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## CDXC Committee 2007-2008

<b>President</b>	Neville Cheadle <b>G3NUG</b> Lower Withers Barns Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HY	(01568) 750560 g3nug@btinternet.com
<b>Chairman</b>	John Butcher <b>G3LAS</b> Westlands, Westland Green, Little Hadham, Herts SG11 2AJ	(01279) 842515 chair@cdxc.org.uk
<b>Secretary</b>	Chris Duckling <b>G3SVL</b> Many Oaks, Collington Lane West, Bexhill-on-Sea, E. Sussex TN39 3TD	(01424) 845384 sec@cdxc.org.uk
<b>Treasurer</b>	Nigel Cawthorne <b>G3TXF</b> Falcons, St.George's Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0BS	(01932) 851414 nigel@G3TXF.com
<b>Digest Editor</b>	Martyn Phillips <b>G3RFX</b> 17 Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1BA	(0117) 973 6419 ed@cdxc.org.uk
<b>Awards Manager</b>	Jim Kellaway <b>G3RTE</b> 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1QW	(01707) 657309 jkellaway@btinternet.com
<b>CDXC Yahoo! Group Moderator</b>	Mark Marsden <b>G4AXX</b> 38 Lambert Cross, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2DP	(01799) 503104 g4axx@ntlworld.com
	Michael Wells <b>G7VJR</b> Belvoir Cottage, The Avenue, Madingley, Cambs CB23 8AD	(0777) 599 7222 michael@g7vjr.org
	Gordon Rolland <b>G3USR</b> The Lodge, 3b Reeves Lane, Wing, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8SD	(01572) 737774 g3usr@btinternet.com
-----		
<b>Contest Manager</b>	Lee Volante <b>GØMTN</b> Warnbrook, 25 Baccabox Lane, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5DD	(01564) 822958 contests@cdxc.org.uk
<b>Webmaster</b>	John Butcher <b>G3LAS</b>	web@cdxc.org.uk
<b>Digest Picture Editor</b>	Mike Allisette <b>GU4EON</b>	gu4eon@gmail.com

**CDXC Reflector:** <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CDXC/>

# Club News and Views

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## Editorial

**Martyn Phillips, G3RFX**

Before we go any further, here's wishing you all a very Happy New Year! Here's also hoping Santa brought you almost everything you wanted for Christmas.

I did quite well again on the seasonal loot. Amongst other things I was bequeathed with a couple of *The Two Ronnies* DVDs plus one of *Dad's Army* (Yes, "Stupid boy...").

Jane also presented me with the latest edition of *Chambers Dictionary*, essential for any self-respecting cryptic crossword freak, plus all 1,600 pages of *Collins Italian Dictionary* ("Mamma mia!"). Who knows, maybe one of these days it'll come in handy when discussing the respective merits of the philosophy of Bertrand Russell and Umberto Eco with some Italy Tango Nine or other on 20 SSB.

But once more I digress. A veritable plethora of rivetting reportage awaits you in this issue of the *Digest*. In it we travel to the four corners of the earth – assuming the earth has corners, that is. And which four corners (as opposed to four candles, see *The Two Ronnies* above) are those?

Well, for starters how about Guinea, West Africa [3X], and Svalbard [JW]? In this *Digest* Roger, G3SXW, manages to pop up from both in fairly quick succession. Whereas with Nigel, G3TXF, it's first JW-land with Roger on the one hand and then the URE Congress in Cádiz, EA7, without Roger on the other. If you see what I mean.

It's then a long overdue return to exotic climes for Derek, G3KHZ, once again down

in PNG. No, not the airport code for Penang (that's PEN...), but PNG as in Papua New Guinea.

There again Bob, G3PJT, fills us in on a trip to somewhere slightly closer to home, GVA/Geneva and 4U1-land. I make that four corners.

Anyway, before I go perhaps I can just remind you that articles and contributions for the *Digest* are always very welcome. If you have any photos to go with them, then even better. Mike, GU4EON, is our Picture Editor, so please send any pictures direct to him. It's Mike, and not me, who chooses which photos go in the *Digest* and which don't.

Needless to say, the best photographs are usually those which tell some sort of story. A photograph of somebody simply sitting in front of a radio transceiver, eminently meaningful though it might well be to the sitter himself, can be very boring. And I'd say the same about most pictures of PC logging screens.

I'd also suggest that you restrict the number of photographs you send in to just two or three at most. It is of course great to have the additional choice provided by 12 different photographs, say, but even with today's mega-fast broadband it can still take many minutes to download them all – especially if they each weigh in at a fairly massive 4 MB.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

## Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

As I write this a few days before Christmas, the ARRL has just announced that the island of St Barthelemy has been added to the DXCC 'entity' list. There has, of course, been speculation about this event for some time and many DXers had become quite excited about the prospect, as indicated by the buzz going round the various forums. Not for the first time, I found myself asking "Why?"

It seems that the French government has issued a decree designating St Barthelemy as an 'Overseas Collective', whatever that means. Anyway, it is now considered to be the same as Martinique, Guadeloupe and other places already on the DXCC list. This happened on 21 February 2007. On 14 December the US State Department formally recognised the change and subsequently the ARRL scratched its collective grey beard and announced the addition to the DXCC list of entities.

While all this is perfectly logical and according to the rules, I wonder if I am the only one who thinks it is all becoming a bit daft. Nothing has happened to change the situation of St Barthelemy in respect of its radio communications potential. I suspect nothing much has happened in any other respect either. Most DXers around the world have probably worked FJ more than once, but none of these contacts will count for DXCC. We have to do it all over again. This might do wonders for the hotel industry on the island, with numerous expeditions no doubt descending on them in the course of the next few months. It might also please the indigenous amateurs, although I suspect they will soon tire of the attention. For everyone else it just means that, once they have got round to another FJ QSO, they can claim to have worked 338 DXCC countries instead of 337. Big deal!

Of course this is only another example of the peculiarities of the DXCC list. We have a house in Rome, a few rocks in the South China Sea which you can't even stand on without the help of a clever Chinese carpenter and there is an island off Venezuela which has recently been blown away by a hurricane. Was it not the Chesterfield Islands which became 'entitled' a few years ago, but not until the ARRL became convinced of the existence of a sand bank some hundreds of miles away which no one had been quite sure about for the previous few hundred years? Then there was Ducie, whose recognition depends on Pitcairn, also hundreds of miles away, having a Society which is an IARU member. Again I ask myself "Why?"

Is it just possible that these things have become a tad too complicated? I would have thought that the most relevant criterion by far was the geographical situation of the 'country'. Of course there has to be some recognition of sovereignty, if only to deal with issues of authority to operate and other such legalities. Looking at DXCC as an indicator of operating success, is there any obvious reason why 1AØ has the same status as the whole of the French Pacific island dependencies? Come to that, why do G, GM, GW, GI, GD, GJ and GU all count separately?

It is perhaps not surprising that 40 odd years ago Geoff Watts saw the need for a new award structure when he invented IOTA. Granted, it has its own anomalies and peculiarities, but it does seem to be more securely founded on criteria which have some relevance to radio communication - which is what we are all about, isn't it?

At the other end of the scale we have the prospect of some activity from a proper 'entity' - Bouvet Island. This is really

exciting, not least because the operator, ZS6GCM, is newly licensed and has no experience of HF operating, far less expeditioning. What's more he will be operating in his off-duty hours. Of course, my enthusiasm is more than a little tongue-in-cheek. I have no doubt that he will be submerged in the cacophony from the masses, abused on the clusters and probably totally demoralised for doing what we all claim to be doing – enjoying a hobby. Oh, well... it used to be a hobby in the old days.

Changing the subject rather dramatically, it's time to start the booking process for the CDXC 2008 Annual Dinner. In spite of a very successful event this year, the Committee is keen to expand the Dinner - and space at the previous venue is limited. We also wanted to be as accessible as possible to the maximum number of members. So we have managed to make a booking at the Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre for Saturday, 15 March. Those who attended this year's HF Convention will know that this is a superb venue, with excellent accommodation close to the A1 at St Neots. The catering should be equally good and there is plenty of overnight accommodation at reasonable cost for those

wishing to stay over. If more incentive were needed, our speaker will be Roger Western, G3SXW, who surely needs no introduction. We all look forward to whatever interesting and relevant thoughts he may have on his mind come March.

Let's make this the best ever CDXC Dinner. It's not too early to get the date in your diary and to secure a place by contacting Chris, G3SVL. Why not make up a group from your local area and hire a minibus? It will surely be a great night out.

Finally, a very Happy New Year to all CDXC members. Let's hope for plenty of juicy DX, even though I gather there is not yet much sign of an upturn in the solar cycle.

By the way... don't forget the LF Challenge in March as well. All you need to make a show is a half-decent 40m aerial. Details on the website, advice from the reflector.

73 es gud DX

John, G3LAS

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## President's Patter

### Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

The 3B7C QSLing has been going very well using the StarQSL system developed by John G3WGV. To date nearly 46,000 QSOs have been confirmed, one-third of the total; perhaps this is another world record given that we only arrived back in the UK in early October.

The team of QSL managers, all CDXC members, comprises Chris, G1VDP; Don, G3BJ; Ivan, G3IZD; John, G3LAS; Chris, G3NHL; Neville, G3NUG; Chris, G3SVL; Gordon, G3USR; Don, G3XTT; Clive,

GM3POI; Jim, MØZAK, and Bob, MDØCCE. Bob, M3RCV, deals with the SWL cards. Of these Chris, G1VDP, John G3LAS, and Jim, MØZAK, were not with us on the island and volunteered to help. We are very grateful to all the members of the team. On the question of QSLing, we are seeking a QSL manager for our club call MØC. Can anyone help, please? We want to encourage the use of the club call and having an experienced QSL manager would help enormously. If any member is interested, please e-mail me.

We have been marketing again. So far we have mailed letters of invitation to those UK stations who have QSLed 3B7C direct. It is early days yet, but the initial response is positive. In the early spring we will start mailing those UK stations that worked 3B7C on the most band-slots. We really do want to attract active DXers to the club and to get our numbers back to the 700 mark.

your wives and partners. It will be a great evening. Booking forms are enclosed with this *Digest*.

By the time you read this the Christmas and New Year activities will be over. I hope all our members had a great time and I wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous 2008.

A reminder that the CDXC Annual Dinner is on Saturday, 15 March, at Wyboston, which proved to be an excellent location for last year's HF Convention. Roger, G3SXW, will be giving the after-dinner talk entitled 'Seven Kilowatts in the Dark Continent'. Roger is an excellent speaker, so do bring

73

Neville

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## New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<b>Call</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
G3YYD	David Wicks	St Albans
G4JJS	Simon Harrison	Bingley
GMØSCA	Simon Edwards	Broughton
GM4FAM	Cris Henderson	North Kessock
GM4XQJ	Brian Waddell	Laurieston
GWØNKG	Mike York	Bridgend

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## Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

To promote HF operating, to encourage excellence, particularly in DXing and contest operating, through mutual assistance and by encouraging support of DXpeditions, the issue of achievement awards, or by whatever other means is deemed to be appropriate.

- Membership** Full details are available from the Secretary.
- Subscription** £15.00 for UK members, £20.00 for overseas members (US\$40 or 30 Euros). New members joining between 1 January and 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer.
- Digest** Published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Editor by the published deadline. Please note that views expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.
- Website** <http://www.cdxc.org>

# **CDXC Annual Dinner 2008**

**15 March 2008 at 7:30 pm**

**Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire**

**After-dinner talk by Roger Western, G3SXW, on  
'Seven Kilowatts in the Dark Continent'**

The Annual Dinner is one of the big social events in the CDXC calendar - and 2008 will be no exception. The venue we have used for the past couple of years is no longer suitable, but we are delighted to announce that we have secured a private dining room at the excellent Wyboston Lakes, the venue for the 2007 RSGB HF Convention. We have also been fortunate in securing Roger, G3SXW, as our after-dinner speaker. Anyone who has heard Roger speak will know that we are in for a treat!

The cost for the dinner is just £31 per head. For those wanting to stay overnight, Wyboston has rooms available - or there is a Travel Lodge less than two miles away.

The Annual Dinner is a great opportunity to meet and catch up with other members and their partners. With the excellent venue, food, company and after-dinner talk this is set to see a record attendance. So book early to avoid disappointment!

## **How to book**

Complete the enclosed booking form and return it to Chris, G3SVL, with your cheque for £31 per person.

## **Wyboston Dinner Location**

The full address is: The Waterfront Centre, Wyboston Lakes, Great North Road, Wyboston, Bedfordshire, MK44 3AL. It is located at the junction of the A1 and the A428. Contact Chris, G3SVL, if you require a printed map or detailed directions.

## **Overnight at Wyboston**

Book direct on (01480) 212625 and quote 'CDXC'. The rate is £59 per room (breakfast extra).

## **Overnight at Travel Lodge**

Book direct on (0871) 984 6010 - but the best rates are online at: [www.travelodge.co.uk](http://www.travelodge.co.uk) - put Wyboston in the hotel search box. Currently rooms are available for £39, with breakfast extra. The full rate is £51.

## **Any other questions**

Contact Chris, G3SVL, at [sec@CDXC.org.uk](mailto:sec@CDXC.org.uk), or by phone on (01424) 845384.

# The CDXC LF Challenge 2008

Following a small survey carried out during 2006, the results of which were discussed at the last Committee meeting, it was agreed to keep the rules the same for 2008. If the response is as poor as it was this year, ie 2007, then we will review the situation for 2009. It is planned that the website will be working for this contest, enabling entrants to update their scores.

## **Aim:**

The aim of the competition is to work as many DXCC entities during the month of March 2008. Each DXCC entity is counted ONCE only.

## **When:**

0001 UTC, 1 March 2008 to 2359 UTC, 31 March 2008.

## **Bands:**

**ONLY** the 1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz bands

## **Modes:**

No restrictions.

## **Logs:**

Send a list either by e-mail to [jkellaway@btinternet.com](mailto:jkellaway@btinternet.com) or by post to Jim Kellaway, 55 Ladbroke Drive, Potters Bar EN6 1QW. Headings in the following order only will be accepted, otherwise logs will be disqualified.

## **DXCC Entity, Band, Call, Time and Mode.**

QSL cards are not required, but in the event of a dispute the CDXC Committee may request a photocopy or print-out of the applicant's log.

## **Awards – Multi-band**

**Penallt Trophy** – Awarded to the first-placed station. The trophy is returnable, but a small engraved plaque will also be presented to mark this achievement.

**Tindle Cup** - Awarded to the second-placed station. The trophy is returnable, but a small engraved plaque will also be presented to mark this achievement.

The station in third place will receive a small engraved plaque to mark this achievement.

**Single Band Awards** – The leading station on each band (1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz) will also receive a small engraved plaque.

Entrants who work more than half the score of the Penallt Trophy winner's will receive a certificate.

# DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT    [don@g3xtt.com](mailto:don@g3xtt.com)

A new DXCC to chase, Ducie and Clipperton just round the corner and suggestions that the new solar cycle may finally be starting. Perhaps 2008 will come good for the DX community! Whether I'll get on to the bands, of course, is a different matter. I thank those CDXC members who supported me in the RSGB Board elections. It looks as though it could be an 'interesting' three years. Anyway, at least Colin G3PSM will be in the President's seat, so the interests of CDXC members will, hopefully, be well represented.

Apropos of which, and I beg your indulgence for a few words here, there was quite a discussion on the CDXC reflector about how to choose between the candidates. I refrained from jumping in, as it seemed highly inappropriate while the elections were underway. But one suggestion was that candidates should offer some indication of their stance on the major issues facing the Society and the hobby. While this seems like a good idea, my experience to date, having already benefited from two years co-opted to the Board, is that most candidates for election have little idea of the breadth of issues that are live at any given time.

Most volunteers come to the role having served on, perhaps, a couple of committees and with a particular direction to their interests (EMC, Raynet, contesting, or whatever). They then, quite quickly, have to gain some understanding of the much wider range of issues that they will, of necessity, have to deal with – as Directors, they have a legal and fiduciary duty for the affairs of the Society as a whole, not just their particular specialist interest. It's quite a daunting level of responsibility, not only to look after the interests of existing members but of members still to come. In comparison the

CDXC Committee has a somewhat easier task as it can focus on a very specific set of interests among its members. Both organisations have their place, of course, as do the many other special interest groups and bodies which make up this wide-ranging hobby of ours. Let's hope we can all work together to encourage new entrants to the hobby and new enthusiasm for those of us who have been round the block a few times – mind you, a few more sunspots would go a long way to helping with that too!

