

# Thinking Day On The Air

By Paul Lewis G4APL

February 2005

## TDOTA 2005 preface

First of all welcome to the Guide and Brownie Leaders that may be reading the CatRad and Caterham Guide's TDOTA 2005 report.

This years event was again organised on the third weekend of February. We had been notified of around 45 Guide groups in UK and Canada. 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

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. During the December, Paul G4APL started reviewing the TDOTA 2005 paper work.. In January wrote to the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) that the Caterham Radio Group (CatRad) would be active again and to be 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 2005 (TDOTA) for the Caterham Guides and Brownies was again held at SKY-WAVES on Saturday 19th February 2005. This was hosted again by Ann

and Paul who hold the Radio Amateur Callsigns G7BSF, G4APL, Annabel 2E1PAL/M3PYL and Belynda M3BYL 9th Caterham Guide. This was the 17<sup>th</sup> time the Caterham Guides and Brownies were at Ann and Paul's home for their Radio Communications Day.

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

As we approached the weekend, the weather was getting colder 1 to 2C, with a strong easterly wind, with snow expected. Paul did not think it will be warm enough to fire up the Barbeque. Will see later in the day

Thursday, Friday 17, 18 February, Paul took some annual leave off work so that the house could be re-arranged and the aerials checked out. The 80 Metre aerial feed point had to be repaired after the winter storms. Then raised the tower



9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guides Belynda M3BYL and Laura M3LRA listening intently during a 2 Metre contact.



Robin 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guide leader enjoying her HF Contact with another Guide Station

supporting all the aerials to enable the best signal reception By late afternoon Friday, the house was set-up and the VHF, HF and LF transmitter and amplifier had been tested on air.

Paul check out the Short Wave band conditions on Thursday and Friday. It was not looking too good as the radio propagation was nearing the 11 year Solar cycle expected in 2006.

## The Event

Saturday 19th February 07:45 all the PC's the guides would be using and equipment switched on and checked out. Paul fired up the HF (High Frequency) short wave transmitter on 20 metres at 08:00 hours and after many CQ (Seek You) calls made contacts with West Ukraine,

Melbourne Australia, Japan. All contacts were short passing the minimum information.

The CatRad TDOTA team Mike G3TWJ, John G8MNY, Bryan G0SYR (who took some Annual Leave so that he was available), Ted G7OBF, Trevor G7BWE arrived a little after 08:00 hours.

Janette (Robin) 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guide Leader arrived at 08:45 just before the six 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guides including Radio Amateurs. Belynda M3BYL, Laura M3LRA, Sophie M3SOF

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 five hours.

Thinking Day On the Air stations contacted were

GB0BG Banbury Guides

GB4SMB St Michael Guides West Yorkshire

GB7SKG 2<sup>nd</sup> Kilbarcham Guides Paisley Scotland

GB2GGW Worksp

MX0EVG/P Ellen Valley Guides Cumbria

PA6JD/J Rotterdam Netherlands

At 15:00 we change frequency to 21MHz where our Guides and Brownies talked or listen to stations in the following USA states, Florida, New Maryland, Arkansas, Boston, Pittsburgh, Long Island, Virginia, Philadelphia, Followed by and excellent contacts were made with Helen VA1YL and her nine guides in her Nova Scotia Canadian Home. Robin had a long chat as well as the Caterham Guides.

During this contact the following exchange occurred between our two Guide Groups

GX0SCR "You are coming through loud and clear Over"

VA1YL one of the nine guides at the Canadian end responded " I am a LOUD AND CLEAR TYPE OF PERSON Over"

The guide was SO LOUD, that she was heard in every room of the house!

It was good for our guides and Robin to exchange greetings and be able to exchange comments with Helen and her guides.

By 17:30 UTC the band conditions were getting difficult and signals weaker. The station was switched over to the 14MHz band, where contacts were made with VO1 BZM St Johns New Foundland, and VE1GGC Winnepeg Canada.

The Short Wave HF station was closed down at 18:15 UTC

The VHF Station went on air with the Guides and Brownies at 10:15 and closed at 17:00 UTC. The Ladies Sophie M3SOF, Laura M3LRA, Belynda M3BYL Caterham 9<sup>th</sup> Guides where assisted by Annabel 2E1PAL and Ann G7BSF

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 six hours TDOTA station worked was GB2THG Turners Hill Guides, Counties worked West Sussex, Bedfordshire, Surrey, Kent and Essex

The Guides also enjoyed themselves on the network computers connected to the the amprnet (AmateurPacketRadioNETwork) chat server network.. 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. Contacts were made with locals in the Surrey area, Netherlands, Perth Western Australia (VK6HU Peter who made a special effort to be to chat to the Caterham Guides as he enjoyed the conversation last October (2004), Queensland Australia and Sweden,

When the Brownies and Guides 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 Ted.

