

# SOS Radio Week

## Radio amateurs go on the air to raise funds for the RNLI



What SOS Radio Week is all about, raising funds for the RNLI.

**SOS RADIO WEEK.** This event isn't a contest; groups or individuals go on air as much or as little as they choose raising the profile of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution as well as raising funds at the same time. 2011 was the fifth year for this nationwide event and it is hoped to better the £3675 raised in 2010. Every year more and more radio amateurs have taken part. In 2010, 15 individuals or groups were involved, for 2011 many more stations registered on the SOS Radio Week website.

At the Norbreck Amateur Radio Rally last year, event founders Derek, G7LFC and David, M3LFC were joined by members of the Porthmadog & District ARC to present the cheque from 2010 to Lisa Cooke from the RNLI.

At the National Hamfest in 2010, a new radio society was launched – the Lifeboat ARS. This society was formed with one of

the main aims to continue to run and grow the annual SOS Radio Week fund raising event. They also will provide support and advice for groups wanting to run special event stations throughout the year at RNLI stations.

**BACK AT THE BEGINNING.** In 2005, 10 year old David passed his Foundation licence and gained the callsign M3LFC. He'd always been interested in the RNLI and decided to organise a three month operating marathon in 2006. David was sponsored during this operation and raised £300 for the RNLI. They rewarded his efforts with a day out at Lytham St Annes RNLI station, which seems to have been a memorable day.

When the RNLI announced their first SOS Day in 2007, M3LFC and G7LFC decided they'd do some fund raising during

the week leading up to SOS Day. That's when SOS Radio Week came about. Since then, David and Derek have encouraged more amateurs and groups to get involved and the event – and the money raised – has grown year on year.

With the Lifeboat ARS now acting as liaison between radio amateurs and the RNLI, the event in January 2011 looks have been the best yet. Many radio clubs and individuals got together with their local lifeboat stations or set up nearby. We've got some reports from clubs who got involved included in this article.

**SPONSORS.** New for 2011 was the Icom UK involvement. They provided an ID-E880 D-Star dual band mobile and an IC-E80D D-Star dual band handheld to be awarded to the group and individual, respectively, that raised the most money during SOS Radio Week 2011.

Icom UK are already involved with the RNLI through the marine division of their business and are members of the RNLI Ambassador Scheme. This involves Icom UK promoting RNLI membership. They do that by offering a year's introductory membership with the purchase of either the IC-M71 VHF marine transceiver, IC-M505 or IC-M603 VHF/DSC marine transceivers – all of which were on display at the recent Boat Show in London.

Martin Lynch & Sons also supported the 2011 SOS Radio Week by offering a Wouxun KG-679E 2m handheld. So if you don't win one of the main prizes for your fund raising you will be entered into a draw for other prizes such as the Wouxun radio.

Snowdonia Radio Company started their sponsorship in 2010 and have done so again this year. They sponsor the SRC Young Persons Award that goes to the young person who has put most into the



Scarborough Special Events Group members Kevin, G0NUP, Roy, G4SSH and Nick, G4OOE with 9 year old logger Emily.



Event founder G7LFC operating VHF at the Porthmadog & District ARS special event station.



Bob MW0RHD demonstrating radio to sea scouts at the Porthmadog & District ARS special event station.

event – not raised the most money or made the most contacts but one who has really participated well.

Sigma Euro-Comm donated four antennas for the draw too. Other sponsors this year were dynanti web design and G7LFC software.

**AWARDS.** If you worked any of the stations involved in SOS Radio Week 2011 (and there's a list of stations on the website), then you are able to apply for an award. The Worked SOS Radio Week Award has various levels that can be claimed. Working one station qualifies for a commemorative certificate, three stations is the Bronze Award, six stations is the Silver Award, then ten stations is the Gold Award and 15 stations earns the Platinum Award.

These awards are free but the organisers would appreciate a donation to the RNLI – and this can be done via the website. Full details of how to apply for the award also are on the website.

**GB4RNLI.** The Scarborough Special Events Group was on the air as GB4RNLI in support of fundraising for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's SOS Radio Week. This was the third year in which the Group had operated on behalf of the RNLI and they are grateful to all amateurs who contacted the station and forwarded donations for the RNLI.