Anyway, enough of this. On to what has been happening in the DX world. I'm afraid much of the following is taken from Internet-based sources, so many of you will have seen some or all of it before. I apologise for that, but I think most of it is worth repeating in hard copy and I am also in the throes of completing the adjudication of this year's IOTA contest, so am a little time-challenged! It has to be said that my dear XYL has also been claiming back significant numbers of brownie points (decorating, gardening etc.) since I returned from four weeks in the Indian Ocean – there's no such thing as a free lunch (or DXpedition)!

## **A new one!**

No doubt members have already spotted the addition of a 'new one' to the DXCC list. This came completely out of the blue with even Steve, 9M6DXX, who is usually up to speed on any possible new ones, being caught unawares. But, for the record, here is the official ARRL announcement:

*"ARLD052 New DXCC entity*

The ARRL DXCC Desk is pleased to announce the addition of St Barthelemy (FJ)

to the DXCC List, making the island entity number 338 with an effective date of 14 December 2007. Cards with contacts dated 14 December 2007 or after will be accepted for DXCC credit. New card submissions for St Barthelemy will not be accepted until 1 January 2008 in order to allow time for administrative adjustments.

The 'event date' that caused St Barthelemy to be added to the DXCC list was 14 December 2007, the date the US State Department Fact sheet was updated by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. This update added St Barthelemy to the List of Dependencies and Areas of Special Sovereignty with its Administrative Center in Gustavia, qualifying it under DXCC rules in Section II -- 1 Political Entities (c). French St Martin (FS), while also added to the List of Dependencies and Areas of Special Sovereignty, will remain on the DXCC List, but it is now considered a Point 1 Political Entity under the same classification as that of St Barthelemy.

Please direct any questions you may have about St Barthelemy, St Martin or the DXCC program to the ARRL DXCC Desk at [dxcc@arrl.org](mailto:dxcc@arrl.org).”

And here is the relevant data for your logging programs, as provided in the press release by OH2BH and OHØXX, who arrived on cue to activate the new one:

Prefix – FJ  
Country Name - Saint Barthelemy  
CQ Zone – 8  
Start date – Probably 22 February 2007  
QSL Bureau - Yes (REF France)  
UTC Offset - 4 hours behind UTC  
IOTA - NA-146  
ITU Zone – 11  
Continent - North America  
Longitude - 62.83 W  
Latitude - 17.92 N

Other islands that will count for Saint Barthelemy: Chevreau, Coco, Fourchue,

Fregate, La Tortue, Le Boulanger, Pain de Sucre, Pele and Toc Vers.

Unlike Swain's Island, say, St Barthelemy should be an easy shot from the UK and, in any case, doesn't require a major expedition. It's somewhere that's frequently activated in contests, perhaps even more so now, and by holiday expeditioners, so most CDXC members should soon have this one in the bag on multiple bands and modes.

### **Bouvet press release**

“On 19 December 2007 Petrus, ZS6GCM, was granted temporary permission to operate an amateur radio station for the duration of the 2007/2008 scientific expedition from Bouvet Island. The call sign will be 3YØE. We would like to use this opportunity to thank Tom V. Segalstad, LA4LN, and Trond Olsen, LA8XM, for the wonderful help and time they dedicated in obtaining permission to operate from Bouvet Island.

Secondly we would like to welcome Colin McGowan, MMØNDX, to the team. Colin has donated a dedicated website for the expedition and will act as the webmaster. We are hoping to receive regular logbook updates from Petrus via satellite phone and will have a logbook search page where you can look if you are in the log. The official 3YØE operation webpage address is [www.3y0e.wordpress.com](http://www.3y0e.wordpress.com). The site is under construction and we plan to have it fully operational in a couple of days. Feel free to visit the site on a regular basis for the latest news from Petrus.

Emil Stoikov, LZ3HI, has begun design of the 3YØE QSL card. Emil has donated the QSL card design and printing free of charge. He will also act as the official QSL manager for 3YØE. Previews of cards that were designed and printed by Emil can be found on his webpage at [www.lz3hi.com](http://www.lz3hi.com). We look forward to presenting you all with the official QSL card when it is done.

3YØE QSL information: Emil Stoikov, PO Box 8, 6000 Stara Zagora, Bulgaria.

Petrus will be notified via satellite phone of his new callsign and permission to start operating. We certainly look forward to bringing you more exciting news in the near future.

73 to all and good luck

Rhynhardt Louw ZS6DXB

3YØE Pilot Station and Media Officer

### **E7 prefix**

T93Y, Boris Knezovic, reports from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, that new E7 callsigns with a one-letter suffix will not be issued until 1 January 2009. Representatives from the ITU and IARU are planning to go to Sarajevo for the inauguration of the E7 prefix some time before then, but with no official date set for that yet. Boris reports that everything is still very unofficial. Boris, a crack operator, tower climber and computer man, has a good website at [www.t93y.com](http://www.t93y.com).

### **Cycle 24**

Solarcycle24.com reports that 'The tiny area that has rotated onto the eastern limb does appear to be a Cycle 24 spot. In the first images it did seem to have a tiny spot associated with it. The most recent image "as of this post" appears to be a plague area. In the new magnetogram it does, however, have the proper magnetic signature to classify it as Cycle 24'. Check it out at [www.solarcycle24.com/pictures/spots3.jpg](http://www.solarcycle24.com/pictures/spots3.jpg).

### **BS7H and ZL8R videos**

The 2007 BS7H and 2006 ZL8R videos by 9V1YC, James Brooks, are now complete and available at [www.dxvideos.com](http://www.dxvideos.com). The Scarborough Reef and Kermadec Island videos look behind the scenes at these two very successful DXpeditions. The BS7H

video ([www.dxvideos.com/bs7hvideo.htm](http://www.dxvideos.com/bs7hvideo.htm)) was filmed in native 16:9 (widescreen) so it's best viewed on a big flat screen or Plasma TV. The ZL8R video ([www.dxvideos.com/zl8rvideo.htm](http://www.dxvideos.com/zl8rvideo.htm)) was shot seven months after the Raoul volcano exploded. If they are anything like James' past videos (which I am sure they are!) they will make a great Christmas gift for your favourite DXer. The videos are just \$25 (US) each and will be available for shipping on 14 December.

### **The possible break-up of the Netherlands Antilles**

*(from a GIØRTN posting on the CDXC and FOC reflectors)*

"My understanding is slightly different. In a series of referenda in 2004-5 only tiny St. Eustatius voted to remain part of the Netherlands Antilles and as a consequence, the Netherlands Antilles is set to be disbanded by 15 December 2008. The whole process could be delayed by the failure of the governments of Curaçao and the Netherlands to reach agreement on the handling of Curaçao's substantial government debt.

The two larger islands of St Marteen and Curaçao are indeed stated to have a 'status aparte' within the Kingdom of the Netherlands similar to that currently enjoyed by Aruba. Presumably, they will become new DXCC entities under criterion 1c (local self-government) or may have to wait to be allocated an ITU callsign block and qualify under 1b.

My understanding (via WØCG) is that the PTT on Curaçao expect that the latter step could take several years as they expect other issues to take priority ahead of gaining a callsign block. So the speed which they attain separate DXCC status depends on how Newington interprets the DXCC list criteria...

The three small islands of Saba, St Eustatius and Bonaire will become 'special municipalities' essentially integrated fully within the Kingdom of the Netherlands; their combined population is under 20,000.

I'm not certain to what extent they will retain any sovereignty, ie will they adopt the Euro as their currency rather than the dollar-pegged Antillean Guilder? Will they become part of the EU, not remain a part of it - or have some semi-detached relationship with it like EA8 and ZB2? In any case their degree of self-determination will be significantly less than that enjoyed by the Antilles at present and, assuming a high degree of integration with the Netherlands, their DXCC status will be determined under criterion number 2, geographical separation. All three islands are just a little more than the requisite 350km from the Netherlands for separate status!

St Eustatius and Saba are only 23km or so apart on my measurement, so presumably they will remain a single DXCC entity together. On the other hand, my rough calculation using DX Atlas is that Bonaire is the merest tad over the minimum distance to either of those islands (809km as opposed to the necessary 800km) so should count separately from them in any eventuality. If

my measurement is over-generous by 6 miles or so, though, one could in theory have a PJ4/5/6 entity covering all three small islands. But I assume not.

Whether these will be new entities and the existing ones will be deleted, or whether they will simply be continuations of the existing PJ2/4 and PJ5/6/7 entities is also in the lap of the DXAC, but the former must be at least an option, given that the Netherlands Antilles is scheduled to \*cease to exist\* by the end of 2008.

So, as I see it, by the end of next year we \*should\* have the following entities in the Dutch West Indies:

Aruba P4 (as present)  
Bonaire PJ4 (possibly a continuation of PJ2/4, possibly new)  
Curacao PJ2? (new)  
Saba and St Eustatius PJ5-6 (possibly a continuation of PJ5-7, possibly new)  
St. Marteen PJ7? (new)  
and possibly a couple of deleted entities.

Confused? You ought to be. Of course, I might be wrong, but this is my understanding.

73 Gerry, GIØRTN”

## 8R1PW, February 2008

Phil, G3SWH, and Jim, G3RTE, will be active from Georgetown, Guyana, between 22 – 29 February 2008. The 2003 'Most Wanted' survey by 425 DX News shows Guyana at #168. The licence has already been issued and the callsign will be 8R1PW. As there were two recent operations from Guyana in 2007 which used mainly SSB, our activity will be on CW only on all bands 160-10m. Propagation and QRN permitting, we plan to have two stations on the air for as many hours every day as possible. Our main objective is to work as many European, North American and RoTW stations on as many bands as possible.

QSL via G3SWH, either direct with SAE and adequate return postage (recommended), via Phil's website at [www.g3swh.org.uk/form.html](http://www.g3swh.org.uk/form.html) for a bureau reply or via the bureau.

There is more information at [www.g3swh.org.uk/8r1pw.html](http://www.g3swh.org.uk/8r1pw.html).

# Borneo Bulletin

**Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX**

*teleniuslowe@gmail.com*

I drove the 350 kms to Brunei for the CQ WW phone contest in October and stayed at 'Tungku Lodge', the new guest shack owned by Ambran, V85SS. I was the first guest to stay there and the TA-53M beam had only been put up on the Thursday before the contest, at the same time I was driving from Sabah to Brunei.

The beam worked very well, despite being a small five-band trapped antenna (10, 12, 15, 17 and 20m on a 14 ft boom) and only mounted at 40 ft. On the Thursday night conditions were good and I had some enormous European pile-ups on 20m. This looked promising!

During the day the bands were very quiet, though, and Ambran and I spent most of Friday leisurely putting up a Butternut HF2V with elevated radials and dipoles for 40 and 80m. Ambran already had an effective 160m dipole antenna in the forest or jungle behind his property. On the Friday evening conditions on 20m were fair, but not as good as the day before. I worked one particular European station on both evenings and his signal was between 10 and 20dB weaker on the Friday than it had been the day before. Sure enough, come the Saturday, conditions had deteriorated again and, apart from the first few hours of the contest which were fast and furious, I found it slow and hard-going.

Although I was a multiplier for almost everyone I called (V8AQM was also active, but only on 20m SOSB low power) I spent most of the time searching and pouncing as CQ calls invariably brought no response. I did manage to get a couple of good runs into Europe on 20m on both the Saturday and Sunday evenings (early afternoon GMT), but they were short-lived and there were no good openings to the USA. Even the JAs,

once the reliable mainstay of contest operating from Asia/Oceania, are noticeably thinner on the ground than they used to be.

Bring back the sunspots, I say!

## Singapore

In November Eva and I travelled to Singapore for a few days of shopping (Sabah, for all its delights, is not the world's greatest shopping destination) and just soaking up the atmosphere in what has rapidly become our favourite city. We were really just passing through, en route to the SEANET Convention in Thailand, but since we had to fly via either Kuala Lumpur or Singapore we thought we would take the opportunity of spending a few days in the Lion City.

A couple of days before we were due to leave I had an e-mail from our old friend John Krzymuski, N2QW (ex-G4DQW), who said he was going to be in Singapore on a business trip and he had the weekend free – could he come over to see us in Kota Kinabalu? What a coincidence: we decided to meet for afternoon tea at Raffles instead and then spent the evening at, firstly, a microbrewery (the first 'real ale' I have had in two and a half years!) and then, of all places, a Mongolian restaurant. It was great to meet John again after many years.

While in Singapore I took the opportunity of buying a Yaesu FT-857 as a first step towards putting together an effective one-man DXpedition station for when the sunspots return. The cost was the equivalent of £265 (tax-free) compared with £499 (incl. VAT) in the UK. This was a bit of a gamble as I had never used an FT-857 before, but what a great little rig it is! The receiver filtering (at least on SSB) is just so

much better than that of an equivalent small mobile rig from another manufacturer. Also - and very important to me - the FT-857 noise blanker is far more effective than the noise blankers in the FT-2000.

I have used the FT-857 at 100W to make a few QSOs from the 9M6DXX home station, but have yet to try it out in anger.

## **2007 SEANET Convention**

After four nights in Singapore we travelled on to Lampang, 100 kms south of Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, for the SEANET Convention. It was a lot more fun than I was expecting it to be, never having been to a SEANET 'do' before and knowing that most attendees are net and emergency communications operators rather than DXers. However, there was a very good showing of DXers and contesters from around the world including Stig, 9N7JO (LA7JO, EP3UN etc.); Karl Renz, K4YT (whom I have worked from numerous locations over the years since 1978 but never met before); Don, HSØZEE (ex-A92BE and G3VFU); top Japanese DXer Tachio, JA1BRK, and CDXC members Fred Laun, K3ZO, and Tony, G4UZN, who made the trip over from the UK especially for the event. Many of Thailand's growing number of young DXers and contesters were there, including Champ, E21EIC, as well as our friends Taizo-san, JA3AER (ex-GWØRTA and D68C), and Kazu-san, JA1RJU (9MØC, D68C) from Japan.

In total there were around 150 delegates, including many wives - the event is mainly a social event and there is much to interest non-radio-enthusiast partners.

On the Sunday morning I gave a presentation on the 3B7C St Brandon DXpedition. I had only been allocated 30 minutes, so I deleted many of the slides in the PowerPoint presentation put together by Don, G3BJ, for the RSGB HF Convention in order to fit the time available. The presentation went extremely well. No fewer

than 33 Thai amateurs worked 3B7C (a very high proportion of those active on HF from Thailand) and most of those 33 were there for the presentation. JA1BRK worked 3B7C on 22 band-mode slots (the maximum possible was 24 and the top JA made 23 of the slots), while Kazu, JA1RJU, worked 3B7C on 21. Around 60% of the audience had worked 3B7C at least once - and the room had many XYLs watching the presentation, so in reality the percentage of licensed amateurs there who worked 3B7C was probably a lot higher than 60%.

'John', HS1CKC (a Thai national), was so interested in the presentation he asked me for the CD afterwards while Paul, 9V1PH, the only representative from Singapore at SEANET this year, who had been tasked to give a presentation on the Convention when he gets back to Singapore, also wanted a copy.

The Sunday morning 'plenary session' (the only radio content of the whole weekend) this year (perhaps for the first time in SEANET's 35-year history) was almost entirely about DXing and contesting. In addition to 3B7C, Champ, E21EIC, gave two presentations, firstly on his participation at WRTC 2006 in Brazil, where his multi-national multi-single team won first place. Roger, G3SXW, appears prominently in the video as the chief judge. Champ had recently been in the USA and visited the K3LR mega-station and talked about that, then showed a 15-minute Icom video which features both the K3LR station and the RSGB IOTA programme. There are many excerpts from the D68C video in this and FSDXA gets a credit at the end (ironic, since D68C was sponsored by Yaesu!) Despite being a commercial for Icom the video is well worth seeing and it is available for downloading on the Icom USA website.

