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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

Don, G3XTT, might no longer be the Editor of the Digest, but he still seems to write half of it. Thanks, Don! You'll find his regular *DX an' all that* column on page 12. Here we gather that he recently notched up the grand total of 100,000 QSOs – and that's just under the home call. There's an interesting analysis of all this. Don also contributes more on 3B9C and IOTA 2004 – not to mention the latest *DX & Event Calendar*, this time on pages 60-61.

Yes, a 68-page Digest. In fact with so much interesting material finding its way into the Editorial inbox it could have easily been an 80-page one. But then if you go much beyond 68 pages in the current format, it becomes quite difficult to staple it all together. So I had no alternative but to hold one or two items over for next time. This includes a contribution by Dave/MMØEAX and friends on their highly successful IOTA expedition to Grimbister Island in the Orkneys. Sorry, guys! Believe me, though, we will have that to look forward to in the September Digest.

We're certainly spoilt for DX-pedition reports this time. Quite apart from the radio, what always fascinates me about these trips to exotic places are the insights you gain into the locals and the locations themselves. Not to mention the trials and tribulations often associated with getting there (and back) in the first place. But then these days us Brits probably get more practice at this sort of thing than most, especially those of us who regularly travel on the UK's national railway network.

Be that very much as it may, on page 19 Tom, GM4FDM, tells us all about 'T33C – An

Expedition to the End of the World'. One of the en route uncertainty factors here: the good ship 'Te Taobe', described as '5 million floating rivets held together by rust'. Rivetting stuff indeed!

We also have a very generous double helping of V8/Brunei courtesy of Phil, G3SWH, on the one hand and Derek, G3KHZ, on the other. In fact with Derek it's 9M8 as well.

There's a report by Rich, M5RIC, on non-IOTA Malawi and 7Q7MM. Ric, DL2VFR, fills us in on his trip to the frozen north and OX ["Brrr!"], in the company of Frank, DL2SWW. David, MØCNP, tells us about his not entirely straightforward mini-DX-pedition to VP9 - while Martin, G3ZAY, concentrates on 'A Memorable QSO' with VP8 back in 1982.

It's the CDXC AGM and Summer Social coming up on 17 July, of course. This Digest should reach you in good time for that. And it's important that it does, seeing as on page 9 we have the official AGM notice, followed by the 2003-04 Accounts. Hopefully you won't need a magnifying glass to read those. OK, so the Accounts might not be as rivetting as a trip to Banaba aboard the 'Te Taobe', but they're important too – and all painstakingly put together by Treasurer Nigel, G3TXF.

See you on the 17th.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

www.btinternet.com/~g3rfx

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

This month we seem to be well and truly into what is known in journalistic circles as 'the silly season'. Apart from a few holiday operations from various islands, little seems to be happening on the HF bands and we have had only a few Sporadic E openings on 6m to keep the cobwebs out of the 'magic band' rigs. Sadly, this is likely to become the norm for the next few years as the solar cycle continues its downward trend.

Nevertheless, there is always something to keep us occupied. For a start, the two CDXC challenges are developing well. The IOTA 2004 table is well supported with over 40 participants, of which the leaders have very good scores in excess of 400 points, or, in one extreme case, over 500. There are obviously many more stations active in this programme, but it may be that some have become confused with the Euro 2004 activity which seems to emanate largely from Portugal, for some unknown reason.

We also have 27 runners in the Kenwood stakes for the superb prize of the TS-480 transceiver. I am certainly looking nervously over my shoulder at the strong challenge from 'XTT. It looks as if the 6m scores will hold the key to this one. Does anyone have a good Es predictor program? Of course, there may be others with high scores who are too shy to declare themselves in the table and who will suddenly appear out of the woodwork at the end of the year.

Members will have recently received a notice about the AGM and Summer Social to be held at 12 noon on Saturday 17 July, at the QTH of Don Field, G3XTT. This is not only an opportunity to have a say in the running of the Club, (Treasurer Nigel, G3TXF, is presenting

the state of our finances elsewhere in this Digest) but also to enjoy a very good day out with a barbecue and fun for all the family. Yaesu UK have very generously donated an FT-817 as the major raffle prize again, so you could find the trip very worthwhile, even profitable. Other raffle prize donations would be very welcome, but no rubbish please! Either send to me or Don, XTT – or simply bring your donation along on the day. Either way, do come along and mingle. President Neville has kindly agreed to arrange the transfer of some Further Felden weather as in previous years.

Talking of days out reminds me that CDXC has shown the flag at some very good events recently. We were at Kempton Park in April – sadly not a race day – and at the excellent Elvaston Castle rally on 13 June. In the near future we will attend the McMichael rally in Reading on 18 July – yes, the day after the Summer Social; there's commitment for you – and then the Donington (Leicester) event in September.

These events are not only enjoyable in that we get to meet many members who are otherwise only names in the database or voices on the air, but they are also valuable recruiting opportunities for us to spread the word and involve more people in our activities. We would very much like to increase these appearances, particularly in the further outposts of the country, so if you know of a suitable event, let us know in good time. If Committee members can't attend, we will try to whip up some support from members in the area concerned to put on a stand.

Finally, a last-minute reminder about nominations for this year's Local Heroes

Award. The Committee will be making a decision in July, so let's have any suggestions as soon as possible. For a check on the rules see the website.

That's it for now. I hope and expect to see you all at Don's place on 17 July. If you haven't yet checked in with Shaun, please do so to make sure that we order enough bangers and burgers to go round.



73 es gud DX John, G3LAS

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

To be off the air for a few months while we wait for our new home in Herefordshire to be finished is a little strange! Oh, how I miss those IOTA pile-ups! But there's plenty to do radio-wise with the 3B9C QSL-ing. More about that later.

The Elvaston Castle rally was fun and it was great to meet so many CDXC members there as well as quite a few joiners. This is a really pleasant rally in the middle of the Derbyshire countryside and well worth a visit with the family.

The AGM and Summer Social will soon be with us (Saturday, 17 July; the AGM starts at noon sharp). Yaesu UK have come up with a superb raffle prize yet again - an FT-817 - so do come along and buy a few raffle tickets. We are very grateful to Don and Janet Field for stepping into the breach and agreeing to host the social, thus filling the void left by

Yours Truly. If you have something to donate to the raffle, please bring it along.

Back to the 3B9C QSL-ing. We decided that we needed to develop an entirely new approach to QSL-ing for a major DX-pedition and, as a result John, G3WGV, developed StarQSL. This is working like a dream.

There are 12 of us in the QSL management team, all linked through the Internet. To quote John, G3WGV: "Managing the QSL cards for a DX-pedition of the size undertaken by FSDXA is an enormous task. We have learned from experience that one person simply cannot cope with the workload, but equally it is hard to maintain adequate control over the process if many people are involved. StarQSL is designed to overcome this problem by linking many QSL managers together, via StarServer. The result is that all managers, regardless of location, can see the entire QSL

process and can quickly and efficiently respond to QSL requests.”

One of the beauties of the system is the label printing. When there are enough labels to print, you just push the print button and the labels are printed by Word. I ran off about 1,000 labels yesterday and the system worked flawlessly.

So, we now have a real 21st Century system for QSL-ing! But what about the input, the incoming QSL cards? 19th Century maybe. 75% are fine, but why do the rest make such heavy weather of such a simple job. A few examples:

- Outgoing envelopes and IRCs or Dollars nested so that they are cut in half when the envelope is opened.
- Envelopes taped all over so that they are very difficult to open.
- Envelopes with no slot for opening – these seem popular in Japan.
- Oversized envelopes – expensive to post.
- Dollars placed in return envelopes – easy to miss.
- Dollars wrapped in carbon paper etc.

As for the return envelopes:

- Envelopes with no gum.
- Self-seal envelopes with no stick.
- Envelopes that are too small for a standard card.
- Envelopes with no country name – a favourite with the US.

- Stamped envelopes with incorrect postage or with foreign stamps.
- Air mail envelopes with only enough postage for surface mail.
- Labels only, no envelope.
- No callsign on envelope. (It's inevitable that the card and return envelope will get separated at some stage)

We also noticed multiple applications, sometimes one letter per QSO! I think the record so far is eight letters from one individual.

As for the QSL cards themselves, my pet hates are:

- A card per contact – some sent around 25 cards!
- Contacts not in chronological order.
- Copies of the web log without full QSO details.
- Illegible writing.
- Times not in UTC.
- And yes, unbelievable, no callsign on card – we've only had two of these already!

It really isn't that difficult, is it!

- Use a good quality envelope for incoming and outgoing mail. C6 is a good size. Use freshly gummed envelopes or peel and stick.

- Make sure the return envelope is addressed properly.
- Put the fold of the return envelope and of IRCs or Dollars at the bottom of the incoming envelope.
- From the 3B9C point of view, all we need is a list of contacts made in chronological order. We don't even need a QSL card.
- Put a callsign on the back of the return envelope. It can be under the flap if you're worried about postal theft.

So back to the next batch. Trish and I have opened and distributed around 6,000 envelopes so far. We are now past the peak of the directs, with only 100 envelopes being received each week on average. As I write, around 20,000 QSOs have been processed by StarQSL. Labels have been printed for most of these and many letters are already in the post.

Our thanks to Alex Newberry of Nevada for designing the 3B9C card. A formidable

challenge, given the number of sponsors and logos.

Finally, I should comment on the excellent service provided by Hertfordshire Display of Ware, which is run by John Watkins, G4VMR (g4vmr@hdprint.co.uk). They did a wonderful job in printing 50,000 cards and circulating these to the QSL manager team in just under two weeks. The only hiccup was when an Omega delivery van was hijacked and a box of cards went astray. Another first, I guess! We didn't realise that 3B9C cards were so valuable. Any idea of their street value?

My thanks to all the CDXC members who worked us and thanks to the many members for the contributions and positive comments about our DX-pedition. See you at the AGM and Summer Social.



73 Neville, G3NUG

For Sale

FT-1000MP, InRad mods, Filters 500/250Hz in Main and 500Hz in Sub.
Manual/technical overview/original packaging. £1000.

Antennas available in July:

HyGain TH5 Mk2, £100
Cushcraft 15-4CD 4-el 15m monobander, £100

Lots of lengths of aluminium tube, including 4 by 1/4 verticals from my old 4 square, etc.
Free to purchasers of any of the above. Buyers collect.

Bob Whelan, G3PJT. Tel (01223) 263137.

Secretary's Update Shaun Jarvis, MØBJL

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
GØRCI	Alan Gibson	Grantham
GØWSP	Philip Croft	Buxton
G1VDP	Chris Colclough	Nuneaton
G4BWP	Fred Handscombe	Bury St Edmunds
G8XTJ	John Fitzgerald	Great Missenden
MØDOL	Chris Darlington	Northampton
M3ZYZ	Charles Wilmott	Barnsley
MMØEAX	Dave Thomson	Orkney
MM1APX	Mark Simpson	Orkney
W4FCU	Larry Guenther	Richmond, VA

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

To promote HF operating, to encourage excellence, particularly in DX-ing and contest operating, through mutual assistance and by encouraging support of DX-peditions, 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\$30 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.cdx.org.uk>



Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 17 July 2004, at 1200

Venue: G3XTT, 105 Shiplake Bottom, Peppard Common, Henley-on-Thames RG9 5HJ

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of 2003 AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Election of New Committee
7. Election of Auditor
8. Any Other Business

CDXC Accounts 2003-2004

	£	£	£	£	£	
INCOME	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000	
Subscriptions	9,984	7,437	6,719	6,181	5,927	
Donations received	586	1,981	618	218	389	
Software Sales	0	0	0	0	23	
Advertising	808	100	675	253	1,147	
Misc Sales	191	172	267	363	375	
Raffles	688	443	401	380	20	
Bank Interest	19	18	22	19	0	
Dinner Ticket Sales	1,118	1,248	1,470	598	1,031	
Total Income	13,393	11,399	10,172	8,012	8,912	
EXPENDITURE						
Newsletter	5,183	4,541	3,639	3,343	2,832	
Postage	1,579	1,887	1,631	1,585	1,255	
RSGB/Licence	15	15	55	15	38	
Insurance	0	0	105	105	0	
Committee Expenses	84	118	160	358	175	
Trophies and Badges	346	182	149	214	612	
Expenses	660	532	643	390	39	
Bank Charges	0	3	8	15	0	
DX-pedition Funding	2,600	1,961	2,000	2,800	1,935	
Dinner	1,275	1,274	1,375	789	1,054	
Adv/Logo	0	0	364	117	0	
Website	105	0	0	0	0	
Marketing	1,518	534	927	0	0	
Total Expenditure	13,365	11,047	11,056	9,731	7,940	
Excess of income over expenditure	29	352	-884	-1,719	972	
BANK ACCOUNT STATEMENTS						
Current Account b/f	2,013	1,694	1,772	2,669	3,666	
Income	13,374	11,166	9,483	8,011	8,912	
Uncleared cheques	650	0	-700	700	-400	
Transfer from Deposit	0	0	5,580	1,000	0	
Transfer from US Dollar A/C	0	0	0	385	0	
Total	16,038	12,860	16,135	12,765	12,178	
Less expenditure	13,025	10,847	13,575	8,978	7,940	
Transfer to Deposit A/C	2,902	0	900	2,000	1,000	
Prior-Year Adj and Pre-payments	350	0	-34	15	481	
Cash Adjustment	-34	0	0	0	31	
US \$ and Euros Adjustment	360	0	0	0	58	
Current Account c/f	-565	2,013	1,694	1,772	2,668	
Deposit Account b/f	1,693	1,675	3,836	2,817	1,805	
Transfer to Current	0	0	-5,580	-1,000	0	
Other direct receipts	0	0	2,497	0	0	
Transfer from Current A/C	2,902	0	900	2,000	1,000	
Interest earned	19	18	22	19	13	
Deposit Account c/f	4,614	1,693	1,675	3,836	2,818	

BALANCE SHEET - ASSETS						
Current Account		-565	2,013	1,694	1,073	2,669
Deposit Account		4,614	1,693	1,675	3,836	2,817
Digest Float		500	500	500	500	500
Cash		0	34	34	0	31
US Dollar and Euro Cash		318	15	0	0	358
Accruals and Pre-payments		-433	0	0	0	0
Total Assets/Reserves		4,434	4,255	3,903	5,409	6,375
DXPEDITION FUNDING						
Operation	Location		Main Group	£		
3C0V	Annobón		DL's	300		
3B9C	Rodrigues		G's (FSDXA)	400		
7Q7MM	Malawi		G's	100		
9M2TO	CDXC Local Heroes Award			200		
FO/IT9YRE etc	FO/Australes		IT9's	150		
FO/G35WH	FO/Australes		G's	200		
HH - 4V200YH	Haiti		DL's	100		
OY Group	Faeroes		PA's	50		
T33C	Banaba		PA's	250		
TO4E	Europa		F's	300		
V8JIM	Brunei		G's	150		
XU7ACT-ACU	Cambodia		G's	150		
XZ7A	Burma		DL's	100		
ZK3SB	Tokelau		I's	250		
	Prior Year Refund			-100		
Total for Year 2003-04				2,600		

CDXC MEMBERSHIP

During the year, CDXC membership increased from 604 to 661

FINANCIAL PERIOD

This financial statement covers the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF, Treasurer CDXC

AUDITOR STATEMENT

In my opinion this Financial Statement is consistent with the accounts of CDXC for the financial year ended 31 March 2004

John Linford, G3WGV, Elected Auditor CDXC

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT g3xtt@lineone.net

I passed something of a milestone recently, when the G3XTT QSO total went above 100,000 some time during the weekend of the WPX CW contest. I suppose this isn't really a huge number, as it calculates out to be less than 3,000 QSOs a year, which is something I could have achieved with one serious contest effort a year. But, of course, what has actually happened is what happens to most of us. There are years when I have been pretty active and others, whether for family reasons or whatever, when G3XTT has rarely been heard. Of course, that number doesn't reflect probably as many QSOs again, made from many different contest and DXpedition stations, both in the UK and overseas. What I can say, though, is that all G3XTT QSOs have been made by G3XTT; it's never been shared with others for a multi-op contest, for example. So I found it quite interesting to look at the band-by-band breakdown:

160	21134
80	13926
40	14498
30	1311
20	18084
17	1543
15	13681
12	1217
10	13011
6	1302
4	120
2	1686

There are also a few hundred on 70cm, and some cross-band QSOs not included in those totals. What do they tell me? Well, I suppose the disparity between the main bands and the WARC bands is a result of my contesting

tendencies, and the dominance of 160m shows where my real enthusiasm lies. 10m tends to creep up during the sunspot maximum years, and then lies fairly dormant as we creep through the solar minimum. Of course, a single-band contest effort in one of the 'biggies' can quickly change the balance of QSOs quite significantly. Anyway, I found it interesting and you might like to compare the pattern with your own operating.

Recent Band Activity

I daresay no one will get too excited about the propagation we have enjoyed (probably not the right word!) over the past couple of months. There have been times when the bands have been very quiet indeed. But it hasn't all been bad news. For example, over the WPX CW weekend there was lots of Sporadic E around, with huge short-skip signals on 10m. 20m was open pretty much round the clock, with loud VK/ZL signals in the wee small hours, and 40m showed signs that it is enjoying the downturn in sunspots – I was still working across the Pond 90 minutes after sunrise, with the occasional Caribbean and ZL QSO thrown in for good measure. Even Topband came good. I'm told OC4WW (Peru) was a huge signal at one stage, and I heard a PY, although he couldn't hear me through his high noise level. G3ZES, an active 160m operator, has been spotting DX like 9V1GO and VK6HD almost as a matter of routine on the band. To me, the most remarkable signal has been from FO/ON4AXU, from the Australs and then the Marquesas. At times when there has been little or no other DX on the bands, Gerard has been a consistently good signal on 20m for several hours every morning, and relatively easy to work. According to his webpage

(www.qsl.net/on4axu) he has three transceivers, two 500W linears and two laptops with him, which is pretty impressive. Antennas are verticals and dipoles. Presumably he has also been at pains to find good operating locations, close to salt water. By the way, one of the recent ARRL propagation bulletins pointed some forecasts for solar activity which suggest that the minimum will occur in late-2006/early-2007, with the flux down to about the half the levels we have been seeing earlier this year. Better start building those LF antennas!

