



Ofcom delays introduction of Lifetime Licence

In a recent news release on their web-site, Ofcom have announced that the introduction of the Amateur Lifetime Licence has been put back until 1st December.

The web-page quoted, "The new online lifetime licensing system will be available from 1 December 2006 when Ofcom will deliver a simplified service to existing and new licensees, and allow for a smooth transition of the licensing processes from our operating centre, the Radio Licensing Centre (RLC), to Ofcom's head office."

The page goes on to state that, if you need to renew your licence during October, November or December 2006, you will automatically be sent a new annual licence to temporarily replace your old licence, which you **will not** be required to pay for. Direct Debits will not be collected.

If you need a new licence during October or November 2006, you should contact the RLC. You will be sent an annual licence which you **will not** be required to pay for. Your new annual licence will cover the short period until your new lifetime licence is issued through the post.

From 1 December 2006, free online licences will be available. However, those applying via a paper-based application will be subject to a £20 charge. ■

Exercise "SideTrack" Caldicot Leisure Centre, 28 September

During the morning of Thursday 28 September, members of the Gwent RAYNET Group took part in Exercise "SideTrack" based at the Caldicot Leisure Centre.

The exercise, organised by Monmouthshire Emergency Planning Service, utilised Caldicot LC as a "Survivor Reception Centre", based on an inci-



"Survivors" from the Tunnel incident arrive at the SRC and are "booked in" at the initial Reception Point. (Photo: GW7BSC)

dent involving the Severn Railway Tunnel. Over 100 volunteer "casualties" played out roles as survivors from the incident and, whilst not requiring hospital treatment, they were still required to be interviewed by the Police, and were transported to the SRC.

The exercise was a test to validate the SRC procedures and arrangements, and RAYNET were asked to provide communication links around the SRC, covering the SRC Manager's

Office, Information Desk, Registration Area and First Aid Room.

As the exercise was a localised event, revolving solely around the Caldicot LC complex, 2m handheld radios were used. Net Control (Mike YKZ) was estab-



One of the Police Registration Desks where the "survivors" registered and gave the Police details of the "incident". (Photo: GW7BSC)

lished in the LC Reception next to the SRC Manager's Office. Gerwyn (JDE) and Ann (NNA) were located at the Police Registrations Desks and First Aid Room, whilst Dave (KAC) and Ben (RCG) were located on the first floor at the Information Desk.

There was a reasonable amount of message traffic for RAYNET to handle, though we could, perhaps, have been utilised a little more than we were.

It had been hoped that we could have activated a radio link between the SRC and Police HQ at Croesyceiliog. However, the Police advised that they wished to trial some additional procedures at the SRC and would not be able to run this second link. They do wish to test such a radio link to/from Police HQ, and it has been suggested that this takes place at a later date, during one of their own communications exercises. ■

Group Meetings at Chepstow and proposed dates for 2007

In the near future, it is likely that the Royal British Legion Club in Chepstow, will be closed and the building sold. As a result, we will obviously not be able to hold our meetings there.

For our next meeting – 08 November – it is likely that we will meet in The Old Ferry Inn, Beachley. Meetings in the Chepstow-area for 2007 may possibly be held in the Bulwark Scouts building subject to the Scouts' agreement.

Proposed meeting dates, and locations, for 2007 are:

Jan 10 (Newport), Mar 14 AGM (Cwmbran), May 16 (Chepstow), Jun 13 (Brynmawr), Jul 18 (Pontypool), Aug 22 (Newport), Sep 19 (Caerphilly) and Nov 22 (Chepstow). ■

Chepstow & District Amateur Radio Society

Christmas Party

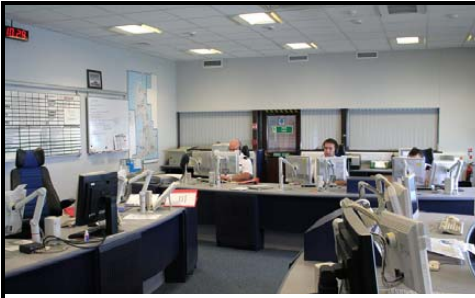
7.30pm, Friday 1st December 2006

(Venue to be confirmed)

£5 per person if not a member of C&DARS

Further details from Norman (MWOHJG)

Visit to Swansea MRCC



The Operations Room at Swansea MRCC.
(Photo: GW7BSC)

On Friday 22 September, members of the Group visited the Coastguard Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre at The Mumbles, near Swansea.