The cost, by the way, of the entire SEANET convention was just US \$175 per person. This included three nights accommodation in a reasonably good hotel, including all food and most drinks (Chang Beer, a Thai

brewer, was one of the sponsors, but wine or spirits were extra), two full-day excursions by coach, all entrance fees to attractions in the area, all entertainment (lots of pretty Thai lady dancers, at least I assume they were ladies), and numerous 'SEANET freebies' including a very nice quality polo shirt, Chinese-style jacket, book on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RAST/(Radio Amateur Society of Thailand in English and Thai (fascinating reading), a package of raw Thai silk, coffee mug with individual callsign, SEANET 07 baseball cap, A3-size group photo, key ring and much more. Almost unbelievable value - I kept on wondering if I would have to pay the hotel bill in addition to the registration fee, but apparently it was all included!

### **Ray Gerrard, G3NOM / HSØZDZ**

There was news at the Convention of our friend Ray Gerrard, G3NOM / HSØZDZ, a former CDXC member. For those who don't know: in November 2004 Ray suffered a massive heart attack. His heart stopped for many minutes and he was in a coma for several weeks before opening his eyes. After several weeks of gradual improvement, doctors allowed Ray to be moved from hospital in Bangkok to his home, a 90-minute drive from the city centre, where he is now resting and recovering further under the care of his wife, Lawan, E21UHL. Ray has never regained full consciousness and has not recovered his power of speech, but RAST

officers and other close friends who visit him from time to time report that his reactions show that he recognises their presence.

### **SEANET 2008 - Sabah**

The 2008 SEANET Convention will be held here in Kota Kinabalu and in Kudat, at the northernmost tip of Borneo, from 21-23 November. I hope we will be able to put on as good a show as the Thais did! The weekend is the one before the CQ WW CW contest and already there are plans for several of the contesters who were at SEANET this year to stay on after the Convention to do the contest. These include Stig, 9N7JO; John, W2YR / HSØZDJ; Sam, SM3DYU / HSØZDY; Champ, E21EIC, and possibly Martin, HSØZED / G4UQF, and one or two others. This is the group that has been behind the many contest operations from the HSØAC club station over the years. I know that several members of the 3B7C team are also keen to attend the SEANET convention next year, including Gordon, G3USR, while Falk, DK7YY; Bob, MDØCCE, and Chris, G3SVL, have said they would also like to take part in the CW contest from Sabah. Also, Pete, SM5GMZ, is likely to be in this part of the world again at that time so we hope to see him too.

The SEANET 2008 website should appear at [www.sabah.net.my/seanet/index.htm](http://www.sabah.net.my/seanet/index.htm) shortly.

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## **3B7C – updated list of individual sponsors**

2EØMJK	9A8A	AF3Y	DJ3WE	DL2KCE
2WØDAA/P	9V1RH	AH6NF	DJ5DT	DL2MSA
5B4AGC	AB4IQ	CT1BWW	DJ5TK	DL3FSC
5B4AGQ	AB6QM	CT3FT	DJ8CR	DL6GV
5B4AGT	AB9CA	DD7ZW	DJ9ZB	DL6HY
5B4AHJ	AC9A	DD9HK	DK3HA	DL6LBI
5B4AIH	AE6RR	DEØDKR	DK7VW	DL6LZM
5B4WN	AE9YL	DJØKM	DK8IF	DL6UGF
6K2AVL	AF3X	DJØTP	DK8SX	DL7JOM

DL7UMK	G3ENI	G4FTC	IZ5FSA	K1XV
DL7UPN	G3GEJ	G4HKS	IZ5ILK	K2EUH
DL7YS	G3GHS	G4HUN	JA1AJK	K2LA
DL8JDX	G3ICO	G4HXT	JA1DCY	K2SZ
DL8QS	G3JJG	G4HZV	JA1DEU	K2TQC
DL8SAD	G3JNB	G4IRN	JA1ETN	K2UFM
DL8UF	G3KKJ	G4JCC	JA1FO	K3BM
DM3HZN	G3KOZ	G4KLF	JA1FVE	K3EE
E21EIC	G3KWK	G4KTI	JA1GV	K3HP
EA2FQZ	G3LAA	G4LOF	JA1HGY	K3LL
EA3EJI	G3LET	G4OWT	JA1IKA	K3PU
EA3KB	G3LOJ	G4PEL	JA1IRH	K3SX
EA4TD	G3LUW	G4PTJ	JA1MCU	K3TRM
EA5FQZ	G3LZQ	G4PWA	JA1PRV	K3TZV
EA7GBD	G3MIR	G4UZN	JA1RJU	K4BAI
EA7LS	G3MRT	G4VXE	JA2ATE	K4DXU
EA8AG	G3NGX	G4VXT	JA2FBY	K4EDI
EA8ZS	G3OKB	G6DGK	JA3AAW	K4HGX
EI2CA	G3PEM	G6OKU	JA3AER	K4HMB
EI2CL	G3PPG	G7ITT	JA3AVO	K4KAL
EI2CN	G3PQA	G7VJR	JA3BKP	K4KO
EI2GLB	G3RAU	GI4NKB	JA3EMU	K4MNE
EI2JD	G3RLG	GJ3LJF	JA3FUO	K4PI
EI4DW	G3ROO	GMØELP	JA4HCK	K4QS
EI4GY	G3RZP	GMØVEK	JA5IU	K4TD
EI7BA	G3SBP	GM3JYB	JA6BCK	K4TEA
EI7CC	G3SED	GM3OXX	JA6CM	K4UEE
EI7CD	G3SVD	GM4ESD	JA6WJL	K4UFS
EI7GY	G3SYM	GM4UZY	JA7CDV	K4WGW
EI8BP	G3TXF	GM4XMD	JA7EU	K4WNW
EI8FH	G3UCK	GM7NVA	JA7WQJ	K4XR
EI8GS	G3UEG	GM7TUD	JA8AZN	K5AC
EI8JR	G3UHU	GW1FKY	JE2HCJ	K5AND
EI9FBB	G3UML	GW3SQX	JE2LUN	K5EWJ
ES1QD	G3UZM	GW4JBQ	JJ1VVB	K5GH
ES5MC	G3VCQ	HA5PTT	JJ1BDX	K5IX
ES5RW	G3VMW	HB9AAL	JK1KSB	K5YG
ES5TV	G3VPS	HB9AQL	JL1QOC	K6FG
F1UJS	G3WKL	HB9DDO	JL1UXH	K6GEP
F5VHJ	G3WPH	HB9HFN	JM1MQE	K6LLK
FM5HN	G3WYN	HB9JOE	JN4MMO	K6XG
GØAIX	G3WYW	HB9TON	JO3EVM	K6YUI
GØFWX	G3XRJ	I1LGR	JO7KMB	K6ZTA
GØFYX	G3YBO	I1WXY	JP1NWZ	K7ACZ
GØIVZ	G3ZAY	I3NXM	JQ3IEM	K7CMR
GØJJG	G3ZFZ	I4MKN	JRØAMD	K7CS
GØKQA	G3ZQH	I4QHD	JR4IMT	K7FL
GØMTN	G4AEP	I5IHE	JS2LHI	K7MTR
GØPHY	G4AFJ	I7OEB	KØFM	K7MY
GØSNV	G4AMT	IKØIOL	KØIW	K7ZD
GØTSM	G4AXX	IKØXBX	KØOK	K8FH
GØUVR	G4BUO	IK5OWQ	KØSQ	K8GG
GØUZP	G4DJZ	ISØ/YO3RA	K1BRO	K8NVR
G2JL	G4DZW	IV3EFE	K1KU	K8VJV
G3BDQ	G4EXD	IZØAEG	K1PX	K8YTO
G3CWW	G4FNL	IZ3JZK	K1UQT	K9CIV

K9CT	MMØBQN	NA5Q	VK5WO	W6UM
K9JP	MMØDWF	NA7DB	VK6ANC	W6WYB
K9LA	MM5DWW	NDØN	WØBV	W6YD
K9LOF	MUØFAL	ND4V	WØEAN	W6YDE
K9QMX	NØTB	NE1RD	WØFM	W6ZL
K9TP	N1DG	NIØC	WØLSD	W7CU
KB3IFH	N2CLB	NN6R	WØPTI	W7HUY
KB4CL	N2LQ	NU4B	WØQQG	W7JY
KB4X	N2OO	OE3GCU	WØVX	W7VJ
KB6NAN	N2WB	OE3HY	WØYK	W8LGJ
KB7UB	N2WK	OH3MKH	W1GWN	W8NW
KC2FXH	N3DV	OK2ZDL	W1LW	W8QZA
KC9Z	N3KR	OR2T	W1MO	W8SAX
KD2Q	N3YIM	OZ4LS	W1SKU	W8SQ
KD8CGH	N4CC	PAØBWL	W1YM	W8TK
KE4DH	N4CU/N4FQJ	PAØFBI	W2NRA	W9FG
KE4KY	N4DCC	PAØSIM	W2OO	W9LYN
KE5K	N4ESS	PAØWRS	W2RS	W9MAK
KE9L	N4JRG	PA3BWK	W3EW	W9NG
KF4MGU	N4LZ	PA3CNO	W3IZQ	W9NGA
KF6JSP	N4PF	PA3FQA	W3LPL	W9PL
KF7E	N4PN	PG4M	W3UR	WA1S
KG4CUY	N4XR	PP1RR	W3WL	WA2EQF
KH6AT	N5JB	PU1WHK	W3YX	WA3HJR
KK8I	N5KD	PY3CAL	W4BUS	WA3OFR
KN5O	N5KGV	S55VM	W4DN	WA4DOU
KP2A	N5PG	SM5AQD	W4DR	WA5VGI
KR4DA	N5TEY	SM5BFR	W4GF	WA6JJB
KS4Z	N5TY	SM5CCE	W4JO	WA7OJY
KY7M	N5XU	SM6CNN	W4JSM	WA9GQK
LA4RT	N6AJR	SM7BIC	W4LSC	WB2ZAB
LA8AW	N6DHZ	SP3RBG	W4LZP	WB2ZHB
LA8PF	N6ERD	SV9AHZ	W4MPY	WB8JHT
LA9DK	N6NO	TA3J	W4NGR	WB9CIF
LX2A/LX7I	N6PSE	TA3YJ	W4NL	WD4LBR
LY2BAW	N6QI	TF3YH	W4OA	WD5R
LY2BOS	N6VS	TF4M	W4QM	WD8CQB
MØADG	N6XI	VA3PL	W4RBO	WF4W
MØAWX	N7BF	VE1TK	W4RK	WF5T
MØCNP	N7KA	VE2AWW	W4TMR	WK3N
MØDXR	N7MQ	VE3EFX	W4WRS	WN1L
MØJKQ	N7TR	VE3MWX	W4ZRZ	WT4XX
MØMGG	N7UN	VE3ZZ	W4ZYT	WW3QB
MØMRW	N7ZA	VE6NL	W5CWQ	WW5W
MØXAT	N8BI	VE6WZ	W5ODD	WX2K
M1SOM	N8WXQ	VE7CFZ	W5WP	XE1L
M3SON	N9BT	VE7KET	W6IJ	YO8CRU
M5ZZZ	N9TK	VK4BUI	W6JZH	ZL1BYZ
MMØBQI	N9WW	VK4OQ	W6SJ	ZL4PW

# The 3X5A Experience

## Strange Happenings in West Africa

### Roger Western, G3SXW, and the VooDoo Contest Group

In November 2007 for the 14<sup>th</sup> straight year the VooDoo Contest Group entered the CQ WorldWide CW contest from West Africa in the Multi-Multi category. We signed 3X5A from Conakry, the capital of Guinea, at 9° 32" N, 13° 41" W. Conakry is set on a peninsula, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean – this was a big attraction for us! This project was a big success, with nearly 15,000 QSOs and 40 million points. More importantly the seven operators laughed until it hurt and encountered some really bizarre experiences. Read on!

Operators this time were: Ned Stearns, AA7A; Roger Western, G3SXW; Fred Handscombe, G4BWP; John Warburton, G4IRN; Rob Ferguson, GM3YTS; Bob Allphin, K4UEE, and Mike Fulcher, KC7V.

#### Move From Mali

Our story starts in Bamako, the capital of Mali. We had operated as TZ5A in CQ WW CW in 2005 and 2006, and stored our one ton of equipment there, thanks to our good friend and retired soccer star Siré Diallou. We would move this gear to Conakry by hired bus and driver on a rather arduous two-day journey to Conakry, 600 miles to the west.

Our group has learned to remain flexible and to meet challenges as they arise. The first challenge was when our bus hire company told us at the last minute that they could not find a large (35-seater) bus for our trip, as arranged. Instead we would have to take two smaller vehicles in convoy, to transport all of our equipment and the team. This worked out just fine in the end, but we did have a much bigger fuel bill, which was most unwelcome. The bigger of the two new

buses also needed a roof rack, which took most of a day to get welded on.

AA7A, G3SXW, G4BWP, K4UEE and KC7V left Bamako at 5.30 a.m. just before the skies turned grey, having loaded the gear on the bus the night before. We headed west, the road down to the border with Guinea being mostly smooth dirt. The route was Bamako, Guinea border, Siguri, Kankan, Dabola, Mamou, Kindia, Conakry.

At the border we expected to be met by our hired guards (see below) but they were not there. However, the crossing was uneventful, with six barriers: police, customs and immigration on the Mali side and then the same on the Guinea side. These were all negotiated quite smoothly, taking only an hour or so, and requiring only small 'tips'.

#### Guards

Guinea has become more lawless in recent years in the provinces, with occasional banditry. Our local contact, Karel (see below), recommended that we pay for armed guards to escort us to Conakry. This was a new experience for us. In all the years of travelling around West Africa with our equipment this had never before been deemed necessary. It did add a little spice to our journey (and to our budget!). However, at the border they were nowhere to be seen.

As we drove on we gave up finding these guards. We were told that 'they will find you'. After all, there is only one main road and there are few buses with several white faces and a load of equipment, so we did stand out somewhat. Some 50 miles into the journey, at Kankan, we were waved down by two armed guards in black jump-suits

and berets, very smart and professional, each bearing an AK47. We feared the worst, but it turned out that these were our pre-arranged guards. They were CMIS (Company Mobile Intervention Security), a government security organisation available for hire. They were tough guys but absolutely charming, polite and friendly, taking care of us at every step of the journey, each of the two buses carrying one guard.

On every road in West Africa there are numerous road-blocks: police, army, customs, local militia. A dozen such checks per day is not unusual, mostly just to confirm that all papers are in order, but occasionally more troublesome. The investment in our guards paid handsome dividends: we were just waved through each time with many big African smiles.

### **Overnight in Dabola**

We had arranged to stay overnight roughly halfway through our journey in the town of Dabola. There were two 'hotels' in this town and we had made strenuous efforts several weeks before to book rooms. The rainy season had knocked out the telephones but we finally got through to make the reservations. We arrived at 7pm, just after sunset only to find that they, so they claimed, had booked our rooms for the day before. They had three rooms, not the five needed. Fortunately the second hotel had two rooms, just down the road, so we were all accommodated.

Checking in we were informed that the room rate was equivalent to USD \$8 or GBP £4 per night and this certainly set the tone. I recall Bob, K4UEE, asking me if we could get some sheets for the bed (he doesn't speak French). I then realised that we had a bed and a towel, but no sheets. I asked at the bar and was pointed to a pile of sheets – make your own bed. But the spaghetti and beer were very welcome. This dinner cost about the same as the room rate. Bob wondered whether there would be a 'No

toilet seat' discount, but none was forthcoming!

At 6 a.m. we were again ready for departure, our armed guards in tow, and we endured a long 12-hour day of bone-crunching, spine-shuddering, teeth-juddering pot-holes to reach Conakry. Apart from some very brief stops for diesel and cold drinks we encountered no problems (and no bandits) but we did enjoy the mountain scenery. There were forests, but the only animal life we saw were cows, goats and dogs. The larger bus developed problems, managing only walking speed up the steeper hills, which slowed us down considerably, but it did keep going.

### **Checking in**

It's now Sunday evening, five days before the start of CQ WW CW. We arrived at the Camayenne Hotel in Conakry to find that the hotel's air-conditioning system was malfunctioning, blowing only hot air. It will be fixed tomorrow, they said (it never was fixed!). We repaired to the bar for a well-earned cold beer.