CDXC Kenwood Challenge

Speaking personally, I've been enjoying the CDXC Kenwood Challenge. It's been fun having to rework countries that, in some cases, I haven't worked for some years. Of course, it's also been frustrating when I've missed stuff like ZS8MI and XF4IH, both of which I failed to catch and neither of which is likely to be QRV again before the closing date of the Challenge. Similarly, R1FJ, which was QRV while I was in 3B9. It's also been an excuse to be active on 6m during the Sporadic E season, which has been fun - although the season really doesn't seem to have got off to a very good start. By this time last year I had been working the Caribbean on 6m on double-hop Sporadic E but, so far this year, it doesn't seem to have happened. The table on the CDXC Web page tends to suggest that John, G3LAS, and I are running a little ahead of the pack, but both John and I have this nagging feeling that there are a few members out there with big scores that they are keeping quiet about! When I hear of some members pushing up their 6m scores with JT6M meteor scatter skeds, I start to wonder just what scores are waiting in the wings. And, of course, the positions could change quite dramatically when the autumn DX season arrives, along with the big CQ WW contests. Actually, it's rather interesting to see which countries I'm missing on the HF bands at this stage. With

238 countries worked on HF since 1 February at the time of writing, I don't have a GD in the log, for example (I did work GD in January, but that doesn't count!). Of course, that will certainly be put right in September as there is a big expedition planned. Do join in (UK members only, I'm afraid); it's fun and the valuable prize being offered is certainly an incentive. And after all, we certainly wouldn't want the CDXC Chairman to think he can win it without a fight!

LoTW

The big news for DX-ers, I suppose, is that you can now use those matching QSOs on Logbook of the World to actually claim something. The necessary interface software is now live and you can ask for any relevant matching QSOs to be part of your next DXCC submission, reducing the number of cards you actually have to send through the mail. In practice you'll probably find, as I have, that most of the matches so far are with US contest stations! But undoubtedly more and more DX stations - and, in particular, DX-peditions - will start to upload their logs as a matter of course (*memo to self - must upload logs for my TF, 9G, VP9 and similar operations!*).

RSGB Operating Manual

Right now I am busy with a rewrite of the RSGB's Operating Manual. Like all such tasks, what seemed relatively straightforward at first is turning out to be something of a major project. The more time I spend on it the more I realise that a significant overhaul is required. It's curious in that, in many ways, DX operating and contesting are exactly as they were 20 or 30 years back. In other ways, though, and largely as a result of computers in the shack and the availability of the Internet, things have changed out of all recognition in a way which simply isn't reflected in the current edition. Anyway, if any of you have particular axes to grind or great ideas about amateur

radio operating, I welcome any input! And I'd love to have a selection of suitable photos to choose from, illustrating the diversity of our hobby, from DX-pedition pictures (large and small – the expeditions, not the pictures!), contest stations, tidy and organised shacks (!), SSTV, EME, satellite and microwave activity (CDXC members do all that stuff, don't they??), etc. It's your chance to be a star!

Finally, an apology to that FB British gang of G3RTE, G3SWH and G3NOM/HSØZDZ who, with Greg V85GD, activated V8JIM back in March. I managed to miss them off my list of UK-centric expeditions. There have been more since, of course, including

9M8PSB/V8PMB in April with 9M2/G3TMA, G3KHZ and IZ1CRR.

By the way, as with pretty much every column in this Digest, this one is what you want it to be. I can cover DX-related topics, forthcoming and past DX, etc. Let me know and do contribute input of your own, in terms of DX-ing experiences, operating tips and dislikes, or whatever. My deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication, so try to get anything to me at least a week before that (i.e. by the 13th of August for the next one).

73 Don G3XTT

The 3B9C Video is now available!

It runs for 45 minutes and with it, as an added bonus, is the so far unreleased D68C video.

The cost in the UK for the two videos combined is £14.95 including p& p.

You can order on your credit card by going to

www.fsdxa.com/3b9c/video.html

Please be careful to complete both stages of the ordering process!

Alternatively, you can send a UK cheque for £14.95 to:

John Linford, FSDXA Treasurer, Pennine View, Sleagill, Cumbria CA10 3HD

Please write '3B9C video' on the back of the cheque.

Prices for other parts of the world and other formats are shown at the above web address.

Project Star Reach (3B9C) – Bulletin No. 6

The 3B9C operation closed down on 12 April, with 153,000 QSOs in the log. Of course, that's not the end of Project Star Reach, and this press release brings news on QSL-ing, magazine articles, presentations and, of course, the Nevada Rodrigues Trophy programme.

Some Statistics

3B9C made a grand total of 153,113 QSOs, of which well in excess of 130,000 were unique band/mode slots.

Much more detailed analysis will follow over the next few months, but for now here is the band/mode/continent breakdown. Numbers shown in bold are new claimed world records for a DX-pedition.

Total QSO count overall	153,113
Unique calls in log	37,040
CW total	77,610
SSB total	66,826
RTTY total	5,280
PSK31 total	2,172
Others (FM, SSTV, EME, Sat.)	1,225
1.8 MHz	2,288
3.5 MHz	7,509
7 MHz	18,366
10.1 MHz	11,375
14 MHz	21,594
18 MHz	20,154

21 MHz	29,920
24.9 MHz	16,858
28 MHz	23,535
50 MHz	1,448
70cm, EME and Satellite	66
Africa	1,001
Antarctica	3
Asia	27,609
Europe	92,099
North America	29,809
Oceania	1,866
South America	670
United Kingdom	8,582

QSL-ing

The 3B9C QSL cards arrived from the printers last week, and a large number are already in the mail, with over 11,000 QSOs already confirmed. It is expected that all direct cards received to date will have been answered and mailed by late June. From then on, we are aiming at a turnaround time for direct cards of two weeks or so. We are also starting to deal with electronic QSL requests received via the 3B9C website. And, as promised, we will be uploading the complete 3B9C log to the ARRL's Logbook of the World in good time for the September DXCC annual deadline.

A reminder of the QSL route. Direct cards should be sent to FSDXA, PO Box 73, Church Stretton, SY6 6WF, UK. Bureau cards go via the RSGB Bureau. There is also a form on the webpage for requesting bureau cards.

Articles, Presentations and Video

Firstly, the website (www.3b9c.com) is still active, of course, so you can go back and read the daily updates as the expedition unfolded, see the final statistics, and find lots of photographs.

A number of articles about Project Star Reach are scheduled for the coming months. UK readers will find an article in the July RadCom, and QST will carry one in the August issue. CQ Ham Radio in Japan has already carried an article about 3B9C, and we are expecting others to appear in Ireland, Germany, France, Finland and elsewhere.

Presentations have already taken place at Visalia and Dayton (DX Dinner, DX Forum and the Topband Dinner). There was a presentation scheduled for Friedrichshafen (Saturday, 26 June) and there will be a strong 3B9C flavour to the RSGB's HF Convention (23-24 October), with an overall 3B9C presentation, a presentation on the StarSoftware suite of programs, and a presentation on LF Propagation from 3B9C. There will also be a 3B9C presentation at the Italian Convention in Bologna (25-26 September) and, of course at many other national and local club events around the world.

You can also buy a video of 3B9C (45 minutes, with a bonus 39-minute video of our previous D68C Comoros expedition). Early orders have already been despatched, but there is still time to order your copy. Copies can be ordered via the internet at:

<http://www.fsdxa.com/3b9c/video.html>

You can pay by credit card on this site. Alternatively, if you are in the US or the UK we can accept cheques on US or UK banks.

If you are resident in the UK

We can accept sterling cheques (drawn on a UK bank account) for the video. Please send your cheque to:

John Linford
Pennine View
Sleagill
Cumbria CA10 3HD

Please make cheques payable to 'FSDXA' and write '3B9C video' on the back of the cheque. The cost of a UK PAL video (both the 3B9C and D68C videos on one tape), including postage, is £14.95.

If you are resident in the US

Similarly, we can accept payment by US check in US dollars. For a US NTSC video of 3B9C and D68C, please send your check for \$32.95 to Wes Lamboley. In this case make cheques payable to 'W. Lamboley' and write '3B9C video' on the reverse side. US cheques should be sent to:

Wesley R. Lamboley, W3WL
690 Hunterhill Way
Roswell GA 30075
USA

Nevada Rodrigues Trophies

The Team are delighted with the interest shown in the Nevada Rodrigues Trophy, with around 400 applications received from amateurs and SWLs from all over the world. The closing date has just passed, and shortly the applications will be processed.

All queries received have been answered. Winners will be announced on the website in due course. Trophies will be presented at the RSGB HF Convention in October. Any that cannot be presented in person will then be mailed to the recipients.

Container Back in UK

Finally, our container with its 6 tonnes (metric, but similar to imperial tons) of equipment has just arrived back in the UK and several of us will be busy this week unpacking, cleaning, checking and storing the equipment ready for the next one! Apropos of which, our thanks to all of you who made suggestions for expedition targets after our D68C trip. Sadly, due to political and other circumstances, many of those proved impossible. But we do hope you enjoyed 3B9C.

Don Field G3XTT, NK1G
(g3xtt@lineone.net)

(3B9C Publicity Officer)



Transmission 2004

‘Transmission’ is the annual amateur radio fund-raising event for the British Wireless for the Blind Fund (registered charity number 1078287). This year ‘Transmission 2004’ takes place over the weekend of 25-26 September.

All radio amateurs are encouraged to take part in order to raise funds for this very worthwhile charity. The idea is that you ask your friends, family, workmates - anyone in fact - to sponsor you for contacts made during the weekend of 25-26 September.

This year is slightly different as trophies will be awarded to the individuals and clubs/groups who make the most contacts or raise the greatest amount of money for the charity. Certificates will be sent to all individuals and groups/clubs who either raise

more than £10 for BWBF or who make a donation of at least £10 to BWBF. In order to qualify for one of the trophies you must be a current member of the RSGB and resident in the UK. However, overseas amateurs and non-members of the Society are also invited to join in the fun and raise funds for BWBF (they simply do not qualify for the trophies, although they are eligible for the certificates).

Rules:

1. Obtain an official sponsorship/pledge/donation form from: ‘Transmission 2004’, British Wireless for the Blind Fund, Gabriel House, 34 New Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4QR; Tel: (01634) 832501; Fax: (01634) 817485; e-mail: info@blind.org.uk; or download one from the BWBF website at www.blind.org.uk.

2. Ask as many people as you know - family, friends, workmates, other radio amateurs - to sponsor you for contacts made during 'Transmission 2004' on 25-26 September. Sponsorship can be for either a certain amount per contact or for a single sum, irrespective of the number of contacts made.

3. Sponsored contacts can be made at any time between 0000 UTC on Saturday, 25 September, and 2400 UTC on Sunday, 26 September.

4. The definition of a 'contact' for the purposes of 'Transmission' is a two-way exchange of callsign and signal report. Each station may only be contacted once per frequency band *per day*. In other words, every station contacted on 25 September may be contacted again, on the same frequency band(s), on 26 September and that second contact may also be counted towards the overall number of contacts made.

5. This is *not* an amateur radio contest, so sponsored contacts can be made on any band for which you are licensed, including 10, 18 and 24 MHz.

6. Sponsored contacts may be made with your own callsign, a club callsign or a GB special event callsign. Applications for GB special event callsigns must be made in the normal way at least 28 days prior to the event. Full details from the AR Dept, RSGB, Lambda House, Cranborne Road, Potters Bar EN6 3JE; Tel: (0870) 904 7373, or via e-mail to: ar.dept@rsgb.org.uk.

7. Trophies will be presented to:

- (a) the individual raising the most funds for BWBF,
- (b) the group or club raising the most funds for BWBF,
- (c) the individual making the greatest number of contacts during 'Transmission 2004',

(d) the group or club making the greatest number of contacts during 'Transmission 2004'.

Certificates will be awarded to *all* stations raising at least £10, or making a donation of £10 or more to BWBF. Please send cheques made payable to 'British Wireless for the Blind Fund' to the address in 1. above.

All donations are gratefully received, no matter how small, but the minimum amount to be raised to qualify for any trophy is £50. The minimum number of contacts to qualify for an award in category (c) or (d) is 50 contacts.

8. An 'individual' is when only one person operates a station callsign, whether that callsign is a personal callsign, club call or GB special event station. The definition of a group or club is any operation of a callsign by more than one individual. Groups and clubs are invited to operate on more than one frequency band simultaneously.

9. To qualify for the trophies, you *must* return the sponsorship form *and a cheque for the amount raised*, made payable to 'British Wireless for the Blind Fund', to arrive *not later than Friday, 15 October 2004*.

To qualify for the trophies for the greatest number of contacts you must state how many contacts were made during 'Transmission 2004' and enclose a copy of the log. Either a *photocopy* of a hand-written log or a hard-copy print-out of a computerised log is acceptable. Please do *not* send the *original* of hand-written logs as they cannot be returned, and do *not* send computerised logs on disk. The minimum information required is the date, time, frequency band, and callsign of the station contacted. The log should be signed by the licence-holder (or NoV-holder in the case of GB special event callsigns) as follows: 'I certify that this is a true copy of the logbook entry for [callsign] during the period 25-26 September 2004. [signature].' Sponsorship

forms and cheques returned without log copies will only qualify for the trophies for raising the most funds for BWBF.

To qualify for any trophy you *must* be a current member of the RSGB on 25 September 2004 and be resident in the UK. (However, special certificates will be sent to *all* stations raising more than £10)

10. The trophies will be presented at the RSGB HF and IOTA Convention, which this year takes place at the Europa Hotel, Gatwick, Sussex, over the weekend of the 22-24 October 2004. The trophies may be taken home by the winners, but must be returned as arranged with BWBF for presentation to the winners of 'Transmission' next year.

Out and About

T33C – An Expedition to the End of the World

Tom Wylie, GM4FDM

t.wylie@ntlworld.com

Banaba was No. 26 in the European most wanted list, and so in the spring of 2003 a group of European operators decided to try to activate this very rare and isolated island.

Banaba is part of Kiribati, yet separated by some 600 km from Tarawa, the capital. It must be one of the most remote Islands in the world. Banaba has a chequered history. From being a desert island paradise it has become a desolate shell of an island hollowed out in the centre, but with large pinnacles of rock pointing to the sky. The only saving grace at the moment is that a thick cloak of jungle vegetation covers most of the scars left by the British Phosphate Commissioners when they left Banaba in 1979.

It is thus difficult to get accurate information on Banaba. There is no electricity on the island and no reliable form of communication back to the main island group. A search of the Internet asks: 'Did you intend to search for banana?', and that just about sums it up.

The island is governed by a Council, which actually resides on Rabi Island, which is off Fiji and some 2,000 miles distant. Rabi was purchased by the British and the residents of Banaba were shipped there after the war 'to make a new start', but many of the residents want to go back to their ancestral home on Banaba and over the years some have managed. Contact was made with the Island Council on Rabi and they readily agreed to give us permission to land and operate from Banaba. They are indeed enthusiastic towards anybody who will give publicity to their plight and that of Banaba itself.

If you wish to read more about Banaba and the British Phosphates Commission, have a look at: www.janeresture.com/banaba4/index.htm for further information. We could not find any accurate maps of the island and so it was difficult to plan ahead for operating locations etc. We were aware that the island's highest point is only about 80m high. It is not actually a coral island, but a volcanic one.

When it became known within the DX fraternity that an expedition was planned for Banaba, it was discovered that other groups including Frank, DL4KQ, and Hrane, YT1AD, were also trying to get to Banaba and so all the groups amalgamated rather than compete against each other. A first News release was made on 21 April 2003, and Banaba 2004 - T33C was born. Unlike the 3B9 Group, the Banaba team found it almost impossible to meet personally, apart from a short meeting at Freidrichshafen later in the summer. A newsgroup was created on the Internet and so the group was able to 'meet' and carry out discussions and make decisions. Between then and the end of 2003, different individuals joined and left the group due to various circumstances.

Frank, DL4KQ, was appointed to be in charge of logistics – ie getting us to Banaba and back. Rob, PA2R, was in overall command, whilst Flo, F5CWU, was placed in charge of all matters financial as well as being appointed the QSL Manager. Part of Flo's remit was to try to gain sponsorship for the expedition, but at the end of the day everybody in the group also played a part in this activity.

It soon became apparent that the venture was going to be costly. Various routes were tried, but the cheapest for the Europeans was to fly Korean Air either from London (in my case) or from Frankfurt. Korean Air would take us to Fiji, where we would transfer to Air Nauru for the next leg to Tarawa in Kiribati. From Kiribati the last leg would be by sea and the difficult part was finding and organising a suitable ship. Now, the Polynesians don't have a word in their language which matches the urgency of 'mañana'. Every advert for a shipping company lists both e-mail addresses as well as a fax number. Just try contacting them! It soon became a very frustrating exercise, which often could only be resolved by making a very expensive telephone call. Eventually we found a shipping agent who owned their own ship. The ship was the 'Te

Taobe', a tramp steamer which travels around the islands in the region carrying all sorts of goods and people. They agreed to take us to Banaba on one of their regular (four times yearly) visits, but we would have to charter the boat to get back off again, unless we wanted to stay for three months. And so it came to pass.

Everything we wanted to use on Banaba would have to be carried there – and returned. We could rely on nothing. For various reasons we decided to make all purchases in Europe and ship everything by sea. The first thing we had to buy was a container. Leasing or borrowing a container for over six months was a non-starter. Fortunately we found a suitable container and had it shipped to Frank's house in Germany. Over time Frank, assisted by several local hams, kitted out the container to preserve all our equipment during the long sea voyage. Ten generators were purchased, as we could not rely on being able to re-sell the generators in either Tarawa or Fiji.

Much discussion took place about rigs and linears. Acom offered to loan us seven of their '1000' amplifiers and these were to be used with the small Elecraft K2 transceiver. Various members of the group either had or had built their own K2. At the same time discussions were taking place with SteppIR in the States for the use of their yagi antennas and we ended up taking seven. The benefit of these beams is monoband performance on each band.

