

Thinking Day On The Air

February 2000

TDOTA 2000 preface

First of all welcome to the Guide and Brownie Leaders that may be reading the CatRad and Caterham Guide's TDOTA 2000 report.

This event is much smaller than last October's JOTA and ran for 48 hours worldwide. Though there are not that many stations active outside the United Kingdom and Canada

Following last October's event with the guides, during the following months, Paul G4APL started reviewing the TDOTA 2000 paper work. Contacted the Radio Society Of Great Britain (RSGB) that the Caterham Radio Group (CatRad) would be active again so that the Club Licence would be amended to allow Greeting Messages to be sent to more countries than that specified on the Transmitting Amateur Radio Club licence.

Preparation

The updated paper work was passed to Janette 'Robin' to coordinate the Caterham Guides and Brownie companies at the beginning of the February.

The Thinking On The Air 2000 (TDOTA) for the Caterham Guides and Brownies was held on Saturday 19 February 2000 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 Callsign of the Caterham Radio Group.

Thursday 17 February, Paul took the afternoon off so that the Tower with all the aerials on could be raised higher and the aerials checked.

Paul noticed that two of the four guy ropes had been cut as well as two cables feeding the 80 and 40metre LF band aerials. This was a major set back, and required urgent attention the following day. Friday Paul took a day off work to rearrange the house

Fortunately Paul had also taken Friday off so that the house could be rearranged for the separate work area's required.

John G8MNY arrived around 10am with the extra equipment, and also assisted Paul in repairing the damage LF aerials and feeders.

By mid evening the house was set-up and the VHF, HF and



Brownie sending her TDOTA Greeting Message with Mike G3TJW looking on.



Brownie sending her Greeting Message on the 2 Metre Station

LF transmitter and amplifier were tested on air and all was ready for the expected 40 Guides and Brownies expected the following day.

The Event

Saturday 19 February Paul fired up the HF (High Frequency) Transmitter at 07:40 hours on the 20 Metre band and the first contact was made with the Hobart Tasmania. A contact with Western Australia, and two stations in Sydney, New South Wales Australia, followed this. During the

contact with the last Australian the HF linear amplifier failed to switch over. Houston We Have a Problem. Yes we have a problem. Guides due to arrive in 40 minutes and the High Power amplifier was failing to switch in. Initial indications indicated it was the 'reed relay' in the HF transceiver. This left Paul in a predicament, does he take the transceiver apart and hit a problem that can not be resolve, or investigate the problem the following day after the event. Paul decided the latter, as the event must run. In fact the relay (that has been working for over 20 years was replaced the following day)

The rest of CatRad TDOA team Mike G3TWJ, Bryan G0SYR, Ted G7OBF, G8MNY John, Chas M0BIN arrived at 08:30 hours to assist Paul and Ann. A team briefing was held in the technical room. (Kitchen)

Janette (Robin) Caterham 9th Guide Leader arrived at 08:45 just before the first Guides, Brownies, plus our two Woldingham 1st Rainbows Belynda and Pippa.

Paul handed the HF station control over to Mike who started making contacts with Guide Stations around the United Kingdom.

The VHF Station went on air with the Guides at 09:30 with Ann G7BSF (who was getting over a heavy cold and found it difficult to talk) with Ted G7OBF ready to take over, until 18:00.

The Packet Radio PC was connected into the Caterham Radio Group's TCP/IP server and provided the Guides one of many contacts all over the world as well as working other Guides with in the UK.

In the technical area the Guides were taught about and how to build a crystal set instructed by Bryan.

The Brownies and Guides had to participate in two discussions covering propagation and radios with Paul and John.

The Guides learnt to send their names in Morse suitably instructed by Chas and John

The Guide Leader (ROBIN) and Guide helpers (Lucy Ann, Antonia, Claire and Annabel) ensured that the paper work was being completed and that all the required tasks were carried to gain the Radio Communication Badges.

Lunchtime, Ann and Paul fired up the Barbecue in the garage. After all it was a nice dry chilly and sunny day.

The Guides Antonia and Claire took the orders and Paul and Chas did their best to ensure the food was burnt to an edible enough state before being consumed by those present.

During the afternoon we had a visit by Sue Fishlock, who is the Guides Assistant District Commissioner for Surrey. Sue went on air over the 2 metre band and had a contact with GB7THG Turner Hills Guide TDOA station and spoke to Gill Crook (nee' Wotton) 1st Crawley Down guides. Who used to be the 1st Caterham Guide Leader in the past. Robin also had a chat with Gill. Paul spoke to Sue and during the ensuing discussion, Sue mentioned she had been guiding for 40 years and had not visited an Amateur Radio before.