Now all we had to do (!) was to set up seven 1 KW stations and a dozen antennas, but we were really excited because the hotel was located immediately beside the sea. At high tide the waves lap against the hotel perimeter wall. After several years operating the contest from close to the Sahara desert at XT2DX, 5U5Z and TZ5A we would finally enjoy the benefits of a salt water take-off.

We had read that Guinea had suffered civil riots some months earlier which had forced a change of government, but all seemed 'normal' in Conakry when we arrived. This normality included cuts to the electricity supply a dozen times each day, but the hotel generator always kicked in leaving us stranded in our showers or elevator for only about 40 seconds each time. A minor inconvenience. Fortunately we suffered these power cuts only about 7-8 times

during the contest and everything fired up again quickly each time.

## Setting Up

We had reserved a suite and adjacent bedroom for our shack, to cater for the seven stations. The suite had a 45,000 BTU stand-alone air-conditioning unit, so was very cool, but the adjacent bedroom (for the three LF stations) had only the central air-con system which was close to useless, blowing warm air. Also, several of the team were accommodated in rooms with the same poor air-con. This was to become our single biggest problem of the visit. The climate in Conakry is hot and humid, around 30°C or 90° F and 80% humidity around the clock. Several team members moved down from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor where the air-con was better and we negotiated for a stand-alone air-con unit to be installed in the LF-station bedroom. As the hotel had no cash we each had to deposit dollars as down-payments on our room bills to provide the \$700 for the hotel to buy the air-con unit. This, we should emphasise, was a 200-bed hotel, but with low occupancy and minimal cash-flow. It was originally four-star when the Belgian airline, Sabena, used to own it.

Any such negotiation involves several meetings and hours of time-wasting frustration. We learned not to leave anyone to carry out promised tasks – they simply didn't do them, so we had to accompany them all the way whilst it was being completed. We also quickly learned that a small gratuity (just a dollar) was likely to secure co-operation much better if given up front, rather than after the event.

The challenges of setting up our stations and antennas were 'normal'. But the humidity cost us dearly. The roof, at 50 ft, had no restraining wall but we managed to find ways to anchor the guys for the various monoband antennas. The 160 and 80m verticals adorned the gardens, the hotel management and the other guests accepting

that this was normal behaviour for crazy foreigners.

Tables and chairs were located and even more importantly the circuit breakers were upgraded to 60 amperes per room, so we had plenty of mains electricity! The sun beat down, but the elevator did work for the crucial periods when gear was transported to the roof. We will never forget that elevator, with its scraping noises and a heart-stopping, violent shudder every time we passed the first floor. After a while, though, we decided that the risk of getting trapped in it was worth it: we only had to climb the five-storey fire-escape a couple of times to realise that. We were each drinking around three litres of water each day.

We installed monoband Force 12 beams for 10, 15 and 20m, a Cushcraft 40-2CD for 40m, plus verticals for 80 and 160, a C3 tribander for mult-hunting and a 80m sloper. Flag RX antennas for 160/80m, beamed to N/E and N/W, were installed on the roof and worked well (thanks to Ned).

The seven stations were one per band plus one for mult-hunting, each consisting of Elecraft K2 transceivers plus old Alpha 76 and 78 amplifiers. The K2 rigs are carried in each year with luggage, but the Alpha amplifiers are taken out of the stock-pile each time and mostly just fire up without a hiccup. This time we burned out one K2 and one Alpha, using up all of our contingency gear, but we were OK so long as we time-shared the 160 and 10 mtr stations.

## Frustrations

There were more frustrations on this trip than usual. We were blessed with ocean-side Fresnel zone RF enhancements, but the lack of air-con and climbing five floors whenever the elevator was out of order did stretch our patience. The hotel restaurant quickly ran out of anything which involved meat. The vegetable soup, chicken sandwich and fish were fine, but quickly became

tedious. The bar quickly ran out of anything but beer, but hey - who's complaining?

This used to be a four-star hotel. Everyone in the hotel tried their personal best to welcome us and we felt that they too were frustrated by the lack of cash. It came as no surprise to learn that new investors are looking to buy the hotel. Meanwhile the current owners seem to be bleeding it dry.

Communications were also very difficult. It's hard to imagine, but the hotel had no telephone connection in or out, only internal between rooms. Our cellphones didn't work because there are no roaming agreements in Guinea, so we needed to buy local SIMM cards. Thank goodness for the iridium phone provided by Bob, K4UEE. We did have slow, always-on Internet connection, negotiated with a local ISP for a fee, wired into our shack.

Maybe it's a sign of the times, but when we met John/G4IRN and Rob/GM3YTS at Conakry airport the day after our arrival on the bus they, apparently, had been genuinely concerned as they had not heard from us since leaving Bamako. We had to explain that we really had no way of telephoning or texting. These days we have all quickly accepted that instant communications is the norm. But it's not the norm in Guinea!

Another 'strange but true' story concerns money. There are about 4,000 Guinea Francs to the Dollar or 8,000 to the Pound Sterling, yet the largest denomination note in general circulation is 5,000. We all had bulging pockets and found it sensible to change money daily rather than resorting to wheelbarrows! Hotel exchange rates are always really poor, so when checking out we called our money exchange man to the hotel again for some major transactions and then hauled large piles of filthy notes to the cashier's desk, in plastic carrier bags. It was a pleasant surprise to note that when it came to cash everyone was straight and honest: exchange rates on the street were not open to negotiation and were fair, almost official,

and we soon learned to do as they did and just count the number of bundles of 50,000 GNF (about \$12 or £6) rather than counting each individual note. One 5,000 GNF note is folded around nine more. Even the hotel just counted the bundles when we were checking out.

## **Weird callsigns**

Unlike almost any other country in the world Guinea insists that all amateur radio callsigns have a second letter in the prefix: 3XY. Each service, military, aircraft, marine, public comms etc. has a letter and 'Y;' is for amateur radio. They then issue them in numeric-alpha sequence: 3XY1A, 3XY2A up to 9A, then 1B – 9B, etc. We were allocated 3XY5D, so this was the callsign which we publicised prior to the trip.

However, we explained that we would send this callsign some 30,000 times during the 48 hours of the contest and the extra letter 'Y' would slow us down and damage our chances of winning the contest. We're sure that they thought us crazy to make such a big issue of it. But they relented. To make a short callsign on CW they created a new series: 3XT. They were right: 'T' is a lot shorter on CW than 'Y'. Then to show their maximum co-operation the call-sign was officially changed to 3XT1. No suffix to minimise transmitting time! Again, we tried to explain that while their flexibility was greatly appreciated this would cause much confusion on the bands. Can you just imagine how many callers would think that they had not copied the suffix and ask for a repeat?

Could we not, as previously requested, change this to 3X5A, please? They did so, but this was confirmed only at the last minute and the new licence handed to us two days before the contest. This was a big relief to us and we want to thank Karel and Mr Camara for their tremendous help with local negotiations – it did make a big difference to us.

## The Contest

Many articles have been written about operating the contest, so we will be brief. At the equator things are somewhat different. We were one of the few stations who could make QSOs on 10m, being close to the equator. The HF bands (20, 15 and 10m) usually provide non-stop pile-ups, which is the driving force behind our efforts to undertake these difficult projects. But this time, being at sunspot minimum, all HF bands were closed or nearly closed during the second half of the night.

It is the LF bands which demand special mention: 40m is known as 'The Zoo' amongst the VooDudes, as loud signals emanate from all directions, the pile-ups are enormous and the operating skill of callers seems far worse than on other bands. We even resorted to transmitting high in the band and listening for callers a few hundred Hz higher. Each fifteen minutes or so we had to QSY and start a new pile-up as things would get completely out of control: continuous callers cover the frequency making it difficult to complete any contacts. Each time we suffered Cluster pile-ups within 3-4 minutes of starting on a new frequency. For us the DX Cluster is a curse – it seems to encourage callers to just hit the button and start calling without listening.

Our 160 and 80m antennas worked very well and we made (VooDoo) record numbers of QSOs, nearly 1,000 on 160m. This was no doubt the result of being immediately beside the sea. A number of people reported that we had big signals on these bands, much bigger than we usually

have, and yet we were using our normal transmit antennas. With only seven operators we were quite stretched to man the seven stations. We closed 10m at night, and even 15m for a few hours each night, leaving these two bands to be checked by the Mult station. Of course, 160 and 80m were closed in daylight, but 40m was workable for all but the middle 8-9 hours of the day.

The path to Europe (N and NE) and North America (NW) is ideal, mostly over salt water. However, to Japan the path is far harder. We did make the first ever (we believe) 3X to JA contacts on 160m, but unfortunately only three of them. The other useful opening to JA is long-path over South America in the middle of the night: this happened only on 15m this year, with very weak signals, but we did manage to scrape in 100 or so. The VK/ZL openings are even harder to find, and yet the most difficult path this year was to KL7: not a single Zone 1 was worked on any band.

On the computing front, this year for the first time we elected to switch logging from CT to Win-Test. This was an excellent decision: it worked flawlessly, a great program. We also decided to go to wireless networking for the first time. Another great decision. No RF problems, even with seven KW in the room. With our Internet always-on connection the Cluster spots were propagated to the appropriate band and all was sweet. We have John, G4IRN, to thank for this huge leap forward in our technology.

Our rough Claimed Score is as follows:

Band	QSOs	Zones	Countries
160	976	22	82
80	1,766	25	100
40	2,779	37	131
20	4,544	38	156
15	3,768	37	146
10	1,031	21	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,864</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>708</b>

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>39,246,048</b>
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Compared to last year (TZ5A) the extra 160 and 80m QSOs made up for the reduction in 10m QSOs, so we finished with slightly more contacts, but fewer mults and almost the same score.

The continents were as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>EU %</b>	<b>NA %</b>	<b>Rest %</b>
<b>160</b>	49	45	6
<b>80</b>	57	36	7
<b>40</b>	44	46	10
<b>20</b>	47	45	8
<b>15</b>	47	45	8
<b>10</b>	61	30	9
<b>All</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>

## Peri-Contest

Before the contest we ran sporadic pile-ups as a way of testing antennas and stations and getting our operating up to speed. This is enormously enjoyable because outside the contest we can use proper split-frequency DXpedition tactics. We also activated the WARC bands after the contest.

For the second year AA7A and KC7V also did EME on 2m. At TZ5A last year they made some 80 contacts. From 3X5A they made 125, aided by a second 16-ele beam. Seven CW contacts were also achieved, but trips to the roof were needed every half-hour or so to turn the beam.

In total we made over 20,000 QSOs from Guinea, all on CW (except EME).

The evenings before the contest are also ideal for socialising, catching up with all the news with pals who we have not met for some long time. We were fortunate to find excellent restaurants in Conakry, including a Chinese and an Indian just near the hotel. We found everything was cheap in Guinea. Group dynamics are also important: with only seven we could all stay closely in touch with what everyone was doing.

## Ministry of Telecommunications

We were honoured to be visited at the hotel by Mr Sow, the Director General of the Ministry of Telecomms and several of his aides, including Mr Camara (Licensing) and Mr Bah (Training). They in turn invited us to visit the Ministry after the contest. They are all keen to develop amateur radio in their country and we are keen to offer help.

They wish to set up a club station, and already have a TS-930 transceiver. We unpacked it and fired it up and showed them the fundamentals of using this equipment. They now only need a location and an antenna. We offered to supply some peripherals and will progress this project during our 2008 visit.

We can also help by securing training materials in French, examination questions and so forth. They are already affiliated to IARU.

All these government officials were charming and welcoming, and we really appreciated their hospitality.

## Home Time

After spending five long, hot, sweaty, frustrating days setting up the whole station and antennas it was all dismantled in just a few short hours. We always employ some boys to help us with the lifting and carrying and they are happy to get the work, always proving very willing to please.

We then transported all materials to storage facilities at STI-Guinea, for which we are very grateful to Karel Waerzeggers, 3XY2A. They will stay there until next November.

To be recommended is the pre check-in facility offered by Air France. We went to their downtown office in the afternoon, checked our baggage and secured our boarding passes. This makes the airport experience in the evening much more

bearable. Then comes the boring bit: the long flights home. It is overnight to Paris then onward connections. Our US team members must find this considerably more tiring than the British.

## Post-Trip

As I write we are just tackling the post-trip activities. This includes designing and printing the QSL cards, analysing our logs, submitting them to CQ and to LoTW, final reconciliation of accounts, sending e-mails to action outstanding matters etc.

QSLs for 3X5A go to G3SXW, direct or via the Bureau. Bureau replies can be solicited by e-mailing QSO details to [g3sxw@btinternet.com](mailto:g3sxw@btinternet.com) - we do not need your paper QSL card. Direct replies will be posted in early January.

Then, while the trip is fresh in our minds, we draw up an action list for next year: equipment that needs to be repaired and acquired. Our usual modus operandi is to activate each country twice, so we expect to

return to 3X5A next November. Then it will be time to move on. We have already started looking at maps and see that Sierra Leone, 9L, is only a short journey, and we understand that this country is quite stable these days. So we might arrange a brief reconnaissance visit there next November to prepare for 2009. The following years could then also encompass Liberia, EL, and Ivory Coast, TU. The alternative is to move North to Guinea Bissau, J5 but then there's little other potential further up the coast: Senegal, 6W, already has contest stations and we have previously activated Gambia, C5.

Whichever direction we choose to travel it seems highly likely that the VooDoo Contest group will be entering CQ WorldWide CW Contest for several years to come, from West Africa. All team members enjoy the experience enormously: we laugh a lot, we love the pile-ups and we embrace the challenges. Here's to completing a second full sunspot cycle in Africa!

Thank you for all the QSOs - CU in November 2008 from 3X5A.

### **Internet translations at their best - some QSL requests received by G3SXW**

#### **From a station in Brazil**

DR friend I am with a problem not this appearing in LOTW the contact carried through with TZ5A would be possivbol the friend to verify shaving me if this beating the data?

**This was from Japan** (an 'International Business Reply' was enclosed)

Dear Sirs, Please do not put a stamp on an envelope enclosing. Please do an answer in mentioned expiration date. An envelope for an answer receives approval of rate recipient payment (IBRS). Please do an answer in a bureau when refused to a post office. Yours sincerely.

#### **And here's one from Korea**

Three GSXW Hi ask you three X5A both wireless contact reports confirm our 40 m and 20 m in 07.11.24 UTC.01.41.09.? We ask that you help with a blessing from God modeunbun together today also want to joteunharu... 73

# DX Journey to the North

Roger Western, JW/G3SXW, and Nigel Cawthorne, JW/G3TXF

by G3TXF

On school maps Svalbard, like Greenland, looks disproportionately large because it is so far north. But how far north is it? The T-shirts on sale at Svalbard airport proudly announce that it is 78° N. In order to get into perspective how far north that is, just remember that Peter 1<sup>st</sup> of 3YØX fame is at 68° S. So, to put it simply, JW is some 10° further to the North than Peter 1<sup>st</sup> is to the south! But there the comparisons end. Unlike Peter 1<sup>st</sup>, where travel involves several days at sea, a major logistics operation and helicopter landings, the journey up to Svalbard on a scheduled SAS airline from Tromsø in northern Norway, is nothing but pure comfort.

The planning of the JW/G3SXW and JW/G3TXF operation was done at relatively short notice. Our initial point of contact was Mathias, JW5NM, who runs the JW5E club station in Longyearbyen. Svalbard is a group of Arctic islands. The main island of Spitsbergen (37,500 km<sup>2</sup>) has the main town of Longyearbyen. There are several other islands in the Svalbard group, all of which count as JW. However, one of the most remote and smallest islands (Bear Island - only 178 km<sup>2</sup> in size) within the group counts as the separate DXCC country of JX. CDXC members Martin, G3ZAY, and Michael, G7VJR, had operated from the JW5E club station only a few months earlier. They were able to provide us with useful background information. Unlike Martin and Michael's trip, which was in the summer when the sun shines for 24 hours a day, our short trip was to be in early November. It was during our first conversation with Mathias, JW5NM, that he reminded us that it is pitch dark in Svalbard for 24 hours a day from 15 November onwards each year.

