

# Guides Thinking Day on the Air 1999

The 1999 Guides Thinking Day On The Air (TDOTA) for the Caterham Guides, Brownies and Cubs was held on Saturday 20th February at the home of Ann and Paul Lewis, who hold the Radio Amateur Callsigns G7BSF and G4APL.

The Amateur Radio Callsign used for the event was again GX0SCR, the special event club Callsign of the Caterham Radio Group.

In December Janette 'THE BOSS' - guides would like to activate TDOTA Phonetic Alphabet, The Thinking Day enabling the other tasks to be completed gaining their Communication Badge.



Robin' of the 9th Caterham Guides confirmed the again this year. Preparation and learning of the greeting message, was prepared in advance. Thus on the day towards the Guides, Brownies & Cubs

During the period January and February Ann and Paul prepared for the event.

During the preceding week John G8MNY, brought up some equipment for use in the technical room.

Another PC had to be rebuilt so that the Guides could link to the Network Convers server which was completed a day before the event.

Friday the 19th February, saw Ann, Paul and Annabel re-organise the house so that one room became the VHF (Very High Frequency) station operating in the 145Mhz Amateur Band. In the same room designing QSL cards, and various books, maps to look up the required information.

Another room had the Amateur Packet Radio station, which was linked into the main Caterham Radio Groups (CatRad) Packet Radio digital network using radio links around the U.K and links to other Radio Amateurs all over the world.

The main Radio Shack was prepared and the HF (High Frequency) equipment and aerials checked out and tested to check that all was OK..

The Kitchen was stripped out and became the technical area for the crystal set installation and demonstration.

Check on the Weather Map, and the forecast for Saturday was going to be a nice sunny day with low winds. Paul raised the tower to the full height so that we had the best possible wireless signals.

We finally retired to bed at midnight.

Saturday 20th February

The paper work supplied by the Radio Society of Great Britain listed some 100 TDOTA special event stations registered as being active over the weekend.

HF Station

Paul at 07:00 started up on 20 metres and made contact with stations in New Zealand, Novgorod City(Russia), Germany, Central Russia and an Englishman on holiday Nr Sydney Australia and coming back to the UK next week.

The rest of the CatRad TDOTA team arrived at 08:30. John G8MNY, Bryan G0SYR, Ted G7OBF, Mike G3TWJ. A briefing given by Paul as to what was expected, and plan for the day.

Janette 'THE BOSS' arrive at 08:45 with the first group of Guides and Brownies from the Caterham 9th group and Anne, Leader of the 1st Caterham Brownies arrived at 09:10 with 1<sup>st</sup> Brownies.

At 09:00 Mike G3TWJ was well installed in the HF stations chair and assisted by Bryan G0SYR. During the day there was a continuous stream of Guides, Brownies, Cubs sending and receiving Greeting Messages. Mike and Bryan assisted in sending 151 greeting messages to other amateur radio stations on 40 and 15 metres. Station was closed down at 19:50hours  
46 HF/LF stations were contacted during the day:-

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## UK & Eire Stations worked

Crewekerne Eastbourne, Loch Tey, Ayr, Newport, Waterford Eire, Merseyside, Redditch, Dorchester, Colchester, Malvern, Norbury, Kettering, Kembridge Bay, Bristol, Merther Tydfil, Cudham, Cardiff

## Overseas countries work

VE3	Canada NW Niagara	KA0	Nebraska	VE7	200k North Vancouver
K9	South Arizona	VE6	Alberta	KC7	Montana
W7	Kansas	N9	Idaho	W4	Miami
WA2	Boston	W7	Washington	K7	Nevada
KC5	Texas	W6	Los Angles	ZL2	New Zealand
UA1	Russia	VK2	near Sydney		

## VHF Station

Ann and Ted operating the VHF station had long contacts with TDOTA stations in Send near Woking, Turners Hill, Haslemere, West Wickham, Hillingdon, Shepperton, Romford, Chadwell Heath.

