

amateurs you can have your event listed in the radio magazines if you have planned several months ahead or, by telephoning the RSGB a couple of weeks in advance, you can get it broadcast on GB2RS, the Society's news service. Your own QSOs in which you are arranging for the loan of equipment from local amateurs and a letter to your local radio club will also promote interest. However, it is probably non-amateurs (or would-be-amateurs) who you are aiming at mainly. Here the local press are often willing to print a column explaining the event, possible with a picture of people clambering up roofs to erect aerials in preparation for it. Our BBC local radio station in Brighton has always been very interested in GB4HHC, transmitting a live programme from the college two years ago and recording an interview during the station's operation this year (and asking for the final number of contacts as an update item).

The importance of publicity cannot be stressed enough for, although as an operator you may have fun chatting away all day, the purpose of a special event station is to promote amateur radio, especially to those not converted! So you need as many people as possible to drop in and see the station in operation and under the 'greetings message' ruling it should be even easier to persuade them to come.

If all this sounds like a lot of organisation, well let me tell you that it is! There are no shortcuts to making the event really 'special' but a lot can be done to ease the problem if the organiser can delegate to some reliable people. Different people can take responsibility for the erecting of the equipment, its dismantling, QSL cards, logbooks, refreshments for the operators and publicity. Remember that the more people that the delegate has in his team, the better for publicity in general and the less lugging of aerials he'll have to do!

On the day

So the day has arrived (not without a hitch I daresay). As organiser you have hopefully got the honour of making the first contact calling tentatively "CQ, CQ from GB-***" (you'll soon get used to the callsign) on your favourite

band/mode. On the other hand this may well be one of only a handful of contacts which you, as organiser, will be able to make, for your main job will be wandering around to keep everyone happy. You are responsible for the legal side eg, filling in logbooks correctly and checking that the operators sign the log with their name and callsign at the end of a stint, and ensuring that for a Class A special event callsign there is always a Class A licensee present (even if the licensee who holds the 'letter of authority' cannot be there all the time). You will be explaining about the station to visitors, the Press, and will probably be interviewed if your local radio station comes. What will you be left with if your local RAYNET is called out on an operation? You can certainly expect to lose half your operators and what about their rigs and the pump up mast you borrowed? I hope that you have discussed this possibility in advance for you must always be prepared for the unexpected!

Even if you are only planning HF contacts from the station, you will find it extremely useful to have a VHF portable or low power rig with a vertical aerial at your disposal (using your own callsign if preferred). This will enable you to get local coverage eg, to talk-in visiting operators or to keep in touch with the foraging party going to the chip shop or pub for refreshments.

To liven up the dead hours of the early morning you can always

try repairing rigs, supping the beer brought in during the evening, filling in QSL cards and trying out different bands/modes to those you are familiar with. This is an ideal opportunity for a Class B licensee to learn about HF operation and to become inspired to learn Morse (I'm still planning to when I get the time!).

And after . . .

And so at the end of your successful and enjoyable special event station comes the time of dismantling it all. Isn't it funny how everyone disappears and you alone get left to let down the pump up mast and remove its aerials (not a delicate operation for one person as you try not to get hit round the head with the aerial crashing down towards you).

When every rig etc, is packed away and returned to its owner, you'll be left with the logbooks and the QSL cards. The first of these items you will have to keep whereas the second you will want to get rid of as quickly as possible and await the returning goodies to use for next year's display and publicity. (Hopefully you are hooked and there will be one next year.)

The QSL cards can either be sent direct or via the RSGB's bureau. For friends of the operators and members of local radio clubs or RAYNET groups it is often much appreciated if the cards are passed on through local contacts as it is far quicker than if they go via the bureau. However, posting QSL cards directly is a costly business and is to be avoided where at all possible. After all, the contact could always send you a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

To receive QSL cards sent to you via the bureau you will need to send the sub-manager responsible for GB stations plenty of strong envelopes stamped with more than the normal letter rate to allow for the great number of cards you hope to get.

With the dispatch of the last QSL card the organiser's job is done. It really is nice to bask in the glory of a successful special event station commemorated by a report and photographs in the local Press and by the receipt of a fat bundle of QSL cards (so my husband keeps telling me!).