Our container left Rotterdam in early December and arrived in Tarawa, Kiribati, in March. Customs had a field day. They must have thought it was their birthday and Christmas all rolled into one. We had to provide a complete inventory of the contents of the container, down to every nut and bolt. Customs faxed us with the 'bill' for importation duty. The bill was way over the top and we had to do some speedy negotiating

in order to bring the cost down to a manageable level.

We left our homes around the 23-24 March, the US operators going via Los Angeles and all of us meeting up in Fiji and Tarawa. To allow for mishaps, late arrivals etc., we allowed a couple of days lay-over both in Fiji and Tarawa.

We called at the offices of the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in Tarawa to collect our licences. Most of us wanted several licences, either for vanity reasons or for future use. Some operators chose callsigns in the T3Ø, T31, T32 and T33 series. With 18 different operators, Mr Moto, the granting official, granted more licences in two days than he has done for the past five years. However, he did it with grace and good humour, and at \$50AUS per licence, he probably generated more revenue than at any time in the past five years..

After receiving our licences we crossed the road into the harbour area to inspect our 'cruise liner' for the trip to Banaba. When we entered the port there were a few small cargo ships all lined up against the harbour wall, all looking smart and freshly painted, and one rust bucket tied up at the end of the jetty. No marks for guessing which one was ours. Clearly painted on the stern was 'Te Taobe'. At that point I seriously considered not going. 'Te Taobe' was 5 million floating rivets held together by rust. We busied ourselves by opening our container and pre-assembling some of the antennas and the masts. It would not be possible to do this on board ship, as our container would be sealed in the hold. The sun was baking and around 40 degrees C. We consumed many litres of water and applied loads of Factor 40.

The following afternoon we sailed for Banaba. It was a hot evening and we enjoyed the breeze as we left the lights of Kiribati behind us. Our accommodation on board the 'Te

Taobe' was very simple. We tied camp beds onto the hatch cover and the crew strung a tarpaulin over the top. It was hotter than a baker's oven inside the 'tent'. The next day it got even hotter. There was nothing to do except lie on our bunks and drink water. We had some self-heating meals with us, which were a boon, but it was sometimes difficult to tell exactly what you were eating. When darkness fell at around 6.30pm it was time to take to our beds again. Our only light under the tarpaulin was a single 60W bulb and any torches which we might have ourselves. Some people were reading and some listening to personal stereos. At around 1am I was awakened by a loud bang. I sat bolt upright. The rain was lashing down on my face. There was mayhem all around me. People were shouting, crew members running. For a moment I thought the ship was sinking – all I could think of was sharks! The ship had sailed into a sudden tropical storm. One of the ropes holding the tarpaulin had snapped, the tarp had split and was flapping violently in the wind. Metal poles which had been inserted into holes in the side of the ship were banging up and down as they were whipped by the snapped rope. It was utter chaos. Everything not tied down was swept overboard. Thank goodness we had the foresight to tie down our beds. I shudder to think what might have happened otherwise. After what seemed like ages, probably about half an hour, the ship sailed out the other side of the storm and into relatively calm seas. The crew repaired the tarpaulin in the darkness, but none of us dared shut an eye for the rest of the night.

At around 5am, just as it was getting light, some of the crew were pointing ahead. Banaba was just about visible. It looked just like the picture on our website – very low-lying. As we got closer we could pick out buildings and other structures left by the British in 1979. By 6am we had dropped anchor and launched our two small metal dinghies. First ashore was one of the locals who had travelled with us. He turned out to be

the local Member of Parliament for the island. Then it was the turn of PA2R, YT1AD and DL4KQ to go ashore, meet the locals and carry out a recce. Even though it was early, the arrival of the boat is an event on Banaba and so there were a large number of locals lining the small harbour to greet us. It took us a whole day to unload the contents of the container into the small boats and ferry them ashore. Base camp had been established at 'Banaba House', the British Phosphate Commissioner's house.

We also established that there were two working trucks on the island, which we could rent. Soon the trucks were being loaded with antennas, masts, generators and everything for the SSB and Digital stations which were to be located remote from base camp. The rest of the day was spent erecting the three camps and all the antennas, firing up and testing the generators, laying out the stations and computers.

Banaba is only a few degrees south of the equator and so daytime temperatures were always in excess of 35 degrees C. The work was very demanding and physically exhausting. The SSB camp was 1 km - and the Digital camp 2.5 km - from base camp. If a truck was not available, everything had to be carried.

By the end of Day 2, all antennas were up and the stations were running. The SSB camp had 3 x SteppIR yagis each at about 9m and we had a 40m and an 80m delta loop on a separate fibreglass mast. We also had a 6-element beam on 6m. The CW camp had 2 x SteppIR yagis at 9m (the third was damaged during erection). A 2-element yagi on 30m, a delta loop for 40m and 80m completed the antenna farm. A few days later we persuaded a small boy to climb a nearby tall tree so we could haul up our 160m dipole.

At the Digital camp, there was one SteppIR yagi, with dipoles for the other bands.

160m

On Top Band we made 399 QSOs - 13 on SSB and the rest on CW. A disappointing total when you compare that total with the numbers made from other major expeditions. As this was my first major expedition and I did not know most of the other group members, I tended not to say very much in the run-up to the expedition, but I feel it was a bad mistake not to take the Titanex verticals for 160 and 80m - antennas we had used and trusted on other expeditions. As Banaba is so far from the main landmasses, we really needed that low-angle radiation. There was no space to erect a 160 or 80m 4-square, but a single vertical or pair of phased verticals was possible. As a result we only made three European contacts on 160m: DL1MH, RA6AX and UA6LV. We had no dedicated 160m band specialists, but then again you can only work with those who volunteered to go.

80m

2,514 QSOs - 1,274 of which were on SSB. Europe fared a little better on 80m in that we made 138 QSOs on CW, 15 on SSB and two on RTTY. I don't think the delta loops were particularly effective on 80m and we would have fared better with a Titanex.

40m

6,478 QSOs were made on 40m, of which 603 were made with Europe on CW and 124 on SSB. As we had more space at the SSB camp we experimented with a homemade vertical, with raised radials, on this band.

30m

1,683 QSOs out of a band total of 4,885 were made with European station on 30m. The 30m antenna was a 2-element yagi. At times this station was used to try to transmit our logs out on Pactor. We also set up a G5RV, but it was

not possible to run a CW station and a Pactor station on this band at the same time.

20m

As always, the bread and butter band. 18,933 QSOs were made on 20m, of which 7,407 were with Europe. When the band was open to Europe it was also open to Japan and the US. Whilst we had no problems with Japan, some of the US stations paid little heed to 'Europe only!'. Having said that, the conduct of European stations was abominable on occasions and drew much condemnation from our American operators.

17m

Had some startling openings to Europe with regards to signal strength, but again this was often marred by poor European operating conduct. One evening I had a contact with GM4NFC, who was at least 20dB over S9; incredible signals, but short-lived. We made 12,452 QSOs on this band with 3,844 European stations. We were much more successful on this band with Europe than on 15m.

15m

16,544 QSOs were made on this band, of which 3,059 were with European stations.

12m

This band was disappointing for me, with only 5,926 in the log - of which 261 were with Europe, and probably southern Europe at that. After the second day of operating, conditions on 12 and 10m deteriorated so badly that some days no QSOs were made on these bands.

10m

5,524 QSOs on this band, with only 66 in Europe. All of these QSOs were with stations in southern Europe.

Datamodes

For this we had two experienced and dedicated operators – Doug, N6TQS, and Bill, AKØA, both of whom have been on numerous expeditions. Doug and Bill used a HAL DXP38 DSP radio modem in preference to the newer MMTTY and other forms of soundcard TTY. 36 QSOs were made in SSTV and 635 in PSK31.

People invariably draw comparisons between expeditions and it is often hard to gauge one expedition against another - as seldom do they have the same number of operators or are there for the same number of days. Each expedition is different in its degree of difficulty. I couldn't help but admire the statistics of 3B9C in last quarter's edition of the CDXC Digest. Very impressive, especially in that they managed to set a few new all-time records. However, doing some statistical analysis of my own, it was interesting to compare the numbers of QSOs as well as the number of operators and days of operation. Doing a rough calculation, 3B9C managed some 208 QSOs per day per operator. T33C managed 378 QSOs per day per operator. 3B9C averaged some 6,657 QSOs per day, T33C managed 6,818. Had T33C been there for an additional two or three days, I'm sure that the 100,000 total would have been surpassed, especially as the A and K indices were falling substantially and conditions were vastly improving, especially towards Europe just as we had to leave the island. However, I'm sure you are familiar with the old adage that statistics can prove anything!

One point which did cause us a little grief - and one which, if I ever go on another T33-type expedition, I would seriously re-consider - is stating from the outset that we would have our logs on the Internet on a daily basis. We tried to do this via a Pactor link on 30m, which according to propagation predictions should have worked, but it proved unreliable. The problem was that when the band was

open, operators wanted to use the antenna for making QSOs and not transmitting logs. I don't think there is sufficient bandwidth on 30m to run two stations simultaneously. Hindsight is a marvellous thing, but I don't think that under the same circumstances I would attempt to get the logs onto the Internet. I'd rather suffer the consequence of working dupes.

The Banabans

The Banabans are a very laid-back group of people. There was no visible work going on on the island apart from fishing, which seems more of a social activity than work-related. Banabans exist on the interest from a court payout against the British government. There is a large store on the island, but there is very little food in it, apart from a few tins of meat and soup and some breakfast stuff. The islands rely strongly on fish as the staple part of their diet. During our stay we ate fish for breakfast, lunch, dinner and supper. I didn't know there was so many different ways of cooking fish. We took a crate load of stuff for the local school, pens, pencils, jotters, solar power calculators, rulers and so on. It was disappointing not to be able to hand over these materials directly, but we had to give them to the island community of elders, who decided which class would get what etc. I just hope that all the materials reached the school.

They are a very social people who love to sing and dance and hold a celebration at every opportunity. We were invited to take part in a 'Cava Ceremony'! Cava is a drink which looks and tastes like dishwater. It starts off as a powder, which is then wrapped in a cloth and pounded in a basin of water to much singing and clapping until the powder has released all its properties into the water. It makes your mouth numb and is alleged to have some narcotic tendencies, but personally I'd prefer a nice glass of Glenmorangie.

The children were wonderful and hung about the various camps until they were supplied with a can of coke and a bag of crisps. On our second day on the island, as we stood and admired our SSB antenna farm on the site of a football field, cricket wicket, polo field and volleyball field (all left over from the British), we were approached by the village elder, who told us that we would have to move some of the antennas, as the field was required by the Banaba international football team, seeing as they were practising for a game with Tarawa. Every afternoon a bunch of the local teenagers arrived at the field and, after doing some warm-up exercises (hardly appropriate in 35 degrees C), they would do some circuit training and then practise their football skills by throwing a frisbee to one another. We couldn't figure this out - until after three days we discovered they didn't actually have a ball. So we supplied them with a ball. After their practice most of the team came over to our operating positions and watched our operating antics. We had to explain, of course, what we were doing. We thought they were really interested in ham radio, but during the second week we discovered that they were actually 'casing the joint', seeing as stuff started to go missing. First of all it was minor things like tools – cutters, pliers, spanners - then it was T-shirts and training shoes. It finally came to a head when a Heil headset and a £500 digital camera went missing. After consultations with the island elder and the schoolteacher, we were able to 'purchase' the digital camera and headset back for \$20. Unfortunately the boy who stole the camera couldn't make it work and smashed it on a rock, breaking the LCD screen and lens. After all our hospitality and social intercourse with the islanders, this left a rather sour taste in our mouths.

We spent our other off-time exploring, fishing or swimming.

Our trip back to Tarawa and Fiji went smoothly and without incident. On our arrival back in Inchon, Korea, we were met by

members of the KARL DX Club who took us to Korean Police Headquarters in Seoul to join other members of the KARL for a DX Dinner. The Police Club is very active and was running a special event station whilst we were there. Many of the police officers are licensed and are DX chasers. It turned out we had worked many of them on Banaba. Rob, PA3EWP, made an impromptu presentation.

Strange but true

During our work-up to the expedition, we were approached by a man called Charles Veley, an American. Charles is striving to get into the Guinness Book of Records by visiting all the countries of the world. After visiting some 319 Countries, he bumped into a group of radio hams whilst visiting the Åland Islands and Market Reef. They told him about the DXCC Countries List, which includes a few entities that Charles has not yet visited. Hence his interest in Banaba. Charles used to run his own software company, but now spends his spare time travelling around the world. It is incredible to learn that he has visited such places as Bouvet and had an interest in the postponed Peter 1 expedition. Charles said that he had 15 people, each willing to pay \$15,000 to set foot on Peter 1. Charles spent one night on Banaba and then left on the boat the following morning. He is nearly as weird as us! One thing he did have, though, was a very small handheld satellite telephone, which he allowed me to use on board the 'Te Taobe' to telephone home to Scotland. It didn't half surprise my wife when the call went through! Charles hired the phone in the US to keep in contact with his wife, and the cost of a 3-minute call was little more than \$5. Perhaps for remote islands in future we should consider this as a way of getting our logs out and onto the Internet, instead of the unreliable Pactor links.

T33C consisted of operators from nine different countries, not all of whom spoke fluent English. We were from different backgrounds

and had different skills and attributes. In the main everybody blended together as a team. New friendships were struck up. In expeditions as in life, natural leaders sprung up and were able to support, direct and even to cajole when spirits were low in the early hours or when conditions were bad. It is amazing how resilient you become to being prodded out of bed at 4am for the early shift! Two of our members were 70 years old. One even spent his 70th birthday on the island. Most had been on expeditions before, but for our team doctor Alan, K6SRZ, this was his first expedition. Alan was kept busy treating minor cuts and bruises as well as mosquito bites. We also had the first YL operator to operate from Banaba. Claudia, K2LEO - and girlfriend of Andrea, IK1PMR - made a few QSOs, although not a DX operator. Claudia actually made her first ever QSOs whilst on Fiji, prior to Banaba.

QSL Cards

Flo, F5CWU, is our QSL Manager. On arrival back home in France, he was swamped with QSL card applications. As I write this article, we have designed our card and it is being printed. It is expected that the first cards will be available by the time this is in print. Labels will be printed using BV Version 7 by DF3CB - and cards are being printed by IT9EJW. Flo is QTHR.

Thanks

Must go to all our sponsors, without whose help this expedition could never have taken place. It was a very expensive operation, including a heavy financial commitment by those taking part. Tribute must be paid to those manufacturers who continue to support expedition after expedition, but without whose support life would be very difficult. There are many people who deserve our thanks, including Kiribati Shipping 'KISS', the captain and crew of the 'Te Taobe' for getting us safely ashore; Mr Moto, who painstakingly

issued all our licences; the Island Council for Banaba for permission to land and operate. I would personally like to thank my wife and children for allowing me to fulfil my dream. After all it is their inheritance I am spending.

What next?

Well, our container is still on the high seas. When it finally arrives back in Germany it has to be unloaded. Generators and other bits and pieces have to be sold to square the books. The deserving will receive their QSL cards and some of us might even plan our next expedition.

And finally:

The Banaba trophy will be awarded to JA2VPO for amassing the grand total of 26 QSOs and working us on 23 applicable band/

mode slots. Banaba certificates are winging their way towards the applicants. We expect that shortly a video/DVD of the expedition will be available – see our web page for details. I would personally like to pay tribute to Frank, DL4KQ, and Rob, PA2R, for the amount of work they put in prior to the expedition and for the work still to come in unloading the container, ensuring that all equipment is returned to its rightful owner. Please visit the web pages of our sponsors.

WWW

www.dx-pedition.de/banaba2004/

www.janeresture.com/banaba/mining.htm

www.intentionaltraveler.com/pages/stories/travelerman.html

7Q7MM, 18 April – 1 May 2004

Rich Brokenshaw, M5RIC

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The DX-pedition took place from 18 April until 1 May 2004. Group members were myself, Mark, G4AXX; Dick, GU4CHY; Steve, G4EDG, and Steve, G4JVG. We all met at Heathrow and checked in smoothly with no problems at all considering all of our baggage. No funny looks either, considering we were taking a ski-bag to Kenya!

The flight to Malawi was via Kenya and Zambia, before finally arriving in Malawi the next morning. After a two-hour drive we arrived at Red Zebra Lodge just outside Salima, our QTH for the next two weeks. We were greeted on arrival by Stuart Grant, the lodge owner, and Cato LA9PF/7Q7PF, who had collected our licences from Blantyre. Cato was also a huge help to us, staying overnight

on the first day so he could help us set up the antennas on our second day.

After a look around the lodge grounds we decided to set up a couple of antennas on the lawn, get the callsign on the air and see how the bands were. 30m and 17m verticals were set up on the lawn and two stations were assembled inside. After about 90 minutes of working two of the biggest pile-ups we'd ever experienced, there was a dramatic lightning storm and the power went out. At this point we decided to call it a day and all get to bed.

The next few days were spent putting up antennas. A Cushcraft A3S tribander, phased verticals for 40m, a single vertical for 12m, a full-size ¼-wave 80m vertical, 160m inverted-

L, a 10m monoband yagi and a 160m Beverage. A third 100W station was added to the shack. It was not until a few days after we had arrived that everything was ready to go - and we could just operate all the time and not have to think about putting something up. Once all the antennas were erected and the stations configured, we made an operating rota of four-hour shifts split between the five of us over three stations. Logs were uploaded daily to the website with daily news on our progress.

The equipment we used:

Kenwood TS-480HX
Yaesu FT-100D
Alinco DX-70TH
Acom 1000
SRW Loudenboomer
Cushcraft A3S 3-ele tri-band beam
2-ele 10m yagi
1/4 L verticals for 24/18/10
2-ele phased array for 40m
Full-size 1/4 wave 80m vertical
160m inverted-L
3 laptops running CT in DX-pedition mode

Now that we were in full swing we got used to band openings and just got on with operating, only stopping for lunch (and beer) and if there was a power cut. We tried our best to keep the stations running 24/7, but it was not always possible.

