



Ridgeway Repeater Group. Newsletter First Quarter 2021

Messages/Notices

I hope you have all had a Merry Christmas and Father Christmas was good to you, and to wish you a very happy and prosperous new year from the RRG committee. I know we are all living in restricted times because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I hope everyone is well and making good use of your amateur radio licenses.

Please Make a Note, The Newsletter from the Next Edition Will Only Be Available on The RRG Website not via email.

Update from the Secretary G4XUT

Hello from Rob, G4XUT. I hope you and your families are all well after this rather long and drawn out lockdown period but have been able to make good use of our hobby during this time.

Our repeaters have been used more than usual in recent years since those heady days in the 1980's when it was difficult find a free channel on VHF to have a QSO on!

The COVID regulations have meant that the "out of breath" walkers group have been exercising regularly including myself but keeping in our local areas.

Ken G1NCG has done more exploring at Liden lake (mind the mud Ken), Nigel G8VRI investigating the old Blakehill farm airfield (in the Fog) and the MSWJ railway path near Cricklade, Brian M0SWL searching for the MSWJ Tunnel near Marlborough (and finding both ends of it) and Andrew M1CJE around his local Marlborough area whilst being locked down until his SOTA activation can resume once again.

Richard, G4MUF (and Jude) continue to stretch their legs along the Wilts. and Berks. Canal with various interesting stops and to discuss the findings of the day!

There is also a regular daily walk by David, M0NMI near Waterhay (don't forget the waterproof boots next time) which is always interesting.

For those of us who are not some active, keeping in touch with all those folks is good for the mind and also keeps them company. I can vouch for that with QSOs going on most of my walks up to 2.5 hours and keeping the repeater warmed up nicely as a bonus.

For those not mentioned above I do apologise, and for the many listeners in the area but there are too many to mention but maybe included in the next newsletter.

The RRG AGM was very well attended via Zoom (is it only 4 months to the next AGM – never?) and we now have a new Chairman, David, M0TFY who has kindly stepped in to join us and I would like to welcome him to the RRG. Thank you all for helping the RRG by subscribing again in 2020/2021 year, it is very much appreciated.

David is a keen Radio Amateur and I am sure he will bring in a wealth of knowledge to the group.

Current Repeater Status:

GB3WH (FM) is being used more recently and with the weekly Thursday SDARC nets on there, it has made contacting the SDARC members and others that much easier on 2 metres.

GB7TC (DMR) has been working fine with only a short period of internet connection outage and the Phoenix server requiring a re-boot. See Nigel's latest Talk Group updates in the newsletter.

MB7USW (APRS) has been operating normally except when the internet connection occasionally goes down for short periods.

GB3TD has been working normally, however there are some intermittent issues lately with some interference from GB7TC. This is probably due to a filter or connector problem.

The group will investigate this when we are able to go to site and can adhere to the latest COVID lockdown regulations.

The Echolink service was suspended in January due to changes to the NOV holders of the remote links. Andy, M1EFY has closed down his link (many thanks Andy for lots of years of Echolink service) and Andy G0UWS NOV status is now Non Operational due to commitments.

Rob, G4XUT has taken over the remote link as of 18th January 2021.

I would like thank Ken for his continued support to the RRG and for producing the newsletters (never an easy job) which are always interesting to read.

Stay Safe all: Rob G4XUT

New Talk Groups available via GB7TC

There are some additions to the Talk Group list, these have been added as a result of the new Phoenix link with DV Scotland. <https://dvscotland.net/>

There is no necessity to add these to your code plugs but they are available for use if you wish.

