

Norfolk County RAYNET - Coastal Group

Controller's report 2010 - 2011.

The report is in 2 sections nets and activities
Although it looks like Coastal Group has been busy, it must be remembered that all activities / exercises are open to all members of Norfolk County RAYNET, and are merely listed here for admin reasons. Without inland group members, it is unlikely any of the exercises would have taken place.

The Monday night NET

This tends to be taken on a rotation basis, with the 2 controllers taking the net on alternative weeks. It is at 21.00 local on 144.650MHz and all members and non members are welcome to take part. We have had guests from the continent when conditions are good and the fat controller has his vertical pointing that way.

A quick scan through the record cards shows approx 26 different people have been on the net since last year, of which 10 tend to be regulars, 2 have left RAYNET and 1 was on holiday in the area.

The net is an ideal time to check your equipment under load and its propagation. The fat controller tends to run his equipment under emergency conditions i.e. battery powered, in the dark with a torch and sometimes with a portable aerial connected.

Activities

There has been an Activity or exercise every month this year with the exception of October and November.

January

Exercise Sea Over Sand (SOS) - SES GB4CLB from the Cromer Lifeboat station, run over 3 days operating on HF and VHF. See write-up in RADCOM (a copy is on the web site) 11 members managed to attend. At the end of the event the Coastal Group Dep. controller resigned because of personal differences with the controller. Since then, G4PSH has taken the roll of Acting Dep. Con., if needed in an emergency. A volunteer to take on the role would be appreciated.

February, March and April

Coastal Group Socials, held at the Reefs Bar in Sea Palling, all members and partners etc. were invited to meet, eat, talk and drink. Approx 3 - 5 members attended at different times

March

Exercise Speed Talk. Part of Hethersett High's Science weekend. A rest centre station was set up using VHF and HF (C.W.) and demonstrated to young people and adults. 14 members took part - 1 mobile 2 in school and rest from home. PHQ talk through was activated.

May

Exercise Quick Walk - Support for Big C's Walk of Thoughts at Fritton Lake was provided - new challenge this year, new control setup in new location, new route (only finding out on day!), but a good time was had by all! 8 members took part

June

Exercise Toad in the Hole As we hadn't been invited to take part in the national exercise, we held our own simulated Coastal Surge flood. This replaced our normal Monday night net and people were sent to different locations and given vague instructions and communications. 2 base stations were used as different controls, and their communications on 2m duly failed to confuse the evening even more. This is a good training exercise for members to get out, set up and find out what the real thing could be like. 15 members took part

July, August (and into September)

Exercise Portable Challenge 2011. Members were challenged to go out on 6 different occasions and work the net as a portable station in a place they hadn't been before. A record of all the signals they received / people heard along with their location were then forwarded and posted to the net About 4 members took up the challenge and the net was run portable by control on 1 occasion.

September

Exercise Big Cycle - Holkham Hall. A month earlier than in previous years and is likely to be at the same time in future years. Arriving there were the normal by now shocks of resited control and having to pay to get in (if in car!) The new location seems to be better for radio as virtually all locations except 1 were in direct communication with control. The one that had to be relayed, of course was the one where our one emergency of the year took place! - 9 members took part.

Final figures of member participation

Over the year approx 26 members were on the net at different times
10 are regular - add to this 3 who attend most exercises and it actually gives a figure of approx 13 who I would feel happy relying on in an emergency. The number includes both controllers.

2 have now left RAYNET
1 was on holiday in the area

Exercises

All exercises operate with the minimum number of members - as a result training has to be given in the briefing and then by listening on the air during the exercise. With the shortage of numbers, there is no opportunity for members other than the controllers to experience being control, logging etc. It also means that if a member goes off air, that position often has to be left until they return.

In each exercise there has been at least one incidence of a member's equipment failing. Fortunately they have been able to put things right / have a spare with them. Continual use of equipment for a whole day puts a different strain on equipment than just a low power burst to the repeater . . . learning to right things in the field is a good thing to learn!