

applicant was not really connected with the event. For example, when applying for GB4HHC the callsign is issued to Richard G3TDL who, as husband of one of the teachers at the College, is the nearest friendly class A licensee willing to be responsible for a 24 hour station (he even enjoys operating throughout the night!). The idea of GB4HHC as part of Haywards Heath College Festival Week was conceived by my husband Pete G8DCZ, who teaches Electronics there, to promote interest in amateur radio amongst the students there (all sixth formers) and to give those already licensed the experience of operating a special event station. It also has the useful sideline of sponsorship for the number of contacts made which gets the Electronics Dept. a little extra money to gradually equip a permanent radio station there (any donations gratefully received!).

We were lucky getting GB4HHC with the College's name as its phonetics but what callsigns are issued? Some GB callsigns eg, GB2RN (HMS Belfast) are permanent stations and will not be available to the general public. These are all listed in the current callbook which can be consulted to avoid duplication. Most GB3 callsigns are those belonging to repeaters and beacons nowadays but in the past they have been issued for special events and, where these events are held annually, they will continue to be issued at present. So the normal callsigns available to new applicants are GB2 and GB4 followed by two or three letters or GB8 followed by three letters.

On the application form it is necessary to state what phonetics will be used for the station and it is more usual to choose a callsign whose phonetics describe the event of its location and to use these rather than the internationally recognised ones eg, the Sussex Mobile Rally applies for GB2SMR and uses its name rather than Sierra Mie Romeo. Although it is still necessary to keep within the terms of an ordinary license and use no 'offensive language', the choice of phonetics is almost limitless. A quick telephone call to the RSGB's Membership Services Dept. will en-



sure that your idea is sound before sending in the application form. Indeed when telephoning to ask for an application form two years ago, the callsign GB4HHC was reserved for us pending written application. As I said before, no reasonable request is turned down by the RSGB but it is as well to have alternative callsigns up your sleeve in case the one you want has been issued to some other event.

Once an event has got its callsign, the RSGB tries to ensure that the callsign is kept specially for that event for approximately 18 months after its last use. This enables annual events to keep their call signs and should cause less confusion than if different events took over the same letters, especially with QSL cards sent to the event. (Biennial events are at risk here.) It is this continuity that allows GB3 special event callsigns to exist for, if they lapse now, they will not be renewed under the present policy of keeping GB3s for repeaters and beacons.

Although the keeping of a callsign works in theory, it can sometimes go wrong. Often it would go unnoticed by most amateurs but there was one recent 'hiccup' when the the Boys Brigade Centenary took over GB2BBC, having applied for it two years previously. During the intervening time, the British Broadcasting Corporation in London had applied for all the possible GB-BBC callsigns to

celebrate 50 years of their external services ie, converting all their normal club stations G-BBC into special event callsigns. The confusion seems to have arisen because G2BBC is not held by them but they were granted GB2BBC to use for the month ending at midnight on 31st December 1982 (although they did not use it after Boxing Day in practice). At midnight the same callsign GB2BBC was taken over by the Boys Brigade in a station operating from Devil's Dyke, Sussex. Since amateurs in Surrey and Sussex were able to receive both GB2BBC stations, there was considerable confusion and the Boys Brigade had to deal with a spate of enquiries asking why the British Broadcasting Corporation had suddenly re-opened its special event station. It must have been even more confusing to foreigners listening from Europe who would not have grasped the significance of the different phonetics. Also by mid-July no QSL cards had been received by the British Broadcasting Corporation for GB2BBC although their other special event callsigns had received plenty. I pity the QSL Bureau's sub-manager who will obviously have to check them by date to ensure that they reach their correct destination. Unfortunately for him, both GB2BBC stations were in operation on consecutive weekends in July this year and both were operating from Motspur Park, London!

So you've thought of an event to promote amateur radio to a wider range of people, how do you