Pretty much each day we had the same band openings at the same time, so every morning Mark would have worked something from the Pacific on 20m – and on 40m CW at sunset the JAs were very loud and in their 100s. We all had our fair share in the pile-ups. In the first few days they were huge, needing a split of about 10 kHz in SSB to be able to copy call signs; you had to be there to believe it! This was the most fun I have had in the hobby so far - such a buzz to have so many people calling you at one time.

We started to take things down on Saturday morning, 1 May, and all throughout the day, ready to leave early on the Sunday morning for the long trip back home. Anyone hoping to work us on Saturday would have been disappointed as we only operated for a few hours in the morning.

Our final day's operation was cut short by a power cut just before lunch, which lasted all afternoon. We had power cuts every two days or so and there was not much we could do about it. We switched over to run on a back-up generator at 100W to keep the stations going. On the last evening Stuart took us all out on the lake for the evening, just getting back at sunset in time for an enjoyable farewell dinner.

This trip would not have been possible without the help of sponsors and individuals. They are:

Corporate sponsors

[Kenwood \(UK\)](#)

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[Digital Crocus](#)

[LZ1JZ QSL Print Services](#)

Individual sponsors

Paul Brice-Stevens, GØWAT

Andy Summers, G4KNO

Chris Burbanks, G3SJJ

Cato de Sauvigny, LA9PF/7Q7PF

Dick Whittering, G3URA

Roger Nolan, G3KWK

Taizo Arakawa, JA3AER

Jeff Pascoe, G4ELZ

Hiroaki Kanamori, JA7SN

Victor Brand, G3JNB
 Lee Volante, GØMTN
 Mike Allisette, GU4EON
 Mark Wootton, M5MKW
 Owen Williams, GØPHY

Chiltern DX Club
 South Dorset Radio Society
 GMDX Group
 EUDXF

DX Clubs/Groups

Danish DX Group

Not forgetting all those who called and worked us - thanks!

Here's the log summary of the 27,092 QSOs we made by band and mode:

Band	CW	SSB	RTTY	FM	Band totals
160m	268	0	0	0	268
80m	237	372	0	0	609
40m	1951	290	0	0	2241
30m	1561	0	0	0	1561
20m	1252	1906	70	0	3228
17m	2351	1519	44	0	3914
15m	2772	3572	690	0	7034
12m	2281	1304	0	0	3585
10m	2566	1951	105	30	4652
Mode totals	15239	10914	909	30	27092

We have left literally a complete station for anyone else to use. Details about this appear below.

For more photos and information please visit the 7Q7MM website:

www.malawi.digital-crocus.com

A new DX holiday location

Steve Telenius-Lowe, G4JVG / 7Q7XX *g4jvg@ntlworld.com*

A new DX holiday location is now available to rent: Red Zebra Lodge in Malawi, the location of April's 7Q7MM DX-pedition by CDXC members G4AXX, GU4CHY, G4EDG, M5RIC and G4JVG. See above for Rich, M5RIC's, account of the DX-pedition.

We left behind a great deal of equipment at the Lodge following the DX-pedition. This, together with equipment belonging to the owner of the Lodge, and some left behind by a Spanish group in 2002, is now available to rent.

Here's the deal. Any radio amateur or group staying at Red Zebra Lodge is invited to use the equipment for the nominal sum of £50 per week (or £100 for major contest weeks) on top of the normal cost of accommodation and meals at the Lodge. This charge is to help to cover the cost of the Cushcraft A3S beam and the purchases made by the 7Q7MM team (coax, radial wire, heavy-duty guy ropes etc.) all of which are now available for use.

You will find a complete inventory below. As you will see, you could walk in to the Lodge with no equipment whatsoever and be on the air the same day. However, if you are planning to operate a 'proper' DX-pedition (as opposed to a holiday operation of just an hour or two a day) or a contest, we would recommend you take your own rig and, unless QRP is your thing, a linear amplifier – especially if you plan to operate the low bands. The good news is there's no need to take a power supply, coax, or any antenna for 10/15/20m.

Please note that all the equipment is kept safely in storage. The Cushcraft A3S beam is stored in a ski-bag. It is partially assembled,

but needs the elements to be mounted on to the boom; instructions are provided and the elements and boom are clearly colour-coded. There is plenty of local assistance available for erecting the A3S at about 30' on a steel pole above the water tower. An RF choke balun and sufficient low-loss RG 213 coax is provided to run from the A3S mounted in this location to the 'shack'. After your operation you are expected to take down all the antennas (again, local assistance is available). The A3S should be partially dismantled and returned to the ski-bag for safe storage until the next operation from Red Zebra Lodge.

Mains power is 220 volts. A generator is started manually within a few minutes of the fairly frequent mains electricity cuts, allowing operation to continue at all times.

Licensing. Licensing is relatively straight forward and costs the equivalent of about £5 for a one-year licence. Information is available at www.qsl.net/oh2mcn/7q.htm and the Malawian licence application form is at www.qsl.net/oh2mcn/7q7a.pdf.

Red Zebra Lodge. The Lodge is located at Kambiri Point near Salima and is directly on the shore of Lake Malawi. There are six twin-bedded rooms available in an accommodation block. The rooms are not luxurious, but are quite comfortable. Mosquito nets are provided, as is an oscillating table fan.

A day room in a separate thatched building is ideal for amateur radio operation as it overlooks the large garden where antennas can be erected and, incidentally, has superb views over the lake. Two more bedrooms are available in this building and radio amateurs may be asked to take these rooms if the others

are occupied by non-radio guests at the Lodge. Seven of the eight rooms are *en suite*, while the eighth has a separate bathroom and toilet adjacent to it.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are taken in the restaurant and bar, no more than a dozen paces from the 'shack'. Drinks are available in the bar from early morning until after dinner. Excellent locally brewed Carlsberg beer is just 35p a bottle! Fresh drinking water is free of charge and is available all day.

Flights. Unfortunately the direct British Airways service from London to Lilongwe no longer exists. Kenya Airways flies from Heathrow to Lilongwe via Nairobi from about £500 return. A new low-cost carrier based in Nairobi, East African Safari Air (www.africansafariair.com), may be worth looking at. Alternatively, there are regular flights to Lilongwe from Johannesburg.

Costs. Accommodation at Red Zebra Lodge, including three meals per day, costs around £125 per person for a week, based on two sharing a twin room, or £165 per person per week for single occupancy of a room.

Private transfers from and to the airport at Lilongwe (110 km) is about £60 each way, irrespective of the number of people in the group (ie £30 each way for two people).

Amateur radio equipment charge: £50 per week except for the weeks of the *CQ* World Wide DX Phone and CW and *CQ* WPX SSB and CW contests (four weeks per year), when the charge is £100 per week.

Example 1: A one-week amateur radio trip to Red Zebra Lodge for two people sharing a room during a non-contest period would cost approximately £710 per person (flight £500, accommodation and food £125, airport transfers £60, equipment fee £25).

Example 2: A two-week amateur radio trip to Red Zebra Lodge for two people in individual rooms and including a major contest weekend would cost approximately £965 per person (flight £500, accommodation and food £330, airport transfers £60, equipment fee £75).

Note: all costs are approximate and will vary with the exchange rate and of course the precise amount you have to pay for the flight.

Interested? If you'd like more information, or if you'd like to book, please contact either me (g4jvg@ntlworld.com) or Mark, G4AXX (g4axx@ntlworld.com).

Inventory of equipment available at Red Zebra Lodge:

Alinco DX-70 160 - 6m 100W transceiver with hand mic
Alinco EDX-1 160 - 10m 150W ATU / power meter

MFJ-949E HF ATU / SWR power meter (30 / 300W)

Manson 20A 13.8V supply (conventional with mains transformer)

Telecom 45A 13.8V switched-mode power supply (input voltage range 100-120V and 220-240V)

Cushcraft A3S 10/15/20m 3-element triband Yagi

RF choke balun for A3S with approx 25m of RG213

2-element 10m monoband Yagi ('homebrew') with balun

Approx 250m of RG58 in approx 10 lengths including 1 x 60m, 1 x 40m, 3 x 30m, 2 x 15m, 2 x 10m, 1 x 4.5m

10m of 300 ohm open ladder line terminated with dipole centre piece and SO239 socket

300m thin orange polyprop rope in various useful lengths

Approx 50m heavy-duty yellow polyprop rope suitable for guying heavy-duty verticals or masts.

1 x 9m approx 2in diameter steel pole for Cushcraft A3S

1 x 10m approx 1.5in diameter steel pole (eg for supporting dipoles or inverted-Vees)

1 x 10m approx 1in square section steel pole (eg for supporting dipoles or inverted-Vees)

1 x 11m long thick bamboo (heavy) (eg for supporting 80 / 160m vertical / inverted-L)

20 x 18m wire radials

1 x 8m approx bamboo for supporting eg 10m monobander, with metal guy ring

1 x 8m fishing rod (top section broken) eg for ground plane

2 x 4 way mains distribution boards (UK 230V square pin plugs are standard in Malawi)

2 x 4 way mains distribution boards (European 220V round pin sockets)

Approx 12 iron guy stakes varying from 0.5m to 1.2m long

1 x long wire used for Beverage (160 metres plus)

Short aluminium pipe (stub mast)

Tools: hammers, soldering iron, solder

You will need to bring:

Coax patch leads, logbook or PC for logging, headphones or Heil headset etc., CW key / keyer, bandpass filters (if more than one station operational simultaneously), amplifier (if required), coax connectors PL259s, SO239 to SO239 'barrel' connectors etc., antenna hardware, insulators etc., toolkit.

Cray Valley RS DX-pedition to the Isles of Scilly (St Mary's Island), EU-011.

There will be six operators, four of whom are members of CDXC:
GØVJG, G4BUO, 2EØATY, M3CVN, G7GLW and GØFDZ.

The team will arrive on 21 July and hope to be on the air by the evening, working all bands (except 160m) with own calls. There will be plenty of VHF activity, including 2m and 6m. QSL will be via Cray Valley's QSL manager, G4DFI, or operator's own call. In the IOTA Contest on 24-25 July we will use the call M8C. The location will be a farm in the NE corner of the island [IN69UW] and the WAB is SV91. GØFDZ will be working on 10 GHz, 10.368.1, from 23-25 July. Talk-back on 144.175 MHz SSB.

Monitor frequencies ± are 80m: 3.529, 3.769; 40m: 7.029, 7.089; 30m: 10.109; 20m: 14.029, 14.189; 17m: 18.079, 18.139; 15m: 21.029, 21.289; 12m: 24.909, 24.939; 10m: 28.029, 28.489; 6m: 50.153; 2m: 144.289.

Nobby, GØVJG

Brunei 2004

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

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Jim, G3RTE, and I had been looking for a possible DX-pedition location since the aborted trip to Midway Island in March 2002. We looked at several alternatives, but all were rejected for one reason or another. One remaining possibility was Brunei Darussalam and when Jim bumped into Ray, G3NOM, at the FOC dinner in October 2003 and discovered that he had a contact in Brunei who would possibly be our host, our plans began to firm up.

Brunei is #82 in the 2003 Most Wanted survey by the 425 DX News. The January 2003 ARRL listing shows Brunei at #129. In addition, Brunei counts as OC-088 for the Islands on the Air (IOTA) award. Neither Jim nor I had worked anyone from Brunei on CW for many years and our initial enquiries indicated that it was much needed on CW on the main bands and on the WARC bands on any mode. Consequently, we set an expedition target of 12,000 QSOs, with an approximately equal split between CW, RTTY and digital modes and SSB.

Ray is now permanently resident in Thailand and also holds the call HSØZDZ. He is currently Vice President and International Secretary of the Radio Amateur Society of Thailand, a very experienced DX-peditioner and very active in SEANET.

Ray's contact is Greg, V85GD, who is a New Zealander and also holds the calls ZL3GD and VK4PG. Greg is a very busy man and a captain with Royal Brunei Airlines. Indeed, his QSL card proclaims him to be a Kiwi who flies! Although he spends a lot of time away from home, he was happy for us to make use of his house in Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB)

for our activities. It was possible that he would not be able to be with us during the proposed DX-pedition dates, even though he had requested 'local' rostering on those days - but his Filipino maid, Lourdes, was volunteered to look after us in such circumstances.

This was very much Jim's expedition as far as organisation was concerned. Licensing was his first obstacle and, with Greg's help, he made contact with Hamidoon at AITA, the newly privatized licensing organisation in Brunei. The process was relatively costly. The licence itself cost \$B25, but we also needed to submit technical details of the IC-706 transceivers we planned to use for 'type approval', for which a separate charge of \$B50 was made. There was a further charge of \$B20 for temporary importation documentation for customs purposes, making a total of \$B95 each (roughly equivalent to £35), which had to be paid in cash. Hamidoon was more than happy to issue us with special call signs, and we chose V8JIM (G3RTE), V8NOM (G3NOM) and V8SWH (G3SWH). It seems they no longer issue V85 series calls, but what are strictly aircraft-style calls to visitors and residents. Finally, we were informed that we each needed a letter of surety signed by a local amateur who would undertake responsibility for our amateur radio actions while we were there. Naturally, Greg offered to do this for us, but the response was that the letter had to be signed by a local and not an ex-pat, not even one who has been there as long as the 15 years that he has. Fortunately, Greg had some contacts who were willing to assist with this particular requirement.

The dates we chose for the expedition, 8 – 15 March 2004, included the RSGB's Common-

wealth Contest and Ray wanted to make a single operator entry in the contest using his own call. I am a great believer in using only a single callsign for an expedition, primarily because it makes QSL-ing so much easier and significantly reduces the size of the pile-ups that would otherwise develop with many of the 'big gun' operators wanting to work each available callsign to the detriment of the more modestly equipped stations. Consequently, we agreed to use V8JIM as the official DX-expedition call and that my own call would not be used at all.

Ray made a reconnaissance visit to Greg's house in mid-February and came back with a detailed site plan with proposals for numerous antennas. He also reported that Greg's house and location were fantastic and that operating from there would almost be like working from a five-star hotel, with fewer constraints about what we could do. The take off in all directions except south is unobstructed for several kilometres. A hill rises quite sharply to the south. Greg had a C3 beam available, but this needed to be assembled and erected together with the 15-metre telescopic tower that he was arranging to fly in from Australia. We hoped that the tower at least would be erected by the time we arrived in BSB, although we were more than happy to finalise the installation for Greg in exchange for his hospitality.

Ray picked up and paid for the licences and type-approval certificates during his reconnaissance trip. He met Rahman, V85RH, who is the President of the Brunei Amateur Radio Society, at the AITA offices - and the fact that Rahman knew both Ray and Greg and that they were obviously good friends removed the need to search for any other guarantors. They decided that it was safest for Greg to keep the original documents at his house and for him to mail copies to Jim and me from Frankfurt during his next trip to Europe. The import permits were also ready, but have only a two-week life span, so Greg

agreed to pick them up around 1 March and get them to us in good time, otherwise they would have expired before we arrived.

Jim and I booked airline tickets on the daily direct flight with Royal Brunei Airlines from Heathrow via Abu Dhabi to BSB and Ray booked his flights from Bangkok, planning to arrive at roughly the same times on Monday, 8 March. Greg was unable to get his local rostering and in fact flew into Heathrow early on the morning of our departure on the actual aircraft on which we were to travel. He called us on Jim's cell phone whilst we were in the departure lounge, saying that he hoped to be back in BSB by Wednesday and that he had passed the import permits to a member of the RBA ground staff to be handed to us at the departure gate, an arrangement that worked extremely well.

The flights were 'dry' but uneventful and we all arrived in BSB on time, actually meeting up with Ray in the arrivals area. We proudly produced our import permits to the customs officer, who had obviously never seen anything like it before and who disappeared into the office for a while before allowing us through. Ray had arrived with 79 kg of excess baggage, so that - combined with Jim's and my modest bags - we needed two taxis to take us to Greg's house, where we were welcomed by Lourdes.

In addition to Greg's private quarters, the house boasts three spare bedrooms, Greg's shack and a large lounge on the ground floor that could be used as an operating area. We allocated ourselves bedrooms and by common consent agreed to set up the SSB station in Jim's bedroom and to use the lounge for the CW and RTTY stations. There were several wire antennas already installed, including a 40m delta loop and a 20m inverted Vee dipole on a bamboo pole mounted on the balcony outside Greg's first floor shack. The 15-metre tower was on site, but needed to be erected, and the C3 beam assembly needed to be

completed. Greg had also left an enormous amount of sundry antenna hardware and numerous tools for us to use. In order to get on the air as soon as possible, we decided to replace the dipole with my 16-metre top doublet, but as an inverted Vee - a configuration that I had not rigged it in previously and which displayed an amazing tendency to tangle with anything and everything in sight, a problem that I had not previously encountered. We eventually got it rigged and the station set up and I was able to make the first QSO with HL5FBT on 30m at 1051 UTC on 8 March. There was one small problem: the keying of the IC-706 from the laptop parallel port wasn't working properly. Jim had a serial lead that worked fine, but he was unable to get his computer's parallel port to work properly either, so initially all my sending had to be by hand, which was very frustrating - except when Jim was sleeping or working SSB, when I was able to use it! Needless to say, Jim nicked it back when I was asleep. Jim and I were jet-lagged and went to bed shortly after dinner, but Ray continued on 30m well into the night, bringing the expedition total to a healthy 522, including many Europeans, before going to bed himself.

Next morning (Tuesday) the bands closed from 0100 to 0900 UTC (9am to 5pm local), so the day was devoted to antenna work. The tower was temporarily erected in the middle of the lawn supporting a 40m inverted vee dipole. The HB9CV two-element tri-band beam that Ray had brought was also assembled and erected onto the same hardwood mast, but failed to tune properly. Other wire antennas were also erected, enabling operation on all bands except 160 and 80m. Conditions were not good, with no signals on any band during the day. 30m opened to the western USA in the late afternoons, but was very hard work indeed due to severe QRM caused by numerous, illegal SSB transmissions originating in the surrounding countries. We now had two stations on the air simultaneously and

operated 40 and 30m CW well into the night, enjoying some excellent pile-ups.