The full TG list will be revised over the next few days (also to update the change from linking from BM UK to FreeDMR), so please keep a check on the website listing - <http://www.dmr-uk.net/index.php/layout/>

TG86/TS1 - XLX600E (PEANUT)

TG87/TS1 – XLX679A

TG23550/TS1 - SCOTLAND CHAT (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23551/TS2 - NOT YET NAMED (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23552/TS2 - NOT YET NAMED (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23553/TS2 - NOT YET NAMED (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23554/TS2 - NOT YET NAMED (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23555/TS2 - DV SCOTLAND (STATIC ON ALL THEIR REPEATERS)
TG23556/TS2 - NOT YET NAMED (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23557/TS2 - SCOTLAND EAST (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23558/TS2 - SCOTLAND NORTH (DV SCOTLAND)
TG23559/TS2 - SCOTLAND WEST (DV SCOTLAND)

Hubnet UK is available via GB7TC using TG23526 on Time Slot 1.

Use this link <http://phoenix-e.opendmr.net/#> and the "Matrix" page to see what Talk Groups Phoenix links to.

For example GB7TC will always broadcast TG1, TG2, TG13 and TG235 if there is any traffic.

The other TG listed at the top of the page are "User Accessible" (UA) and will stay up if used in a QSO/. For example after a call on TG235, you should move to one of the UA Talk Groups TG80 to TG84.

TG23526 is available as UA, just activate it by calling through GB7TC and the next time there is a break, it will become active and you will hear, and be able to join in the QSO (If there is one) or call through.

The TG can change frequently, as new ones are added, the current list of TG is available at <http://www.dmr-uk.net/index.php/layout/>

Hot Spots

The mapping of Phoenix hot spot reflectors to TG is on <http://phoenix-e.opendmr.net/#> under "Remap". Example, you register your hot spot to Phoenix-F and then select a Reflector, it will map to the TG as shown in this table.

You can monitor all the Phoenix hot spots on <http://78.129.135.43/ipsc/index.html#>. Hotspots can also register for multiple TG and this is on the "Matrix" tab. In this case the hot spot will act like a GB7xx repeater and you can use the TG directly via the Hot Spot.

Try your own hot spot frequency with TG9990 and see if you get the parrot/echo test. That function is separate from the reflector component.

Reflector	NAME	TG	TS
4400 (UK Calling)	TG235	235	1
4401 (UK - Chat 1)	TG80	80	1
4402 (UK - Chat 2)	TG81	81	1
4403 (UK - Chat 3)	TG82	82	1
4404 (UK - Chat 4)	TG83	83	1
4405 (UK - Chat 5)	TG84	84	1
4409 (CQ-UK WIRES-X)	CQUK	2351	1
4410 (SW England)	TG810	810	2
4420 (NW England)	TG820	820	2
4430 (Midlands)	TG830	830	2
4440 (East England)	TG840	840	2
4441 (East England 1)	TG841	841	2
4442 (East England 2)	TG842	842	2
4450 (Scotland)	TG850	850	2
4460 (NE England)	TG860	860	2
4470 (Wales)	TG870	870	2
4491 (SE England)	TG801	801	2

Thank You Nigel G8VRI for this update on these additional Talk Groups for GB7TC so that you can all add them to your current DMR configurations.

Update on My Home built Loop Antenna.

After using it for ten months with two different setups (Computer/Radio that is) I have to say I'm impressed with the receive capabilities of this antenna and radio setup. At first I used it with my small computer running an Intel Atom CPU with 1Gbt of ram it worked but receive was fair but not brilliant. When this first computer died I looked for a replacement and found a used recycled one that suited my needs, this has dual core CPU and 2Gbt ram which has doubled it's receive capabilities to my delight. Then a family member offered me some extra ram and I have managed to get 6Gbt of the 8Gbt of ram I was given to work on the secondhand computer which has helped a great deal, making receive better still or should I say has made the radio's receiving qualities better still because even in noisy conditions it can still pick out stations from all over the world. To give you an idea of stations heard :- Australia VK2DX, China BH1MQA, Japan JA3QJB, Mongolia JT1CO, Turkey TA1ERY, Italy IK2RLM, Kuwait VK2DX this jus a few of the stations I hear continental Europe, my only problem is they cannot hear me. Transmit is still limited but there two factors that need to be taken in to account one is the amount of RF in the shack as antenna is sited on the wall of the shack, and two I haven't got around to sorting out my HF linear which

worked the last time I tried it but that was awhile ago. I know this sounds like me making excuses and I think yes maybe I am. Also have to think just how much power I can use safely, so that has started me on my next project of building another loop which can be controlled remotely.

