

m0blfarticles

Special Event Station GB0DHS Devonport High School for Boys, Plymouth July 1999

The GB0DHS event was held on Thursday, 1st July 1999 at Devonport High School for Boys, Plymouth. This page tells the story of the station.

The school holds an *enrichment week* annually, to enable pupils to experience things not normally done in the classroom and to allow visits to take place. It was felt that the enrichment week would be an ideal opportunity to teach the Lower VI some radio-related physics, giving them a chance to experience what had been learnt 'on-air'. As I would have finished my A-Levels by then, I felt that I would have time to organise the day in the week preceding the event (with the exception, of course, of publicity and applying for the Special Event callsign).



Unfortunately, since I could not be in school to organise that end of the event (because of my examinations) or to encourage people to take part, there was no interest shown from the Lower VI. By this stage, an article about the station had already been submitted to the *Newcomer's Notes* pages in the Radio Society of Great Britain's journal, *RadCom*, and the callsign had already been obtained. I did not, therefore, feel able to cancel the event, which was being supported by the school's headmaster (and only other amateur in the school), Dr. N.M. Pettit, G4KNP. Eventually, it was agreed that the first year, who were all in school on the Thursday doing a drama project, could visit the station at lunch-time.

On arriving at the school, I found that the room I had organised for my use (and which I had chosen as it provided suitable aerial anchoring points) was being used by a senior member of staff for his activity, and so I was moved to a different room. This one, unfortunately, provided no points where an aerial could be mounted, and was near to a mains electricity cable that provided much interference. I was now able to start to unpack the station. Linking up the transceivers, power supply units and so on was easily done. The aerial was more of a problem. Firstly, I should thank Angus Graham, G3TXL for giving me a large amount of copper wire, with which I made two dipoles, for 40 and 20m (see [below](#)). The resulting length I had planned to suspend above the balcony which joins the various blocks, assisted by two friends, Sean and Lucia. As the room used, however, was not the one planned, I could not suspend the aerial. I merely was left resting on the concrete wall of the balcony.

During the morning, we were able to make a few contacts, all but one on 2m, as a result of the HF aerial problems. At 12:30, I went down to the hall, where the first-years were practising their drama (hence the lack of uniform and painted faces in the pictures) and they were told to come up to the new venue.

They arrived shortly after I had started a contact with G3TXL and so he was able to receive

greetings messages from some of them, before I left the local repeater to go simplex with G1RXR/M and M1CAB/M who stayed for almost an hour listening to the messages being sent. Regrettably I was not able to get back into the GB3WD repeater, where G3TXL was still waiting, due to the poor location below sea-level, to allow his son, Tom, to speak to him. The station's operation was briefly interrupted by the caretaker, unhappy that I was in the room that I had moved to but, generally, the day went well. No more HF contacts took place, partly because of high geomagnetic activity which caused the entire 40m band to fade-out, partly because, unknown to me, the aerial feeder somehow had become detached from the tuning unit.

In the afternoon, I was able, helped by Sean and Lucia, to pack up the station quickly - fortunate as I had to go to the Year 13 (Upper VI) Leaver's Ball that evening.

The station was, basically, the equipment from my shack at home:

HF Equipment

Yaesu FT-757GXII
100W
40m Dipole; 20m Dipole

2m Equipment

Yaesu FT-2500M
50W
5/8 Whip

As briefly mentioned earlier, the dipoles rested on the concrete wall of the balcony which runs between blocks. They were centre-fed from one single 70 Ohm ribbon feeder, which went into an ASTU (until the wire came out without my knowledge, over the course of the lunch-time).

The 2m whip was placed on a window-sill, inside the room on the middle-floor where the event is being held. It could not be placed outside as there was not enough feeder to allow this.

The following stations were contacted on 2m:

G0EBH (Charles), M1AFE/M (Mike), G1RXR/M (Joe), G3AGA (Davey), M1BUI, M1BVU/M, G3VNG (Dave), G3TXL (Angus), M1CAB (Bob).

On HF only one contact was possible, with 2A0BSM (Stu) from Sterling, Scotland, using the special prefix to celebrate the opening of the Scottish Parliament, which also took place on 1st July.

QSL cards are being sent to all stations. If you heard us, please send a report to us (via the bureau is best) and a QSL card will also be sent to you.

For any further information, about the day, please feel free to email me: m0blf@qsl.net

Thanks to Neil Stewart for borrowing the school's digital camera and providing the photographs on this page.

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