The journey from London to Svalbard involved three flights. The first was from London to Oslo, where an overnight stay near the airport was necessary in order to catch an early morning flight from Oslo to Tromsø. The third leg was from Tromsø up north to Svalbard. Although not many people actually live on Svalbard (about 2,000) there is a continuous stream of air passenger traffic between the Norwegian mainland and Svalbard. There is no indigenous population in Svalbard. Most people there have their main home in mainland Norway. Hence the relatively high levels of passenger traffic, even in winter. In the summer when most tourists visit Svalbard, there are also direct flights from Oslo.

## Welcome to JW-land

The flight north from Tromsø to Svalbard takes just under two hours. We landed during a light snow-storm at around 1pm local time and were met at Longyearbyen airport by Mathias, JW5NM. Before heading for the JW5E shack, Mathias took us on a short ride outside the main town. The weak daylight was already fading fast by this time, but in the near dark we were just able to distinguish some of the local sights including the vast antenna farm of a VHF ionosonde transmitting station as well as a herd of reindeer that were trying to find something to eat in the snow just outside of town. The JW5E shack is located in a purpose-built hut on the edge of the saltwater fjord. The water at the edge of the fjord was already iced up. The take-off from the sea-level location of the JW5E shack can best be described as variable. The shot to North America is perfect. It is straight along the fjord out into the open ocean. Subject to there being some

propagation, working the USA from this site is not a problem. The take-off to Japan is over salt water across the fjord, but there are some high mountains in the middle distance which would cut off the lower angles. Much of Europe, which is to the south of the JW5E shack, is blocked severely by close-by high-rising hills as well as by the town of Longyearbyen itself. However, as luck would have it there was a gap in the mountains in the direction of the UK.

As our trip to JW was going to be short we wanted to make the best use of the time available. Mathias, JW5NM, was planning on being away for the weekend at his country cottage located some distance from the main town. So once we had unpacked our gear in the JW5E shack Mathias drove us to the hotel (some 700m from the shack) so that we could check in. JW5NM then set off for his weekend break in the cold and dark of the Svalbard countryside.

The descriptive blurb for the Radisson SAS Polar Hotel in Svalbard says it all. It is described as 'The world's northernmost full service hotel... located just 1,333 km from the North Pole'. Once we had checked in and unpacked our next priority was a late lunch before setting off back to the JW5E shack and the hoped for CW pile-ups. During our brief four-day stay in Svalbard we got to know very well the 700m walk from the hotel up on the hillside down to the JW5E shack at the water's edge. We had both come prepared for cold temperatures. We both had snow boots which made walking easier. However, even though it was a relatively short walk to the shack, it could be quite uncomfortable, particularly if there was any wind blowing.

### **Getting set for the pile-ups**

Once back in the shack we set up the two stations which we had brought. The JW5E station is well equipped with two operating positions inside the cosy shack. Outside there is a 30m self-supporting tower with a 5-element HF tri-band beam. There are

various wire antennas for 40, 80 and 160m hanging off the same tower. Even though there were two stations already in the JW5E shack we felt more comfortable using the radios which we had brought (G3SXW: K2 and G3TXF: TS-570) in conjunction with the JW5E antennas.

Our usual pattern of operating (whereby G3SXW hammers away at the high-volume traditional HF bands while G3TXF concentrates on the WARC bands) was not going to be possible during our short JW operation for two reasons. Firstly the propagation varied dramatically, so that on occasions only 40m would be open to anywhere. Also with the wire antennas that hung off the tower being close together it was not possible to work on 40m and 30m at the same time, even though we had our usual Dune-Star filters and we were not using linears. The wire antennas were just spaced too close together. We were not going to start playing around with the antennas outside in the cold and dark at an unknown location!

The only three bands used were 40m, 30m and 20m. Roger, JW/G3SXW, operated mostly on 20m using the 5-el yagi. Nigel, JW/G3TXF, worked mostly 30 and 40m with the wire antennas, but with one operating session, including one good run to the USA, on 20m. In addition one solitary QSO was made on 80m CW.

### **Tough radio conditions**

HF radio propagation from 78° N can be really difficult. Received signals were often extremely weak, but we could nevertheless run pile-ups for some of the time. We were able to keep a close eye on the local K-index. There is a K-index measuring facility in Svalbard, which can be seen on the Internet. We therefore had a useful measure of the local K-index. Once the index went up, the bands went down! There was no Internet in the shack, but we could check on the K-index as well as band reports when we got back to the hotel.

Although we had come fully prepared to operate as much as we could, in practice there wasn't much happening on the bands during the night. On the one occasion that we returned to the shack late in the evening we found that every band was completely dead. The middle of the 'day' generated the most activity. During our visit there was a weak twilight at midday, and the sky had some discernible daylight for about four or five hours of the day. Had we been in JW just two weeks later, it would have been pitch dark all day. The speed of movement in the grey-line at that time of year is dramatic.

We quickly fell into the usual DXpedition pattern of operating, eating, sleeping and then operating again. Although we were only in JW for a few days, we sampled several of the local restaurants. We had been particularly recommended a restaurant called Huset (house) by Rag, LA5HE. Unbelievably for what must be one of the best restaurants nearest to the North Pole, it had a vast wine cellar.

Svalbard has less than 50km of roads. There's no crime. People don't lock their cars. There's nowhere that a car thief could drive them to! And yes, there are signs warning you of the dangers of polar bears. Many people in Svalbard do carry guns for protection against possible attack by polar bears. The younger generation of Svalbard inhabitants appears to spend most of the time racing around on snow scooters. There are said to be over 2,500 snow scooters on Svalbard. Slightly greater in number than the population.

### **QRT in JW – returning home**

The Monday morning was to be our last operating session. After a quick breakfast and check out of the hotel we went back to

the JW5E shack for the last few hours of pile-ups. Conditions were again highly variable, but JW/G3TXF was still able to work JAs on 40m during the early morning. Roger, JW/G3SXW, spent the last few hours running on 20m. Here again conditions changed quickly. At one moment the band seemed open, but then within a short time the callers would stop and the band went quiet again.

Bang on schedule Mathias, JW5NM, returned to the JW5E shack from his weekend trip in the country, during the late morning on Monday. After a de-brief on what we had been working during our stay we packed the two stations back into their suitcases, re-assembled the original JW5E equipment as we found it. We then headed back on the short drive across town to the airport.

The journey back was easier than travelling out, because we were able to do all three flights (Svalbard – Tromsø, Tromsø – Oslo and Oslo – London) in quick succession without an overnight stay, so we were able to get back home on the same day.

Thanks to Mathias, JW5NM, for his help in providing us with access to the JW5E club station and for helping us out in Svalbard. We finished up with just 2,100 CW QSOs in the JW/G3SXW and JW/G3TXF logs: 1,100 were on 20m, 530 on 30m and 470 on 40m.

JW-Svalbard is one of the few countries (along with JX, TF, OX and UA-FJL) situated in Zone 40. JW is located right inside the auroral oval, which makes radio conditions difficult. Next time either of us hears a station from Zone 40, we will have a much better appreciation of the propagation difficulties of operating from that part of the world.

## DX at the 2007 URE Congress in EA7

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

Spain's national society, URE, holds its annual congress in different locations each year. The 2007 URE Congress was held in the large Bahia Sur hotel complex in San Fernando, close to Cádiz in EA7-land in early December. There were nearly 400 delegates staying at the congress hotel, with some 600 delegates registered in total. The number of amateurs attending was just over 200. The overall delegate number included many family members. A programme of tourist visits to local places of interest was organised for family members. This was the second URE Congress attended by G3TXF. The previous one attended was in Ceuta (EA9) in 2002.

Although the 2007 URE Congress ran over three days, it was just the third day that was entirely devoted to DX presentations. There was a series of lectures in Spanish covering several DX-related topics. Speakers on DX topics included CT1BWW, EA3GHZ, EA5BWR, EA5KY, EA5YH, F6EXV, G3TXF, HQ2ALJ and N4GN (with NW6P and W6OAT). The DX sessions were chaired by Juan, EA9IE, as well as by URE President Diego, EA7MK.

Topics covered during the DX presentations included the NCDXF's major DXpedition funding programme, the numerous DXploits of Kan, JA1BK, (by Paul F6EXV) including the first Swain's Island operation KH8SI, as well as lectures on several other recent operations including HQ2R in Honduras. The HQ2R operation also involved the donation of some radio equipment which subsequently proved most valuable in providing a hurricane warning service. José, EA5BWR, Angel, EA1QF and Alvidio, HQ2ALJ, gave a magnificent talk about how this donated amateur radio equipment had helped save lives during a recent Honduras hurricane.

A URE Congress special event station AM7SF was operated on 20m and 40m from the main foyer of the hotel. Even though there was a full programme of DX presentations, there were still plenty of time for the various meals as well as chats with numerous of the EA delegates. The main feature of the last evening was the URE Congress Dinner. In keeping with the Spanish tradition of dining late, pre-dinner drinks started only at 9pm. The 400 delegates attending the dinner did not sit down until after 10pm. The Congress Dinner finally finished (after various speeches and presentations) at around 1.30am on Monday morning. This did not give G3TXF much time to get some sleep before leaving the hotel at 7am to catch a flight back to London, via Madrid.

The delegates list shows that there were about 15 non-EA delegates at the URE Congress, but that the bulk of the over 200 call signs present were from the nine call areas of Spain.

### Cyprus special event station

On 1 January 2008 the official currency of the Republic of Cyprus changed from the Cyprus Pound to the Euro. To celebrate this historic event, members of the Pafos District of The Cyprus Amateur Radio Society will be using the call C4EURO throughout 2008. C4EURO will be QRV on HF and VHF, on phone, CW and the datamodes. QSL via 5B4AGC.

73 Alan, 5B4AHJ

## A 1,000-mile boat trip and two new IOTAs

Derek Cox, G3KHZ

*g3khz@derekcox.plus.com*

The lure of two brand new IOTAs, Taku'u, OC-283, and Nukumanu, OC-284, attracted Hans, SM6CVX, and myself. These are the most remote islands belonging to Papua New Guinea (PNG). Following our fun trip to the Trobriands, PNG, last year we were excited to push the boundaries. These new IOTAs are 500 miles from East New Britain. The thought of sailing all this way in this part of world can be rather daunting. There are no rescue services. Six of us signed up for the trip: Hans, SM6CVX; Luis, CT1AGF; Steve, G4EDG, and Derek, G3KHZ plus two non-ham friends, Stig Nyman (Sweden) and Paul Hamblin (from my village).

We chartered a wonderful-looking schooner, the Imajica II, but were devastated to learn just six weeks before the trip was due to start that the boat had serious engine problems and the charter was cancelled. By this time we had bought our air tickets and paid the deposit for Imajica II. After a frantic Internet search and telephone calls to PNG and Australia we came up with two possibilities: a boat in Cairns and one in Kokopa, New Britain. We finally chose the one in Kokopa, the 45ft MV Barbarian II - built, owned and operated by an Australian, Rod, who has 30 years of experience in these waters and a good reputation. The choice proved to be a good one. The deposits for Imajica II were painlessly transferred to Rod. The only disappointment was that Paul, an experienced sailor, joined specifically to do some sailing. 'Stick and rag sailing', as Rod called it! Paul had bought his air tickets and there was no going back.

Last year on my return from PNG I was clobbered for a big excess baggage charge. I was nervous as we had decided to take two 500W amps in addition to our normal rigs and antennas. I figured an excess baggage

charge of £1,000 each way was a fair estimate. We contacted the airlines for an additional baggage allowance and had some success with Air Niugini and TAP. The long-haul carrier wouldn't play ball. Luis, Steve, Paul and I decided to check in as a group at Heathrow. Bag after bag was heaved onto the scales. My main case weighed 27kg and a 'Heavy' tag was attached. I had a total of nearly 50kg. Others in the team had baggage similarly overweight. I was sweating. Finally the boarding passes were issued and not a mention was made of any excess baggage. Phew! The same happened in reverse on our way home. We were lucky. Two lessons learned from this. 1. Check in as a group. 2. Get the airlines to check your baggage through all the way even if, like us, you bought your tickets for the various sectors separately. The immigration folk like it because it saves them work. If you end up in a queue for immigration see one of the officers and explain. They will take your baggage tags and get your baggage transferred. You just go to the transit lounge.

After a one-night stay in Port Moresby we met Hans and Stig and all boarded the Air Niugini F-100 for the final leg to Rabaul, New Britain. The F-100 was the best flight of all; plenty of room between the seats and a lovely quiet ride. We were talking about Nukumanu in the plane and a lady, sitting adjacent, overhead our conversation. She was an American and was heading back to Nukumanu. She had lived there for many years as a bible translator. We gained valuable knowledge of the place and people. She was heading to Buka Island and hoping to pick up a boat from there. As we approached Rabaul we had an impressive view of Mt Mother, still belching smoke and ash 13 years after the violent eruption that devastated Rabaul and the old airport.

Kokopo has taken over from Rabaul and a new airport has been built.

We stayed at the Kokopo Village Resort for two nights – long enough to do our local shopping, visit the boat and meet Rod, our skipper. At lunchtime on Friday, 19 September we boarded Barbarian II and headed SE for Cape St George on the eastern tip of New Ireland. Then we sailed due east for the journey to Nukumanu. We made a brief stop at Kilinailau en route to give Steve a rest. He was not well at that stage.

After four days' sailing we arrived in Nukumanu lagoon. The locals came in their banana boats to greet us. We launched the dinghy and made for the beach. This is the home of nearly 1,000 Polynesians. Our primary task was to make contact with Ariki (paramount chief) David. After a long delay he came to meet us from an adjacent island. Although he had been advised, Ariki David was a little sceptical of our visit and there were rumours that we might be spies...short wave radios, Morse code! Eventually after a long meeting with the Ariki and the presentation of gifts for the school we gained his confidence. A later talk to the children at the school worked wonders. On the boat, we prepared a flashy 'thank you' poster to be presented to the Ariki on the last day on Nukumanu.

We used the men's meeting house at one end of the island for the two CW stations. The two stations with linears were located about 450 yards away under the covered front of the store house. This gave us the ability to operate CW and SSB/RTTY simultaneously on the same band.

The long meeting with chief David left us short of time to get all the stations QRV that first day. Only Hans was up and running by nightfall and he had a great time on 20m SSB and CW that first night. The remaining three stations were ready the following afternoon.

At this low point in the sunspot cycle there is very little propagation from about three hours after sunrise until mid-afternoon. I don't think our signals were as strong as last year from the Trobriands, but we were some 500 miles further east this time. Each operator had his own set-up and we worked the pile-ups until we almost fell asleep at our rigs. Apologies to those who perhaps caught us at these moments when it must have been confusing!

Considering the remoteness of Nukumanu, it is more prosperous than its nearest neighbours. The locals make their living by diving down, sometimes to 20m to collect bêche de mer (sea cucumbers). A hazardous operation that does result in some fatalities. The sea cucumber is an expensive delicacy in the Far East. The prosperity was evidenced by the number of fibreglass banana boats fitted with outboard motors. These people trade with the neighbouring Otang Java islands which belong to the Solomon Islands.

The next stop on our journey back westwards was Taku'u. This is a very cramped island with the houses packed close to each other. About 500 Polynesians live here. The place is full of chickens and the cockerels crow all day and most of the night too. We used a similar set-up for the two sites as on Nukumanu, but the separation distance was less and that did result in some interference. We stayed five days here to allow for a couple of days on Kilinailau.

We presented gifts to the headmaster for the school and gave a talk there. By chance our visit coincided with International Teacher's Day. We were invited to the festivities and watched Polynesian dancing and drama. The invitation included lunch and we dined on turtle meat, chicken, homemade cake and molasses made from liquid tapped from the top of the coconut trees.

The last stop was at Kilinailau. Melanesians live here. They are much darker than the

Polynesians and have features more like the Papua New Guinea people. We chose the island of Piul: a lovely clean, open and quiet place that was not crowded. At each place we visited we were able to erect our antennas near the beach, but here Steve managed to mount his vertical on a post which was in the sea. Where did I read those words, 'location, location, location?' In most cases we managed to choose sites that gave us clear take-offs towards the NE (Europe) and NW (North America). Again two sites were used, but even closer this time and not so good for simultaneous operation on the same band.

