

## Brian M0DCO's Story

It all started 11 years ago in May 1994. When I took my Novice Exam (now known as the Intermediate) I took and passed the exam in August. The actual day was the 27th, I then went out and bought my first 70cm's radio. This was my first introduction into Amateur Radio. Radio was something I'd always been interested in apparently since even from when I was 2 or 3 I carried a transistor radio about with me, and as I grew up I started getting different sorts of transistor radio & started listening to V H F & sometimes bits on the short wave bands.

When I was about 13 or 14 or even before then, a Friend of mine had a C B brought back from the United States & one day I went over to his house to listen to it & I got hooked. The C B was illegal in those Days but that was a great form of communication for me in those early Days.

I had a C B brought for me when they became legal in 1981 & started using one in the area that I lived, outer London & found it a great source of entertainment & a great way to talk to people.

How does this relate to amateur Radio & RAYNET you may ask? It was some years later when I moved down to Margate in 1988, I didn't know very many people in the area. I started work at an engineering factory, where obviously you make some friends, but the other thing was I didn't know anyone really socially in the area.

Then my mind went back to C B lets get a C B I thought & see how things go from there, hopefully I'll be able to make some interesting friends. Time went by & I started to talk to people on the C B I found out that they were also in Amateur Radio. I didn't realise at the start it would actually encourage me to take my Novice Licence.

It was channel 6 the local channel which was known locally for a lot of people who were amateurs to actually have a talk on there, & some people of an evening used to practice Morse code with the help of some local amateurs. In listening to this I started talking to one of the people on this channel that I later found out to be Martin G0LGE, I can't remember exactly when it happened but he said would I be interested in taking up the Novice Course.

In between this happening & me getting my first CB I'd also had a Radio scanner & started listening as you do to the usual sort of things on these frequencies.

Amateur Radio of course being one of them & started listening to the local repeaters both on 2 metres & 70 cm's. Listening to the amateurs, & the things they talked about, having spoken to someone on C B who was an amateur & getting to know some people locally I & a friend who at the time only lived a few doors down the road both decided to have a go at the Novice Course. This we both did & both passed, whilst doing this I got to meet someone else Dave G1NLQ who lived locally & had one of the local shops. Talking to Dave & quite often popping into see him it became some what of a meeting place for amateur Radio enthusiasts alike & talking to Dave found out that he was a member of RAYNET. What was RAYNET I asked? & what sort of things did it involve, he explained about RAYNET & it's involvement & how amateurs were using their Radio skills & putting them to good use. I said to him this sort of thing I don't think that I will be able to do. Why not said Dave? He said that you will have to apply like everyone else & it will be put to the panel, & we will see what happens.

This is where I met Derek for the first time G0DFI & went with a friend to meet Derek at his house & he explained about RAYNET to me & what it involved & asked what I thought about it. I looked forward to it with enthusiasm & thought that this is something I could really get involved with.

My first RAYNET event would have been one of our RAYNETS annual events the Seaward 20 at Hartsdown Park. This was my introduction into RAYNET & I went with Barry G7MSC & did some operating under his supervision at a controlled point. I hadn't gone into the control side of RAYNET by this time this was something that excited me, in the fact that this is where all the Radio communications went through & was like the nerve centre.

It must have been my second or third RAYNET event where I was introduced to Ken G4PTE It is Ken I have great admiration for & Derek & those people in the early days, that gave me a lot of encouragement for someone very wet behind the ears & had a lot to learn. I did realise this the first time I sat in control.

I like most people had to listen to control a few times & thought that it wasn't as hard as it really is, it's not until you actually sit in the control & operate an event & you have got a lot of different traffic coming in at you in a very short time, you need to take priority calls if necessary & pass on the appropriate Radio messages. The other thing that wasn't uncommon was for people to abbreviate call signs, I tried to do this & was probably pulled up for it & rightly so, one of the things that RAYNET has taught me is that you learn things for a reason. Radio call signs you've earned them you want to use all of them, you don't want to miss bits off your call sign.

You might be thinking to yourself by now why is this so different what is so strange about this up until now there has been nothing different to anyone else but I am actually visually impaired have got very limited sight but this doesn't stop me using my ears. People that work around me through the hobbies & when we are out on an event always seem to be amazed at the information I can take in, & actually remember e.g. numbers call signs & whatever it happens to be & can store that amount of information & can remember it most of the time.

Like everyone else I have my off days well what has made this so special, is I think I'm right in saying I am the only person I know someone may be able to correct me if I am wrong the only visually impaired member in RAYNET. It has not presented a problem to me & never has been to anyone I have worked with they maybe a bit weary at first but that's only natural. This seems to disappear very quickly when I drop one of my many wise cracks as I do from time to time. I join in the usual Banta that goes with any group. The only thing this restricts me is I can't actually write the log, because no one else would be able to read my writing I certainly can't read it so I wouldn't expect anyone else too.

The question might suddenly arise then how's he managing to write out this bit of information well thanks to technology & using a synthesizer on my computer it's all being typed out, so hopefully you can read it.

I've enjoyed the many things I have done over the years in RAYNET & I still don't stop learning, whether it be one of the run of the mill events, an exercise, a live call or even one of the quieter events that we do, they are all enjoyable. I work with a good team & it's nice to feel part of the it.

I stated earlier that I was the only visually impaired person in RAYNET this isn't strictly true my wife is also visually impaired & also recently became a member of RAYNET, she like everyone else is going through a steep learning curve at the moment but will in time get more confidence & become a lot more used to the operating procedures.

To sum it up then disability isn't a problem certainly not for Thanet RAYNET I found & I thought that it wouldn't be a problem for any other group any disability within reason you can work round like all challenges in life there to be overcome. The last exercise we did I was actually one of the people walking round through the woods with the assistance of my Guide Dog, so it just shows you never know what sort of things you may get involved in.

I hope this gives someone some encouragement if they are thinking about joining RAYNET & thinking they may not be able to because of some disability or they don't think they are capable of doing it, anything in life can be possible if you set your mind on your goal & step by step you achieve it. The secret of it is to break it down into sections little bit at a time nothing wrong with having a big goal to achieve sometimes it may take a bit longer sometimes you need to break it down into sections.

I hope this has been inspiring for someone & that my rambling hasn't bored everyone senseless & please feel free to comment. My name is Brian M0DCO & you will find the appropriate links & information through the rest of the web site.