

RIDGEWAY REPEATER GROUP

SECRETARY G4XUT

Secretary@rrg.org.uk

CHAIRMAN /EDITOR M6CUE

m6cue@live.co.uk

NEWSLETTER

December 2015

The Voice of America / MM? by Rob G4XUT

Whilst on holiday on the Greek island of Rhodes, Greece (SV5) in September, I came across an exhibition in the Old Town area of Rhodes just off the Street of the Knights. Yes it was lovely and warm and sunny there – enough said! Now when I were a lad, the AM radio transmissions from the off shore radio stations (Pop Pirate) located in the English Channel were all the rage, so when I came across this exhibition it caught my attention straight away. This was about a radio transmitter which was fitted in a ship called the USCGC Courier with the call sign of NFKW. The transmitter was a powerful 150 kilowatt on medium wave and was manufactured by RCA with a Collins 25 kilowatt short-wave transmitter. The medium wave transmitter was the largest ever to be installed on a ship. The frequency on medium wave was 1259 kHz. It broadcast from 1952 to 1964, during the cold war period, reaching as far as the Middle-East and the southern Soviet Union. It was said that any ship which passed nearby when the transmitter was operating would experience an electrical arc known as St Elmo's fire and it was said that one of the treats for the locals was to hold up fluorescent tubes which would light up. The ship was moored in Kolonna harbour nearby to Rhodes town. The power for the transmitters was provided by one of three 500 kilowatt generators plus a 250 kilowatt generator for the ship's facilities. The incoming signal which was to be re-broadcast was received on UHF by the ship from a land based site quite close to where the Rhodes Radio club is located today. This was replaced by another relay station at Koskinou in later years. The Medium wave transmitter would broadcast using a barrage balloon antenna, but was subsequently replaced by an inverted delta type, but the balloons were kept for emergencies. However, these had a tendency to break free and end up in Turkey! On shortwave, the antennas used were Tryton folded conical monopoles.

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The Voice of America / MM? (Cont....)

by Rob G4XUT



In 1960 whilst filming the Guns of Navarone in Rhodes, the actor Gregory Peck and his wife Veronique Passani visited USCGC Courier. The VOA broadcasts ceased in 1964 from the ship which returned to the United States for decommissioning on 25th August 1964. It was handed over to the Coast Guard Reserve Training Centre in Yorktown Virginia. It was recommissioned in 1966 as a training vessel. In 1972 it was decommissioned again and in 1977 was sold for scrap, a sad end for a ship which served its country well.

The VOA transmissions were from land based sites on Rhodes sometime after 1964 and I can personally remember listening to some of them, however these closed down in 2006.

There are more photos and information available on the website www.rhodesinthecoldwar.com

My thanks go to all those involved with setting up the exhibition and website.

Rob G4XUT

More DMR NEWS

By M6CUE

(This item continues on pages 4 & 5)

PROPOSAL FOR REORGANISATION OF UK REGIONAL TALKGROUPS

As most of you will know, we have been making various mutterings for many months now regarding the need to reorganise the current “TG8” regional talk group structure. To a great extent, this has been a victim of its own success, but it has shortcomings – some of which we have attempted to paper over with the invention and implementation of the “direct dial” talk groups. With the rapid (and continuing) expansion of the network it is time for a fresh look at what we might do going forwards; this paper is intended to be the cornerstone of an open discussion regarding how the regional talk groups would be best organised. This is NOT a “done deal”, nor a fait accompli. Please feel free to share thoughts and observations and to ask questions.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

There are currently multiple instances of “TG8” which are not identical. In some instances this causes user confusion; of greater importance, it places technical constraints on the way our bridges are programmed. This reduces our flexibility and agility, and limits our opportunity to optimise the use of network resources.

At least one instance of “TG8” is currently larger than reasonable or rational (SE region) and this needs to be pruned sooner rather than later.

Other than by way of “direct dial” or the use of TG235 there is no ready mechanism for a user in (say) Dartford to speak with a user in (say) Preston. DD is sub-optimal since it would not be apparent which of the repeaters serving Preston the user may be within range of. TG235 is less than ideal, since it consumes much more repeater / network resource.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

At a high level, the following changes are proposed:-

- Creation of ten regional TGs to replace existing four “TG8” groups
- Creation of new talk groups (TG8 SE split into two, new TGs for SW, Midlands, East)
- Renumbering of existing “mini TGs” to better align with the new regional structure
- Creation of two “UK Wide” User Activated TGs
- Each repeater assigned to a “home” regional TG which is “always on”
- Each repeater able to access other regional TGs on a User Activated basis
- Removal of the direct dial TGs – the proposed changes should make these superfluous

