

CatRad Camp Shilton 2008 Report

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GX0SCR/P SHILTON Summer Camp

Here is an insight into the Caterham Radio Group's annual Summer camp event held this year between Tuesday 8th July to Sunday 13th July 2008. The event was again held in Mike's brother's orchard 'field' in the old village of Shilton, near Brize Norton RAF air base (Witney) West Oxfordshire. Locator IO91es.

This will be the 25th Year since Paul G4APL and Ann G7BSF first visited this location in 1983. They made an 8mm cine' film at that time.

This year the following members John G8MNY, Bryan G0SYR, Alvin G6DTW and Mike G3TWJ and Chas M0BIN had committed to the six days on site. With Ted G7OBF and XYL coming for a couple of day trips. Paul G4APL proposing to be onsite for the Saturday.

This report is again based on feedback from John G8MNY. Photographs and video taken by Bryan G0SYR and Chaz M0BIN.



Group photo before starting off. Left to right Mike G3TWJ, John G8MNY, Iris, Bryan G0SYR, Chaz

Preparation

As in the previous 25 years, Bryan collected the initial food supplies together.

As in the previous years, it was agreed that the radio and supporting equipment would again be reduced. Using light weight poles to support the required aerials. John loaded up his van with the required poles, aerials and Radio and computer equipment.

The Journey

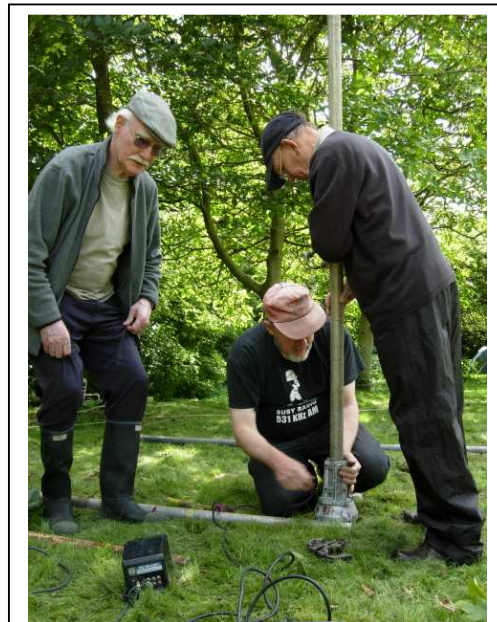
Tuesday morning the 'CatRad convoy' formed up outside Bryan's Home. John having re-organised the radio equipment and aerials in his van for this event. The previous weekend he was involved with VHF National Field Day. Chaz arrived and his Camper Van was loaded up with the food. Bryan travelled with Chaz. After the custom group photograph and Video. Before setting off at 10AM.

The journey along the M25 and M40 was uneventful, took the A40. Stopped off at the Transport Café in the lay-by as had been done in previous years. For the cup of tea (cuppa) and a snack. Afterward rejoining the A40 for the rest of the Journey to Shilton.

Setting Up

Bryan, Mike, John, Alvin and Chas arrived on site

Mike's brother Pat had done an excellent job previously cut the long grass on the field. John let some air out of his van's



Chaz M0BIN, John G8MNY with spanner and Mike G3TWJ fitting rotator to mast

tyres to give more traction to drive the van to the top of the hill in the corner of the field as in previous years.

All the masts, aerials, Tents and equipment was put up. Except for the 2metre packet system.

The 3 element 10/15/20 Metre tribander HF beam mounted at 13 Metres and the 5 element 6 Metre yagi beam at 15 Metres on the same mast.

The 40 Metre dipole was put up at 10 Metres running NW/SW, and the 80 Metre dipole was up at 10 Metres running North West /South East.

160Metre aerial was a long wire at 8 Metres above ground.

The large blue and orange mess tent was erected. In which the meals were prepared by Bryan and consumed by those present. John's van had it's usual side tent for the two HF and 6 Metre stations. Equipment provided by Mike, Ted and John

Inside the van was the 2 metre and Packet Radio station

A four way mains intercoms system was set-up to advise those not in the mess tent. When food or drink was being served up.

Alvin arrived onsite in his Motor Home Wednesday morning at 00:30hours and parked up (while the rest of the camp were asleep) Ted turned up later that day with his equipment and handbook. The rest of the aerials were also sorted out.

