



Girlguiding UK
girls in the lead

THINKING DAY ON THE AIR REPORT

21 & 22 FEBRUARY 2009





Thinking Day on the Air Report 2009

February 2009 was another very active TDOTA celebration, Over thirty stations took to the air to give nearly one thousand members of the movement an opportunity to use amateur radio to talk to other members throughout the world.

It was nice to have a number of stations on air for the first time this year, especially GB0SBG, St Brendan's Guides in Belfast, GS3BSQ for Aboyne Guides near Aberdeen and GB0GGR Girlguiding Renfrewshire, Greenock. All stations enjoyed the event so much that they plan to take part in 2010.

Many stations have been providing members with the opportunities to experience amateur radio as a form of communication for thinking day for a number of years. GB0IHG have been providing First Highworth Guides with a station for at least 21 years, thanks to the organisational abilities of Dick Humphries. Thinking Day on the Air was first active in 1985 to celebrate 75 years of Guiding, so next year the event will celebrate 25 years along with Guiding's centenary.

Two Guides from 5th Gourrock Guides, Kathryn McBride and Jenna Sinclair, helped with running GB0GGR as part of their training for their Foundation Amateur Radio Licence.

From September 2009 to October 2010 OFCOM (the UK Radio Licensing Authority) have agreed that stations celebrating the Guiding Centenary may apply for the very special prefix of GG100 for their station. Applications need to be accompanied by a letter of verification from an adult member of Girlguiding UK who will be part of the activity.

So even if the solar conditions remain similar to this year with few sun spots, TDOTA stations should find lots of radio amateurs wanting to work our special calls.

Liz Jones M0ACL

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GB0FHG - Berkshire

The station was put on for the Hedgerley District Guides although Rainbows, Brownies and Guides came from around the district. There were about thirty visiting, more Rainbows and Brownies than Guides.

There were two stations in operation HF and VHF. HF consisted of a FT1000 at a Linear (400watts) and 40/80mtr trapped dipole at only about 30ft running north / south. Most operation was on 40/80 although we did try out 20mtrs for a short time. VHF was on 2Mtrs. FT847 into white stick at 30ft. Both FM and SSB used.

Dave G4XDU



GB0GTD - Farnborough, Kent

The 3rd Farnborough and Goddington Guides took part in “Thinking Day on the Air” on Saturday 21st February. The station was located in St Nicholas Church, Orpington.

I suggested the idea to the Guide leaders during December 2008 and with their support started to arrange the technical side of the event. After talking about the event on the local amateur radio repeater (GB30K), I was quickly offered help and equipment to get the station on the air.

The area around the church was not ideally suited to the deployment of antennas, so we decided to deploy a Carolina Windom HF antenna in a “dog leg” configuration using the 30ft mast as a central support. A 20ft telescopic fibreglass mast was used to support the long end of the antenna and a 20ft long fishing pole was used for the short end. A VHF collinear antenna was clamped to the top of the 30ft mast. Various local trees, fence posts and even the vicars washing line pole were employed as guying points. One guy rope even had to pass over the roof of the church to find a suitable anchoring point. A UHF antenna was installed at low level to access the local repeater/Echolink node (GB30K).

Initially HF conditions seemed quite poor with the bands being dominated by French contest stations, but they improved later when we worked VA1YL, the Guide station in Nova Scotia.

GB0GGR in Glasgow and GB0THG in Wiltshire were found via Echolink on GB30K.

2m FM brought in contacts from GB4SUN in Croydon and GB0FHG in Slough.

In total we made 15 contacts and communicated with 11 different stations with 5 of these being other Guide/Brownie special event call signs. We spoke to 24 people over the air and 17 guides sent messages from GB0GTD.

Best DX was UN7CC in Kazakhstan at 2952 miles followed by Guide station VA1YL in Nova Scotia at 2902 miles.

Charlotte and the other Guide leaders kept the girls very busy during the event with various activities ranging from semaphore and designing their own QSL cards to doing a strange message sending technique using balloons and pieces of string! There were also talks on how to keep safe when using the internet.

I was really impressed by the enthusiasm of the guides and hope they enjoyed the event as much as we did.

Neil - G7AQK

GB0IHG - First Highworth Guides, Wiltshire

This year we operated from the Church Room of St Michael's Church Highworth, a 13th century, medieval church situated on a hill top blessed with a 24m (78ft 9in) high bell tower. The tower has a hole made by a cannon ball when it was used for target practice in the English Civil War.

