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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

At the AGM back in April I made the bold statement that we hoped to complete all of the outstanding new work by the end of the summer in order that we could embark on various upgrades and outstanding repairs. Little did I know what problems would be forthcoming due to the foot & mouth crisis; For some five months we have been denied access to certain sites and at others we took the prudent steps of not visiting them unless necessary. In particular those sites in the Forest of Dean and others in the heart of the farming countryside have not seen us. Some may say that we have been fortunate in not having equipment fail, I believe however that the reliability of our equipment is due to the professional installation techniques that we employ and the care and planning that goes into every installation.

One of our major new installations is the new site for GB7GH. Over the past few months Ron (G8CXR) and I have been to the site on several weekends preparing the building and installing the underground services (electric, telephone and lightening earth's).

It is with regret that Ron has informed us that he and his good lady are moving out of the county to pastures new. Through the medium of this publication I would like to thank Ron for all of his assistance.

With Ron going this leaves a 'hole' in the committee; Is there someone out there who would like to get involved in keeping the systems (both voice and data) going? The commitment is not vast but the experience gained is invaluable. You do not have to be highly technically competent or have muscles like on Ox, just a willingness to put something back into the hobby. Please contact me or any other committee member to find out more (contact details are on the back page of this newsletter).

Nick Negus
G6AWT

GB3GH 70CM VOICE REPEATER

Ken (G3LVP) has made an application to relocate the 70cm voice repeater to Churchdown Hill (to be co-located with GB3CG). The RMG 'lost' the first set of paperwork submitted so Ken has sent a further copy to both the RMG and to RSGB HQ.

Two new commercial radios (RS9044) have been obtained for use at the new site, however they will require some modification before they are ready for use.

It is intended to replace the existing repeater logic with the G8CUL module that the group purchased (thanks to a donation) sometime ago, this will give more flexibility and control. It may be possible, with the appropriate approval and some additional hardware, to inter-connect GB3CG and GB3GH and so provide cross-band facilities.

Coverage from the new site will be significantly different to that from the existing site, but should give far better coverage into Cheltenham, Gloucester and more southerly parts of the county.

GB3CG 2M VOICE REPEATER

A couple of the cells in the battery backup system, which we inherited from the site owners, are showing signs of age and will need to be replaced in the near future.

We have received reports that some users are having problems receiving GB3CG when using CTCSS (tone) squelch, we suspect that the CTCSS deviation level may be too low for some radios. Users that experience this problem are advised not to use CTCSS (tone) Squelch until such time as we have made any necessary adjustments to the repeater.

GB7GH NODE

Preparations for moving the GB7GH from the existing site to an adjacent site have been progressing well.

Our planning application for installation of a replacement mast and equipment cabin has been approved and we have agreed with Cotswold District Council that the cabin will be coloured Drab Olive.

Initial problems getting a low impedance reading for the lightening earth (originally 63 Ohms) have been overcome by the installation of two additional earth rods and some 75mm² copper tape to bond them all together.

It is hoped that installation of the tower will be completed in early September.

The group has in the last week received notification that we will be required to vacate the existing site by 31st December. This gives us 4 months to complete the move of GB7GH and GB3GH to their respective new sites, and means much of the work planned for other sites will have to be delayed in favour of completing the move of these systems. If you are available to help with this work (mostly at weekends) please contact Nick (G6AWT).

We aim to minimise disruption to the packet network as much as possible during the move of GB7GH, by completing the move of each of the main links in as short a time frame as possible (ideally in a few hours). However it may be necessary to take some other links out of action for much longer periods of time. Look out for details on GB7GLO, GB7LGS or GB7DXC.

The 23cm duplex link to GB7RT, which was disabled for a while earlier in the year to eliminate a problem of mutual interference (as reported in the March newsletter) has been restored to normal operation and the link is now performing well in both directions.

GB7FD NODE

We are still awaiting news from the site owners regarding the replacement of the aerial mast.

The only recent visit to the GB7FD site has been to remove a faulty electronic timer, after its failure caused the system to stop working.

The main southbound links from GB7NW to GB7SW and beyond were out of action for a while earlier in the year due to a fault. As this newsletter was being prepared those links were once again out of action, but no further information on why they were off or how long they might be out of action was available.

GB7RT & GB7SR NODES

GB7RT has had problems with ingress of water into the 23cm antenna and feeder, the feeder has been replaced and the link is now working well.

Following contact with Racal Telecom regarding the cable connection between GB7RT and GB7SR this link seems to have been working well over the last few months.

GB7GC NODE

GB7GC was off air for a while in late July / early August due to several intermittent faults with the computer hardware. We believe that these faults may have been due to corrosion on many of the internal connections, which is most likely caused by the high levels of Chlorine present in the equipment room. If the problems return we may need to replace the existing 486-computer system with another.

GB7RC NODE

Steve (G4FPV) and Stewart (G0LGS) returned to the M48 Severn Bridge in early August to fit a new CWID unit, re-crystal one of the 70cm link transmitters and restore power to the system.