The following morning (Wednesday), Jim discovered that his IC-706 was producing no RF output. He subsequently discovered that the power output transistors had blown. Fortunately, Greg had previously agreed to us using his shack and Kenwood TS-450 transceiver, so that we were able to continue with the expedition.

The rest of the day was devoted to antenna work, having contacted the local tower expert, Fred, V85AF, who was to erect the tower in its final position prior to installing the C3 beam. In anticipation of his arrival we dismantled the tower from its temporary location and re-erected the 40m dipole on another hardwood mast. Fred arrived just after lunch, followed shortly afterwards by Rahman, V85RH, and Jonny, 9M8DB. Johnny is another old acquaintance of Ray's! The tower is designed to be guyed in three directions at two levels and has a flange-type base fixing with a pivot for manually raising and lowering it. We placed the flange in its final position on the concrete base adjacent to the house, but I was concerned to see that Fred was using only 6mm-diameter Rawlbolts, whereas the holes in the baseplate were 12mm. Nevertheless, and despite the torrential rain, the tower was raised in its final position, temporarily guyed and my doublet re-erected on it. Once again, the doublet showed a very nasty tendency to snag on everything in sight, but we were back on the bands in the late afternoon as soon as we had dried out and changed our clothes. Operations continued on CW until the small hours.

More antenna work was necessary the following day (Thursday). We repaired the fault with the HB9CV antenna, which was due to a loose connection in one of the traps. Ray had brought a Butternut vertical for the LF bands that we erected on a short hardwood mast with numerous radials. Whilst it tuned

beautifully on both 80 and 160m, we could hear no signals on 160 due to an exceptionally high local noise level and consequently we had to abandon our plans for operating on that band. However, it performed well on 80m and we made many CW QSOs with the west coast of the USA, Japan and Europe. Surprisingly, after being dead for the previous few days, 12m opened to Japan and the western USA.

On Friday and whilst the bands were dead once again, we also completed the assembly of the C3 beam ready for it to be mounted on the tower. Greg arrived home in the late afternoon, having been delayed by some logistical problems with faulty aircraft. He looked – and was - exhausted! As usual, the bands opened in the late afternoon and the pile-ups kept us busy most of the night, although the high numbers of European stations wanting to make duplicate QSOs became tremendously frustrating - with sometimes as many as three or four stations in a row attempting to make duplicate QSOs on a band/mode. Needless to say, duplicate QSOs were not logged.

On Saturday - and once Greg had rested - we spent some time planning how to erect the beam. Again, Fred was an essential part of the operation and he was only available on the Sunday. Greg arranged for a surveyor from a local crane hire company to visit and advise on the possibility of lowering the beam onto the tower. Ray started his RTTY operation and at times we had three stations on the air simultaneously. The Commonwealth Contest started at 1000 UTC (6pm local) when Jim and I were both relegated to either the WARC bands or SSB. Jim found it hard going to generate a pile up on SSB, whereas there was always plenty of interest in CW, which accounted for the relatively low number of SSB QSOs. However, 10m opened and we made a respectable number of QSOs on both CW and SSB, primarily with Japan.

The crane duly arrived at 9am on the Sunday. Fred arrived shortly afterwards. Once again, it was necessary to take down the doublet as well as the bamboo pole supporting it, a task that fell to me. One of the temporary guys for the tower was also attached to the same bracket as the bamboo pole and whilst it seemed to me to be secure after removing the pole, it was not and the tower came crashing to the ground, tearing the 6mm fixing bolts out of the concrete base. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the telescopic tube in the top of the tower was slightly bent. Fred and the crane driver managed to straighten it whilst Greg and I went off to a local hardware store for some more substantial fixings. Much time was lost drilling out the fixing holes and re-mounting the base. The crane was then pressed into service to raise the tower, whilst the galvanized steel guy wires were sorted out and secured. These seemed to be even more susceptible to tangling than the doublet! Finally, the beam was lifted into position and Fred climbed the tower to guide the stub mast into the rotator and secure it. The rotator was aligned and the tower cranked up to its full height. It looked beautiful – and worked very well too! To finish off the afternoon, I re-rigged the doublet in a slightly different position, using tower and a convenient palm tree as end supports. But it still tangled!

Sunday night was our last operational period and we pushed as hard as we could to make our target number of QSOs, but when we added up the individual totals the next morning, we were almost 2,000 QSOs short, having made only 10,226, excluding duplicates.

Dismantling the antennas on the Monday morning took much less time than it had to erect them, as did putting Greg's house back into some semblance of order. All our flights left in the late afternoon and Greg was scheduled to fly to Jeddah at approximately the same time, so we were all able to travel to the airport together. Although Ray had left a

lot of his baggage for Greg to take to Bangkok on a later flight, he was still 53 kg over his baggage allowance, but called on his negotiating skills to reach an acceptable settlement for the excess baggage charges.

The flights home were uneventful and we arrived safely, feeling pleased to have given a new country or band/mode to at least some of the Deserving. Special QSL cards have been printed by Tony, LZ1JZ, and are available either direct to my QRZ.com address or via the RSGB bureau.

Our particular thanks go to our XYLs, Cheryl, Jan and Lawan, for letting us go; to Greg, V85GD, for the use of his most comfortable house; to Lourdes for looking after us so well; to Hamidoon at AITI for issuing the special callsign; to John, G3LZQ, for the loan of equipment and to our sponsors: RSGB, Chiltern DX Club, GM DX Group, NCDXF, EUDXF, GDXF, Clipperton DX Club, Danish DX Group and Nanchatte DX Aikoukai - without whose help and understanding this operation would not have been possible.

Band	CW	DXCC	SSB	DXCC	RTTY	DXCC	Total	DXCC
80	339	28	0	-	0	-	339	28
40	1872	72	0	-	0	-	1872	72
30	2252	70	0	-	0	-	2252	70
20	1139	59	529	47	72	5	1740	69
17	830	43	10	4	0	-	840	43
15	1214	58	624	18	100	12	1938	62
12	771	47	45	3	0	-	816	47
10	287	32	142	5	0	-	429	34
TOTALS	8704	98	1350	57	172	14	10226	105

V8PMB, Pulau Muara Besar, IOTA OC-184 9M8PSB, Pulau Satang Besar, OC-165

A twin IOTA DX-pedition April-May 2004

Derek Cox, G3KHZ

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Just back from a successful and enjoyable DX-pedition, I had visions of side-stepping moral duties like writing any report about the trip etc. We had not asked for any sponsorship, I thought, and so no one should expect anything from us! But, I am bursting to tell you about the true 'ham spirit' that we experienced on this DX-pedition.

Ian, 9M2/G3TMA, Maury, IZ1CRR, and myself joined up for an IOTA DX-pedition to these two islands in late April-early May. Ian, living in KL, was able to tackle the licensing and authorisation first hand. He made reconnaissance visits to both islands. As part of the licensing procedure in both V8 and 9M8, one needs a local sponsor.

IOTA OC-184

Ian secured the willing help of Rahman, V85RH, to assist with the V8 licensing. Rahman also helped secure the permissions

from the police and the Ministry of Home Affairs to use Pulau Muara Besar (PMB).

Ian's recce to PMB confirmed that we needed to set up camp on the north side of the island for good propagation to EU and NA. PMB is fairly close to the mainland (30 mins by boat) but uninhabited. The wet tropical climate causes all the vegetation to grow in a high, tangled and impenetrable mass, hiding snakes and many other unmentionable oversized creepy-crawlies! Ian's e-mailings confirmed to us that it would not be a comfortable place to visit. A week before the DX-pedition started we learned that Nordin, V8AND, with a team of his workers had cleared 1,000 square yards of jungle so that we could make our encampment.

On the second evening after our arrival in Bandar Seri Begawan (capital of Brunei) we invited the local radio amateurs to dinner at the CentrePoint hotel. Many more of the locals then joined in to give their help. On the following day there were a number of boat journeys to PMB. Firstly a large metal framework arrived, about half the size of a barn, supporting a huge canvas roof. This completely covered our two operating tents, the two sleeping tents and a communal area. A large table - that was shipped in together with Calor gas and a cooking ring. Cool boxes and blocks of ice arrived along with all manner of food. Nordin lent us two generators and one of his workers, Hary, was given the job of staying with us to take care of the generators and also us. He lit fires to produce smoke that helped keep the mosquitoes at bay. Drinking and washing water, ice and generator fuel was replenished regularly by these wonderful guys. A 2m station was set up for

us, giving us the ability to keep in contact with the group on the mainland.

We erected two multi-band verticals virtually in the water. Ian's new Butternut had radials stretching well into the ocean when the tide was in. Later we added my wire Moxon rectangle wire beam for 20m. This was mounted on a 30' fibreglass mast lent to me by Nordin. Ian, with his catapult, shot a line over a nearby tree and we put up a wire dipole for 17m.

Two stations were operational, one for CW (FT-900) and one for SSB (FT-100). We did not take amplifiers. Even without these our airline baggage excess was almost 50 kg! DuneStar and ICE filters kept the mutual interference to manageable levels.

In the tropics propagation is pretty dismal during the late morning and the bands really come to life after dark. Ian and myself operated shifts of 2-3 hours duration. Maury did most of the SSB operating and so we flogged him fairly hard, being the youngest member of the team! V85RH did some SSB operating too. 10,999 QSOs are in the V8PMB log using all bands from 40m to 10m. Our best results came from long-duration pile-ups on 15, 17, 20 and 30m. The static levels were pretty bad at times and during two nights we suffered torrential tropical downpours with lightning to match.

On Sunday our V8 friends and families came and organised a barbecue. The kids swam in the sea. We had lots of fun, plenty of leg pulling and we made a lot of friends.

When it came time to make the final QSO our friends returned with two boats and did most of the work taking the encampment down and loading everything for us. It took two trips to complete the transport of all the equipment back to the mainland. Our local friends invited us to a farewell dinner that evening. On the following day Rahman and Johnny Tan,

9M8DB, drove all the gear and us from Bandar to Miri in northern Sarawak. Johnny drove from his QTH in Miri to collect us. Here Johnny treated us to lunch and rounded the trip off with a visit to his QTH before taking us to Miri airport.

The hospitality and support given to us by these wonderful guys overwhelmed us. Without their generous help the OC-184 DX-pedition would have been a near impossibility.

IOTA OC-165

We flew from Miri to Kuching on the next leg of our journey and spent a couple of nights in town. This gave us enough time to buy provisions and obtain final clearance to stay on Pulau Satang Besar (PSB). We also managed to rent a 'well used' generator from a Mr Wee in Chinatown, Kuching.

Ian had hired a boat and a boatman, Sulaiman, to take care of our journeys to and from PSB. Unfortunately Ian was not able to join us on this second IOTA. On the morning of our departure we needed two taxis to carry the gear and ourselves on the 45-minute ride to the jetty.

A 45-minute boat journey got us to the island. A view of this island from a distance seemed to accentuate the very steep sides of the hills. The characteristic double hump outline of PSB clearly identified it for us. The only sandy beach stretched out to a tip on the south-east side. A quick check with our great circle map and a compass showed that the short path to Europe was going to be difficult, with CT being about the only area that would not be totally screened by the steep hills.

We set up camp and fired up the single station we had planned for this IOTA. The first QSOs were in the log just before 4pm local time on Thursday, 29 April. After 3 hours the generator failed! The engine continued running, but there was no output. The wardens

were very kind and invited us to temporarily use their facilities. We moved the station and antenna to their camp area along the southern side on the island. This severely reduced our ability to get a signal into either Europe or North America. I took the generator back to Mr Wee the following morning and stayed overnight in Kuching, leaving Maury to fend for himself!

The following morning, with the generator repaired, I went back to PSB. We relocated the station back at the SE end of the island, ran a further length of coax out to the vertical antenna, now located right at the high-tide point. Now we were in business. The two of us then alternately manned the station on an almost continuous basis.

We did, however, take a short break one evening to go out with the wardens to witness one of the giant green turtles, laying her 100 eggs. She does this 10 times a year. The wardens mark the nest site and after 50 days they encircle the nest area with a protective wire-mesh fence. The young turtles hatch out on about the 53rd day and they are collected in a bucket and released into the ocean on the next high tide or the following evening to limit attacks from predators. We were indeed privileged to see this whole operation.

After 4,500 QSOs and with the last QSO in the log early on Wednesday, 5 May, it was time to leave. It rained all night and was still raining when we dismantled the station. A welcome shower at the Medeka Palace hotel and a good meal (in contrast to the island diet of cornflakes and tinned pineapple) prepared us for the flight to Kuala Lumpur that evening. A couple of days sightseeing in KL rounded off the trip and we arrived home on Saturday morning, 8 May.

The Future

Anyone considering a trip to OC-165 in the future might like to consider the island of

Sampadi. It is uninhabited and there isn't any special wildlife protection. It should be easier to arrange a visit. This is a further 5NM out, but the small beach there faces NW. It is easy to mount a vertical in the water, giving a clear take-off to the north, with unimpeded paths to both EU and NA.

Donations

CDXC has a FT-900 which, by arrangement, may be borrowed for DX-peditions in the Far

East. To supplement this we have donated a tent, inflatable mattress, fan (essential) and cool box. These are held by Ian, 9M2/G3TMA [*See also 'Letters to the Editor'. Ed.*].

For other information and pictures on this DX-pedition check out:

www.425dxn.org/dxped/borneo/

G3KHZ

An Expedition to OX

Ric Stumpf-Siering, DL2VFR dl2vfr@onlinehome.de

Back in 2001 we [myself, DL2VFR, and Frank, DL2SWW] thought about activating a rare IOTA somewhere in the north. Our expeditions are usually to Scandinavia, so at first we focused on that area. But seeing as most European IOTAs are far from being 'rare ones' we looked even further north and ended up in Greenland.

Initially we toyed with idea of going to an unnumbered group. For example, why not activate Greenland's North East Coastal Islands? So we looked into how to get there and what would be needed. At a very early stage we realised that going to such a place would probably be something for a larger group - or as part of a regular scientific expedition. You would need to have additional insurance in case of emergency, also guns and other equipment etc. – as well as food, water, electricity and the approval of the local authorities. We would have to apply at least one year in advance for permission to go to the nature reserve in Greenland's north-eastern territory. And of course it would be very expensive. So we stopped dreaming and

started drafting plans for something more realistic.

After plenty of research, also on the Internet, we finally found a suitable island group: Greenland's South West Coastal Islands. This island group was activated briefly in 2000 and numbered NA-220. With a confirmation rate of only 8% it was definitely on the 'most wanted' list. This is what we'd been looking for. It seemed to us that Maniitsoq [Sukkertoppen] was fairly easy to get to by plane, seeing as they'd built an airfield there in 1999. The population of 3,000 was also a good indication of the likely facilities there. On the Internet we'd read about a hotel, a seamen's home and some cheap hostels besides, also daily flights and permanent electricity. Not the sort of thing you'd perhaps expect in an area just below the Arctic Circle and known as a desert of ice and rocks!

Our plans were gradually taking shape, but in 2002 we had to give priority to other projects such as trips to Belize, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Then at the beginning of 2003 NA-

220 was reported as being 12,4% confirmed. So not a rare one any more, but still rare enough. It was high time to get back to this project and go to the island now. We contacted the local tourist board and made some inquiries. After a few weeks we received more detailed information from Maniitsoq and had an extensive look at maps of the area. Radio-wise, what would our take-off be like from there? Where could we locate our antennas? What would the best QTH be? Here we made use of a lot of photographs found on the local websites.

Based on our experience in the Arctic, we decided to take amplifiers with us as well as vertical antennas. Propagation would be not very easy from there. And this time we would have to use a plane to get to our expedition site, so we would be limited as to the amount of luggage we could take.

It wasn't that complicated to find an airline flying to Greenland and ultimately Maniitsoq. There was only one: Greenland Air. With tears in our eyes we looked at the ticket prices quoted by the travel agencies and also on the Internet. The cheapest way to get to our destination was to buy the tickets direct in Copenhagen. But they were still expensive, so for one moment we thought about flying – for the same price - First Class to the South Pacific. But then everybody could do that!

And what would be the best time to go? In order to save money we decided against the summer. The winter would have probably been better for the lower bands, but the weather could be bad and a possible problem when putting up our antennas. Last but not least, the flight conditions could be bad and prevent us from reaching the island in the first place. So we decided to go in late April/the beginning of May. We would still have a sufficient period of darkness to operate on the lower bands - and the weather would be comparable to our winter.

For accommodation we chose the seamen's home – much cheaper than the hotel, but still a big item in our financial plan. When we enquired about a room we also asked some 'unusual' questions about space for antennas, the type of mains plugs, the buildings and mountains round about. We also said that we were planning on doing some 'ionospheric studies'. These questions were duly answered and we were allocated Room 4 for our 12-day stay.

We were also given the address of the local telecommunications authority. After all, they said, it would be a good idea to check with them about our 'ionospheric' plans. Eventually, as requested, we received a special call, but we still had to apply for an official licence. We couldn't quite understand why this was, seeing as OX is a CEPT country, but it was still nice to have an official document from 'Qaqortoq, Kalaaliit Nunaat' [Julianehaab, Greenland] with our names and callsigns on it. Maybe the staff at the seamen's home would be less excited about our strange activities now!

At the beginning of 2004 NA-220 was up to 13,1% confirmed. It was our task to change that. We started to get our equipment together and practised putting up antennas in Arctic-like conditions. It was about -5° C and we were only using a 'Leatherman' and a simple knife. We chose a Butternut HF6 and a Sigma 40XK to taken with us into the cold. They would be quite easy to set up and should work well together with our two IC-706s and FinnFet amplifier.

Our plan was a) to give as many people as possible a new IOTA and b) to provide as many extra band points as possible. When we announced our plans we received a lot of requests for 160m and RTTY. So we thought about it. For RTTY we would need a laptop. Originally, to help reduce the weight of our luggage, we had planned to use paper logs. And would there be a chance to work Top

Band? Indeed we would be happy enough if we had some openings on 80m! The Arctic, of course, is well known for polar cap absorption, aurora effects and very short nights at around this time. But we set everything up for both - RTTY and 160m, where we hoped we'd be in with a chance.