INITIAL DRAFT “2016” STRUCTURE

When reviewing this, please bear in mind that this is an initial stab at how we might go about it. There is no assertion that this is the final solution; it needs to be reviewed and commented upon by the repeater keepers, adjustments may need to be made and consensus needs to be reached before implementation. **THE GEOGRAPHIES AND REPEATER COLLECTIONS PRESENTED HERE ARE NOMINAL AND WILL BE SUBJECT TO INPUT FROM REPEATER KEEPERS. ALL OF THESE TGs ARE FOR TS2**

TG8SE *END OF LIFE – WILL BE DELETED FROM BRIDGE CONFIG 31st JAN 2016*

TG800 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

TG801 METRO EAST: (roughly Hertfordshire / East London / Essex / Kent) GB7AK / GB7AS / GB7CK / GB7EK / GB7EX / GB7IK / GB7LO / GB7SE

TG802 METRO WEST: (roughly Central & West London / Surrey / Sussex) GB7EP / GB7GF / GB7HR / GB7ID / GB7MP / GB7NS / GB7SC

TG810 THAMES VALLEY, BRISTOL CHANNEL AND SOLENT: GB7AV / GB7BK / GB7CT / GB7WL / GB7KM / GB7SU / GB3WE

TG820 NORTH WEST: GB7BR / GB7CA / GB7EL / GB7HM / GB7LP / GB7MB / GB7MR / GB7PN

TG830 MIDLANDS: GB7FW / GB7GB

TG840 EAST OF ENGLAND: GB7CT / GB7DS / GB7FU / GB7LN / GB7MK / GB7PE

TG850 SCOTLAND: GB7DD / GB7EE

TG860 NORTH EAST: GB7HS / GB7HX / GB7LE / GB7SR / GB7TD / GB7TP / GB7XX

TG870 WALES & MARCHES: GB7HM / GB7PN

TG880 NORTHERN IRELAND: (No repeaters at this time)

- **NOTE: GB7HM and GB7PN intentionally included in both TG820 and TG870**

NOTE: GB7CT intentionally included in both TG810 and TG840

OTHER TALK GROUP CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

TG80 NEW USER ACTIVATED "UK WIDE" TG A

TG81 NEW USER ACTIVATED "UK WIDE" TG B

TG803 REPLACES TG2352

TG861 REPLACES TG2350

TG862 (unchanged)

TG863 REPLACES TG2351 **TG864** REPLACES TG2353

Let us discuss and finesse this proposal until it can be made to work for the UK. It is generated by a genuine need to change the way things are working for TG8 at the moment.

1. We need to stop having multiple objects in the bridge which are "TG8" but not the same TG8. There will come a time when our bridge will not support such configurations, and it is much better we get that out in the open and deal with it now, rather than when we are at a crisis point.
2. TG8SE is too big. WAY TOO BIG. Looking at the way it is utilised, it does not need to be that shape and size, and better use can be made of our repeater and network resources by splitting it up (there are now as many repeaters in TG8SE alone as there were in the whole country 18 months ago!).
3. Because there is no easy (and easy to understand) way to have a contact with broader territories when required we see that TG235 is used. It is considered that providing the ability to connect a single repeater to any of the regional TGs on a User Activated basis, coupled with the pro-

-vision of two “UK Wide” User Activated TGs will reduce the unnecessary utilisation of repeaters when such contacts are desired.

Please note that this will ALWAYS be an “opt-out” capability for individual repeaters; all that will be required will be for the Keeper to make his wishes known to the bridge admins (admins@cc-3.net)

This is a hybrid network with the UK c-Bridge at the heart.

Starting next week this will allow connection of Hytera repeaters to the established UK c-bridge repeater network, and soon it will allow DV4Mini to connect to specific UK internal talk groups.

There are NO plans to offer cross-connections to non-DMR or analogue networks and by design there will be no “reflector” capability.

This development has been made possible by work carried out over the past few months by DF5OC and G0RDI; further details will be available as things progress.

In the meantime, we hope you are as excited as we are about the new possibilities that Phoenix brings to DMR in Europe, and we have a bright future since we are leveraging the fast, rock-solid infrastructure we have built over the past 12 months.

As mentioned in the article, this reorganisation will mean that all codeplugs, regardless of make/model will have to be rewritten, or at least seriously amended.

**This article was emailed to me from <http://www.cc-3.net>
Neil M6CUE**

As the festive season fast approaches, I will take this opportunity to bid you all a Very Merry Xmas & a hopefully Happy New Year. I hope that Santa & the gods of propagation are kind to you all in the rest of 2015 & all of 2016.

Good DX & Best 73 de Neil M6CUE

And Finally

Any contributions for the next issue can be emailed to me at m6cue@live.co.uk by Jan. 30th please.

**Thanks.
Neil M6CUE**

Just a late note.

There will be more news regarding GB7TC, it's connection to the SW Cluster & possibly beyond in the next newsletter & also on the website <http://www.rrg.org.uk>

M6CUE