such participation in local RAYNET meetings and activity.

I appreciate that most of you don't like to be involved in the political matters, but I felt that it was most important that you were made aware of these recent developments with the RSGB and all RAYNET Groups and have a full opportunity to respond so that any RSGB policy is based on the wishes of all the members of the Emergency Radio community.

We are a voluntary organisation and our members at all levels make great contributions in time and effort to progress the aims and objectives of RAYNET. In this issue of *RAY~Link* you will read of the rollout of the UK General Licence to those Groups who wish to improve their connectivity with User Services, loan filters for Groups who are suffering from interference problems, in the background work continues on the update of the RAYNET Manual, issuing of talk-through permits and the submission of the first annual report to Ofcom on the operation of the talk-through scheme (at their request). We do not wish for our volunteers valuable time to be diverted from delivering real and effective services to our members to help them serve our User Services by having to deal with any political consequences of this questionnaire, as I pointed out at the start of this letter, we all joined RAYNET to put our skills to use to help the public.

Cathy Clark G1GQJ
Chairman
on behalf of the Committee of Management

Getting Lost With a GPS

Have you been given a rendezvous point that is off road? As a RAYNET member, it is almost certain you have. In the past, well before beginning the journey (well, at least 5 minutes), you probably identified the map reference (NGR) on an OS map and planned the route in advance.

Now, of course you are likely to enter the reference into your GPS (albeit that you may have to convert it to latitude and longitude first) and driven off confident in the fact that you will reach your destination relaxed and un-distracted by a need to refer to the map. Of course the risk is that when you arrive at the point on a road nearest to the NGR there is no access. Obviously the author has *never* done this (!) but for those who might have *and* for those who issue the briefing notes here are a couple of suggestions.

Firstly, for those who issue the briefing notes. When you issue your briefing, as well as giving the NGR for the rendezvous point *also* give the NGR of the turning via which access from the road is possible. (e.g. *For access turn off the road at NGR AAnnnnnn*).

To those of you who are relying on the GPS and who have not received details of where to leave the road to proceed along a woodland track or through a farm or wherever, don't forget the old fashioned method. OS maps remain indispensible!

CO-ORDINATE CONVERTERS

Virtually every time we have an event these days, whether as the planner or as an operator, finding a location using a GPS should make life easier and certainly make it safer if travelling alone.

One problem is that the co-ordinates for anywhere are required in different formats for different purposes. For example, if you are surveying a route in advance using a GPS you may only be able to collect the data by latitude and longitude (lat/long). When you get back to sitting down with your OS map it is easier to use the National Grid Reference (NGR). Things are made even more complicated by the fact that lat/long comes in three different flavours. Whilst none of these is harmful to your health, you often can't choose which one you want. You may find your data is in degrees, minutes and seconds or decimal degrees or degrees and decimal minutes. One way to resolve this is to obtain a Ph.D in mathematics. Unfortunately it is highly likely that the event you were planning or attending will be over before you achieve this. It therefore makes sense to consider alternatives.

Before resorting to the Internet and the WWW it is well worth looking at Microsoft AutoRoute if you have it. There are some useful facilities in this. Firstly, under *Tools-Options-Settings* it is possible to select different lat/long formats. Once the chosen format is selected turn on the Location Sensor (*Tools-Location Sensor*). Having done this it is possible to find a NGR using *Edit-Find-OS Grid.* The location of this grid reference will now be displayed on the screen. Move the mouse over this and the location sensor will show the position in lat/long.

Finally we come to the Internet resources available. Firstly, if you can find it, there is WinGrid.exe version 1.0 by G0GJV (not to be confused with v4 by someone else). V1.0 runs in a DOS window—works in everything (yes, even Vista). With this you can very simply convert in either direction. However, for the *coup de grâce* of on line resource goes to http://www.nearby.org.uk/coord.cgi. This works all ways, all co-ord types, gives post code, IARU locator, OS Map No (Explorer & Landranger) *etc!* ❏

Lilian Austin G0WYX
Silent Key

Mrs Lilian Austin a member of North West Durham RAYNET Group passed away peacefully in her sleep on 27th January.

Lilian joined the group in 1994 and was a very active member until ill health prevented her from continuing. She was well liked by all who knew and worked with her and will be sadly missed.

Our condolences go to her husband Dave G0WYW.

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