We suspended a sloping long wire antenna from the top of the tower, running over the churchyard and into the church room. The total length was 46m (150ft 11in).

We used an Icom IC756 PRO Mk1 transceiver and tuned the long wire via an old KW107 ATU. We employed two 4ft earth stakes supplemented by quarterwave counterpoises for the 40 & 80 metre bands. An old Heathkit SB610 monitor scope was included to make sure that our young ladies were generating a good RF



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output - some of them tend to speak very quietly. We employed the same audio system as last year with a separate amplifier and speaker, driven from the IC756 ACC I socket, to compete with the background noise. The IC756 audio amp was used separately to drive a pair of headphones for the operator. We also used a Yaesu FT8900 to operate through out local UHF repeater, GB3TD, and had a try at using Echolink.

A simple wired intercom unit had been used prior to TDOTA, so that our girls could practice sending messages and the use of the phonetic alphabet. This equipment was home made to a design from an old JOTA publication.

Our logs show that we did not work too many stations, but some of these were quite long contacts and all our young ladies passed their messages. Two of our contacts were made using CW (Morse code) to show how it is done. We all had a great time.

Chris - G4AJA

GB0GGR - Girlguiding Renfrewshire

Eunice Lynch MM3UVL enlisted the help of Greenock District Scout Amateur Radio club to organise the first TDOTA station for Girlguiding Greenock Division. Kathryn McBride and Jenna Sinclair, from 5th Gourrock Guides helped with running the station as part of the training for their Foundation Amateur Radio Licence.



Kathryn & Jenna making a contact

Eunice Lynch

During the weekend the girls were taught the correct radio procedures and gained tips from operators in Australia and USA. Guides and Brownies sent Thinking Day greetings to other TDOTA stations across the UK and Canada, and contacted 20 countries across the world. Their most exciting contact was with Keith VK2HBJ in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia. Having been taught how to tune the radio girls managed to find interesting stations in South America, Madagascar, the Far East and Antarctica.

The 21 Brownies and 11 Guides who attended the station were all able to complete their Communicator badge, 2 Guides completed sections of their Baden Powell awards and 1 completed a section of her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.



Louise finding a contact

Eunice Lynch

Apart from sending greetings messages to British and Canadian TDOTA stations Brownies and Guides were offered, Morse code, outdoor wide games using 2-way radios, learn the phonetic alphabet then the Brownie Promise using the phonetic alphabet and sign language.

Amongst the visitors to the station were Maureen Foley, Girlguiding Renfrewshire County Commissioner and Sue Graham, Baden Powell Award Coordinator.

A report of the event was published by the local paper Inverclyde Now.

GB0VOM - Vale of Mowbray

Rainbows, Brownies and Guides had great fun over the weekend passing greetings messages, trying Morse code and working on their District Changing the World Art Exhibition for the Plan Charity.



GB0VOM Morse code practise

Rachel Lamond

GB2CWG - Cambridge West Guides

Cambridge West Guides took part in TDOTA from 10.30 am on Saturday 21st February. The station operated on 08 metres and 20 metres and were able to talk to GB0NGG at Netherurd, Blythe Bridge, Scotland and GB2SPX Spixworth Guides in Norwich, Norfolk. The girls made qsl cards and took part in activities using secret codes and morse codes, plus a treasure hunt with coded clues.

GB2FOX - Foxlease, Hampshire

There were only 25 brownies staying in the main house at Foxlease this year, but they all had a fun filled weekend and the chance to speak to Guides in Canada using the station arranged by Itchen Valley Amateur Radio Club. The Brownies and their leaders were able to learn the phonetic alphabet and use the knowledge to compose a message to pass onto others, and to complete a clue of their Communicator Badge.



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Foxlease talking to Canada

Paula Williams

With their messages written they were then delighted to be able to pass them onto VA1YL, Helen, and her Guides in Nova Scotia, Canada. During another session during the weekend, one Brownie had informed the instructor that they knew there were Brownies in other countries because 'she had spoken to Guides in Canada on the radio'.

Brownies also produced their own QSL cards to send to the stations with whom they spoke, and have received some in return.

A Guide Unit staying in Princess Margaret Lodge overnight visited the station on Saturday evening. They also made QSL cards and learnt the phonetic alphabet. Radio conditions were not very good and it was difficult to find

stations prepared to talk to the girls. Eventually those Guides who wanted to pass a greetings message were thrilled with the contact they made and all girls were pleased with their Guides on the Air participation badge.

