

Amateur Radio Observation Service – Report of Coordinator to Spectrum Forum 2013

General

Deputy Coordinator Mario Brashill G2DPA became silent key in January of this year. He was very active and well known within the amateur radio community and his enthusiasm and knowledge were a great asset. The work he began has been a good foundation for AROS to continue and develop.

Mark Jones G0MGX was appointed as Deputy Coordinator in June of this year. Together with the Coordinator Keith Bassett G7NBU they are responsible for coordinating the monitoring activities of the AROS Observers across the country.

The Amateur Radio Observation Service is an advisory and reporting service of the RSGB which is intended to assist radio amateurs and others who may be affected by problems which occur within the amateur bands or which develop on other frequencies as a result of amateur transmissions.

The service investigates reports of licence infringements, or instances of poor operating practice which might bring the Amateur Service into disrepute. Reports, complaints and associated supplementary information are accepted from any source and the contents of each communication are regarded as confidential material.

Observers

The number of observers registered with AROS continues to increase and following the presence of AROS coordinators at the Hamfest in September the number of observers continues to rise and now stands at 99.

Although the Observers are spread across the country there is still a need for

more observers to effectively cover the UK particularly the south east of England.

Cases

Since the beginning of this year there have been 19 recorded complaints. In some cases there have been many complaints about the same event.

A few of these were resurrected cases from previously reported incidents which had not been resolved or their history was known to AROS. So far this year 5 of the 19 cases have resulted in letters being sent by AROS to suspected culprits advising them that their behaviour is subject of complaint. They are advised that AROS has reasonable cause to believe that their call sign/identity is associated with the bad behaviour and has been recorded by Observers.

Generally the letters appear to have been received in a positive way in that the behaviour appears to have been modified and the complaints have ceased. One of the letters was acknowledged. Except for one case, monitoring suggests that the behaviour has been suitably modified.

We currently have one case (relating to 2 metre repeater abuse) where the letter has been challenged and behaviour has not been modified resulting in a referral to Ofcom.

Therefore reported cases have included:

- Misuse of 5 Mhz bands. This has significantly improved as the year progressed.
- Pirated call signs.
- Sending offensive SSTV / Easy Pal images.
- 3 cases referred to RSGB Intruder Watch.
- Abuse of 2 metre repeaters.
- One case relating to 2 metre repeater abuse referred to Ofcom.

- Another continuing case of 2 metre abuse already referred to Ofcom but with the problem persisting.

2 Metre Repeaters.

The vast majority of the reported nuisance activity is taking place on 2 metre repeaters and appears to be involving the same abusers on a regular basis. The reported behaviours include apparent drunkenness and foul language; abuse aimed at fellow amateurs; silent keying and jamming frequencies with music or verbal ranting.

Some repeater keepers have turned off the repeaters for a period of time in an attempt to discourage their abuse. However other repeater keepers appear unwilling to take any action to control the repeater activity and this may give an impression that the bad behaviour is condoned.

The apparent failure to deal with this behaviour causes feelings to run high amongst the dedicated amateurs and unfortunately the RSGB are often criticised for the failure to act. However as RSGB is not an enforcement body we have to confine ourselves to an advisory role.

Keith Bassett G7NBU

AROS Coordinator

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