The next problem was packing everything and making sure that we would be able to carry the weight. The transceivers, amplifiers and antennas were of course a 'must'. And we would need warm clothes. But maybe we could we leave the razor at home!

With it now spring time in Germany, we left for the big block of ice somewhere to the north-west – and back to winter! We got the train to Copenhagen and spent the night there. Then early the next morning, 23 April, our plane took off in the direction of Kangerlussuaq [in Danish: Sønder Strømfjord]. We eventually arrived there with our 80 kgs of luggage, an ex-US military base in the middle of nowhere. But it's also something of a hub for every Greenland destination. After a short stopover it was then on to Maniitsoq Island. But the plane had a technical problem and so the start of our expedition was delayed for a few hours. But at least the weather was fine: 3° C and clear sky.

When we finally arrived on Maniitsoq Island and had our first look around, we realised how appropriate the Inuit name for the island is. 'Maniitsoq' means 'uneven' and we found ourselves surrounded by rocks and a lot of snow. In between all this: wooden houses of different sizes connected by large steps and also larger buildings of up to six or seven floors. It was like being in Denmark, but without the green and the trees. Here it was just rocks and stones.

Our home for the next 12 days was a far cry from what the average tourist looks forward to. In the harbour and the fishing industry there are not enough jobs to go round. The

Maniitsoq Kommune covers an area as large as Bavaria. The nearest big 'cities' are at least one hour's flying time away. Everything needs to be imported by sea. Denmark still takes care of most things, but Greenland is becoming increasingly independent. The main language is Greenlandic [Inuit], but it is very difficult to learn and understand. You still hear Danish everywhere.

Nowadays Denmark is only responsible for foreign affairs and defence. A lot of the more specialised work is still carried out by Danes who stay there only for a couple of months or years. Since May 1984 Kalaallit Nunaat [Greenland] has been self-governing and is no longer a member of the EU. Its population of 56,000 sometimes has to contend with fairly harsh conditions. Nevertheless, the standard of living is comparable to that of any small Danish town.

On first having a look around while unloading our luggage at the seamen's home we were not very optimistic. We were only about 200m from the water, but surrounded by higher buildings and mountains. Nigh on useless for DX! Also there was hardly anywhere to put up antennas – and children were playing everywhere.

So we started looking around for an alternative. Up by the hotel we spotted a suitable area, but this was too close to TV antennas and a mobile phone mast. But how about the helicopter landing site? This had an unused building next to it and would be ideal for the Butternut. It was owned by Greenland Air, but on a Friday evening it was impossible to contact anybody in charge.

Eventually we found somebody who could help – at our seamen's home. Per, the concierge, was a friendly person and understood our problems straight away. He seemed to be quite interested in people with a rather unusual hobby – people like us who go to islands in the middle of nowhere and

contact other people called 'hams' from there. He gave us the keys to an old house next door to the hostel, but situated some 30m higher up. The only thing we would have to do is take care of the heating. On our first inspection we became more optimistic about the antennas and the rooms were perfect for us. But where was the electricity? The house was obviously not connected to the mains. Unfortunately there was no way of getting the electricity switched on before Monday morning – and even that seemed rather over-optimistic to us.

So we went back to the seamen's home and looked for a way to at least get on the air until we could find a better QTH. We eventually found a suitable place for the Sigma 40XK, on a little mound of snow, and at first started operating with only 100W because we were expecting interference with power lines and TV antennas close by. But nothing happened, so we launched into the long-awaited pile-up - and later started using the amplifier.

The only thing that was as bad as we'd expected was the ionosphere. Most of the time only one band was open - very occasionally two. For four to five hours in the morning and also in the evening we could hear nothing at all. So most of our activity was during the night, all depending on band openings. We met up for breakfast and dinner and discussed the propagation, seeing as at these times the bands were closed anyway. If you couldn't hear us on the air we were definitely not sunning ourselves on the beach!

In fact we came to compare working the pile-ups from there to cutting a field of very short grass with a very small pair of scissors. From time to time a strong wind would come blowing over this field of stations calling and make it impossible to cut any of the grass at all. It was a sound like that of a waterfall and this blotted out everything for several seconds to several minutes. At times we were no doubt putting out a good signal, but it was impossible to hear everybody calling us. So

we tended to start by working some of the very loud North American stations – located just down the road, as it were!

On changing our QTH on the Monday things got a lot better. As promised, electricity was laid on and we started to put up our antennas again. Once again the snow became our friend. We put the Butternut together and buried the base deep in the 2½ metres of snow on top of the bare rocks. An excellent base for our purposes! We tuned the Sigma 40XK for 17m. All other bands were covered by the HF6.

During the night 40 and 30m were usable most of the time. During the day we had some good and long openings on 17m - much better than we had expected – and also on 20m of course. Although we had originally expected it to be the other way round. We occasionally had some short openings on 15m, but on the higher frequencies you couldn't hear a sausage.

It was virtually the same on the lower bands. After hours of calling and a lot of skeds we finally had some 50 QSOs in the log on 80m. Every contact on that band was not only a great success, but hard work too. We didn't make any QSOs on 160m. No wonder. Our semi-dark nights only lasted for about four hours!

We worked all continents, with Europe in first place before North America. However, it was very difficult to work Japan – and then only via the long path. Although we had planned to operate mainly in our favourite mode, CW, we sometimes had good signals from EU and NA which allowed us to operate SSB or RTTY for those who needed these modes.

And at the end of our time on Maniitsoq we had to contend with a new effect: man-made noise. Greetings from Thule Airbase some 100 miles north? But by that time the conditions were going down rapidly anyway. Indeed back home in Germany we heard that on 1 May

there had been a coronal mass ejection (a C 9.5 flare) together with coronal hole 94. Even after the event, that sounded disastrous. The other kind of weather we had was very much what central Europeans would call winter. Only two really sunny days, plus two severe snowstorms. The Greenlanders call this spring time!

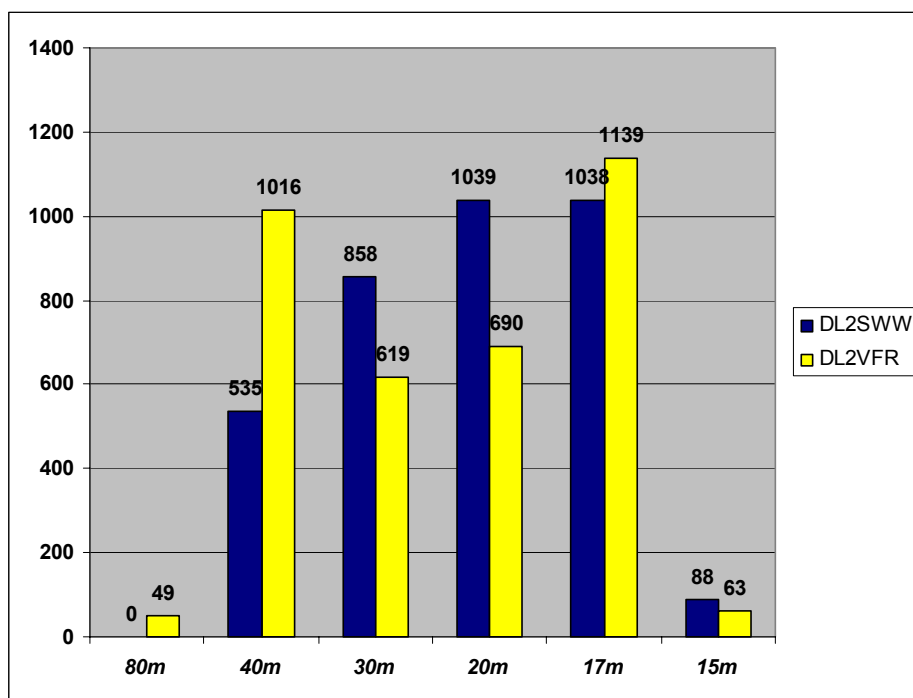
We closed down on the afternoon of 5 May with more than 7,000 contacts in the log. After dismantling the stations we returned home the following morning via Copenhagen, arriving the next day in northern Germany – wearing clothes which were far too warm, but happy to be back home.

In the year of the FSDXA's mammoth 3B9C expedition we were, of course, only a small event on the DX and IOTA scene. Compared to our two-man kayak in Greenland, 3B9C was a huge Viking ship with two dozen rowers or more. Nevertheless we provided a lot of people with contacts - and QSL cards as well.

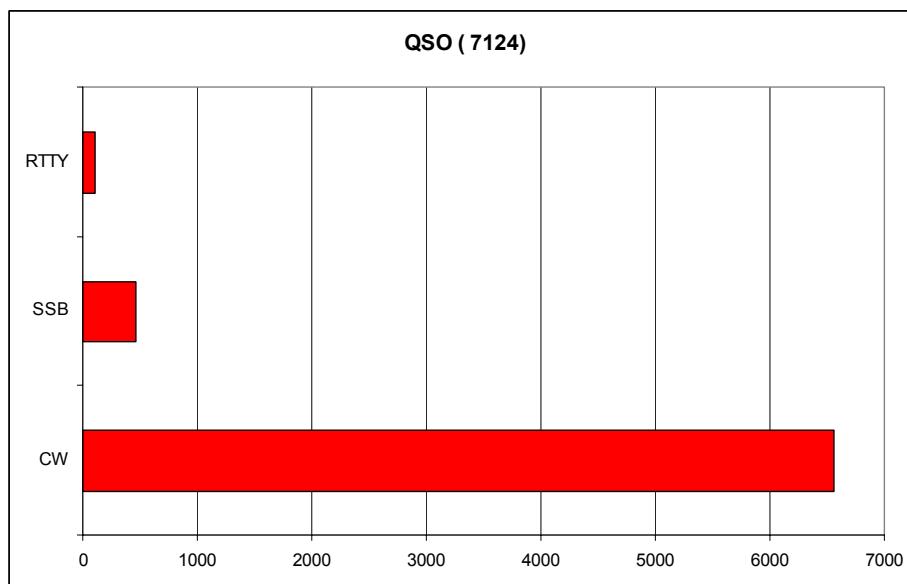
Last but not least, it was a great adventure for us and one day, when our bank balances have recovered, we look forward to going off again to a new island. We'll see you in the pile-up!

Finally it's thank to our sponsors, the GDXF, IREF and DARC Publishing, for their support – and of course thanks to our wives for their patience.

QSO Statistics a) OX/DL2VFR and OX/DL2SWW



QSO Statistics b) OX/DL2VFR and OX/DL2SWW



How not to organise a mini DX-pedition - and not have too good a time!

David Edwards, MØCNP

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On my birthday, 22 January, we were told that highly discounted flights to Bermuda were available, but had to be booked on the day. After a few phone calls, it was decided to book the tickets as late as possible, which was for 9 - 23 March. So it was that preparations began for a holiday DX-pedition to VP9, primarily to see our daughter and her young family, but also hopefully with plenty of time to 'play radio'.

The first thing was to check my Bermuda licence, only to find that it had expired, so a letter to the Government of Bermuda in Hamilton produced the renewed licence, which was delivered to my daughters house within a couple of weeks.

On my last trip, in 2002, I had borrowed a TenTec rig from a local UK amateur, but at only 5W not too much was to be expected. However, a good antenna system, I thought, would make matters acceptable. I had taken a half-size G5RV, W3DPP, a 100' long wire and assorted feeders. A homebrew 20A PSU, and MFJ-948 Versatuner completed the equipment.

On arrival at my daughter's ground floor apartment it became very evident that erecting any sort of antenna was going to be very difficult. The apartment was almost in a hole, with steeply rising ground up to 40' on three sides and a big 'hill' just across the street. As she had only recently moved in, we thought it

would be unwise to start scrambling around on the roof, so a trip to the local DIY shop bought a stack of canes which were taped together to make a pole about 20' long and which was very bendy! With a suitable back stay, this became one end of the half-size G5RV. At the other end of the garden was a services pole some 15" in diameter and 20' high, with high voltage AC, telephone, cable etc. all hanging precariously from the grossly overloaded suspensions! So a nail was inserted about 10' up to provide a support for the G5RV at that end. This proved difficult to tune, so the W3DPP and a long wire were tried, without much success. The house earth system wasn't brilliant either, so an earth rod was put in, watered, and finally a reasonable VSWR was obtained with the G5RV.

Throughout the period of operation, I was plagued with instability problems and RF getting in where it shouldn't. However, at the end of the day, with only a few hours of operation possible due to our family and holiday commitments, some fun was had and some 100 contacts were made. The next time it will be better, I said to myself!

So I decided to build a dedicated rig for such operations. This was loosely based on the G3MVZ design of the 1960s: 100W output, all-band, all-mode – 240V, 117V and 12V input - all self-contained in one unit, with a built-in VSWR meter, so requiring only an antenna and an ATU to enable me to 'go anywhere'. However, this rig is still in the workshop and it will be quite some time before it's completed - if ever!

So what do I take to Bermuda this time? Or do I borrow a rig? Because my main interest is in operating, and I plan to get involved in lots of portable/field activities this year – also HF/mobile - the decision was made to buy a rig. But which one? After due consideration an Icom IC-718, Watson W-25SM switch-mode PSU and MFJ-16010 ATU were

purchased. This all worked fine into my full-size G5RV at home.

On 8 March we then travelled to Gatwick airport, with all the equipment suitably packed into our suitcases, stayed overnight in an excellent hotel, and flew out the next day in a Boeing 777, 'cattle class'. My wife Claire and I are both physically disabled and the level of comfort on board left a lot to be desired, so next time we will hopefully fly Business Class! We arrived in VP9 [GMT -4] on schedule. There I noted that a red 'heavy baggage' label had been attached to my suitcase. I wonder why!

10 March saw us settling in, with thoughts of radio never far away. During the evening we put up the long wire antenna - about 100' of wire in all running N-S, 20' high at one end and 30' at the other, with 60' of it roughly horizontal. An excellent SWR too on all bands, with the exception of 160m. A piece of reinforcement rod provided an adequate earth. A quick listen at 2100 UTC then revealed 8P6AKU at RS 59 on 14 MHz and he was the first callsign in the log.

The next day we were out and about, sightseeing etc. Then towards evening the wind started to get up quite dramatically. At 2100 UTC on 14 MHz HI9/PA3GIO became the second entry in the log - and by midnight a fully fledged tropical storm was blowing. Cursory peeks outside revealed that all was well with the antenna, so a peaceful, although slightly disturbed night ensued.

The next morning there was still a howling gale blowing, but the antenna was still OK. Then suddenly during breakfast there was a huge crash - and the antenna wire was drooping. A large table had come flying through the air from some distant garden, got caught up in the feeder and dragged the antenna and stay ropes away from the supports. Oh dear, I thought, there goes any

operation for today! It was too windy to secure the antenna again until later that day.

The next day turned out fine, so family activities took precedence, albeit with many a QSO in between as of 1243 UTC. Indeed it wasn't long before I had a nice pile-up going. My son-in-law then started to erect a barbecue he'd just bought, so I reluctantly finished the pile-up to give him a hand. Sorry, guys, if you were waiting! The evening barbecue was a great success. And yes, it's true: American steaks are delicious – and also massive!

Then on the Monday morning a great gaggle of workmen and machinery assembled on the road outside the apartment. They started to dig up the tarmac to lay a new water main, seeing as apparently the old one was leaking. The noise was incredible, so much so that even with the doors and windows closed it was impossible to stay in, let alone operate the radio, so we went out for the day. The boat trip around the harbour and sound was beautiful, with the gentle throb of the diesel engine very soothing compared to the raucous noise of builders' compressors!

In between a good number of contacts were made, on and off. Until the Wednesday, that is, when a new tenant moved in upstairs. He was a hi-fi addict and had immediately devoted virtually his whole bedroom to his 'system'. After I heard my SSB signals repeated very loudly via his hi-fi system, operations had to be seriously curtailed, and all future operations would need to be when he went out. He was new in Bermuda - and on business – so thankfully he was quite often out! When I was unable to operate SSB, I decided to try RTTY and PSK31 on my son-in-law's laptop. I'd taken a selection of leads with me for this and already loaded Winlog32 onto it, but I couldn't get it to run. It was the same with CW – and with my paddle key, which had been damaged in transit. All attempts to mend it without the proper tools proved fruitless.

Then the bug struck, one which was doing the rounds in Bermuda. One by one we all started to feel unwell. So very little radio. All I wanted to do for the next few days was sleep!

By 22 March I was feeling a lot better and raring to get on the radio. Then all hell was let loose again: those men and their machines returned to dig up the roadway, this time with seemingly renewed vigour. Immediately the cold water supply stopped. We were advised that we had a rainwater tank for washing etc., but the pump for this wasn't working and hadn't worked for some time. It was also too noisy to operate the radio or to sit in the garden, so we went into Hamilton and sat by the harbour.

The next day it was time to go home. The radio equipment was reluctantly packed away, and a last few hours spent with the family before bidding a tearful goodbye. To our considerable relief, the water supply was turned on again in the morning, so we were all able to have a good wash etc. before flying home. The sting in the tail here is that the upstairs tenant had left his water tap in the bathroom turned on, presumably wondering why there was no water. He forgot to turn it off and went to work. The result was a flood in his bathroom which gradually spilled through the ceiling into my daughter's flat.

At the airport one of our suitcases then flew open on taking it out of the car, discharging the contents on to the pavement. Thankfully, though, at check-in we were offered an upgrade (it's great to have friends in high places...), so the flight home was very much more comfortable.

To summarise on the radio front: about 250 calls were made over a period of about 16 hours. The best pile-up resulted in three calls per minute. Band conditions were very poor. This was confirmed by numerous 'juicy ones' (from a European point of view) calling for long periods without any response. I was able

to work them easily. I found that I could only operate on 80m at around midnight, with 20m during the day being next best – and 10, 17 and 40m generally very poor. Not a single contact was made on 15 or 12m. We shall be going to Bermuda again, maybe in 2005, but

some alternative way of operating may have to be found, eg operating /M from the car - or sitting by the ocean with a kite lifting a vertical aloft!