Liz MOACL

GX0CSR - Caterham

This is the 24th time that Caterham Guides and Brownies have held their 'Radio Communications day' event at the home SKY-WAVES of Ann and Paul Lewis who hold the Radio Amateur Callsigns G7BSF and G4APL..

As one can expect, some guides have revisited the CatRad event 9 to 24 times. For example Robin(24), Susanna (M3ZUS)(5), Belynda (M3BYL)(24) and Elizabeth 9th Caterham Guide (9) Hopefully later this year. Elizabeth will have her own Amateur Radio Licence. Each Brownie or Guide requires about four hours to complete the tasks.

Brownies visiting for the first time are working towards their Radio Communicator Badge.

First time Guides work towards their Communication in the Community and Get on the Airwave badge.

Second time guides work on additional tasks and assist the operators in running the station. Third visits, starting to get the hang of Amateur Radio assisting the other Brownies and Guides. They may then be interested enough to apply and join a Radio Amateur Foundation Course run by other clubs.

Preparation

As we approached the weekend, the weather was improving, snow had melted and expected to be drier. Two weeks previously Caterham On the Hill was cut off due to heavy snow and no Public transport running. Will it be warm and dry enough to fire up the Barbeque?

The aerials and HF, VHF radios were checked out with a couple of overseas contacts. The tower supporting the aerials was raised to enable sending and receiving strong radio signals.

By Friday evening, the house was set-up. It was not looking too good as the radio propagation on 20 Metre faded at 5PM. We are still in the low part of the 11 year cycle. On the Saturday Solar Flux index reported as 70. This has been the case for two years now, due to lack of sun spots on the Sun for the new solar cycle 24.

The Event

At 09:00 or soon after, 4th Caterham Brownies, .9th Caterham Guides including Radio Amateurs, Belynda M3BYL, Susanna M3ZUS (7th Caterham),

Robin issued the Paper work to each Brownie and Guides. Giving guidance as to what is required of them. First they all were preparing their Greeting messages in another room at the start of their four hours of tasks.

Bryan and Mike operating on 20 Metres, found it hard going and not hearing any TDOTA stations. 40 Metres skip was to Italy and France. With strong signals from stations participating in the French contest. It was time to switch to 80Metres at 10:45UTC where we spent next three hours contacting TDOTA stations and others in England.

Lunch was served so that the operators had a break before the next group of Brownies and Guides arrived at 2PM

At 14:00 we moved to the 20 Metre (14MHz) band. We could hear Helen VA1YL off the back of our beam. When our Brownies and Guides had prepared their greeting messages. They were ready and all eager to contact Helen VA1YL and her girl

guides in Nova Scotia. We turned the HF beam around to the North West and had a very long and excellent contact with strong S9 Signals. Our Brownies and Guides greeting the Guides in Canada. Even Robin spoke to Helen again.

After our contact with Helen, our HF station contacted stations in the USA Pennsylvania, New Jersey, W3CRA Collins Radio Association Pennsylvania. VO1BZM GOTA Admiralty Museum Mount Pearl New Newfoundland Canada. HV0A Vatican City. Turkey, CS0RCL 2/414 GOTA Radio Club in South Portugal. 8P9MD Barbados



Amy & Elizabeth, soon to be licensed

Paul Lewis



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Other Thinking Day On the Air stations contacted on HF short Wave Amateur Radio bands were:- GB0FHG Farnham Common, GB2FOX Lyndhurst New Forest, It was good to speak and hear Liz again on 80 Metres. GB2SPX Norwich Norfolk, GB4SUN South Norwood South London, GB0HDG Horsham West Sussex. Other Countries worked Latvia, Bulgaria, Slovak Republic, Finland, England, Russia
The VHF Station went on air with the Guides and Brownies at 09:30 and closed at 18:00 GMT. Ann G7BSF made the few contacts and taken over by Susanna M3ZUS and Paul G4APL. Belynda M3BYL assisted with the check logging and assisting the Brownies. Ann and Paul in the background, responded as and when required.

The Brownies and Guides had to participate in one of the two discussion sessions covering propagation and radios, aerials, comparing different hand-held transceivers (including a very old brick mobile phone) and a home made transmitter and receiver lead by John.

Paul G4APL

GS3BSQ/P Aboyne, Scotland

Thinking Day on the Air is a chance for girls to speak with people all over the world using amateur radio. For many it is their first experience of amateur radio and it is a great way to enthuse the next generation of license holders!

