

Thinking Day On The Air

By Paul Lewis G4APL

February 2004

TDOTA 2004 preface

First of all welcome to the Guide and Brownie Leaders that may be reading the CatRad and Caterham Guide's TDOTA 2004 report.

This years event was again organised on the third weekend of February. We had been notified of around 45 Guide groups in North America would be active this weekend. So lets see if we can locate some of them on the short wave frequencies.

The Girlguiding UK Association now issue a GOTA (Guides On The Air) badge for participation in TDOTA. This event is a first step of gaining an insight to the some of the various aspects of communication via wireless, be it a mobile phone, analogue or digital television, data and computer communications

We would like to congratulate 9th Caterham Guide's Laura , Sophie, Zoe and Chantel on completing the Radio Amateur Foundation Communication Course they attended in January 2004. Laura and Sophie having taken and passed the Radio Amateur Communication Foundation Exam. They are now waiting for their Radio Amateur M3 callsigns to be issued. Joining Belynda Lewis M3BYL making a total of three current Radio Amateurs in the 9th Caterham Guides. Chantel and Zoe are waiting to take their exam. Over the next few months we look forward to be able to report two more guides with licences. Robin is very proud of her guides.

There is lot of support from the Caterham Girlguiding UK units for the Radio Communication Days using Amateur Radio to communicate around the United Kingdom and the rest of the world. Sending and receiving Greeting Messages with other Guide groups and Radio Amateurs.



Brownies listening while Mike G3TWJ establishes contact for the next HF station for them to speak to.

During November, Paul G4APL started reviewing the TDOTA 2004 paper work and made some minor changes identified during the October JOTA event.. In January wrote to the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) that the Caterham Radio Group (CatRad) would be active again and to included in the TDOTA UK official list of active stations.

Preparation

The updated paper work was passed to Janette 'Robin' to co-ordinate the Caterham Guides and Brownie companies late January.

The Thinking On The Air 2004 (TDOTA) for the Caterham Guides and Brownies was held on Saturday 21st February 2004 at the home and Ann and Paul Lewis, who hold the Radio Amateur Callsigns G7BSF, G4APL, Annabel Lewis 2E1PAL/M3PYL and Belynda age 10 M3BYL 9th Caterham Guide. This was the 15th time the Caterham Guides and Brownies were at Ann and Paul's home for their



Guides Sophia and Zoe assisting Brownies preparing their greeting messages before going on the air.

TDOTA & JOTA.

The Amateur Radio Callsign used for the event was again GX0SCR, the Special Event Club Callsign of the Caterham Radio Group.

As we approached the weekend, the weather was getting colder 1 to 4C, due to the cold easterly wind, and Paul did not think it will be warm enough to fire up the Barbeque.

Thursday, Friday 19, 20 February, Paul took some annual holiday off work. Paul checked the aerials then raise the tower supporting all the aerials. Rearranged the house for the separate work area's required.

By late afternoon Friday, the house was set-up and the VHF, HF and LF transmitter and amplifier had been tested on air.

Last thing Paul was exchanging Emails to the GOTA Canadian Guide co-ordinators to advise them that all Systems were GO and hopefully we would find some of them over the short wave band air waves.

The Event

Saturday 21 February 06:45 all the PC's the guides would use and equipment switched on and checked out.

Paul fired up the HF (High Frequency) short wave transmitter on 20 metres at 07:45 hours and the first contact was made with VK3CML in the State of Victoria Australia via the radio Long Path. Followed by JH7FNM 400km from Tokyo Japan, and VK3RD in Melbourne Australia. Conditions were very good compared to previous weekends during the low sun spot cycle that we are in.

The CatRad TDOTA team Mike G3TWJ, John G8MNY and Bryan G0SYR arrived a little after 08:00 hours. Janette (Robin) 9th Caterham Guide Leader arrived at 08:40 just before the seven 9th Caterham Guides including the two new Radio Amateurs.

Paul handed the HF station control over to Mike and Bryan who continued on 40 metres. With the Brownies and Guides listening, sending and receiving greeting messages over the two and a half hours. Which included TDOTA stations GX0SRC/P Burton on Trent District HQ. GB0GSG Essex and a Foundation course being run by G7LWF in Fetcham Surrey

At 12:50 UTC we changed frequencies to 21MHz and again were in demand until 18:30UTC by overseas stations queuing up to work and talk to our young lady visitors.

Our guides had some excellent contacts with the Canadian guides GOTA stations. VE3GYL London Ontario, VE3DBQ Ingersoll Ontario, VO1TK St. Johns New Foundland, VA1YL near Halifax Nova Scotia where Robin had a long chat with Helen (After the event Helen email some pictures of her guides that were forwarded to Robin). VE4GGC Winnipeg Manitoba.

The VHF Station went on air with the Guides and Brownies at 10:00. Chantel could be found using the network computers enjoying herself on the amprnet chat server network. Paul informed Zoe, Laura, Sophie and Belynda that they will be operating the 2 Metre station. While Ann and Paul kept an eye on them. Ensuring that all log keeping was being done. These guides had to establish the radio contact and assist the Brownies and Guides to send and receive their greeting messages. Between them they operated for eight hours.

The Packet Radio PC's (2) were connected into the

Caterham Radio Group's TCP/IP server GB7CIP that would enable the guides contacts around the UK and the rest of the world. Contact was made with 6th Alverstoke West Guides Gosport operating from HMS Collingwood Fareham Hampshire. Other contacts with Netherlands, Germany, Luxemburg, Poland,

In the technical area Bryan was joined by Emily who is licenced as M3EMA from the 6th West Wickham Guides and a friend of Zoe. Emily was seen in the garden running out a 130ft (40m) long wire to be used with the Crystal set that she was going to build instructed by Bryan. Also a Brownie brought her crystal set along so that the Radio Amateurs could get it going for her. This worked well when connected to the 130ft long wire.