David Edwards VP9/MØCNP, MØCNP

A Memorable QSO

Martin Atherton, G3ZAY

g3zay@btinternet.com

Watching the old Tony Hancock video recently I was reminded of the one occasion when I received an “emergency” call on 20 metres. This was back in early 1982 during the Falklands war when I was QSL manager for G3CWI (VP8ANT) down in Antarctica. He had been ordered to keep a low profile on the bands but I kept our twice-weekly skeds on 14MHz just in case he had anything to report.

One evening around 2030z my VP8ANT call was answered by a very weak call from “VP8”. “Go ahead the VP8” I replied. “OK – this is Victor Papa Eight in Port Stanley. We just heard on the radio that the RAF say they have put the runway here out of action. But they haven’t. Please call the Ministry of Defence and tell them that we can see Argentine planes landing right now. Did you get that?” Resisting the instinct to say that my pencil had broken (as happened to Hancock), I confirmed I had copied everything OK, and then heard nothing more from “VP8”. The message was phoned through to the Duty Officer at the MoD in London a few minutes later and presumably got wherever it was supposed to. For years I wondered who had called me and what they had been using – and the answer was revealed in a copy of the May 2002 Falklands Islands Newsletter which I found in Port Stanley last year: “Reg Silvey, the Cape Pembroke lighthouse keeper and former British Antarctic Survey radio expert,

indulged his hobby as a radio ham by transmitting intelligence to Britain at great risk throughout the occupation from his stone cottage, defying an Argentine ban on radios, and radio detector vans that failed to find him.

His Falklands callsign “Victor Papa Eight” was picked up by a radio ham, Bob North, in Rotherham, Yorkshire. Silvey fooled the Argentines by handing in a spare radio smuggled to him by George Betts, captain of the Monsunen supply ship, dismantling his landmark normal aerial, adapting a brilliantly simple substitute – his steel-core washing line stretched across his garden, and illegally acquiring a notice signed by the Argentine Military Governor, General Menendez, denying entry to Argentine soldiers as, it proclaimed, his house had been cleared by the military police.

He thereafter indulged in serious spying with all its dangers, sending fifteen second bursts of intelligence about Argentine gun emplacements and revealing that Stanley Airport was occupied by Argentine soldiers and receiving ammunition supplies, and could be attacked as there were no islanders there. He was never arrested nor subject to arbitrary searches that plagued so many islanders. Nor was his dangerous work ever officially acknowledged.”

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

IOTA Directory – 40th Anniversary Edition

The 40th Anniversary Edition of the IOTA Directory is now available for purchase via the RSGB website at

www.rsgbshop.org/shop/acatalog/

(click 'Radio Books & CDs' and then 'IOTA') or by telephone to Sales at +44 (0)1707 659015. Larger than ever, with 136 pages, this anniversary edition features an historical review, much of which has never previously been published - as well as Geoff Watts' original IOTA list of 1964, fascinating for what it includes as well as for what it omits. It includes all you have come to expect of the Directory: the latest IOTA island listings, DX-pedition stories, the Most Wanted List, and articles on how to get started in IOTA.

Readers who have been active on the bands for several years and want help in identifying operations that count, will find the listing of operations accepted for credit quite invaluable. This listing was first introduced in the 2002 Directory and is now updated and expanded to cover the 650 rarest IOTA groups. Using it could save you hours in preparing your application. And for the first time the Directory includes the current year's Honour Roll and other performance listings.

Update of data in IOTA Directory, 40th Anniversary Edition

New IOTA reference numbers issued

AF-095/Pr TJ Cameroon group (Cameroon)

AF-096 3X Guinee-Maritime Province North group (Guinea)
AS-169 VU Maharashtra State group (India)
OC-266 VK6 Western Australia State (North Coast) Centre group (Australia)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AF-096 3XDQZ/P Alcatrack Island, Tristao Islands (April 2004)
AS-147 JR8KJR/8 Rishiri Island (March 2004)
NA-030 XF4IH Socorro Island, Revilla Gigedo Islands (March 2004)
OC-071 VK6LI Pasco Island (April 2004)
OC-088 V8JIM Borneo Island (March 2004)
OC-092 4G2F Fuga Island, Babuyan Islands (April 2004)
OC-165 9M8PSB Satang Besar Island (April/May 2004)
OC-184 V8PMB Muara Besar Island (April 2004)
OC-266 VK6AN Viney Island (April 2004)

Note: This list includes operations where validation material was volunteered, ie not specifically required for credit to be given. In all cases, cards now submitted will be accepted by Checkpoints if they meet normal standards. This means that the island name should be printed on the card.

Operations from which validation material is awaited as at 3 June 2004

AF-095/Pr TJ3MC/P Mondoleh Island (April 2004)

SA-074 OC3I Los Chimus Island
(February 2004)
SA-089 YV5ANF/1 Sal Key (April
2003)

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

E-mail: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk

Note: Checkpoints are not authorised to credit
QSL cards for an operation where validation is
required.

73 Roger

<http://www.g3kma.dsl.pipex.com>

Visit the website for the latest IOTA
information!

IOTA 2004

Don Field, G3XTT

Enthusiasm for IOTA 2004 continues, with
plenty of activity around the IOTA
frequencies. Remember that you can not only
build points and claim a certificate for chasing
islands, but you can also get certificates for
activating new and rare IOTAs as well.

Islands counting for premium points during
July and August include (there are plenty
more):

July

Many European counters, plus:

AF-003	ZD8	Ascension Island
AF-004	EA8	Canary Islands
AF-005	D4	Cape Verde, Leeward Is
AF-014	CT3	Madeira Islands
AF-022	ZD7	St.Helena
AF-029	ZD9	Tristan da Cunha
AF-086	D4	Cape Verde, Windward Is
AN-016		Various Antarctica

August

NA-018	OX	Greenland
NA-021	8P	Barbados

NA-027	VO1	Newfoundland
NA-032	FP	St Pierre & Miquelon
SA-002	VP8	Falkland Is
SA-003	PYØF	Fernando de Noronha

Of course, there will be many island stations
active in the IOTA Contest on 24-25 July,
many of them for a few days before and after
the contest. The contest rules appear at
www.rsgbhfcc.org.

Here are the standings as currently posted on
the CDXC (www.cdxc.org.uk) website (where
full information on IOTA 2004 appears),
although many others are known to be taking
part:

F6AXP	548
GWØNCU	477
OZ4RT	416
JRØDLU	410
JF4VZT	398
G3LAS	395
F5NOD	383
GØWRE	372
G4NXG/M	316
JA1HP	297
JA2KVB	292

JN6RZM	273
UAØFDX	245
F8NAN	235
JH1QVW	233
9A5CY	232
G3LHJ	223
GØBLB	199
PA9ZZ	190
UA3DEE	181
J13MJK	177
VE3VHB	175
HAØIH	175
W4DKS	161
PAØMIR	139
F8DGF	133
W4ABW	125
G3LUW	122
MØCSD	96
GØTHF	93
DL4UCS	80
WA3GNW	65
NØYO	64

MMØNDX	60
2E1OKT	49
G6OKU	49
DL7FA	47
MØKCM	41
F6FYD	32
GW3KJN	26
GØPCF	25
G3TXF	20
GØGFQ	10
VE6ZT	7
MMØBQI	6
G6LAU	6
M5FUN	3

I am happy to answer any questions about the programme.

Don G3XTT

don@g3xtt.com

Manager, IOTA 2004

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

It is pleasing to see so many of you in the RSGB 80m Club Championships, and not just the RTTY section either! Yes, I have actually entered the SSB legs, as well as the CW nights. I am happy enough with CW, but somehow I just can't take to SSB. How some of you manage close to 100 contacts using this mode is beyond me.

In general, there is still a lot of confusion as to how to conduct an RTTY QSO, and I guess the easy way is to say it is very similar to a CW QSO in format. There are still a lot of folk using the 3 X 3 style of call when responding to a CQ, and this is simply not necessary. It was said that sending a 1 X 3 can reduce confusion, but I am not sure even that

applies in this particular contest. In a major RTTY contest, yes, I agree it is feasible that you can get two stations on the same frequency, or close enough that you may want to specify which one you are after, but in the 80m CC, as it is pretty much confined to Gs, it isn't that likely. What I have noticed though, is that many callers are way off frequency. I use very narrow filters, so if you call too far away, I just won't hear you, even if you send a 3 X 3 call!

I have also seen a lot of people asking for repeats of the exchange when it has printed as TOOAPWEAPWE. Don't bother asking for a repeat, as you can translate it easily enough. If you look at the top row of letter keys on the

keyboard, you will see that the number keys are slightly to the left in the row, so Q = 1, W = 2, E = 3, and so on, with P = Ø. If you now look at TOOAPWEAPWE, you can see that this translates as 599A023A023 and that A is the equivalent to a space. This happens because you have missed the SHIFT character (the numbers are shifted letters), and that is how it comes out. If you select USOS (un-shift-on-space) you reduce the chance of this happening, but you can't prevent it entirely.

I will now make a rash offer! If any of you are having difficulties with RTTY and want to use it more, then e-mail me, and I will see what I can do to help you. I must suggest that you join BARTG, as you will find lots of help and advice in our monthly magazine 'Datacom'. If you want some help in getting MMTTY sorted, then ask me. I was part of the team that has written the latest help file, so I do feel reasonably familiar with what it does.

I don't seem to have spent that much time in the shack of late, but I managed to work ET3TK on 20m for an all-time new one, which was very nice. A few days later I found him on 17m RTTY, and he said he would be active in the ANARTS RTTY contest. Indeed he was, and I found him on both 20 and 15m, so I am now very pleased. QSL for this one is via OK1CU. I am not sure how long he will stay in Ethiopia, but he has certainly been very active on RTTY. I also suspect he has NET and AFC on, as he tends to wander up and down a bit, so do get ready to turn the dial to keep him tuned in! It is far better for you to tune exactly on his frequency, rather than use NET & AFC yourself. If you do that, you will find it harder to work him. Ed, D2PFN, has also been on 17m, so keep an eye out on the band. With 15m often closed, there is some nice DX about on 17m.

The ANARTS contest gave me a few surprises, and it was nice to work 9M2/G4ZFE on 15 and 20m, plus G4WFQ/HI9 on 20m. But perhaps the biggest

surprise to me was on the Sunday morning. I got up at around 0515 UTC and started on 20m, as it was already a very nice sunny morning, and I assumed I would be too late to get anything on the lower bands. However, I decided to check 40m anyway, and to my amazement, I found ZL2AMI pounding in. Got him first call, and then found he was the only signal on the band! I had thought I might find a few single-band entrants for that extra mult, but I hadn't expected to find ZL.

5U7B was active in the contest, but was working split for most of the time, and the pile-ups were just too big to warrant staying around. As is usual in many contests, some of the DX is under a big pile-up on the first day, but it then dies down, and they can be worked comparatively easily on the second day. This didn't seem to apply to 5U7B, but ET3TK was definitely easier on Sunday.

By the time you read this, the Friedrichshafen HamRadio event will be over. This will be the first time I have ever been to this event, so I am hoping to find a few of you to say hallo to, maybe over a pint or two! I know Neville will be there as part of the 3B9C team, and I hope to attend that lecture.

Waldemar, DK3VN, has arranged an RTTY dinner on the Friday evening and I will let you know how that goes in the next issue. It looks as though there will be some well-known RTTY types there, so it could well be a good evening.

In case you didn't already know, I have now taken on the role of BARTG awards manager. Full details of these can be found on the BARTG website at www.bartg.demon.co.uk along with details as to how you can apply.

What to look for in July/August:

July 7 – 21: K8AQM and K8AA as 5WØTR and 5WØDL. QSL via K8AA.

July 9 – 19: VP9 by WA4PGM. QSL direct to home call only.

July 29 – August 6: K4SV and VA7DX as 7P8DA and 7P8NK. QSL via K4YL.

August 7 – 11: K4SV and VA7DX as 3DAØSV and 3DAØWC. QSL via K4YL.

August 12 – 17: C9 by K4SV and VA7DX. QSL to K4YL.

Contests:

July 3 – 4: DL-DX RTTY.

See www.dl-dx.de for more info. Has sections for low power, and wire antennas!

July 10-11: UK-DX RTTY. See www.srars.org/ukdxc.htm for the full rules. New contest for 2004.

July 24-25: Russian RTTY (clashes with IOTA!)

See www.sk3bg.se/contest/russrtty.htm for the full rules.

August 21-22: SARTG RTTY (great format of 3 X 8-hour sessions)

See www.sartg.com/contest/wwrules.htm.

SCC RTTY

See <http://lea.hamradio.si/~scc/rtty.html>.

Finally, don't forget the final 80m CC data evening on 22 July. I do hope the RSGB continues this contest, as it has proved very popular.

That's it for this time, so good hunting, and see you in the contests!

Phil GUØSUP

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Yes, it's a new name at the top of the page. Tim, G4VXE, has decided to stand down from compiling the Contest column for the Digest, and he suggested I might be a suitable replacement. Tim, G4VXE, and Paul, GØWAT, before him have both done an excellent job. I hope I can produce a column of an equally high standard.

To help me prepare, one of the first things I've done is to grab a large handful of old Digests, and remind myself of what the old columns have covered. The most popular form of submission has tended to be reports of contests themselves - from home operations, to field-day style multi-operator activities and also contest expeditions overseas. These are

always great reading and help to show the 'big picture' of contesting, ie the preparation and planning of contests and the teamwork involved.

I will be very interested to receive other reports too. Perhaps some new software or hardware you've tried? Tell us what worked and what didn't.

If you've recently tried Single-Op 2 Radio for the first time, tell us how you got on with it. I wouldn't expect you to hand over that secret formula for winning CQ WW you've been working on, but there must be lots of experience amongst the CDXC membership that could be useful to others. If you're a new

contester, what things would you find most beneficial?

For those that don't know me: I do try to take part in a lot of HF contests. So please send me some contributions, otherwise you'll be reading about my exploits into events like the Eastern Kiribati Top Band Sprint, or perhaps the VK/ZL QRP SSTV Challenge from now on.

Over the years I've tried QRP and low power contesting with stealthy wires and dipoles running along the garden fence. I've also been fortunate enough to be able to operate from the 'sharp end' at some high-performing stations from time to time, so I hope I can relate to most testers, or would-be tester situations. I operate in CW, SSB and data modes contests, so can't be accused of any editorial bias!

RSGB Club Championship

The first year of the new RSGB Club Championship series of contests will be drawing to a close when you read this. The intention was to develop a series of short-duration events, based around activity from Affiliated Societies. The choice of weekday operating, 90-minute sessions on 80m, and 10W/100W sections was chosen so it would appeal to as large a 'potential audience' as possible.

Before any contest format is tried for the first time, there is bound to be a little trepidation from the organisers. Will the format work? Will there be enough participation? Admittedly the first month's events on SSB and RTTY were difficult, more due to the band conditions than low activity. 'DLs everywhere, but 'no Gs' was a common lament.

But after the initially shaky start, the propagation and activity improved - and from then on the rates achieved, and the levels of

activity, have made the Club Championship seem like a mini-AFS. Several of the leading clubs have had 10 operators or more taking part, with the individual leaders making over 160 QSOs on CW, 170 QSOs on SSB, and over 40 QSOs on Data. Almost 60 clubs and societies have taken part so far.

What has also been pleasing is that the 10W section has also been well supported by Foundation licensees and other QRP aficionados. Many of the QRP scores rival the 100W sections - and there are not many other opportunities for QRP stations to make 100 QSOs in an hour and a half.

The biggest problems could be put down to the popularity of the contests. The most recent SSB events have started to see a little congestion, as the increasing number of entrants try to fit within the allocated contest frequencies. The band planning decided upon left the top 50 kHz of 80m clear, which has mostly meant that the contest has not caused any grief for the DXers and other non-contest operators.

Any tester who is quite active will build up in his or her head a list of callsigns of other frequently heard testers. This is a mental version of the 'Super Check Partial' files that we may use with our contest software. What I was aware of as the Club Championship progressed was how many new callsigns I'd never worked before in a contest were now taking part. Several clubs have responded publicly that they have enjoyed taking part in the events, and for many it provided the little push they needed to get active on CW, or on RTTY and PSK for the first time. A particular 'first' for me was working G4BUO on PSK!

The contests will certainly be back for next year. From my own local club experience, and after presenting to a few other Midlands clubs recently, it seems the key to success is having a very keen individual who can

persuade others to get on the air to support their club effort. This person can then collect the logs and send them off together via e-mail, which has also enabled a rapid turn-around of contest results. The benefit of having a standard log format also plays a part here.

Whilst some of our well-known contest groups have been putting in high scores from their members, this has been matched in the results by grassroots radio clubs, who are producing their excellent club scores by sheer weight of numbers.

Contest Calendars

Whilst sorting out the arrangements for starting to compile this column, one of the senior members of the CDXC committee said that he thought that there were too many contests organised. As a die-hard contester you may be surprised to find me agreeing with him!

If you are able to at least spend a little time taking part in a contest most weekends, what can seem frustrating is how similar many of the events seem to be. Although the basic premise of contesting is of course simple – contact as many people as you can in a certain time period - the rules for contests, with the scoring of QSOs, points, multipliers, bands, modes and times gives each event its own flavour. Different events will appeal to different people, and also are more likely to be won by different types of stations.

So it's a little disappointing and frustrating when new contests are devised that don't offer anything different from other events. The most common scenario is the 'everyone works everybody else' contest, with DXCC country multipliers, on all bands over a 24-hour period. It's simple enough, and because it doesn't exclude any potential QSOs, it maximises the possibilities for high QSO volumes and activity. Occasionally events like this occur on sequential weekends, with

the real risk that activity is diluted, and instead of one good event, we can end up with two poorly supported ones, with the increased weekend 'band occupancy' that so annoys non-contesters.

Another type of contest is run by many national societies, often with rules that say that DX entrants can only contact stations of the organising contest. Many of these type of events run by our European neighbours are great for average suburban UK contesters to do well in, for example running with a low dipole, or multi-band vertical and 100W.

However, there aren't enough weekends in the year for everyone to have their own contest. A possibility here is to combine similar events, so that contests could resemble the popular SAC or Baltic contests, which still have the same idea, but allow contacts with an area like Scandinavia or the Baltic region.