All three atolls we visited are very low-lying and only about 2m above the high tide level. They are all suffering from the effects of global warming as the sea levels rise. In the case of Taku'u there is an additional problem because the islets are located where the tectonic plates are shifting and sinking. The combined effect is that the sea level is rising at the rate of 22cm each year. All the islands we visited are affected. Nukumanu has reduced in length by about 150m in the last few years. Taku'u has homemade barricades all along the lagoon side of the island and Kilinailau has long wire cages filled with stones at strategic points along the beach to reduce erosion. One small islet has disappeared beneath the waves and there are examples of trees that are now marooned off the main island.

Apart from our radio operation our aim was to publicise the plight of the people. We have words on the QSL cards about this. We have been asked to write an article for *Paradise*, Air Niugini's in-flight magazine. We hope that all this publicity will assist in getting contingency plans in place to take the islanders to a safe place once the sea levels become critical. The most likely location will be to the mountainous island of Bougainville, the nearest sizeable land mass to these atolls. Around 2,000 people are in danger on these atolls.

Each island has a radio to maintain contact with the administrative centre in Bougainville. In all cases there were problems with these radio installations. We (mostly Steve) repaired them all and that helped greatly in our relations with the islanders. Even the radios on the boat had problems which we were able to rectify.

On the boat we were looked after by skipper Rod and four crew members. The young PNG cook, Daisy, produced a wonderful variety of meals. Rod, a keen scuba diver, made regular forays with his spear gun and always came back with some fish. We dined on fresh tuna, barracuda, etc. We ran out of bread halfway through the trip, but Daisy produced bags of flour and baked further supplies. The boat included three double bunks, a water-making plant and a freshwater shower.

Atolls are submerged volcanoes and as a result they have a number of small coral islets around the rim. These islets surround the lagoon and form a safe haven for boats. Here the sea is calm and crystal clear. The water is hot and great for swimming. There are sharks, but certainly Rod didn't worry about them except on one occasion when he had speared a tuna. A shark took a bite out of it and Rod's reaction was, holding the catch out of the water on his spear, "take this fish quickly before the shark eats it".

The people of these islands work together and share what they have. If a new house is needed a group gets together, starts early in the morning before it gets too hot and the house is finished by lunchtime. No planning permission and building regulations here. All the dwellings are made from parts of the coconut tree. The roofs have to be replaced about every 3 years.

We experienced rough seas on our way back to Kokopo. The skipper had been up all night and on the final evening we pulled into a bay along the south side of New Ireland for Rod to take a rest and give the

rest of us a break from being tossed around. At midnight we sailed off into calmer waters. As we approached Kokopo we could see the striking landmark of Mt Mother again.

Papua New Guinea has had a lot of bad press over the years, but doesn't deserve it any longer. There is still some violence in the capital, Port Moresby, and Lae but by being sensible and keeping in a group you are pretty safe. Malaria is present and you need to take anti-malarial tablets. The remote islands have some mosquitoes, but they are not malarious. Bird-watching and scuba diving are the main attractions for tourists. PNG is the home for nearly all of the 38 species of birds of paradise. The national flag features a silhouette of this bird along with the stars of the Southern Cross.

A final twist to our trip came when we arrived for the flight from Rabaul to Port Moresby. One lone official asked, "Which flight are you taking? The 12:10 to Port Moresby? Oh, that left two hours ago!" The next flight was the following day and we had to stay one more night in Kokopo.

Fortunately the flight went very early the next morning and we made our connections to Cairns, Darwin and Singapore, finally arriving at Heathrow at 05:30 on 17 October. The Swedes also caught their flights flying back via Manila and Hong Kong.

### QSO statistics

Location	Call	QSOs
Nukumanu	P29VCX	10,144
Taku'u	P29NI	8,692
Kilinailau	P29VCR	5,403

The majority were CW contacts with some SSB and RTTY.

We take this opportunity to thank CDXC for its generous support and to all the other organisations and individuals who helped with this rather expensive adventure.

73 Derek Cox

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## Dinner and Pile-ups in Geneva

### A short trip to 4U1WRC / 4U1ITU

**Bob Whelan, G3PJT**

*g3pjt@btinternet.com*

Each year IARU Region 1 gives a medal to a person who has been a friend to amateur radio. This year it was awarded to Rudolf Rieder, who has just retired from BACOM, the Swiss radio agency. Rudolf was chair of the CEPT Working Group concerned with radio amateur regulations. In that capacity he led the team working on the revision of T/R 6101, T/R 6102 following the last WRC and introduced the new Novice documents and paved the way for more Entry Level

licences in the future. As such Rudolf has always pushed countries to adopt the latest amateur radio recommendations. And 6101 is the document that many of us use when we make visits to some of the 31 countries which have signed up. The medal was presented by Ole Garpstaad, LA1RR, President of IARU Region 1, at a dinner at the ITU. I was invited to attend as I have worked with Rudolf for the past five years on these CEPT matters.

However, as I was in Geneva at the same time as WRC, I was able to visit 4U1WRC (or 4U1ITU) and do a bit of pile-up practice. The 4U1WRC set-up consists of two separate operating positions – one with an amplifier, each set up for CW/SSB and digital too. The antenna system comprised a 3-element Stepp-IR, 402CD and a 7-element yagi for HF and some wires for LF, although this might have changed by now. For a station which is often operated for short periods by visitors who might not understand the way the station works, a certain degree of protection has to be included to prevent operators selecting the same antenna or bands etc. and damaging the equipment. 4U1ITU has full computer control with an amazing switching system for the antennas.

As there were plenty of radio amateurs amongst the delegates at WRC next door – even the new president of ITU is now an amateur - there seemed to be a steady stream of delegates sneaking away from the conference sessions for a bit of relaxation and operating.

Outside the conference hall I bumped into Dave, K1ZZ, Tim, VE6SH, and Tafa, 6W1KI, but unfortunately missed Trond, LA8XM. In the shack I shared the operating with Bren, KI4PRK, and Miha, S51FB, amongst others. Finally, thanks to Attila Matas, the station manager at 4U1ITU, for the permission to operate and for being such great entertainment at dinner. So this was a new DXFC too!

### **The 3B7C DVD is available now!**

*“A colourful and comprehensive account of life on Ile du Sud, Saint Brandon, during the 3B7C DXpedition.” Don Field, G3XTT*

*“137,500 QSOs with no sunspots from the remote island of Ile du Sud – this is the story of 3B7C.” Neville Cheadle, G3NUG*

Price £12.50 to UK members, including p & p. Also included is the 3B9C Rodrigues video – two for the price of one! Each video runs for approximately 45 minutes.

To order your copy, go to [3b7c.com](http://3b7c.com) and click on ‘Order the Video’, which has all details of payment methods. Payment can be made (preferably) by e-banking or, if that’s not possible, by cheque made payable to the Five Star DXers Association. Overseas members are welcome to use the PayPal facility on the website.

Cheques should be sent to John Linford, FSDXA Treasurer, Pennine View, Sleagill, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 3HD, remembering to include your mailing address.

# Help a Busy QSL Manager

Roger Western, G3SXW [g3sxw@btinternet.com](mailto:g3sxw@btinternet.com)

Much has appeared in print over the years about QSLing. The basic 'rules' are rather well understood these days. But let's spend a moment to dig a little deeper.

QSL managers are volunteers. They invest their time as a labour of love. When sending direct QSL requests you can help to save some of their time by making minor changes to your outgoing envelopes. The suggestions below may seem trivial, but remember that he is handling hundreds of requests, so each minor delay gets multiplied over and over. Our grateful thanks to all those who already implement these suggestions.

- Leave a gap in your outer envelope for the paper knife to slide in. Many envelopes are sealed right to the very corners. The busy QSL manager has to cut a corner off with a pair of scissors. In the process he will also probably cut through the contents of the envelope. This takes time. If using outer envelopes which are glued right to the corners, remember not to lick the last little bit of the flap, on both sides.
  - Every item that is folded by you must be unfolded by him. Most items, like IRCs or Dollars, do not need to be folded.
  - No need to interleave items: each item lovingly packed within another item has to be taken out by the QSL manager.
  - Please flatten and straighten the corners of Dollar bills and IRCs. Preferably use clean notes. Surgical gloves are indicated for some of the filthy notes received!
- Always send a reply envelope, unless you are happy to receive the reply via Bureau. Write your postal address on the outside and don't forget your country name (Americans please note!).
  - If your QSL card covers more than one of your callsigns, please remember to tick which is the one requesting the card. Otherwise the QSL manager has to check each one in the log. Sometimes the computer label shows the callsign, but only in font size 8, making it easy to miss.
  - No need to wrap the contents (your card, reply envelope etc.) in another piece of paper. During forty years of QSLing I have never experienced postal theft for the sake of a Dollar bill.
  - Finally, please never NEVER use staples or adhesive tape! Preventing items from shifting within the envelope is unnecessary. The only exception might be coins, which in any case might be your last choice for paying the return postage.

Many thanks. Good DX!

**We regret to record the passing  
of the following CDXC members:**

G3TLB	Keith Smith
G4ZZG	Charles Wells
GW3CDP	Denzil Evans

# Replying to QSLs for 3B7C

**How difficult can it get? The answer is very difficult!**

**Gordon Rolland, G3USR**

*g3usr@btinternet.com*

## Introduction

On return from the 3B7C DXpedition I volunteered to be one of the team of 12 QSL managers to discharge the FSDXA responsibility for QSLing the many contacts made from St Brandon. What an experience it has been to date – very enjoyable, although sometimes deeply frustrating. It is particularly gratifying to read the Deserving's appreciative comments on their QSOs.

Although a few issues inevitably arise from time to time whilst QSLing, the range of things that can - and do - go wrong is astonishing. Avoiding many of them is a good way to improve your chances of promptly receiving that elusive DX station's QSL card.

## A flavour of some common problems

A typical 3B7C QSL Manager routine involves a number of steps ...

1. Receipt of incoming QSL. Selecting one bulging incoming envelope at random I see that it does not have a stamp. Fortunately it was not surcharged by my local post office this time. Phew!
2. Get it open. Hmm... a tough old envelope... brown manila and perhaps made of at least 280 gm material. Weighs a ton and would have cost lots to post... if it had had a stamp in the first place! Need a sharp knife to cut it open – but wait, it's so well stuck down with glue that the contents have been stuck to the inside edges and inevitably the

whole thing gets damaged as I prise it open.

3. What's inside? I see many QSL cards... some from different stations, most confirming... one contact per card. And something wrapped in foil... it's one USD. Enough for 20 grams to EU and 10 grams to NA and RoTW. Tough job to get the UK post office to accept the equivalent of around 50p for maybe 60 grams of outbound reply cards!
4. What else? A return envelope, right? Wrong! Nothing else... definitely one to return via the Bureau. And in another similar envelope we have a return envelope of the same size as the posted one. To get it into the incoming envelope the sender has folded two edges inwards to give a margin so that it fits. But then it is already frayed by the incoming postal process and is starting to disintegrate. But I digress.
5. Let's check the QSLs. Ah ha... lots of individual QSO detail stickers on this one. One up, one down, others at 90 degree angles and in no particular date / time order. So, getting the well ordered 3B7C log up on StarQSL I struggle to find each listed QSO and give up. Tell you what, I will QSL all contacts in the log and then, if the amateur wants me to check out any that he has recorded but I missed, then he can QSL again – at his cost. Wouldn't it be nice to see all the QSOs detailed in date / time order after all?

6. Down to the details – MHz or metres? MHz always as that's how our transceiver frequency is calibrated. Time? Local or UTC? UTC please, as that's universal and when you are connected to the Internet your logging PC can set it right to the second. Ordered by mode? Never... date and time are key to finding the confirming log entries and particularly for that occasional 'busted call. But I digress again.
7. Hm... here's one QSL in the envelope which is handwritten – must have been sent by a doctor as it's an indecipherable scrawl. Do I bin that one, then? Life's too short!
8. Hours of investigative effort have now passed and we are into the home straight for the current batch of cards – it's time to put the prepared 3B7C QSL cards into their envelopes and send them off. But ... the first envelope is too small and flimsy for the number of reply QSL cards that these incoming cards require. FSDXA is generous, so writing out a suitable envelope solves that problem. But there's more. This next envelope has no gum on the flap or ugh, it's horrible to lick and the paper edge is sharp – oh, now I have cut my lip. Must stop for a coffee to recover and disinfect my wound.
9. So, we now have the cards in return envelopes and they are sealed. What's next? Stamps. My trusty scales and the post office leaflet determine the weight band and worldwide postal rate. However, some envelopes bear UK stamps already – but they are frequently under-stamped. Luckily I have a range of small denomination UK stamps to top them up, but needless to say all this additional effort takes takes yet more time.
10. Is that about it, then? Well, I need to check that the recipient country is written on the bottom of the envelope address, need to apply a return address for me as the sender and to ensure that there is an air mail sticker affixed to the return envelope for outside of Europe. The return address is my address, that is, and is not the one sometimes written onto the top left-hand corner of the envelope by the sender, which often reflects either the original sender's address or that of the QSL co-ordinator, the central QSL manager recipient.
11. Done? Not quite. The post office returned an outgoing envelope to me the next day as the sender... because they had confused the 'From' address with the 'To' address written on by the recipient. Well it did happen today, but I guess that one should not happen too often!

### **What can we learn from all this?**

Your objective must be to make QSL managers' tasks as straightforward as possible. So the principle should be to keep it simple and make everything quite clear. It may seem academic, but it is not. Here are a few suggestions based on my 3B7C QSLing experience to date.

1. Source good stationery. Lightweight airmail envelopes with 'peel and seal' adhesive reduce waste and postage costs out and back. Print your own identical return address labels (including your country name) with the help of the Avery label wizard (an add-on to MS Word, see [www.avery.co.uk/uk1/downloads/wizzard.jsp](http://www.avery.co.uk/uk1/downloads/wizzard.jsp) and apply one to your return envelope. Put a 'From' mini-address label (use

Avery again) on your outgoing envelope. Place any 'green stamps' or IRCs in your return envelope and fold the envelope in two before placing it in your outgoing envelope. Note that self-seal (rather than peel and seal) envelopes do not self-seal for very long.

2. Review the DX station's QSL policy (eg on QRZ.com) and comply with any requests. Incoming QSLs are often not required, just a clearly printed log extract in date / time order, as with 3B7C. State time in UTC and frequency in MHz. Include reference to mode like SSB, CW, RTTY and not A3j, A1a or similar.
3. If you want to - or need to - send your QSL card, then print your card or card label directly from your logging programme. Alternatively generate a neat label by input into the Avery Wizard or manually print the details neatly onto your QSL.
4. Don't guess the return postage amount and then stick foreign stamps on your return envelope. Return postage rates by country are available on the Web. Or just enclose adequate USD or one IRC if only one card is likely to be returned. Send 2 USD as a minimum outside of Europe, more if you expect three or more return cards. 1 USD (or more) together with 1 IRC will probably be well received worldwide.
5. Don't gang up with others to save money – it makes the QSL manager's job more complicated as he will likely print his labels in alphabetical order and then have to

manually re-sort them to match just one return envelope. He may well even just answer all via the Bureau regardless, although FSDXA's policy is to out sort each one and reply together.

6. Write your callsign and your donation (green stamp value / IRC) on the lip of your return envelope – where the flap will stick down when applied. Weigh them, stamp your outgoing envelope adequately and post it. And then be very patient! Many DX stations are only home from time to time and QSL irregularly, although DX stations' QSL managers may be more prompt in their reply.

## Conclusion

I hope that this helps and maybe has caused you a wry little smile! Hopefully you recognised some of your own best practice and maybe picked up a small detail or two that will make a difference to your future QSL return rate. Hope to see you further down the log and pse QSL!

73 Gordon, G3USR

PS: Neville asked me to also highlight the following in relation to 3B7C:

- Do not send obsolete IRCs - they are a waste of time.
- Do not use the 3B9C PO Box 73 address for 3B7C cards (55 to date!)
- Do not use Neville's old Hemel Hempstead address. He left this four years ago. (25 to date!)
- Cards to PO Box 73 and to Hemel will be answered... eventually.
- Do not send cards to G4NUG (4 to date!)

# The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

By the time you read this Christmas will be done and gone, and just a hazy memory. I hope you managed some new DX over the holiday period.