Unfortunately problems with the PC caused the system to key the transmitters without sending any data. In addition the transmitter for the main 19K2 Baud link (via GB7RR) was found to be some 60KHz off frequency due to an oscillator problem.

All other Transmitters and Receivers were tested and found to be operating on the correct frequency.

As a consequence GB7RC is still not fully functional, but should now be sending its CWID.

GB7RR

Although GB7RR has been working normally over the last few months, as a result of work on similar equipment a possible problem has been identified with the transmitter, this may require some modification work to be carried out at a later date.

GB3CCX

GB3CCX was off air for a while following storms in early summer, which caused the PSU to shutdown, however no damage was sustained to any of the equipment.

GB7GLO AND MLVN NODE

Some work has been carried out on the antenna system to improve the links to SONA (G8RDT) and KIDDER (G8PZT).

Work is in progress on an alternative radio for the 19K2 link (via GB7RR).

We have seen a number of instances recently where old (repeated) bulletins have been re-circulated on the packet network, some of which have been over a year out of date. Stewart (G0LGS) has made a number of improvements to his add-on XFBB message filter program, which helps to eliminate these repeats.

GB7XJC

Following GB7XJC's closure (as mentioned in the March Newsletter) Jon Colley (G4XJC) has been advised by Gloucestershire Police that they have completed their investigations and that there will be no charges arising from them. He has also been advised that his Computer Equipment will be returned to him in due course.

Jon is still however awaiting feedback from the Radio-Communications Agency regarding re-instatement of his amateur radio licence and NOV for operating GB7XJC.

LOCAL EVENTS

A Radio, Electronics and Computer Rally will be held at the Purdiswell Leisure Center, Bilford Road Worcester on 8th December 2001. Details from John G8MGK on 01527 545 823 or 07762 203 355 or see <http://www.qsl.net/gb2tcr>. Gloucestershire Repeater Group and FourPack Radio Club will be attending.

A Microwave Round Table will be held at GCHQ on Sunday 14th October. Access is by ticket only (in advance). Contact Nick (G6AWT) for an application form.

TREASURERS REPORT

Income from the 3 Counties Rally in May was a little down on previous years, perhaps due to a clash of dates with other larger rallies, despite this it was still well worth attending this local event.

Over the last few months we have sold a number of 70cm Hand-held radio's (Philips PRP73's), which were donated to the group. The sale of these has boosted club funds by over £500.

A new group insurance policy came into effect on the 1st July 2001. The new policy (with ARIS) provides cover for £15,000 of group equipment and 3rd Party Liability cover. Although more expensive than the previous UKRS arranged policy the new policy provides cover for additional equipment and is better suited to the groups other requirements.

Stewart Wilkinson.
G0LGS

FOR SALE

70cm Hand-held Radios: Programmed with all the usual Simplex, Packet Radio and Repeater Channels, include CTCSS and 1750Hz tone-burst, complete with a fully charged NiCad for the incredible price of £15 each (or 5 for £75 with a free 5 position charger). Contact Stewart (G0LGS).

Trailer mounted telescopic tower, with electric winch: Open to offers (over £400). Contact Nick (G6AWT).

24V DC 10A linear Power Supplies. £15 each. Contact Nick (G6AWT).

Hewlett Packard milli-ohmmeter model 4328A, with new clip-type 4-terminal probes (model 16005A) - Range of meter 1 milli-ohm - 100 ohms. Contact: Frank Harris (G4IEY) on 01242 236715.

FOURPACK NEWS

Following a longer than expected period of being off air much of the equipment for GB7WE was re-installed on 19th August, including equipment for a new link to the KIDDER (G8PZT) node, however the new link is not yet fully operational.

GB7CL was switched on to battery only operation for test purposes for around six hours on the 19th August. All went well and the system was still operational when mains was restored. The current status information shows that this node has been in continuous operation for well over 2 years.

Work for a new node GB7BM has been progressing well. Fourpack now have planning permission for mounting a number of antennas on the site mast, and it is hoped that antenna erection will commence shortly.

Meetings: 8pm on Wednesday 26th September, 24th October, 28th November at 'The Anchor', Upton-Upon-Severn. (Non-members are always welcome).

VIRUS ALERT

GB7LGS along with a number of other UK mailboxes that are connected to the Internet (even for short periods of time) has been subjected to repeated attempts to try and infect it with the Code Red Worm (and it's variants) over the last few weeks.

The level of traffic generated by systems infected with the worm is such that operator of the gateway in the USA, which provides much of the Internet to AmprNet connectivity, has temporarily disabled all http access. The traffic generated by systems infected with the worm was overloading the system.

Anyone running Windows NT or Windows 2000 (not Windows 95 or 98) on any computer that they use to connect to the Internet is advised to ensure:

- a) That they do not have the server that is subject to attack by this worm installed (Internet Information Server (IIS) V4 or V5).

or

- b) That they download and apply the latest patches from the Microsoft Web Site to protect their system from this worm.

(See <http://www.microsoft.com/security/>)

Note: The application susceptible to infection by this worm is installed by default on some systems, so please make sure you that you do check your system and do not simply assume it is not installed.

Stewart Wilkinson
G0LGS