



Frank, G4JST, operating his HF station at GB4HHC

always invite lenders to come and operate) for you can be more certain of the rigs arriving and you have a resident repairer if a minor fault develops. Also you won't feel so guilty if the whole thing goes up in a plume of smoke, as the owner will be able to see that there was no maltreatment of his precious rig. Remember that whatever rigs you want, you will always have duplicates on some bands and no rigs for others however good your planning!

So much for the easy part, but rigs on their own won't help you transmit. Has your room got enough power points for all the rigs you want? You will also need a good toolkit (especially soldering irons and screwdrivers), power supplies, cables, connectors and plugs, aerials and multi-meters; most of which you can borrow from other amateurs. (Remember the 'law': you will always need more than you first expect.) I suggest that on items which cannot be named easily eg, plugs and connectors, you use a colour code for the equipment lent by each amateur, using bands of coloured insulating tape. This greatly aids the dismantling of the station and the return of equipment to its owner.

Aerials need masts or towers and you will have to negotiate for portable ones in most cases. If you are stuck, it may well be worth contacting a local club or your local RAYNET group which may have a small pump up mast for hillside use. (Our thanks to Robin G3ZYE for the use of one such mast for GB4HHC.)

It would seem that the more pump up masts you have, dismantling is much quicker (very useful when the enthusiasm for the station dies with the last contact).

On the subject of scrounging equipment, it is a good idea to contact your local 'emporium'. Our one at Handcross has always proved very helpful and is prepared to lend any secondhand equipment it happens to have in stock at the time.

The final preparations will take place just a few days beforehand and consist of assembling the equipment and checking its operation. The same regulations about non-interference with police, fire, ambulance and airports etc, apply to special event stations in the same way as to ordinary licences. It's at this point that you find the 70cm sideband rig has no microphone or the HF rig has not got enough connecting cable for its aerial. If several rigs are in one room, be sure to plan the room so that the rigs are not so close together as to make it difficult to hear your contact over the surrounding noise. (You could try a row of alternate CW and phone HF rigs.) This year's GB4HHC fell down on planning because the 2m FM and 2m SSB rigs were alongside each other with their feeders close together and their aerials connected to the same mast. It meant that there was interference between them and only one of the rigs could operate at a time, leaving one disgruntled, redundant operator — usually me! Efficient filters, additional to those in the rigs, may pro-

vide some reduction of this effect but you can't beat careful siting ie, distance. Have a word with your local radio club, they'll have had a lot of experience with this during field days.

So much for the equipment but you will also need QSL cards of a standard format and a size not exceeding 140mm by 90mm to help the QSL bureau to handle the cards efficiently and without damage. The problem with this is how many do you have printed? Well, as a guide, with six rigs in operation for 24 hours, 299 contacts were made by GB4HHC. This may not seem a vast number but special event call signs are not really meant for fast, contest-type working. Your contacts always want to know about the event and it's no fun for anyone if you're not prepared to natter. You will also have to allow for wastage when cards are filled out incorrectly (especially by operators who are staying awake for 24 hours!). So you will probably want to order double the number of cards that you first think of!

A few additional hints

The 'greetings message' ruling can be made use of under a special event call sign. It allows an unlicensed visitor to the station to talk to a licensed amateur in Great Britain (which is far more fun than just listening). The only provisos are that a licensee makes the contact and does all the operating of the rig itself and that the non-licensed person may only talk for one over lasting no more than two minutes with each contact. This is a super way to involve everyone in amateur radio and can be used to great advantage eg, letting the college students themselves explain what the event is in aid of (it does get very boring repeating your little speech about the purpose of the station). People may also be more willing to come back later in the day to see how the number of contacts and their distances are progressing if they have become actively involved with the station rather than just looking at your displays.

If you are going to operate a special event station, you want everyone but everyone to know, so publicity is the next important thing to organise. To advertise to other