This year the Aboyne Guiders and Aberdeen Amateur Radio Society got together to take part in Thinking Day on the Air at the Scout/ Guide hut in Aboyne on Sunday the 22nd of February. About 10 members of the club turned out to help set up a G5RV antenna which was used as an inverted V in a field adjacent to the hut. It had a height of 21 feet and dropped to 6 feet. The station was a Kenwood TS2000 running 100 watts and for a time we also used a Yaesu VX-6 with 5 watts on 2m. The callsign was GS3BSQ/P.

When the kids arrived following their church service they had a go at writing their names in Morse Code and practised using a key attached to a Datong Morse Tutor. A lot of noise was made and some coped so well they quickly moved on to passing messages to each other. To keep them busy while a good HF contact was made several youngsters were given the chance to pass greetings messages on 2 meters. This gave the younger ones a bit of confidence and by the time a suitable HF contact had been made they all did really well. Everyone who made a contact illustrated a QSL card and many photos were taken of budding amateurs posing with the VX-6.

In total we had 1 Rainbow, 2 Cubs, 4 Brownies, 1 Scout, 4 Guides and at least one Guider having their first go on air. Several gained their Communicators Badge as well as the Guide on the Air patch and almost 30 messages were passed:

2 meters - 9 messages

80 meters - 18 messages (inc. Netherurd GB0NGG, Shetland, Dalgety Bay & Peterhead)

20 meters - 2 messages (Slovenia & Italy)

SWL Reports were received from the Aberdeen area and from Ayr Guides GB5AG

The Guiders thanked the club for their time and expertise & the club thanked the Guiders for the lovely soup and sandwiches - a good day was had by all!

73

Seonag Robertson 2M0IMP

Ranger Guider Bennachie District, Gordon

Stations on the Air 2009 21/22 February

Here is a list of UK stations which operated to celebrate World Thinking Day 2009

CALL	UNIT	LOCATION
GB0BCG	Barnard Castle Guides	Barnard Castle,
GB0GGR	Girlguiding Renfrewshire	Kilmalcolm, Renfrewshire
GB0GTD	Orpington Guides	Orpington, Kent
GB0HDG	Horsham Division Guides	Horsham, West Sussex
GB0IHG	First Highworth Guides	Highworth, Swindon, Wilts
GB0NGG	Netherurd Training Centre	Peebleshire, Scotland
GB0OSG	Oakley Scouts & Guides	Basingstoke, Hampshire
GB0SBG	St Brendon's Guides	Belfast, Northern Ireland
GB0SDG	Shelf District Guides	Halifax, West Yorkshire
GB0VOM	Vale of Mowbray Brownies & Guides	Sowerby, North Yorkshire
GB1CPG	Coed Peoth Guides	Wales
GB1DSG	Dorridge Scout Group	Dorridge, West Midlands
GB1UB	Upton Brownies	Upton, Yorkshire
GB2AGG	Angus Girl Guides	Montrose, Scotland
GB2CWG	Cambridge West Guides	Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs
GB2EDG	Easingwold District Guides	Easingwold, Yorkshire
GB2FOX	Foxlease Training Centre	Lyndhurst, Hampshire
GB2RA	Firepower Museum	Greenwich, London
GB2SPX	Spixworth Guides	Norwich, Norfolk
GB2TSC	Tolmers Scout Camp	Cuffley, Herts
GI3XRQ	1st Ballygilbert Guides	Girlguiding Lorne, Northern Ireland
GB4GIN	Northampton Guides	Jubilee Camp Site, Northampton
GB4SUN	South & Upper Norwood Guides	Croydon, South London
GB4TDG	Tey District Guides	Colchester, Essex
GB4YOU	Youlbury Scout Camp	Youlbury, Oxford
GB5AG	Ayrshire Guides	Ayr, Scotland
GS3BSQ/P	Aboyne Guides	Aberdeen, Scotland
GX0SCR	Caterham Guides & Brownies	Caterham, Surrey
GX4WWR	Alton Guides & Brownies	Alton, Hampshire
MX0ZOO	9 th Worcester Scouts & Guides	Worcester



Here are a few of the stations from outside the UK known to have taken part in TDOTA 2009

Call	Unit	Location
IZ1NEN	Genova Scouts	Genova, Italy
VA1YL	Port William Guides	Nova Scotia, Canada
VE3ARF	Cornwall Guides	Ontario, Canada
VE3BA	Brantford Guides	Ontario, Canada
VE3JW	195th Ottawa Brownies	Ontario, Canada
VA3TVW	Hamilton Pathfinders	Ontario, Canada
WOERT	Palmyra Junior Girl Troop	Nebraska, USA

Website for further information: www.guides-on-the-air.co.uk