Our visit started around 10:30

with host Ian Thomas giving us a brief overview of the MRCC's activities and area of coverage. We were then taken through to the Operations Room where we were given an explanation of what goes on and the equipment the MRCC makes use of.

We were able to wander around the Operations Room, and ask questions of those on duty. All of the staff were very helpful, and we were given in-depth explanations of nearly all the equipment on display.

Our thanks to the staff at the MRCC for putting up with us, during a most enjoyable and interesting visit. ■

Bulwark Scout Group Jamboree-on-the-Air



Group members are invited to join Chepstow & District Amateur Radio Society members for the Bulwark Scout Group's JOTA event over the weekend of 21/22 October.

The event is taking place at the 1st Bulwark Scout Group HQ on Pembroke Road, Bulwark near Chepstow, and runs from 00:01hrs on the 21st through to 23:59hrs on the 22nd. They will be using the special event callsign "GB3BSG". Members are welcome to pop along at any time. For more information on the event, please contact Dave (2E0DCR).

To get to the Scout HQ:

Take the A48 towards Chepstow. Continue ahead at the High Beech roundabout, passing the Chepstow Hotel on your left. Continue down the hill toward Chepstow for about 1/4-mile, then turn right toward Bulwark. Drive on through the shopping centre to a roundabout where there are markers on the right guiding you to the Scout Hall. ■

GB3BC Repeater Relocation

For those of you who may be wondering where the "GB3BC" repeater has gone, it is currently off-air pending relocation.

It is hoped to have it available again within about 4-weeks, though it's new location is being kept secret. It has been mentioned, however, that the new location provides a considerably larger coverage "footprint", extending much further West and, apparently, reaching the outskirts of Birmingham and Plymouth. ■

Exercise at Box Railway Tunnel (with North Wilts. RAYNET)

Following our successes at the Severn Railway Tunnel, a communications exercise has been arranged at the Box Tunnel in Wiltshire.

In conjunction with North Wiltshire RAYNET, Wiltshire Fire Service and Network Rail, the exercise is to take place on Sunday 26 November, starting at 08:00hrs. Four members of Gwent RAYNET have been invited to participate, to offer "help and suggestions". The event will start with a pre-exercise briefing at the site of the old Corsham railway station (tbc).



View of Box Tunnel, West portal from the A4 road over-bridge. (Photo: Adrian Balch, NR)

There is currently one spare place in our "team", and if any Group member would like to come along, please let me know as soon as possible. [Kevin GW7BSC] ■

Visit to South East Wales Ambulance Control Room

A visit to the South East Wales Ambulance Control at Mamhilad (near Pontypool), has been arranged for Saturday 18 November.

I have been advised that, whilst we may have a large visiting party, tours of the Control Room itself will be limited to 6 persons at a time.

The visit is booked to start at 14:00hrs and, if you would like to go but haven't already put your name down, please let me know as soon as possible. [Kevin GW7BSC] ■

Any ideas please? (Photography Challenge!)

As you will know, we are currently the proud holders of The RAYNET Cup. This trophy will, in the near future, have to be returned to the RSGB. However, prior to its return, I would like to take a few photographs of it, for the Group's records.

As you can probably imagine, a shiny silver object presents a few problems when it comes to photographing it, faithfully recording the photographer, equipment and other items in the reflections!

Without wishing to go to the expense of purchasing a professional "light-tent", or incurring the costs of having it photographed professionally, does anyone have any suggestions of how to "do it ourselves"? [Kevin GW7BSC] ■

If you would like to provide an article and/or photo for the newsletter, please contact Kevin GW7BSC: mw1azr@btinternet.com or 'phone 07010726248.