Scarborough Lifeboat Station was one of the first to be established, in 1801. In the last year, volunteer lifeboat crews in the north of England launched 1090 times and rescued 1013 people.

The Group were active on SSB, CW and PSK and exchanged greetings with approximately 500 stations, mainly throughout the UK and Europe but also some DX stations in Turkey, Canada, Israel, Japan and the USA, who were particularly interested in the event.

**GBOPLB.** Once again, members of the Porthmadog and District Amateur Radio Society got stuck into SOS Radio Week. They ran two special events. For the first weekend, 22 and 23 January, they took over the crew room in Cricieth lifeboat station. For the second weekend, 29 and 30 January, they operated from the Porthmadog Yacht Club.

The radio club would like to give special thanks to Peter Williams, the operations manager of Criccieth Lifeboat Station for all his help in arranging the first weekend of operating.

The station used a Trio TS-480S for HF operations, a Yaesu FT-8800 for VHF working and a Wouxun KG-699E handheld for 4m contacts. The antennas were a SRC X80 HF vertical, SRC X65 wire and a V-2000 6m/2m/70cm, all kindly donated by Snowdonia Radio Company.

**GB4CLB.** GB4CLB, part of the RNLI SOS fund raising week was operational on Friday 27, Saturday 28 and Sunday 30 January by Norfolk County RAYNET (RSGB) as part of Exercise Sea Over Sand. The station was set up in the Lifeboat crew room of Cromer Life Boat – Cromer life Boat Shed being located at the end of Cromer Pier. The aeriels, an inverted V, ¼ wave dipole for 17m and a SRC80 vertical were set up outside the shed, the dipole hanging over the sea, the vertical lashed to handrails and the inverted V over the decking. A 2m home brew ribbon (used as control during RAYNET exercises) on top of a 10m pole completed the aerial setups. The transceivers used were a FT-900AT, FT-897 (both running 100W) and a TM-G707 for FM work.

The station made a combined total of nearly 250 QSOs on 80, 17 and 20m over the three days and a large handful of 2m contacts. Operators were M6TZY, M6JWW, M6EMT, M6TKE, MOVRA, 2EODJR, GOSMS, G1DXQ, G7FSI, G7VAH and G8UJO. The organisers of the special event station can't praise the operators enough for their excellent operation and especially G7FSI in setting up the aeriels and station. Many thanks must also go to the Cromer Life Boat's Crew and officials for their permission, help and warm welcome. All of the operators and Life Boat Crew made the event a really enjoyable time.

**GB4CHC.** The Crewe 'Railway' Heritage Centre ARS is pleased to have taken part in the SOS 2011 Radio Week with its Special Event Station GB4CHC. In doing so it has raised £92 to date (with other possible donations still to come) through sponsorship in support of the RNLI. The total number of QSOs made was 111 covering 45 countries, significant ones being JA, 4S7, HI, KP4, ZS and HK all using SSB and various datamodes.

Although Crewe, Cheshire could hardly be described as a coastal town, members of the Crewe Heritage Centre ARS have associations with maritime aspects of radio communications and are great admirers of the RNLI and the work it does. The Secretary of the club was a Marine Radio Officer in the 1950s operating world-wide and in particular the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

**NEXT YEAR.** SOS Radio Week 2012 will take place 21 – 29 January 2012.

#### WEBSEARCH

www.sosradioweek.org.uk  
www.icomuk.co.uk  
www.mlands.co.uk  
www.snowdonia-radio-company.co.uk  
www.sigmaeurocomm.co.uk  
www.dynanti.co.uk  
www.norfolkcraynet.org.uk  
Scarborough Special Events Group:  
www.princ7.demon.co.uk/index.htm



GB4CLB operated by Norfolk County RAYNET (RSGB) as part of Exercise Sea Over Sand.



Crewe Heritage Centre ARS members standing in front of the Advanced Passenger Train Exhibit that is used both as the Club House and 'radio shack'.



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Alan, GW0SAU on the HF bands at the Porthmadog & District ARS special event station.