business

Note: Items for inclusion under Other Business may be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

TREASURERS REPORT

A few members will have received together with this newsletter, reminders regarding subscriptions that were due up to 12 months ago, as well as some that fall due shortly. I apologise for the lateness of these reminders, but due to family and work commitments; I have had very little time over the last year to deal with sending out reminders.

A small number of members have opted to pay subscriptions automatically from their bank accounts directly to the groups account, thus eliminating the need for any reminders, if anyone else would like to make such arrangements please contact me for the relevant details.

A full Treasurers report for 2006/2007 will be provided at the AGM.

Stewart Wilkinson
GOLGS
Treasurer

GB3GH VOICE REPEATER

As reported in the last newsletter the group received a donation of several complete modularised TAIT T855/T856 UHF radio systems and an assortment of spare parts.

Steve (G4FPV) has modified one of these and built a new PIC based logic control system for the GB3GH Voice repeater; this has now been in operation for many months. This new system seems to provide much better coverage for the primary coverage area (Cheltenham and Gloucester) than the older equipment, however we have had very few reports from stations on the edge of the coverage area.

Although it is not currently a requirement for existing voice repeaters, Steve (G4FPV) has also been working on equipment to allow for the remote shutdown of both GB3GH and GB3CG, some modification of the existing systems will be required before this equipment can be incorporated.

GB3CG VOICE REPEATER

Steve (G4FPV) has also produced new hardware for the GB3CG repeater; this includes new logic system, and suitably modified Key KM150 radios for the transmitter and receiver.

The new GB3CG equipment was also installed many months ago, however the performance is not as good as we expected and work to improve the both the Audio Frequency response and the RF performance is pending (some of this will require taking the system off-air for a few days).

Due to other activities, the GB3CG Echolink Gateway which was/is operated by Stewart G0LGS is now rarely active, if any other full licence holder (or any group of two or more full licence holders) would be willing to take over operating the gateway they should contact Stewart G0LGS and Nick G6AWT.

GB3CCX

The 10GHz Beacon GB3CCX is still working well, with occasional DX spots appearing on the DXCluster network.

GB7RR

Steve G4FPV has replaced the GB7RR Regenerative packet repeater system with one of the TAIT UHF Radio systems and new control system logic, however a problem with the main antenna system means that performance of the system is not as expected and the system is operating on a temporary antenna system.

MB7UC

MB7UC APRS system (Cleeve Hill, Cheltenham) has been working well for several years, but a recent problem with the transmitter has necessitated its replacement, following which a problem with the antenna system was discovered.

The MB7UC system is currently operating on a temporary antenna system, until a decision is made regarding the possible move of MB7UC, GB7RR and GB3CCX to an alternative mast on the site.

MB7US

MB7US APRS system (M48 Severn Bridge, Chepstow) is currently out of action following a fault; this will be investigated as time permits.

GB7FD NODE

The southbound RF link to the Bristol area from GB7FD was closed at the end of 2006 when the G6TJZ node and GB7TJZ BBS systems were closed down, thus ending many years of providing a 9600 Baud link between Malvern, Gloucester, Forest of Dean and Bristol.

The GB7FD node was closed down and all of our equipment removed from the site in late February 2007, thus meeting the timescale previously agreed with the site owner for us to vacate the site. It is hoped that an alternative link will be provided between GB7GH and GB7NW (Swindon) in due course.

Users around Cheltenham, Gloucester and The Forest of Dean should find that the 144.875 MHz 1200 Baud user port on GB7GH provides an adequate alternative access point.

GB7GH NODE

The RF link between GB7GH and GB7WE is currently out of action, however network access to GB7WE (Shropshire) is still available via the KIDDER (G8PZT) node.

Although the GB7GH node has one of the few remaining user access ports (on 144.875 MHz) the level of activity is still rather low.

GB7GLO & MLVN NODE

GB7GLO was off the air a couple of times in early March. The first time was on Friday the 9th of March due to a planned power outage for work at the local sub-station. Then an unplanned power cut that affected most of Malvern for an hour or so from about 21.10 on the 15th of March.

GB7LGS BBS & NODE

The GB7LGS TCP/IP BBS and node (GB7LGS-9) provides much of the connectivity between the remaining RF network in the area (GB7GH / MLVN) and various Internet connected systems. This includes carrying DXCluster traffic between GB7GH (Gloucester), GW3UWS (Swansea) and GB7DXC (Bredon).

LICENCE CHANGES

Ofcom launched a new online licensing system and 'Lifetime' licences for Amateur Radio and Ships licences on 1st December 2006.

All current Amateur Radio licence holders should receive a copy of the new licence documents over the next few months (before your current licence expires).

You will however need to register on the Ofcom Web site at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing/olc/> so that you can keep them informed of any change of details and to re-validate your licence at least every 5 years.

Some people (including the editor) are having problems with the current site, but I would hope most of these would be resolved well before anyone really needs to re-validate their licence.

The new licence rules includes some changes to the identification requirements for Data modes (Packet / RTTY / SSTV etc) as well as changes in regard to remote station operation (refer to your own copy of the document or see the Ofcom website for details of what is permitted).

The licence changes also permit Foundation licence holders (M3 calls) to use the 10m-band and to operate on the Various Amateur Satellites, at least one local foundation licence holder can be heard working VO-52 (Hamsat), AO-7 (Oscar-7), FO-29 (JAS 2) and AO-51 (Echo) quite regularly.

WORCESTER – JUNK SALE

The Worcester Radio Amateurs Association (WRAA) is to hold their very first Junk Sale on 10th April 2007.

It is open to anyone, both members and non-members. The sale will be run as an auction and a 10% commission from the sale of goods will go towards club funds.

This is meant as a bit of fun, and a good way to Spring clean your shack.

Tim G4MFU will be your auctioneer for the night, please arrive early to register or email Tim direct at g4mfu@wraa.co.uk

For further details see the WRAA web site at <http://g0wxj.demon.co.uk/>.

CONTESTS

Several of the RSGB VHF/UHF/SHF contests take place on Tuesday evenings each week between 2000 and 2230 (UK clock times), whilst a few members have been heard on the bands, I'm sure those stations taking part in the contests would appreciate a few extra contacts.

Dates and further details for each of these contests can be found on the VHF Contest web site at <http://www.vhfcc.org/> - whilst entry to the contest itself is only open to RSGB members, all contacts count towards the final score (please ensure you know your IARU locator – see <http://www.carabus.co.uk/jscalculators.html> for a way to work this out).

Stewart (G0LGS) entered the RSGB Xmas VHF Cumulative Contest (operating /P for 2 hours each day on 2m and 70cm between 26th – 29th December 2006), which earned him 2nd place in the open section.