

MW1AZR News

A quarterly Newsletter for the Gwent RAYNET Group – www.mw1azr.org.uk

July 2007



Olympics 2012: Likely threat to Amateur Radio bands

Ofcom have announced that they intend to publish a consultation document at the end of June, relating to the “Olympic 2012 Spectrum Requirement”.

It will be no surprise that there is considerable pressure being placed on just about all current radio-spectrum allocations in order to meet the requirements of broadcasters from around the world, and general administration of the Olympic Games.

The RSGB have been in talks with Ofcom regarding what effect these requirements are likely to have on the Amateur Radio allocations since it was announced that London would host the games in 2012.

Ofcom have been made aware of the issues that are of concern to radio amateurs, especially in the microwave and 70cm bands. Ofcom have recognised these concerns and that some amateur allocations will have to be used for Olympics 2012 communications needs, and the future of such allocations beyond 2012.

Currently, the indications are that if amateur radio spectrum is utilised, then it would be on a “loan basis” only and that, during the loan period, other areas of the spectrum may be allocated for amateur radio use. ■

“Cant Canolbarth 100”

27-28 April 2007

On Sunday 27th and Monday 28th April, five members of the Group assisted North Powys RAYNET with the “Cant Canolbarth 100” — a 100-mile long-distance walk starting and finishing at Llandrindod Wells.



The Village Hall, Llanwrthwl, “Checkpoint 14”.
[Photo: GW7BSC]

We were allocated to “Checkpoint 14” at Llanwrthwl Village Hall (near Rhayader, Powys) together with members of the Cornwall

and Devon branch of the Long Distance Walkers Association. Other Checkpoints were covered by other RAYNET Groups and members of the LDWA.

Our “shift” started at 08:00 on the Sunday, with the Checkpoint being closed by the course “sweepers” at 05:20 on the Monday, after around 400 participants had passed through our Checkpoint. They had started their walk on the Saturday at around 10:00 and were expecting to finish at around 10:00 on the Monday; there were no substantial “rest breaks” for any of the participants during their walk!

Along with ourselves, other Checkpoints were covered by

RAYNET members from North Dyfed, Central Cheshire, West Cheshire, East Cheshire, Staffordshire Moorlands, Shropshire, South Gwynedd, Keighley, Carmarthen, Stockport, Mid-Herts/Epping Forest and Sutton. A total of 43 RAYNET operators, with 310 “Checkpoint Hours”. ■



From front: Mike (GW3YKZ), Gerwyn (GW4JDE) and George (2W1JLK) with our radio station at Llanwrthwl. [Photo: GW8JOY]

Gwent RAYNET Link-up with “SARA”

Following an initial contact with the Severn Area Rescue Association



(SARA), three members of the Group had a meeting with SARA staff at the Beachley Lifeboat Station on 06 June. Kevin (GW7BSC), Dave (2E0DCR) and Mike (GW3YKZ) met with the SARA volunteers to investigate the possibility of RAYNET assisting SARA with certain aspects of their communications. This initial meeting proved very productive.

SARA cover an area which extends up the River Wye and, on Sunday 10 June, radio tests were arranged to gain an idea of likely radio coverage along the river.

Dave (2E0DCR) and Steve (GW8ZOE) set up a portable radio station at Beachley, whilst Mike (YKZ) travelled up the Wye Valley along the course of the river. As well as making use of VHF and UHF simplex frequencies, the GB3AA and GB3AZ repeaters were also tested. A simplex link was also established between Beachley and Newport, with Kevin (BSC) using a handheld radio.

The test results were quite respectable given what was being tried, though a Talk-Through Unit will be required to establish fully useable links between Beachley and at least Symonds Yat.

The SARA personnel are reported to have been suitably impressed with what we achieved and, even at this stage, we are able to provide a much bigger coverage area than they have available with their radio equipment.

It should be noted that our assistance with SARA in a real incident, would be in conjunction with the “User Service” who initiate their callout; Coastguard, Police, etc.

As a follow-up to this activity, I am hoping to arrange a visit to the Beachley Lifeboat Station in the near future. ■

New Talk-Through Unit

As mentioned in the last issue of our Newsletter, Torfaen Emergency Planning Unit have kindly provided us with a new transceiver to replace our faulty FT-8100R Talk-Through Unit radio.



The new radio — a Yaesu FT-8800E — has now been installed in an aluminium case, thanks to Steve (GW8ZOE). There is still a small amount of work to be done to the unit and its installation, though it is expected to be available for use very soon.

Once the unit is complete, it will be brought to the Group meetings so that everyone can see how it works and, most importantly, how to switch it into and out of Talk-Through mode. A “crib sheet” with the information will be kept in the case with the radio. ■

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RAYNET Supplies

For anyone who may not be aware, The Network offer quite a large range of RAYNET-branded items for sale through “RAYNET Supplies”. Such items range from clothing to ID Card holders.

Visit www.raynet-uk.net/main/ and click on “RAYNET Supplies” to view the online catalogue (and download an order form).

If you are registered with The Network, there are additional “members-only” items available, as well as a 10% order discount. To view the catalogue with members-only items, log into the “Members Area” from the web site. Your log-in password will be the membership number printed on the reverse of your ID card.

Once in the Members Area, you may wish to change your access password to something more easily remembered! ■



The Emergency Services Show

Sunday 9th September 2007, 10am-5pm

Hullavington Airfield, Wiltshire

(just off Jnc. 17 of the M4)

More details at:

www.emergencyservicesshow.com

Llangyfelach Tunnel Exercise

A new date has been arranged for the postponed communications exercise for the West Glamorgan RAYNET Group at the Llangyfelach Tunnel, Swansea.

The exercise will be taking place on Sunday 05 August, starting at around 07:00 and is expected to be completed by 10:00.

Members of the Gwent RAYNET Group have been invited to come along. If you are interested, please let Kevin (GW7BSC) know. ■

Group Insurance Issues

Our affiliation with RSGB officially ends on 31 July. From this date, the RSGB’s “Affiliated Society” insurance will also cease in respect of our Group.

This effectively means that, from 01 August, Group members who have not registered with The Network, will have no insurance cover whilst on RAYNET activities, unless they have arranged cover independently.

If you have not registered with The Network, please consider doing so, and either myself or Mike (YKZ) can provide you with the necessary forms to fill in.

At the time of writing, the membership fee is £5.40 per year (per member), with Insurance costing an additional £1.50 per year per member. [Kevin GW7BSC] ■

Gwent RAYNET Web Forum

Anyone who has visited our Yahoo Web Forum lately, will undoubtedly have noticed that there has been little activity over the last few months.

As a result of this, I am considering closing the Forum and have already removed the collection of files from the Forum “files area”. I am planning to close the Forum sometime during August.

Our events Diary, news items, event reports, photo gallery etc., can always be found on our Group’s web site at www.mw1azr.org.uk

If anyone has any objections to this proposal or considers the Forum should continue for other reasons, please let me know. [Kevin GW7BSC] ■

Brecon Beacons Challenge

02 September 2007

The British Heart Foundation’s “Brecon Beacons Challenge” is taking place on Sunday 02 September, with our Group providing emergency communications cover.

We currently have a total of 20 RAYNET operators who have offered their assistance, but a few more would be useful!

If you know anyone who might like to help, please let Terry (GW8JOY) or Mike (GW3YKZ) have their details. ■

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