The Brownies and Guides had to participate in one of two discussion sessions covering propagation and radios, aerials, comparing different handheld transceivers and a home made transmitter and receiver lead by John.

When they arrived, they had to prepare greeting messages and were taught the correct procedure on how to send the greeting message over the Amateur Radio airwaves, and be able to respond to follow up questions.

Phonetic Alphabet testing was carried out by John.

The Guide Leader (ROBIN) and Guide helpers (second or more visits) assisted the Brownies and ensured that the paper work was being completed and that all the required tasks were carried out to gain the Guides on the Air badge, TDOTA Certificates and progress towards the Brownie, Guide Communicator Badge.



**Back Row 9th Caterham Guides Chantel and Robin
Front Row, Zoe, Sophie with a brownie waiting to
speak over the radio**

Due to all the activity going on, Preparation for Lunch was running and hour later than normal. It was noted that the Sun was shining and the temperature was a little warmer. So the barbeque was prepared in the garden as in previous events.

Paul was assisted by Emma who took the orders and Paul as usual did his best to ensure the food was burnt to an edible enough state before being consumed by those present. Due to the demand for contacts with both stations, It was a working lunch for all the Radio Amateur Operators in between overs.

During the day Robin and her Guides and Brownies spoke to or listened to all the stations we contacted.

As the HF shortwave conditions were good and we were in great demand... We decided that the HF station would stay on 15 metres (21 MHz). So that our Guides and Brownies could speak and listen to overseas contacts. The ensuring pile up of stations trying to call our station for a contact kept us busy for the rest of the day right up



Bryan G0SYR in contact with Canadian Guides VE4GGC on 21Mhz taking lots of Greeting messages towards the end of the day



9th Caterham Guide Laura enjoying contacts on the GB7CIP World Wide Convers Packet Radio Network

till we closed down at 18:45 hours
 Here is a list of countries contacted
 Australia (Melbourne, Victoria)
 Japan (nr Tokyo)
 Russia (Nr Moscow), Ukraine
 Spain, France
 Jamaica
 Canada (New Foundland)
 Canadian GOTA stations
 VE3GYL London Ontario (Kathy) '9th Caterham Guide Leader 'Robin' had a chat with Barb a Ranger Guider
 VE3DBQ Ingersoll Ontario (Minie & Emily)
 VO1TK St. John, New Foundland (Dave)
 VE3DND Toronto (Gregory, Olga)
 VA1YL nr Halifax Nova Scotia (Helen) '9th Caterham Guide Leader Robin' had a chat with Helen who organises the Canadian list of active stations.(no one was allowed in the Radio Shack while these two chatted away).
 VE4GGC Winnipeg Manitoba (Gil)

USA
 Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, Niagara Falls NY, Schenectady NY, South and North Carolina, Alabama, Maryland, Rhode Island, Boston Massachusetts South Texas, Detroit Michigan, UK on 40m (7Mhz)

Hull, South Birmingham, Nr Liverpool, Skegness, Bournemouth.

GX0SRC/p Burton on Trent District HQ

G7LWC Fetcham Surrey who was running a Foundation Course.

We were working the Canadian Guide stations right up till the time that all our Guides had to leave.

The HF station closed at 18:45UTC

49 Stations were contacted on 7Mhz(LF) and 21Mhz(HF)
 58 messages sent, 27 Received

On VHF 2 Metres 17 stations were worked including
 Messages sent 86 received 83

Areas contacted, Crawley, Fetcham(G7LWC), Chelmsford(MX5CDS), Watford, Bromley, Tunbridge,



John G8MNY discussing how transmitter, receivers, radios and mobile phones work with the brownies. Brownie Leader Anne Wood in the background.

Dorking, GB7RST Hertfordshire, Banstead, Ashtead.
Wycombe North Guides GB2WND – long periods of
message taking between our two stations throughout the day.

All those that attended the TDOTA station worked towards
their Certificates, Guides on the Air Badge. Completed all the
required tasks towards their Brownie or Guides
Communicator Badge by 19:00UTC

The number of visitors that came to the event were 24, which
meant that the Brownies and Guides had a very good time.

9th Caterham Guide Leader (Janette ROBIN The_Boss)
1st Caterham Brownie Leader Anne Wood
Annabel Lewis (2E1PAL) Brownie Rainbow Assistant

9 from 9th Caterham Guides
4 from 1st Caterham Brownies
2 from 4th Caterham Brownies
4 from 5th Caterham Brownies
1 from 7th Caterham Guides
1 from 6th West Wickham Guides

Supported by 7 CatRad Radio Amateurs G0SYR, G3TWJ,
G4APL, G7BSF, G8MNY, M3BYL, 2E1PAL/M3PYL (came
in after work to assist, plus all those Radio Amateur's that
came on during the day and gave our TDOTA station a call to
make our event successful.

Paul and Mike were fighting keeping back their colds, John
had a very bad back and Bryan had to go to work the next day.

After tidying up the house, Paul, Ann, Belynda and Annabel
ended the evening sitting down to the usual meal and a well
earned rest.



**Paul G4APL with 9th Caterham Guide Emma
preparing lunch for the Guiders and Radio Amateurs**



**Caterham Brownie listening to her own crystal set
after Bryan connected this up to the long wire**



**Back Row 9th Caterham Guide Leader Robin
with Paul G4APL, & Ann G7BSF
Front Row Laura M3LRA, Belynda M3BYL and Sophie M3SOF**

Thank you all, Guider's,
Guide Helpers
and the

CatRad TDOTA Team

JOTA 16th October 2004

<http://www.theskywaves.net>