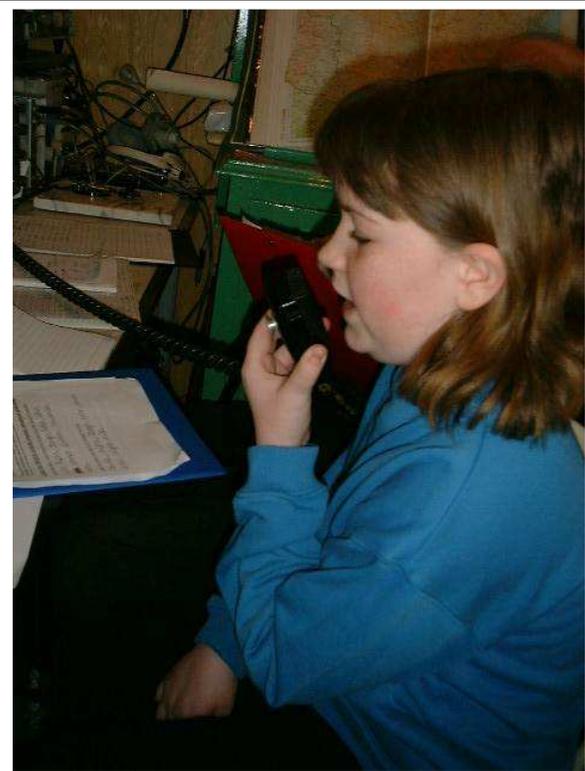
37 stations were contacted on the HF (14,28 MHz) and LF (7 MHz) bands.

Countries worked.

Tasmania Australia

Western Australia

New South Wales Australia, North Spain, North France



Catherine 9th Caterham Guide sending her Greeting Message via the HF Station

England
Sheffield, Kettering, Grimsby, Wallasey, Pembroke,
Peterborough, North Hertfordshire, Somerset, Yorkshire

USA
Ohio, Miami, Florida, Indiana, Boston, New York,
Tennessee Los Angeles, California

Canada
Nova Scotia

On VHF 2 Metres 13 stations were worked including 5 TDOTA stations.

Send District Guides (Brownies), Radio Scouting Team (Herts), Merstham Guides, Girl Guides of Sheraton, Turner Hill Guides (1st Crawley Guides)

All those that attended the TDOTA station worked towards their Radio Communication badge or Certificate. Completed all the required tasks by 18:00. Unfortunately the HF band conditions after 6pm were not as good as last October and the HF operators were



Antonia 1st Caterham Guide, helping the Brownies work towards their Radio Communication Badge

finding it difficult to make overseas contacts.

Both stations had closed down by 19:00 hours. The discussion following event again identified a few changes to the paper work for next time. The changes that were made to cover the lunch time period made life much easier for the operators. Also numbers around the thirty mark ensured there was a nice stream instead of the rush we had experienced in the past.

The number of visitors that came to the event were 37

9 Caterham 9th Guides
& 1 Guide Leader (ROBIN The_Boss)
1 9th Southwick Brownie
1 5th Caterham Scouts
5 Caterham 1st Brownies 1 Leader
2 Caterham 11th Brownies
4 Woldingham 1st Brownies 1 Leader
3 Caterham 9th Brownies
3 Caterham 1st Guides

2 Caterham 5th Brownies
1 Caterham 6th Brownies
2 Woldingham Rainbows

And the 'Big Boss' Guide Assistant District Commissioner for Surrey.

Supported by 7 Radio Amateurs G3TWJ, G4APL, G7BSF, G7OBF, G8MNY, G0SYR, M0BIN plus all those Radio Amateur's that came on to gave our TDOTA station a call to make our event successful.



Paul G4APL conducting an interactive two-way session with the Brownies on the use of radios.



Paul G4APL checking the Brownies work to see if all the required tasks have been completed for her Badge

The evening ended with all the team sitting down to the usual meal washed down with a couple of bottles fizzy drink. After the event Mike and Paul spent a few evenings going through the logs to write out a QSL card for all those Guides and Scouts that we spoke to. On HF we sent 58 and received 29 Greeting Messages. On VHF we sent 128 and received 78 Greeting Messages.

Well Done Everyone Concerned.