In the technical area John was busy with the guides building the Crystal Set, Measuring and identifying Resister values, and wiring and unwiring 13Amp mains plugs

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.

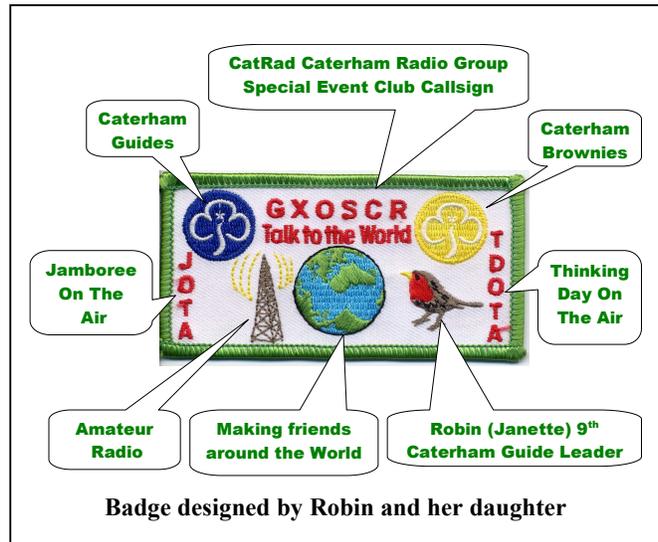


**Caterham Brownies checking the time before logging their HF contacts.**

Some of the brownies had to connect up a circuit to make a lamp light on and off with a morse key power by a 3 volt battery,

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. Robin announced that she had brought along the New Caterham Guide & Caterham Radio Group TDOTA, JOTA badge that had been designed.

Midday it was nice and sunny with a cold Easterly wind, Time to get the barbeque out in the garden It was very pleasant standing there while Ann and Paul prepared the food for cooking. Until the sun disappeared to be replaced with solid cloud and the temperature dropped. The Gas was so cold that the barbeque burners started to



**Badge designed by Robin and her daughter**

Completed all the required tasks towards their Brownie or Guides Communicator Badge and the new Caterham Guides Radio Communication badge by 18:30UTC

While all this activity was going on, Trevor G7BWE took over from Paul taking photographs of the activities. So that Paul had a selection to pick from to include in this report..

The number of visitors that came to the event were 21, which meant that the Brownies and Guides had a good time.

9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guide Leader (Janette ROBIN The\_Boss)  
1<sup>st</sup> Caterham Brownie Leader Anne Wood

9 from 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guides  
5 from 1<sup>st</sup> Caterham Brownies  
4 from 4<sup>th</sup> Caterham Brownies  
1 from 7<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guides

Supported by 9 CatRad Radio Amateurs G0SYR, G3TJW, G4APL, G7BSF, G7BWE, G7OBF, G8MNY, M3BYL, 2E1PAL/M3PYL, plus all those Radio Amateur's that came



**Ted GOBF teaching 9th Caterham Guide Laura M3LRA how to access WEBCONVERS chat server**

go out.

Paul was assisted by Abigail and Katie who took the orders. They made sure the Guides got the food first and forgot to feed some of the Radio Amateurs who were working hard for them. It was not until the Radio Amateurs came outside looking for the food, that Paul realised that there was a communication problem.

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

39 Stations were contacted on 7MHz(LF) and 14MHz and 21MHz(HF)  
47 messages sent, 29 Received

On VHF 2 Metres 17 stations were worked including Messages sent 75 received 10

All those that attended the TDOTA station worked towards their Certificates, Guides on the Air Badge



**Caterham Brownie during her Phonetic Alphabet test with 9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guide Sophie M3SOF.**

on during the day and gave our TDOTA station a call to make our event successful.

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

Following the event Paul will spend several evenings, extracting the information for this report, preparing the data to produce the QSL card for all contacts and Guides spoken to. Paul was so impressed with Nicole Righten QSL card that the picture is being used for the TDOTA QSL cards.

This event was nearly called off by the guides authority, less than twelve hour before the start of our event. Due to the fact that the Radio Amateurs had not been put through the Criminal Record Checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Apparently this is now a requirement for all adults working with under 16 years old when assisting and demonstrating hobbies.

Though we understand the need for the checks in the current state of our society. As everyone is looking over ones shoulder frighten of being prosecuted. With over 500 Radio Amateur's assisting the October UK event requiring to be assessed, could end up with fewer participating. The CatRad TDOTA, JOTA teams have agreed to be CRB'd before the October event.



Caterham Brownies taking turns to construct the circuit to light the lamp with the morse key



9<sup>th</sup> Caterham Guides Sophie M3SOF (left) and Zoe learning to wire up a mains 13 Amp plug



Image by Nicole Righten 1st Caterham Brownies

**Caterham Guides Brownies**  
Thinking Day On The Air   
Jamboree On The Air

**GX0SCR**

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

CatRad TDOTA Team

JOTA 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005

<http://www.theskywaves.net>