Again there was a continuous stream of Brownies, Guides and Cubs all very keen to send their Greeting Messages.

20 stations were contacted and the Caterham Guides, Brownies and Cubs sent 141 Greeting messages.

At one stage during the late morning, one room was full of young ladies and gents all dress in yellow and green uniforms. The other room was full of ladies dressed in Blue uniforms.

Also I learnt later (as I was outside burning the food on the BBQ), that there was a long queue down the hallway waiting for their turn to send greeting messages over the 40 metre band.

## Packet Radio Station



The guides were typing and sending messages over this system to other guides at other Amateur Radio Packet Stations. This system was active for sixteen hours. (07:00- 23:00)

## The Technical Section



Bryan and John discussed with the Guides how the crystal set worked, frequencies, wavelengths and aerial. This time there were a lot more first time visitors and this area had little activity. Paul and John did the interactive talk on propagation and hand held radios with the Guides, Brownies and Cubs.

## Bar B Q



As it was a nice sunny day.  
The bar-b-que was held outside.

## Guide Helpers

Sarah, Natalie, showing them how drinks. All helped



Annabel and to go about toward making



Lisa assisted the brownies and guides designing their DIY QSL card and providing this another successful event.

46 Guides, Brownies and Cubs visited the TDOTA99 CatRad Station. Over 100 Special TDOTA stations were active in the UK

We sent 292 TDOTA Greeting Messages

Contacted 66 Stations (15 Special Event TDOTA stations) the rest were Radio Amateurs giving us support and took pleasure in receiving greeting messages, some taking over 20 during the one contact.

All Guides, Brownies and Cubs completed all the various tasks and gained their Communications badge or the certificate.

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The members of the Caterham Radio Group TDOTA team hope that the 46 visitors had an enjoyable Thinking Day on the Air over the Amateur Radio airwaves.

9th Caterham Guides	12
1 <sup>st</sup> Woldingham Rainbows	2
5 <sup>th</sup> Caterham Cubs	11
1 <sup>st</sup> Caterham Brownies	7
6 <sup>th</sup> Caterham Brownies	5
1 <sup>st</sup> Caterham Guides	9

## Debriefing

Discussion after the event with Janette and with members of the team

Identified that we had a peak and the team was under pressure,

Looking at the arrival times

07:00(2)      09:00 (18)      10:00(13)      11:00(9)      14:00(4)      total=46

by 12:00 there were 40 Yellow, Blue & Green Uniformed persons in the house.

Paul will produce a Schedule with say 24 during the morning. 4 per hour in the afternoon so that the Radio team have reduce numbers to send greeting messages, and can spend more time picking up long distant overseas contacts where the Guides can have more interesting contact to another part of the world in the late afternoon.

The Team reported that the Working log sheets worked. Paul found the data recorded on these sheets very useful in completing the QSL cards after the event. Three evenings were spent writing out the card for the VHF contacts and Mike dealt with the HF/LF cards.

It was suggested that the Guide helpers could assist the HF & VHF Radio Operator in updating these working logs during the event. Making life easier for the Radio Operators.

It was noted that Sarah, Natalie, Annabel and Lisa did not make many calls on the air. Do we need to have another session so that these helpers can pass Greeting Message to overseas stations?

With regards Greeting messages that we send. It was suggested that we change the format so that the name once said is also spelt phonetically as per normal Amateur Radio procedure. Thus making it easier for the other Radio Amateur to pick up the name the first time.

e.g.

Hello (remote operator name) my name is Ann, I'll spell for you, Alpha November November. I am a member of the Caterham 9<sup>th</sup> Guides. I have been a member for 3 years etc.

Paul agreed to amend the paper work.

Our thanks for the support of the Guide & Brownie Leaders, The Guide Helpers, The CatRad TDOTA team and all those Radio Amateurs that gave our VHF/LF/HF stations a call and were prepared to receive all our Greeting Message. Making it a very successful day for all concerned.