The last couple of months of 2007 exhibited some really poor solar figures, making DXing very difficult, although there were some nice ones to be had. At the time of writing the solar disc had been pretty much spotless for a long period of time and was close to the record. For me, this made the higher bands almost useless, and even in some of the contests there were only a few contacts made on 10m.

It is some months since I made a 12m contact on RTTY, but I keep listening, just in case there is a short opening.

17m has produced some new band-slots for me, which was pleasing, but there was no sensational DX to boast of.

I missed Jan DJ8NK as VK9CCC on Cocos Island on 17m. I could barely hear him, and deep QSB made the chance of a contact almost impossible. I actually worked GM on 17m for a new band-slot, and added CT3 and ZP6 as well, so it wasn't all doom and gloom. GM isn't that easy on 17m, but I first worked Andrew, GMØUDL, who had a huge signal here, then Cris, GM4FAM, called in, and a few days later I added MMØMWW/P in Shetland.

30m has been another interesting band to use and there has been some good DX to work. I was very pleased to log Tom, GM4FDM, as V8FDM on this band, as this was a new band-slot for me, and the first time I had heard a V8 since my last (and first!) QSO with V8, which was way back in 1995. I also worked 9M2CNC, EK8SK and TF3PPN on RTTY.

There are many times when there are no RTTY signals on this band, and rather than change bands, why not call CQ? It is amazing just how much will turn up after a few CQs. Towards the end of November I had a listen around and heard an S5 calling CQ. He was worked by a couple of JAs, who then QSYed and called CQ, then a ZL joined in, and after just 5 minutes there were around a dozen QSOs going on.

I still need JA on 30m and, despite hearing them on numerous occasions, the pile-ups are just too great, and if you don't get in quick the pile-ups just get very messy.

Messy pile-ups are a real nuisance, and most often caused by folk just not listening to what is going on. How many times have you heard a station calling the DX when the DX is actually transmitting? It happens way too often, and after that folk start to call over and over, and will call again if some other station is calling when they go back to receive.

Working split is one answer, but on 30m and 40m it isn't always practical to do this. Most of the time, it pays to just sit and listen to how they work. Do they always work the last station that called, do they work the first, do they get a list? Sometimes it can pay to send just your call sign, and just once only. If you time that right, they will get you in the clear and work you. Spending 15 or 20 minutes just listening can be very useful and give you a real insight as to how they are working.

Watching the Cluster can also be helpful, as you may spot trends in what they are working. Try doing a search for their call sign and see what times and bands they were worked from G. If you don't get them today, there may be a chance tomorrow!

In the last issue I mentioned working 5L2MS on 10m and 20m. I have since found out that I worked a pirate. This is most annoying, as the contacts did seem genuine, and the heading was right. I had copied them on 10m for a while, mainly to work out the split and pattern of operation, and I watched the signal build slowly. The contact did seem fine at the time, and as I have MMTTY set to record all screen text, I had a nice list of those worked before and after me.

Shortly after I worked them on 10m I saw them say they were going to QSY to 20m RTTY, and I followed and worked them quite quickly. Again, I had a list of those worked before and after. A few days later I still didn't appear in the online log, but there were notes to the effect that the log wasn't complete, so I wasn't too worried.

Once the operation was over I e-mailed them and asked about my contacts. I was told that they stopped operating on 10m about 30 minutes before my contact, and that they did no 20m RTTY on that day. Most disappointing, as this would have been a new one for me. To make up for that, I have managed to work C91R on 15 and 20m, a new country for me, and two bands to boot! It is amazing how the number of entrants in RTTY contests is continuing to grow. There were a lot of new calls in the

WAEDC RTTY, and many of them gave QTCs a good try. It was also apparent that a lot of folk had tried to get to grips with QTC traffic for the first time, and how to handle them. Usually there are quite a few who send SRI NO QTC, but this time I only saw that a couple of times. There was a lot of help on the various reflectors for handling QTC traffic with the various contest programs, and maybe this helped. Until the latter stages of the contest I had more QTCs than QSOs. The final hours on the lower bands meant fewer DX stations to exchange with, so I just added to the total QSO count. I do not usually CQ on 80m, as I only have a very low inverted-L, but on the Sunday evening, I heard an OE working S & P, and he was a mult for me, so I called CQ, hoping he might work me. A DL spotted me shortly after, and this opened the floodgates! I had a huge pile-up, and there were so many calling, it actually slowed me down. Despite that, I still maintained a good overall rate for almost 2 hours. Oddly enough, the UA9s were far stronger on 80m than the UA3s, so I did manage to grab a few more QTCs before I decided to quit.

The results of the DL-DX RTTY contest have been released, and there are a few Gs in the listings (I have listed the first five in each category, and then the Gs' placings):

**Class A            Single op, all band, full time (158 logs)**

Position	Callsign	QSOs	Points
1	9A5W	1054	3098493
2	RD3A	1081	2830789
3	RK3DZB	832	1795024
4	IICOB	783	1491765
5	USØMM	727	1488970
24	GUØSUP	344	423934
36	GØHDV	279	246717
48	G4DBX	236	194545
60	GW6GW	274	156768
92	MMØCBL	136	71712
129	GWØETF	56	20842

**Class B Single op, all band, 6 hours only (107 logs)**

Position	Callsign	QSOs	Points
1	CN8KD	303	517810
2	PY2NY	268	442385
3	S51MA	269	378350
4	OH2LU	307	354858
5	RN3ZC	311	325871
10	GØMTN	273	273480
21	MWØCRI	213	166428
80	GMØKWW	58	20213
99	MMØDHQ	33	4797

**Class C Single op, all band, limited antennas, full-time (123 logs)**

1	YZ1DZ	748	1359934
2	DJ6BQ	619	1186192
3	SP6OJG	554	1021086
4	OK1WCF	498	851620
5	HI3T	578	825550
24	EI3GC	315	345135
94	G7OGX	73	29024
95	G8UYD	86	27376

**Class D Single op, all band, limited antennas, 6 hours only (80 logs)**

1	IZØEHL	211	210273
2	UT2AU	209	189702
3	TF3KX	182	178699
4	GM8OEG	203	173775
5	ON8RH	206	168984
10	G3RSD	158	113190
27	G4ZOB	112	60384
76	G4OGB	20	2574
78	G6CSY	13	1480

**Class E Multi op, all band, full time No Gs at all.**

Well done to all the Gs of various flavours who took part. The above also goes to show that short-duration contests are very popular, and not just with Gs. BARTG contests also have a short-duration section, so have a go at those as well. It's a pity that some of the other major contests don't adopt a 'part-time' category, as I am sure this would be of interest to many. The 'limited antennas' section is also interesting, as it means those with wires don't have to

compete against those with huge beams, but I guess there are some with huge wire arrays!

QSL info: V8FDM via GM4FDM, EK8SK via SP9ERV

That's it for this time. I wish you all a very Happy New Year and good DX for 2008.

73 de Phil GUØSUP

# Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

## Radio-Sport.net and WRTC

I remember having a look at Jamie/NS3T's radio-sport.net website when it was first launched. To start with I didn't really appreciate the intention of the site and thought that it mostly contained copies of contesting news already available from several other sources. However, the interview-style commentary, and Jamie's sports report narration, really sets it apart from other contesting websites. Over time it has grown into a useful record, with many articles to read. It's got a very positive vibe which is a great advertisement for radio contesting, and I'm now a frequent visitor. It certainly emphasises the 'sport' element of radio sport.

Also, there is a great sub-section of the site devoted to WRTC. When qualifying event results come out, analysis is presented showing the changes in the lead when describing the leader board positions for those precious few places at WRTC 2010. For many, a highlight of the site is that the results of the contests have been scored according to the WRTC rules, and every potential WRTC competitor can see their place in the standings by downloading a spreadsheet from the website without needing to do any calculations themselves.

As I write this, qualifying group EU1, which contains the UK, has Matt, IZ3EYZ, in first place, Fil, CT1ILT, in second, with three French operators making up the Top 5. It's interesting that both Matt and Fil are relatively young contesters. The Top UK placing so far is by Dave, G4BUO, in 14<sup>th</sup> place. There's still plenty of time for changes, with many events left in the qualification period. But with only four team leader slots available in our European group, it's certainly not going to be easy getting to Russia as a competitor.

See [www.radio-sport.net](http://www.radio-sport.net) and [wrtc.radio-sport.net](http://wrtc.radio-sport.net) for more details.

## CQ WW: where are those multipliers?

Last year I entered the All-band Assisted category in both the CQ WW SSB and CW contests. For the previous few years I'd entered the low power or high power all-band categories. A common frustration after those earlier contests was discovering my relative lack of multipliers worked in relation to many other people. With an Assisted entry, I could at least get an idea of what I was missing, and when.

As it turned out, in the SSB contest I felt that most of the 'missing' multipliers that were spotted on the DX Cluster I simply couldn't hear, ie maybe some station improvements would be more important than operator improvements and I could stop feeling quite so bad about my scores. It felt good to have a bandmap near the end of the contest, which showed mostly worked callsigns and multipliers – there were always going to be some gotaways of course.

In the CW contest it was a different story. There were plenty of audible multipliers left unworked on several bands, but the size of the pile-ups they generated was off-putting. OK, it's fine to lose a few minutes if you do get extra multipliers in compensation. The trouble comes when you spend time calling multipliers that is eventually fruitless. I tried not to get too distracted by the multipliers and instead often returned to them several times hoping to find it easier. We all often read post-contest stories about operators who found a rare multiplier 'begging for QSOs' or with no callers. I think I finally got 3X5A in the log on 40m after my fourth session of calling them. At about five minutes to midnight on Sunday night the

pile-up was just starting to thin out a little bit. Avoiding the Cluster-generated pile-ups will help. Seeing the callsign of a station you're in the middle of calling spotted on the Cluster really focuses the mind on trying to work them in the next five seconds before the screaming hordes descend!

Many operators have called the Assisted category the Distracted category. It seems to be accepted that for success your operating style should not change from that of a normal Single Operator station – finding your own multipliers, and working as many stations as you would have done otherwise as an unassisted station are still required. Extra multipliers found by the DX Cluster should not be traded for time making QSOs. Whilst I don't have the skills or the station to put this advice to good effect, one unexpected side-effect of a stream of Cluster spots was saving time when tuning past stations I'd already worked. I know not to place too much trust in the Cluster spot without verifying it with my own ears, but the combination of a spot, a partial callsign I'd heard myself, its signal strength and associated pile-up can be weighed up in an instant. I knew at that moment whether to carry on spinning the dial or call them. Without the Cluster spot I'd need to wait a few seconds more for the station to call CQ again and for me to capture their full callsign. The Cluster spot was one of several information sources that helped me make a decision about what to do. In the latter stages of the contest, where every four out of five stations tuned across may have been worked already, it's really beneficial to be able to tune quickly and confidently through the band, without missing new stations.

Comparing notes with some friends across the world operating from big stations, I was trying to work out where they found their multipliers. For every kilowatt and yagi DXpedition station, there is quite likely to be a '50 watts and a wire' expedition, traveller, or permanent station from some rare location. Even with a rare callsign, they may not be calling CQ. So having a big

signal when calling CQ will certainly help attracting the DX. It was frustrating trying to Search and Pounce to collect multipliers when my friends who were running were able to work multipliers at a faster pace without the extra effort of tuning the band. In conclusion, some multipliers I obviously need to hunt for, but other multipliers it seems I might *only* work when calling CQ. An example of this was when I was calling CQ in the recent 9A CW contest just after midday on 40m, trying to work some Europeans, when a JA station calls me. I was running just 100W to my window, and there was simply no way I was going to find another one.

With us in the very depths of the Cycle 23 / 24 abyss, even the usual CQ WW propagation magic failed to deliver on all counts. Many people were struggling to find vital 3-point QSOs, and propagation on 15m and 10m often patchy. A pleasant 10m opening to Europe in the SSB contest was sadly not to be repeated for the CW event. As to be expected, overall there was some very high band occupancy in the 20m and 40m bands, with activity stretching far beyond the normal CW segments in the CW contest, but SSB transgression only really being a problem on 40m in the October phone event. As band conditions change with the arrival of some Cycle 24 sunspots more of this traffic will move up onto 15m and 10m. With some new sunspots just sighted, maybe next year will give us better propagation to enjoy.

## **CQ WW and Split Operation**

Whilst talking about contest pile-ups, one technique that was in greater use than ever this year was that of operating split in the CW contest. The standard split when operating a CW DXpedition is about 2 kHz up. This is so common you could name a book about this split. In a contest, with almost guaranteed contest traffic immediately adjacent, it can be a little confusing working out where you're meant to call. Calling on one side of the audible

passband is one thing – resulting in a slightly wide single run frequency. If a true split operation is taking place in a contest, this might be 500 Hz to 2 kHz away – generally closer than during DXpedition operating, of course to minimise the used bandwidth. Not many of these stations operating split gave an indication of how far ‘up’ they were listening. This would have lengthened the CQ call, and perhaps concentrated the pile-up to the disadvantage of the operator. Still, whilst there isn’t a standard yet, it may have been a little confusing for some.

In at least one instance split operation occurred where the DX contest station was listening above another contester who was operating simplex in the middle. The contester ‘in the middle’ would presumably occasionally get clobbered by someone trying to work out where to transmit to work the station operating split. This is especially so if the callers to the split station were only listening to their receive frequency. The extreme example of split operation last year

was S79UU on 80m, using 3.700 and 3.530 MHz as transmit and receive frequencies. A worthy multiplier (or double multiplier) for those who worked out what was going on.

If this split operation method works and gives an improved rate, then I can’t criticise it. But I think it should only be necessary for very rare and/or weak signal stations relative to their callers. Extra care will be needed not to disrupt other contest activity, and during CQ WW bandwidth is a very limited resource.

### Endpiece

I haven’t received any feedback so far about the ideas and suggestions for a Contest University UK at next year’s HF Convention that was mentioned last time. Remember, you can reach me at [contests@cdxc.org.uk](mailto:contests@cdxc.org.uk), or via paper mail or telephone from the details given at the front of the *Digest*. Operators are standing by...

73 Lee, GØMTN

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## The RACAL RA17

**Introduction by Ken Cheetham, G4RWD**      *ken@g4rwd.demon.co.uk*

Hi Martyn,

I thought that you may like the following (light-hearted) article for inclusion in CDXC *Digest*. I was given this many years ago by a former work colleague at what was then CSO Cheadle in Staffordshire; one of GCHQ’s HF sites until its closure in 1995.

I have no idea as to the origin of this article - it is rumoured to have originated at Bletchley Park, before GCHQ’s Central Training School re-located to Taunton in the late 1980s (also since closed). If anyone can confirm this, I would love to know. When I joined GCHQ the

RA17 had not long been replaced by the brand-new solid state RA1792, which by the way, is still in limited use to this day.

Little did I know then that I would end up doing a 7-year stint as a Training Officer at both Garat’s Hay, near Loughborough, and Chicksands in Bedfordshire. If you were on one of my courses during this period (1996-2003), then you would have been given a copy of this as a matter of routine. Several years later I saw it re-appear in a station circular at GCHQ Scarborough: such is its notoriety! Incidentally, the article is reproduced as per the original, those are not my spelling mistakes.

## The RACAL RA17 – an appreciation

The RACAL RA17 is a sort of biggish wireless set. The biggest bit is around the outside and is called the case. The front end is big too and is a sort of greyish colour. On the front are lots of black twiddly things that you can turn round and make things happen. Two of these, called ‘knobs’, are bigger than the others and by turning one round you can change the station and if you turn the other round you can cut everything out if you turn it between the black blobs.

There is a long, brightly lit thing up the top of the front with lots of numbers on it that you can whizz around fast with one of the other big knobs. Inside the RA17 there are lots of metal bits and coloured things. There are also glass things like bulbs that go ‘poinggg’ when you tap them gently with a rubber mallet. When you whizz some of the knobs round on the front, sometimes some of the things inside move. Some of the stuff inside does not move, however. An exciting experiment with the RA17 is to whizz the big knob round and round until you get to a big ‘STOP’ sign. Whizz it round once more very fast and you will hear a sort of ripping noise and the scale will disappear. You may also smell burnt celluloid caused by the scale melting on the dial lamps. This is known as ‘Scale Cramping’ and is better than on the TRF wireless, which has a 100 hearts crystal and used to be called a crystal set in the old days.

