

Editorial

Hello to the group members of Gwent RAYNET. As this is my first attempt at a newsletter I would like to pass on my thanks to Kevin and Colin for their work in producing the previous editions.

As you are aware, communications are absolutely vital to emergency situations, whatever and wherever they may occur. We are very privileged in having a licence, of whatever level, that enables us to speak to other enthusiasts wherever they may be. Because of the importance of communications in virtually all aspects of life, is it not important to use our skills whenever communication problems arise?

RAYNET is one means of doing this. Whether the problem is a weather-related disaster or, regrettably in this day and age, terrorist related, RAYNET can and should make a difference.

Event Participation

One of the topics we have for discussion is whether or not we should offer the groups services to help local charity events. Given that on occasion we are hard pressed to find sufficient members who are available for exercises, I would like to know how you would feel about participating in these types of events.

Exercise “Dark Dragon”

Many thanks to those who participated in the Exercise Dark Dragon. For those who were unable to make it, the exercise turned out to be very interesting and was based on a scenario of a train breaking down in Caerphilly Railway Tunnel.



SWFRS “Unimog” Road/Rail vehicle at Lisvane Station, used to transport “casualties” from the train which was in Caerphilly Tunnel. [Photo © GW7BSC]

The Unimog was then supposed to remove passengers from the tunnel in conjunction with Network Rail and the SWFRS. In conjunction with South Glam RAYNET, we had stations located as far apart as the South Wales Fire and Rescue Headquarters at Lanelay Hall, Pontyclun and the Monmouthshire Ambulance Headquarters at Mamhilad. We had previously conducted tests up to Mamhilad and received readable signals from Steve GW8ZOE and Dave 2E0DCR at Mamhilad and the rest of the net.



View of Lisvane Station Car Park as the emergency services (and RAYNET – GW4JDE and GW7BSC) establish their working stations. [Photo © GW4JDE]

On the day of the test, however, Steve and Dave had great difficulty in sending a signal through the net, even with Dave’s “Big Bertha” mast and antenna erected. Signals were received when the Mamhilad team relocated about 1/2 mile from the Ambulance HQ. To cover this site in future, we may need to sight a TTU near Mamhilad and use the TTU to pass messages to the Ambulance HQ.

Regarding the actual exercise, there were technical and managerial problems with the use of the Unimog which prevented the vehicle entering Caerphilly Railway Tunnel. However, at this stage the SWFRS were unable to communicate to the tunnel North portal from the South portal and had requested that RAYNET locate a member at the North portal. Before this was done, the SWFRS chief announced “EndEx”. To get the maximum benefit from the exercise, RAYNET did pass test messages from Lisvane Station to the ambulance HQ at Mamhilad.

“Out Of The Blue” Event

To all you Gwent and South Glam members who braved the weather at the event – well done and thank you! Personally, I discovered that my much vaunted “waterproof” jacket wasn’t waterproof!



Dave (2E0DCR) and Roy (GW1XZI) at the RAYNET Display at the "Out of the Blue" event in Cardiff, 11 & 12 July. [Photo © GW4JDE]

The Friday of the event (11 July) was aimed at schoolchildren and the SWFRS estimated that around 5000 children were scheduled to attend. Thankfully by the time the children arrived the worst of the rain had passed and our exhibition had a number of interested children asking about amateur radio and RAYNET. We were also visited by members of the local councils which proved to be very useful in terms of explaining our capabilities. The Saturday of the event (12 July) was open to the general public with a number of people asking about amateur radio and RAYNET. This event proved an excellent opportunity for us to "show the flag" and hopefully, if the event is repeated next year, we will be asked to participate.



Communications Vehicle from South Berkshire Fire Service on display at the "Out of the Blue" event. [Photo © GW4JDE]

Longtown Mountain Rescue

As you know, on Sunday 3rd August we are holding a communications test in the area covered by the Longtown Mountain Rescue team. Neil Hughes, MW0ECX, will be in attendance to offer advice on the tests. In this instance there will be no hill walking involved as the suggested locations are reachable by vehicle (non-4 wheel drive!). However, it is planned to have another exercise, working with the LMR team, on

a search and rescue operation. Although no date has yet been set, we will be looking for 2 or 3 members who would be happy to man the locations that do require a degree of fitness! More information will be provided when it becomes available.

D-Star

I Am aware that a number of members have now got D-star capable radios. Whilst I would not suggest that people throw away perfectly good FM rigs, if you are in the market for a new FM dual-bander, it might be worth considering a D-Star radio. Has anyone any thoughts for or against D-Star in the RAYNET context?

GB7CD

The new D-Star repeater, GB7CD is now operational in Cardiff. The output frequency is 439.700 MHz and the input frequency is 430.700 MHz.

Group Web Site

The Group's web site – www.gwent-raynet.org.uk – has been moved to a new server following the closure of the old one, "BeebNet". The web site is updated on a regular basis with our Events Diary, News, Photo Gallery, Event Reports, etc. If you haven't visited the site lately, please take a look!

If you have any suggestions on what else could be added – either to the web site in general, or to a Members-only Area – please let Kevin GW7BSC know.

Next Group Meeting

The next Gwent RAYNET meeting is planned for Wednesday 20 August. This is, of course, right in the middle of the holiday season, especially for those with families that include children!

As a result of this likely "non-availability" of some members, we will be holding a joint meeting with the South Glamorgan RAYNET Group at their meeting venue – County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff. Meeting details will be sent out once confirmed with "SGR".

Finally

Gwent RAYNET has recently made a donation towards a new tri-band antenna to be mounted permanently at the new SARA premises at Beachley. The antenna will enable RAYNET to help SARA when we are called out to help the SARA team with it's communications along the River Severn and the River Wye.

Finally, finally, if you have any suggestions for items to be added to the MW1AZR newsletter, please let me have them at gw3ykz@gwent-raynet.org.uk