Paul Left home at 05:40 Saturday morning and was welcomed on site by Chaz and Bryan at 07:40 having chatting to John on 2m FM on the way,

Site Power

Power for the five stations this year was provided by either a Mike's 600Watt Nissan or John's 2.5KWatt petrol Generator, providing power to float charged a 12 volt battery at each station. Both generators had the carburettors stripped right down. The Nissan having had a total fuel block in the petrol pipe and tap. The 2.5KW generator ran trouble free once the oil level was fully topped up

Equipment

The seven GX0SCR/P stations consisted of.

John's HF 100/400Watts station used an IC735 Drake L-4B power amplifier (PA) 3 element 10/15/20 metre beam at 13m above ground level (AGL)
7MHz 100/400dipole at 10m AGL
3,5MHz 100/400Watts dipole at 10m AGL
1.8MHz 30 Watts.

Mike Elecraft K1 QRP transceiver. Had access to the 80/40 metre dipoles and HF beam.

Ted's Kenwood TS2000e transceiver. Had access to the 80/40 metre dipoles and HF beam.

Chaz's Elecraft K3 Transceiver with quite a few options added to the basic kit. The aerials used supported by the 9 Metre fibre glass pole attached to the side of his camper van supporting an inverted L, and later a doublet constructed on the Saturday assisted by those present.

The 6m station FT690 with 50w PA/ preamp connected to the 5element yagi at 15m AGL.



Lunch time. Left to Right. Mike G3TWJ, Ted G7OBF, John G8MNY, Chaz M0BIN



Bryan G0SYR checking the GX0SCR/P AX25 Packet System.

No 4 Metre activity this year.

As in previous years. John's 2 metre station was in the middle of the van which had an auto-caller driving the TS700g, 200watt 12volt Power Amplifier feeding the 11element beam at 17M AGL on the "String Wonder" telescopic mast..

Packet Radio operated mainly by John and Bryan G0SYR
FT290R 2.5W into 5el vertical beam at 8 Metres.
With a PacCom TNC and Laptop running Paket6 connecting to the local Bampton Node GB7BA.
That just happens to have a direct AX25 IP Internet tunnel to the Caterham AX25 IP international gateway GB7CIP.

MESSING

As in previous years. Bryan G0SYR did all of the cooking (allowed off the washing up!) except the one fish and chip round.

Corn Beef Hash was again requested for Wednesday evening as Kathy and Ted G7OBF will be visiting.

Fish and Chips were collected from the Carterton Fish Shop Saturday evening by Paul and Bryan. It has to be reported that menu and catering was excellent again this year.



Mike G3TWJ, Ted G0OBF, John G8MNY and Bryan G0SYR at lunch

Operating

Those present did some operating as detailed in the Logs detailed later in this report.

Ted G7OBF who was staying in the area and attended some of the meals with his wife Cathy. Paul instructed Ted how to work in the HF Contest over the weekend. Paul also configured his TS2000e on detecting a DXcluster 2 metre node broadcast, to automate the tuning of the TS2000e to the band and frequency of the DX stations being spotted.

Weather

Tuesday Dry, Wednesday Rain all day, Thursday to Saturday wet in the afternoon and Sunday was dry.

Visitors

As in previous we were visited by some fellow Radio Amateurs. This year Colin G3NNG, Ray G3LQC (SysOp of the GB7BA node) and his wife and Chaz's friend from the South Coast.



John G8MNY and Mike G3TWJ carrying out maintenance on the mains generators

The Journey Home

Alvin left Saturday evening around 7PM in his motor home taking some of the tree away with him that was over the entrance to the field.

Paul left later at 8:50PM for the 98 mile journey home.

The rest of the Group travelled back on Sunday late afternoon. After taking down all the equipment. They reported that they had a good journey back.



Ted G7OBF assist Chaz M0BIN constructing his portable aerial



Mike G3TWJ watching those assisting Chaz construct his portable aeriels



Alvin G6DTW watching from a safe distance while Ted G7OBF looks on to Chaz M0BIN making his aerial



Mike G3TWJ, Paul G4APL assist Chaz and John G8MNY adding further technical advice.