The RA17 is very convenient because it runs off mains or in the case of hand portable operation, a 230 volt AC battery. If you attempt to run it off more than 500 volts it blows up. This is known as ‘Volatile’. Running round the outside of the inside of the case are long bits of wire which are kind of joined together. These are known as ‘Wadley Loops’ and the set may be tied on the bench with these – thus increasing what us experts call ‘Stability’. There are lots of other stuff you can get on the RA17 like ‘Cross-distortion’, ‘phase comparison’ and ‘Imagination’, but, as you may have

guessed, most of it is unnecessary and superfluous. The main thing is to remember to set the BFO to minus in order to nullify the temperature inversion caused by the aquadag coating on the sync amp. This may sound technical, but, in fact, it is easy. To trace a signal through the receiver is simplicity itself. It is so easy in fact that I will not dwell on it. Sufficient to say that magnetic waves floating in the ether are picked up by the aerial and transmitted in audible sounds by a box with a triangle in it called a ‘demodulator’. Some people may call this a logic gate.

Some more stuff in the RA17 is superfluous. For example, there are two so-called, VFOs – only one of which is used at a time. Therefore, the other is not necessary. Removing the VFO2 makes the set very quiet thus drastically improving an important factor called ‘noise factor’. You may listen to the RA17 on headphones, or, if these are not available, the receiver may be firmly clamped to each ear drum. The technical term for this mode of reception is ‘mutual inductance’ or, to coin a phrase, ‘Inter-polarity reception’. You may well ask what will happen if VFO1 drifts outside the pass-band of Band pass Filter No. 2 – and this is a question you are entitled to ask.

Summing up, the RA17 is better than some wireless sets and not so good as others. It is a legend before its time and is good for getting stuff on. It is very heavy and hot and would therefore make a nice warm door-stop.

### ***Tutor’s comment:***

*This student has a very basic and simple command of technical English, a skill he no doubt inherited from his father – Stanley Unwin – famous for his lecture on the NOISOPHERE and its effect on RADIO WAFERS. This student should go far, and, hopefully, will not return.*

## Fundraising through Amateur Radio

Terry Robinson, GM3WUX

[terry@describe-online.com](mailto:terry@describe-online.com)

For some years now I've been seeking charitable sponsorship for my entries in the CQ WW CW contest. Not only does this yield an excellent sense of fulfilment as the contest progresses, but it cements the idea in the minds of others that I'm not to be interrupted for anything other than refreshments, natural breaks and the obligatory rest periods that are enforced for single operators in these events.

This year, as previously, I'm seeking sponsorship for the British Computer Association of the Blind's (BCAB) EyeT4All initiative.

The BCAB is a self-help association of vision-impaired people with an active interest in computing and the Information Society. We were originally all computer and otherwise IT professionals, but as more and more people have been drawn into computer usage, we've had to embrace the whole range of IT and even ICT interest.

To this end we believe that everyone, including the blind and vision-impaired, have equal rights to access computers and

the Information Society. For more details, please visit [www.bcab.org.uk](http://www.bcab.org.uk).

Our EyeT4All project aims to enrol as many blind/vision-impaired people as possible in the use of computers, through awareness days and training. Awareness days are designed to show everyone concerned that access to computers is possible and affordable. This message is reinforced through simple exercises in letter writing, e-mail and Web browsing.

Although we have received grants from the Big Lottery and HBOS, we still need to raise a significant portion of the necessary funding through our own charitable efforts. To date we've raised significant funding through the sale of our CDs ('Guide Cats for the Blind', 'The Missing Persians File' and 'Top Cat, White Tie and Tails'), although we still need to keep the funds coming in.

You could help us, albeit after the event, by sponsoring my efforts in last year's contest, for which I'm claiming 2103 QSOs with a claimed score of 946825 points. Please visit my fund-raising page, to be found at [www.justgiving.com/cqww](http://www.justgiving.com/cqww).

73, Terry

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## E-mail to the Editor

**from 'a source close to RSGB HQ'**

Dear Martyn,

I wonder if you are aware of the following: January's *RadCom* says that the RSGB are moving (in March?).

What it doesn't say is that they are NOT taking the QSL Bureau with them; indeed I

hear that there is no room for the Bureau in their proposed tiny new premises.

The Bureau's paid staff (and many others) are being made redundant and RSGB will try to outsource it somewhere. People with special QSL arrangements will be left out in the cold. There's no doubt that losing all the accumulated knowledge of the existing QSL Bureau staff at HQ will be a great loss.

## Not the GB2RS News

- DXpedition funding under scrutiny again
- Special event stations resist the Euro trend
- Anti-amnesia tablets to be issued to persistent repeat callers

DXpedition funding is increasingly coming under scrutiny with a view to weeding out those applicants who are merely applying for such financial support with a view to funding their little radio holiday in the sun – a holiday they'll be going on anyway and which they can easily afford themselves – regardless of whether they get any additional funding or not.

In the wake of Cyprus and special event station C4EURO, celebrating the switch to the Euro right the way through until the end of the year, other countries in the non-Euro zone will be putting on special event stations during 2008 to help resist the unrelenting spread of the Euro and celebrate the proud retention of their own local currency. For example, listen out for Mongolia and JV2008TUGRIK, Norway and LA2008KRONE, Guatemala and TG2008QUETZAL.

Anti-amnesia tablets are to be issued to those of our number who have already worked that juicy DX station once, then insist on calling him/her again a mere hour or so later on exactly the same band/mode.

Legislation is just around the corner, designed to bring an end to a problem frequently suffered by some DX stations: that of being called in a pile-up by very loud European stations who then, once the contact has been made, QSY a mere 1 kHz up and start calling CQ there, thus virtually

clobbering the original pile-up. An occasional problem, especially on 20m CW.

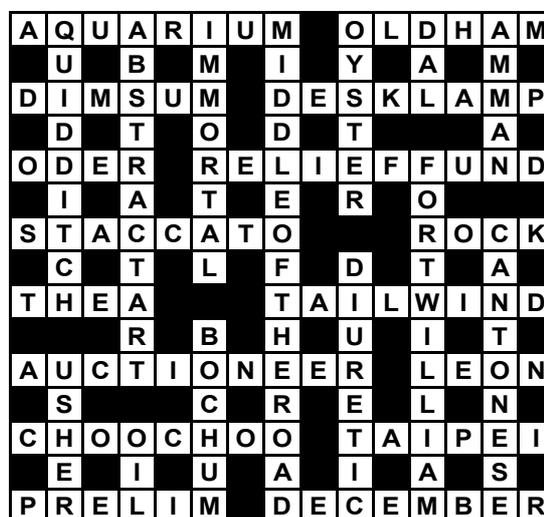
HF Contest News.

Coming up next weekend for the full 48 hours which next weekend will have to offer: the Reverse Normal Prefix Contest. For example, stations in A9 [Bahrain] contact those in 9A [Croatia] and vice versa. Other obvious pairings include

AP – PA	Pakistan – Holland
BY – YB	China - Indonesia
FT – TF	Kerguelen – Iceland
LY – YL	Lithuania – Latvia
V3 – 3V	Belize – Tunisia

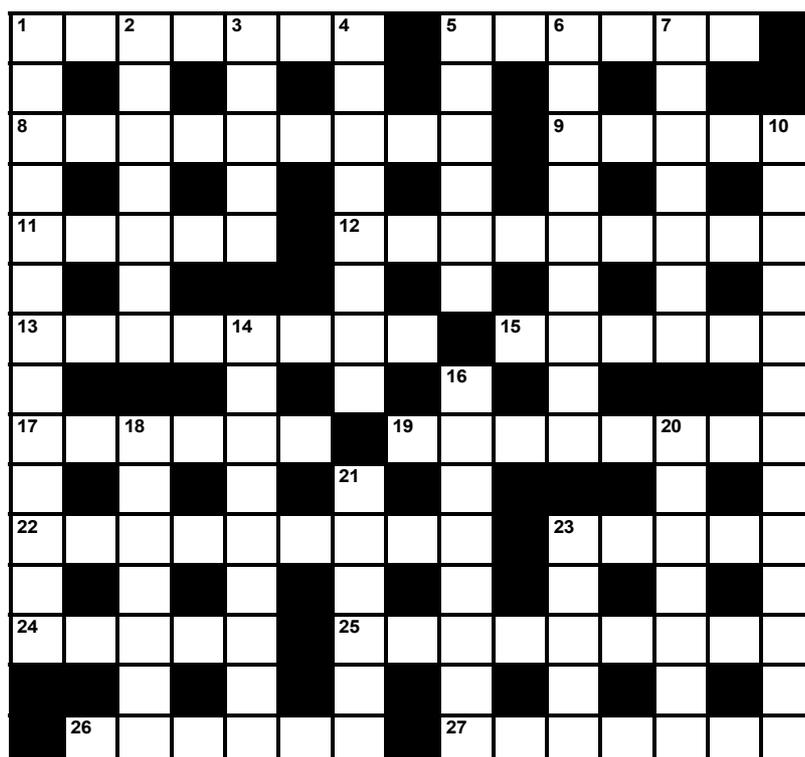
Complaints have already been received to the effect that this contest is highly unfair because it excludes so many other countries from taking part. In which case, it has been said, it'll be just like the highly enjoyable Commonwealth Contest (BERU) in which stations in Commonwealth countries can happily work each other, but all that others in Italy, say, the Balkans and Russia can do is sit on the sidelines for the duration and shut up for a change.

### Solution to Prize Crossword 25



## Digest Prize Crossword 26 *by RFX*

The winner of Prize Crossword 25, November 2007, and that legendary £10 note: Cyril Chapman, G2HDR, Westbury on Trym, Bristol.



### ACROSS

- 1 No tests concocted for this Cambridgeshire town (2,5)
- 5 Very large vehicles getting awards (6)
- 8 Whence a romance might develop that's no longer fashionable (3,2,4)
- 9 Prison dance in the West Indies (5)
- 11 Pilot makes a comeback in unusual air travel (5)
- 12 Supplying tools for joking on the Internet? (9)
- 13 Bird serving drink before retiring? (8)
- 15 As, for example... (6)
- 17 ... leaders of some irrational Zimbabwean zealots let everything burn (6)
- 19 Daily disagreement (8)
- 22 Tour Satan organised for patron of 4? (9)
- 23 Deal with Nauru, by the sound of it (3,2)
- 24 Rate career drug (5)
- 25 Unusual tea mug a la Mexican neighbour (9)
- 26 Bird which only hunts very large victims? (6)
- 27 Unseeing and not selfish at all, we hear? (7)

### DOWN

- 1 Meteors named after John Wayne or Cartier-Bresson, say? (8,5)
- 2 Love an unimportant person (7)
- 3 Refuse to give old dyke-builder the lead in Lohengrin (5)
- 4 Key watering hole on the Starship Enterprise? (5,3)
- 5 Competition at university to speak without restraint (4,2)
- 6 Communications device that's standard issue in American prisons? (9)
- 7 Stays for the leftovers (7)
- 10 Anatomists - or young church musicians? (5,8)
- 14 Unreasonable demand from lofty monks? (4,5)
- 16 Evidence of dangerous creature in famous row (4,4)
- 18 Spot the woman's instruments (7)
- 20 Adolescent regularly displayed in *The Beano* as geek (7)
- 21 Surrealist chap whose favourite colour was brown? (6)
- 23 Scandinavian vegetable (5)

Deadline for entries: 20 February

# DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

(thanks to the 425 DX News for most of this)

till 20/01	3D2AG: Rotuma (OC-060)
till 26/01	EA8/ON5JV and EA8/ON6AK: Tenerife (AF-004)
till 03/02	UN/4J9M: Kazakhstan
till 14/02	3YØE: Bouvet Island (AN-002)
till 14/03	II9CAR: special event station
till April	VQ9JC: Diego Garcia (AF-006)
till April	ZD7X: St. Helena (AF-022)
till May	V73RY: Kwajalein (OC-028)
till 15/05	YI9MI: Iraq
till 30/06	VR1Ø: special prefix (Hong Kong)
till August	C91R: Mozambique
till 30/09	9A73AA: special callsign
till November	YE2IPY: special callsign
till December	HFØPOL: Henryk Arctowski Station (South Shetlands)
till ??	DPØGVN: Neumayer Base (Antarctica)
till ??	LU1ZA: South Orkneys (AN-008)
till ??	R1ANR: 'Blue One Runway' (Antarctica)
Dec-Feb	OJ1ABOA: Aboa Station (Antarctica)
08/01-26/01	HI: Dominican Republic by IZ5JNQ
09/01-22/01	FO: Marquesas Isls (OC-027) by OHs
13/01-27/01	YS3/I2JIN: El Salvador
14/01-26/01	EA8/OZ7FOC: Canary Islands (AF-004)
18/01-28/01	VI2BMARC5Ø: special event station (Australia)
19/01-25/01	F5RMY/P: Porquerolles Island (EU-070)
21/01-31/01	VK7AAP and VK7CLA: Tasmania (OC-006)
26/01-09/02	TM4A: special event call (France)
27/01-28/02	VP8DIF: South Georgia (AN-007)
Jan-Feb	ZS7BYRD: SANAE IV (Antarctica)
01/02-08/02	PW2M: Moela Island (SA-071)
02/02-03/01	KH2/JAØSC: Guam (OC-026)
06/02-15/02	TI9K: Isla del Coco (NA-012)
06/02-11/02	ZF2XD: Cayman Islands (NA-016)
10/02-28/02	VP6DX: Ducie Island (OC-182)
13/02-23/02	CN2XW: Morocco
16/02-02/03	TM1R: special event call (France)
22/02-29/02	8R1PW: Guyana
28/02-07/03	V4: St. Kitts (NA-104) by W1USN, AA1M, W1SSR

15/03-23/03	HQ8R: Swan Island (NA-035)
22/03-30/03	9MØ: Spratly Islands (AS-051) by N1UR and KB1PQN
29/03-12/04	TM2I: special event call (France)
March	TX5C: Clipperton Atoll (NA-011)
24/05-07/06	TM7S: special event call (France)
11/06-23/06	FH/DK7LX: Mayotte (AF-027)

## **The first Bath Buildathon – press release**

**Steve Hartley, GØFUW**

Have you ever wanted to have a go at homebrewing your own transceiver? Studying for the Intermediate licence exam and don't know what project to build? Then here is the event for you!

The first Bath Buildathon will be held in January 2008 to encourage newcomers to have a go at homebrewing. The Buildathon will allow those with limited soldering experience to develop their skills under the watchful eye of some very experienced homebrewers (Elmers). These events are popular in the States, but this is thought to be one of the first in the UK.

The kit chosen for the Bath Buildathon is the Brendon DSB Transceiver from Tim Walford's Somerset range of kits. The 3W QRP transceiver has been specifically designed for the newcomer, so you can be confident that you will go home with a working 80m voice transceiver.

The Buildathon will take place in Bath on Saturday, 26 January, and is planned to run from 0900 to 1700. All soldering and test equipment will be made available on the day and refreshments will be provided. All you need to bring is a bucket full of enthusiasm and a packed lunch. The cost of the day will be £60, to include the cost of the kit, refreshments, room hire etc.

The event is open to anyone who would like to try out homebrewing for the first time. So whether you are studying for your Intermediate exam, or you have held a full licence for years, but never raised any solder smoke in anger, this is the event for you. Why not bring the family to see the Roman City of Bath while you build?

If you are interested in joining in the fun, please contact Steve Hartley, GØFUW, on (01225) 464394 (7 - 9pm weekdays), or by e-mail to [GØFUW@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:GØFUW@tiscali.co.uk). Places will be limited to ensure that everyone gets good mentoring from one of the local 'Elmers', so interested parties are advised to book early.

### **Notes:**

Steve Hartley, GØFUW, has been running amateur radio classes in Bath for over 10 years and is a keen QRP homebrew enthusiast. Other groups have run one-day workshops to introduce newcomers to microwave and satellite operation; this is intended to fit the bill for building your own radio equipment. Tim Walford's range of amateur radio kits includes transceivers, various accessories and test equipment. Further detail can be found at [www.walfordelectronics.co.uk](http://www.walfordelectronics.co.uk). Steve can be contacted at the phone number and e-mail addresses given above or by post at 5 Sydenham Buildings, Bath BA2 3BS.