I think I'm going to stick with my loops as they provide a good compromise of the amount of space they take to erect them and I can mount them in the loft which keeps them out of sight of my neighbours. Making them a stealthy antenna so that nobody can complain of unsightly aluminium farms in the air around my house.

The new project is progressing as I'm looking at variable airspace tuning capacitors of the right flashover voltage, these are few and far between at the moment. I've priced up and located a source for the loop section as this will be 15mm copper pipe, and rather than attempt to make a bend in the pipe I have several 45 degree elbows of the same material, this will make it an octagonal loop. I've also located parts for making the feed point box, that makes two important components of the antenna sourced. I've yet to design a motor system for turning the tuning capacitor but still have time to sort this. I have also been looking at a way of protecting the capacitor by enclosing it in something and I think some waste pipe that I was looking at on an internet site would be just perfect for the job.

My thinking at the moment is I could use the current large air spaced variable capacitor that is on my current loop, for the new loop part of the antenna I'm designing. With a possibility of making use of the G4TPH loop that I have for the low power setup that is in use at the moment. As it seems getting one of the large air spaced capacitors is a bit elusive for now. So if I use what I already have then I can progress a little more quickly with construction of the new loop antenna and perhaps make a start on contacting those DX stations that I can hear. My next task is to attempt to design and source the rotating gear assembly for the remote tuning of the capacitor, my thoughts are some sort of stepper motor which could be controlled by a computer program or the other route could be a switched standard electric motor with forward and reverse capabilities. This is something to ponder on over the next couple of months to find out which is the easiest to build and maintain. I'm also going to look into a method to receive weather satellites if I can and possible try to resolve some slow scan tv pictures. This is only in the idea stages so lets see what progresses or the easiest to achieve, will keep you informed of progress via these pages as and when things happen.

Update on the Liden Lake

Firstly we have several pairs of swans residing on the lake at the moment. Five pairs of adults (10) and approximately eleven cygnets of which seven are from our original pair of adults breeding on the lake last year the others arrived with the extra pairs of adults that have taken up residence on the lake. This makes a total of twenty one swans all residing on the lake at the moment. I think it will be very interesting as the adult pairs start to mate and breed this year, so I'm looking forward to the next months to see what happens. I'm not sure there will be enough food to sustain all of these birds during the year so it will be very interesting to see the outcome in the following months. One other thing is we seem to have a larger gathering of the black headed gulls on the lake more than we usually have, and adding the ducks, Canada geese, aswell as the swans on the lake it always looks very busy. Apologies I haven't taken any pictures lately will try for the next newsletter to add some pictures.

If anyone has ideas or completed articles that they would like to be published in the newsletters please send them to myself at this email address:-
Keng1ncg@gmx.co.uk

The Last Word:

The new silent menace on our pavements, I wonder how many of you have come across this latest scourge to our walkways and pavements ? This silent protagonist can be neither heard or seen until the last moment if they come from behind you, when they woosh past you and giving some people the fright of their lives. I am under the impression that they are supposed to be an illegal form of transport without any legislation covering them. I do hope our wonderful government does the right thing and regulates them properly. I've also heard they are being trialed in larger urban areas as green transport, what a tragedy I say and wheres my cricket bat, lets have some fun. What do you think I'm talking about??

"In The Last Word" Some of the views expressed here are that of your scribe and not those of the repeater group committee.

Just a little snippet from David M0TFY this is a link to an old YouTube video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwbzV2Jx5Qo>