Chaz M0BIN testing his constructed portable aerial using his K3 HF transceiver

From the 2008 logs supplied. These have been analysed as follows. We are getting close to the 23rd 11 year sun spot cycle minima.. Due in 2008/9 (REVISED)

Country prefix worked by Mike G3TWJ on 7,14MHz, GX0SCR/P HF Station Elecraft K1 QRP Transceiver

7MHz														
14MHz														

Country prefix worked by Alvin G6DTW

on 1.8, 3.5,7, 14, 21, 28, 50, 145, 433MHz GX0SCR/P Station IC735 3 element Beam

433MHz														
144Mhz														
50MHz														
28MHz	LA4													
14MHz	DK8 DL2	DL6 DL7	DL8 DL9	EI9 F5	G4 LY4	MM3 OK1	OZ4 PD1	RA3 SQ4	UT3 PA2					
7MHz														
3.5MHz														
1.8MHz														

Country prefix work by John G8MNY HF VHF on 50MHz and 144MHz 28,14,7,1.8MHz

50MHz	EA1	HA6	OM4	T99										
144MHz	G0 G3 G4 G6	M0												
144MHz														
28MHz	G4													
14MHz	IK2 IV3	OM2 OZ3 OZ8	SP5 S50											
7MHz	9A0	CS8 DA0 E7	GB7 HB9 HG0	IU4 OE1 OL4 OM8	OP0 OZ1 PH6 SN0	TM0 YT8 IQ1								
3.5MHz	2E0	G6	LA1											
1.8MHz	G3	G4	G8											

Country prefix work by John G7OBF VHF on 50MHz and 144MHz 28,14,7,1.8MHz

50MHz														
144MHz														
28MHz														
21MHz	HQ	SN	SQ											
14MHz	DE1	DJ9	DM3	DP4	EM5	F6	HQ80	IZ1	OM8 OY	RA3 RK9	RV4	SN0 SQ4	SY7	YT8
7MHz														
3.5MHz														
1.8MHz														

Country prefix work by Bryan G0SYR VHHF 50MHz HF 28,14,7,3.5,1.8MHz

50MHz	F	EA1	I1	G4	EA5									
144MHz														
144MHz														
28MHz														
14MHz	W0 W8	G4	SI9	OY	LA LA8	MS0	EI6 F5	AN5 CU2	PJ4 VK2					

7MHz														
3.5MHz														
1.8MHz														

Country prefix work by Chas MOBIN HF 28,14,7,3.5,1.8MHz Elecraft K1 K3 G5RV or Doublet

50MHz														
144MHz														
144MHz														
28MHz														
14MHz														
7MHz														
3.5MHz														
1.8MHz														

Number of CW/SSB/FM/CONTACTS Per Band (MHz) Based on supplied logs files

LOG	1.8	3.6	7.0	10	14	18	21	28	50	70	144	432	Packet	
DTW					22			1						
MNY	4	5	18		7			1	5		12			
TWJ	No	Log	recvd											
SYR					15				7					
OBF					15		3							
BIN	No	Log	recvd											

Radio Propagation

We are currently going toward the lowest point of the Solar Cycle No. 23. VHF and HF Conditions were not as good on the HF bands as it has been on some previous occasions.

The Solar Cycle 23 minimum is forecast to be in 2008/9 (REVISED). So the downward trend is due to level out will continue for the next year or so.

The Solar Flux Index which measure the amount of radio noise from the sun is illustrated in the following Graph put out on the Amateur Radio Packet network that covers the period of our activity during our field day. The table shows the number of Sunspots for July 2008

PROPAGATION July, compiled by Neil Clarke, G0CAS, and Martin Harrison, G3USF.

The solar disc was spotless again every day. Solar activity was very low. Solar flux levels varied between 65 and 66 units, the average was 66 units. The 90 day solar flux average on the 13th was 67 units, that's one unit down on last week. X-ray flux levels remained below the minimum reporting level for yet another week.

Geomagnetic activity was quiet at first but during the evening of the 11th a coronal hole disturbance arrived.

The 12th was the most disturbed day with an Ap index of 21 units. The average was Ap 8 units. The ACE spacecraft saw solar wind speeds increase from 290 kilometres per second on the 8th to 740 by the 13th.

Particle densities were low except for a brief increase to 15 particles per cubic centimetre during the 11th. Bz varied between minus and plus 2 nanoTeslas on the quiet days and between minus 12 and plus 13 nanoTeslas on the 12th.

As expected at solar minimum the main cause of magnetic disturbances are coronal holes and this as been the case for the last 6 months. The larger disturbances normally related to solar flare and the subsequent coronal mass ejections have not yet took place so far this year. As the Sun rotates in approximately 27 to 28 days, these coronal holes which can last for many months can be forecast with a certain amount of accuracy.

Earlier in the year there were 3 coronal holes this as now reduced to only two.

The most disturbed days for the last six months have been the 29th of March and 27 days later on the 23rd of April, illustrating well the solar rotation. The Ap was 31 and 32 units respectively.