One view that has been discussed in the past is having contests within contests, so that a domestic contest could mix with another contest and both benefit from the increased activity. An example of this is the WRTC event which is now run concurrently with the IARU HF Championship. Similar events have coincided with NFD and the EUHFC in recent years. I'd be interested to hear views on this subject.

SD becomes Freeware

Paul O'Kane, EI5DI, has generously decided to make his SD suite of programs freeware. Development is continuing for the Windows-based versions of the programs. At the time of writing the current version is 10.18. SD, SDI, SDX, and SDV can be downloaded from <http://www.ei5di.com>. SD directly supports more RSGB contests than any other contest software. It is also recommended for beginners to contest logging using a computer. There is also a well supported SD-User e-mail reflector which Paul participates in. Please

persuade some of the members of your local club to give it a try.

K4OJ and W4AN SKs

The contesting community lost two of its most influential and well loved members from the USA over the last few months. Jim White, K4OJ, was a founder of the Florida Contest Group and passed away after undergoing heart valve surgery in February. Jim was an enthusiastic tester and supporter of the FCG, and previously an ARRL HQ employee in the Contest Branch.

Bill Fisher, W4AN, founded the popular contesting.com website, and also helped to create the eham.net website. Several e-mail reflectors, including the uk-contest reflector were personally resourced by him.

Whilst this is of course a sad time for their families, the response from fellow testers honouring their friends' generosity and enthusiasm for their hobby is a great example of the community spirit amongst testers.

This included creating a trust fund for W4AN's young children. Our facet of the hobby can often appear to be one of the more impersonal in amateur radio from our on-the-air activities, but I'm sure there were many fond memories of Jim and Bill being shared in this year's Dayton Contest Suites.

CQ Contest Hall of Fame

At this year's Dayton Hamvention there were two new inductees to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame.

They are Steve Bolia, N8BJQ, who has been a long time director of the CQ WW WPX contests, and Trey Garlough, N5KO, who created the 'CQ-contest' and '3830' Internet reflectors, co-founded the contesting.com website, and is also one of the founders of the

HC8N super-station on the Galapagos Islands. Congratulations to them both.

GB5HQ – IARU HF Championship 2004

GB5HQ will be a large presence in this year's IARU HF Championship contest, running over the 10-11 July. The team, under the leadership of Dave, G4BUO, is again preparing to operate from a variety of locations around the UK. Last year GB5HQ was placed second behind DAØHQ in the Headquarters category, which was an excellent result considering it was the first time a multi-operator, multi-transmitter, multi-location-style operation had been attempted in the UK.

Of course, the team are hoping to reach the top position for 2004. Whilst it wouldn't be proper to ask you to 'just' work GB5HQ, I hope that many of you will participate in the contest and work lots of stations, and I will take it on trust that several of those QSOs will be with GB5HQ! To keep up enthusiasm for making that difficult ground wave 10m QSO, or that noisy 160m QSO, there will again be an awards programme in operation for contacting GB5HQ on different numbers of band/mode slots during the contest. For more details see <http://www.gb5hq.com>.

Now for an account of last year's CQ WW Phone contest by Colin, MUØFAL. Colin's story is a good example of contesting from a typical domestic station – rather than run all-band and be less competitive and perhaps disappointed. Colin picked a specific suitable target and said 'go for it'. I just wish I had a nice MU prefix myself!

CQ WW Phone 2003 by Colin Fallaize, MUØFAL

After the great conditions during the last few years on HF, I was in two minds whether to take part in the contest. The band conditions in previous weeks had certainly taken a turn for

the worse and the thought of fighting the QRM on the lower bands was a non-starter for my enthusiasm. The fact that my shack is in the lounge also does not help for late-night contesting!

A decision to do a single band, low power entry floated into my brain, but what band? Given the recent conditions I floated the idea of 15m single band, low power. But I then learnt that Steve, G4JVG, would be using the club station SB on 15m. Then Richard, M5RIC, who was looking at the records, mentioned that the latest records for GU had been published on the CQ website, including MUØFAL SB 10M LP and was at around 50K.

Well, that record was set by accident in a part-time effort in 2002, so the challenge was on to improve on it in maybe a final shot before 10m goes quiet for a few years! So the decision was made and plenty of sleep for the MUØFAL household as well. In the days prior to the contest I did some 10m SSB activity to see what the conditions were like and things were not too bad. Then the sun developed the spots that a teenager would die of and I started to get very negative; an all-band effort was back on the cards. Well, at least I could make some noise in a part-time effort.

The Friday night arrived and no early night for me! I can't resist a late night tune of the bands. Saturday morning I fire up the MUØFAL station PC and land straight on the frequency of 3V8BB – 59- and he has no takers. Well, I have started: 59/14! I find a clear frequency and off I go; very slow going, a few Russians, but a very low rate. Time for S/P and this pays off - a good rate per hour and plenty of mults. As it is early in the day I decide to hunt zones, countries and maybe 3-pointers. Wow, 10m is a wide band for S/P!

As the day goes on it is hard work, few significant runs on CQs, so S/P becomes the method. Mults in South America and the

Caribbean seem to be all that the propagation will offer me - with a few USA stations, but mainly the big guns. Very few of the little guys. At 1730 the band runs out of steam, but the YL keeps telling me carry on. I give up!

Sunday morning I get up, not too early, and the band is full of European Sporadic E, but no DX. I call CQ and run Europeans; at least there are country mults, but I was kinda hoping for Asian mults... I still need Zone 17, so I go hunting, call an RA9, but he busts my call and fades into oblivion. Then I find a UK prefix who says GUØFAL 59/17 and continues CQ-ing. Eventually I manage to correct him.

This proves to be my furthest contact in an easterly direction for the weekend and I'm just hoping that the afternoon's western opening is a little more productive. I am not disappointed as the day wears on, although I am tempted to go multi-band. I keep plugging on and some short runs of USA stations start to make my score go up and approach the old record. Mid-afternoon the score rolls over to a new record and my brain starts doing overtime. S/P for mults or CQ and let the mults find me?

Well the CQ-ing just won't work in this contest on 10m, so I go hunting with renewed vigour, and I'm trying to remember which Zones may still be available to the W. Not many, but some Caribbean mults must surely be around.

At this time I have worked most of the South American contest stations and they are 3-pointers, but there are still some gaps in Central America, so I start at the low end of the band and work everyone I hear. By the time I reach the top of the band I find XE1KK running a small pile-up. Eventually he says "ØFAL go ahead" - and then he can't hear me as I fade out. That was my only shot at Zone 6 all weekend and I just needed another 50p in the propagation meter!

It is always the same here in Guernsey - and no doubt on the edge of northern Europe - that at the end of 10/15m openings there is a short window that favours the low power stations to Central America as it overlaps with the Central Americans working into USA. After this the band starts to drop off, but sunset is approaching and I try the CQ method again. A few of the little USA guys answer, but still no run rates.

Back to S/P and then I find a W7 calling CQ, so perhaps a Zone 3, but no such luck: 59/05. No Zone 3 either this weekend. At this stage my score is getting to the level that makes totals roll over and I'm hoping to hit the 100K points and a respectable record!

Suddenly at the top of the band I hear a ZS station on a very noisy frequency, so a short listen then a 'MU0FAL!' gives me a new country and Zone. With renewed vigour I reverse my tuning and on the way back down I hear HC8N make a lonely sounding CQ. MU0FAL is greeted with "Hello Colin - thanks mult. Any chance of 15m?" I am so surprised with the extra country mult that I forget that I could easily QSY to 15m for a pal and respond with "Sorry, only 10m", but the club station is on 15. Sorry, Dave, if you are reading this!

As sunset comes and goes the band closes, but not before a huge enhancement of USA signals and a few more points. At 1730 mother nature closes 10m dead - after a great weekend contesting the relaxing way.

17 Zones, 337 QSOs, score 67,070: a new low-power, single-op record claimed for Guernsey.

This is in no way a major score, nor was it intended to be, but after a few years as a multi-band part-time contest station with an interest in just adding to personal country totals on SSB and with a dwindling interest in

SSB activities, it was a great way to spend a weekend on a single band with a low target score to beat. It was also an interesting way to observe propagation characteristics near MUF during a time of intense activity. Hopefully with the solar cycle in decline, this will leave a record open to a challenge for a few years. Records are made to be broken and for newcomers it is always worth checking the CQ website to see what is open to challenge.

M3s and the other QRP guys should consider the options for QRP. A post-contest check of the OH DX Cluster spots showed that I was not spotted at all over the weekend. It always seems that spots in a contest generate the calls from part-timers, so that was one reason that run rates were so low!

As usual after a contest I considered what I would do differently next time. Not a lot really, apart from a dedicated single-band antenna. Search and Pounce for mults or maximum points seems to be the answer when the runs are poor and single-band can be frustrating when watching the points add up. So I urge the newbies amongst us to have a go. It's fun and certainly a way to test your station to the limits.

TX: FT-1000 Mk5, 100W to a trapped dipole.

73, Colin MU0FAL

So, that just about wraps up the contest column for this time. Any feedback or suggestions will be gratefully received at contests@cdxc.org.uk. Popular events coming up include the IARU HF Championship, some challenging WAE and EUHFC events, and of course the IOTA contest, where I will be your roving reporter from an island somewhere in 9A. Happy multiplier hunting and enjoy the summer contest season !

73, Lee G0MTN

Not the GB2RS News *by RFX*

Greek special event stations are currently counting us down to the start of the Olympic Games in Athens on 13 August by adding the number of days left to go to the Big Day as a suffix to their callsign. For example, with 17 days to go SX9A will be signing SX9A/17, with 16 days to go, SX9A/26, etc.

Several eastern European licensing authorities now plan to introduce a similar system to enable radio amateurs in these countries to count us down on the air to their Big Day. Yes, their birthday. So with 333 days to go to his birthday, LZ3AA would have the option of signing LZ3AA/333, the following day LZ3AA/332, etc. These special birthday callsigns would also count as 'LZ333' and 'LZ332' respectively, thus providing an additional attraction for WPX enthusiasts.

Here in the UK Ofcom continues to consider the introduction of so-called vanity callsigns. Current speculation envisages the eventual release of callsigns in the new G0**, G1**, M0** and M1** series, some of which – in line with existing DVLA practice in the highly lucrative field of personalised car number-plates - are likely to attract sizeable financial bids, especially in the case of callsigns such as GØAL, G1RL, MØNA (ideal for a YL called Lisa) and M1KE (ideal for a bloke called Mike).

The long-awaited major international DX-pedition to the North Pole by the Polar Bear DXers Association (PBDXA), originally scheduled for the end of next month, has been cancelled after the group was unsuccessful in gaining the local residents' seal of approval. Last-minute talks also failed to break the ice, despite husky-voiced requests to the amateur radio community to 'bear with us' and assurances that it would be 'all white on the

night'. The expedition was already in the balance due to ongoing polarisation amongst the team members as to which international callsign prefix to use - and lack of suitable hotel accommodation close to the proposed expedition site. Meanwhile, in order to patch up their differences, the Polar Bear DXers Association plan a Gala Reconciliation Dinner at which the star turn will be a Dame Vera Lynn sound-alike singing that immortal World War II classic, 'Whale meat again...'.

A new QSL Bureau Sub-Manager has been appointed for the M1 series of callsigns. That's John Smith, M2JPS, who lives close to the M3. He takes over from Dave Jones, M4DMJ, who lives near the M5. He in turn took over some years ago from Duncan McDonald, now M6DWR, who used to live close to the M8. In fact when in Scotland the M4 and the M6 still meet up occasionally for lunch of sorts at their favourite service area on the M9.

Solution to Digest Prize Crossword 4

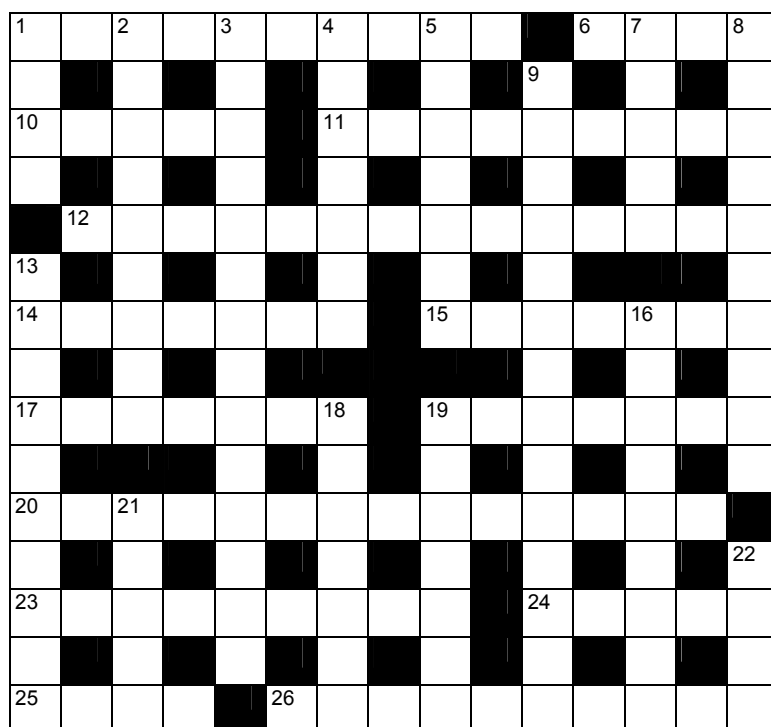
G	I	V	E	T	H	E	G	A	M	E	A	W	A	Y
E		O		H		N		L		L		E		U
O	R	C	H	E	S	T	R	A		O	P	T	I	C
R		A		G		S		B		P		D		A
G	A	L	W	A	Y		W	A	T	E	R	R	A	T
I				M				M				E		A
A	N	N	A	B	A		M	A	R	O	C	A	I	N
		O		I		T		N		D		M		
P	A	R	M	A	H	A	M		O	D	E	S	S	A
L		T				K			F					R
A	T	H	L	E	T	E	S		T	E	N	N	E	R
C		U		Y		S		S		L		A		A
E	X	I	L	E		O	N	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y
B		S		U		F		A		O		I		E
O	N	T	O	P	O	F	T	H	E	W	O	R	L	D

Digest Prize Crossword 5 by RFX

Some very heartening comments again last time round: 'Keep up the good work!'; 'Thanks for another mental challenge!' and 'Another enjoyable crossword! How on earth do you think up the clues?'

As for that last one, the best I can do is quote the playwright Tom Stoppard. On being asked where he gets his inspiration from, he replied, 'If I knew, I'd go there'. I suspect that in my case a rather devious linguistic mind has something to do with it as well!

The winner of Prize Crossword 4, May 2004, and that much coveted 23 across: Alan Pickup, G3XLF, Knutsford, Cheshire.



ACROSS

- 1 The Rev. Spooner's insufficient memory found on board (4,2,4)
- 6 Part of Asia prefixed as once reportedly being part of the USA (4)
- 10 University territory not perfect initially for the French writer (5)
- 11 Cut it fine when cooked, this dish (9)
- 12 Vulgarism such as 6 or 25 (4-6,4)
- 14 Salesmen cyclists, we hear (7)
- 15 To do with a conjunction in Malagasy? No dictionary says that (7)
- 17 Undetermined illnesses exhibited by girl, Sue, after treatment (7)
- 19 A Japanese commander seizing Channel Islands port (7)
- 20 Government department once held by Chris Patten in VS6, say (8,6)
- 23 Place in Kyrgyzstan first-class, Tyneside duke made clear (9)
- 24 Nationalist militants question one from Basra, say (5)
- 25 Peninsula in which bear loses heart (4)
- 26 Priest Jude ordered to give a display of wit (3,7)

DOWN

- 1 Affluent half of South London borough (4)
- 2 The Cantabrigian punter's ideal video equipment? (9)
- 3 Trainee *Panorama* viewer? (11,3)
- 4 Thieves descended from long-term prisoners, given time (7)
- 5 Total upset about gallery changes (7)
- 7 Friend married to Irish leader in days gone by (5)
- 8 The PR expert one calls in to fix the washing machine? (4,6)
- 9 Topical electronics? (7,7)
- 13 Computer program always enabled at Hogwarts? (5-5)
- 16 The Rev. Spooner's European challenge to provide seating on board? (9)
- 18 Forest-born Indian (7)
- 19 Got out of showing awful video in commercial surroundings (7)
- 21 Part of jacket learners get to copy (5)
- 22 It's presented by us, but it's poison to a German (married to a Norwegian...) (4)

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

01/01-31/12	IOTA 2004
till 31/07	3ZØBLY: special station (Poland)
till 27/08	EO6ØFO: special call (Ukraine)
till 07/09	VO2/K2FRD: Labrador (Zone 2) by K2FRD
till September	YAØY: Afghanistan by DL5SE
till 31/10	SVØXAN/5: Dodecanese (EU-001) by IK2WZD
till 04/11	II3T: Special event call by ARI Trieste
till 15/11	SX2ØØ4 and SY2ØØ4: special prefixes
till 31/12	9A8ØADE, 9A8ØZ, 9A8ØABD: special event stations
till 31/12	HA2ØØ4EU: Special event call
till 31/12	HB75A: Switzerland (USKA 75th Anniversary)
till 31/12	HS72B: special call and licence (Thailand)
till 31/12	NL7AU: Upper Matecombe Key (NA-062)
till 31/12	W1AW/9Ø: ARRL's 90 th anniversary
till December	HFØQF and HFØPOL: 'Arctowski' Base (S. Shetlands)
till December	OX2KAN: Special event station
till December	VKØDX: Davis Station (Antarctica) by VK4LL
till December	VQ9LA: Diego Garcia (AF-006)
till December	WL7CPA: Unalaska Island (NA-059)
till December	YI9MC: Iraq by KC4MC
till March 2006	5H3HK: Tanzania by JE3MAS
till March 2006	ZD8I: Ascension Island by G8WVW
till ??	FO: French Polynesia by F6CTL
till ??	FT1ZL: Amsterdam Island (AF-002)
01/06-31/12	OE8ØXRW: special event station
June-November	EL/EI5IF: Liberia
June-October	ST2T: Sudan by S57CQ
01/07-28/07	GB4OL: special station (Operation Overlord)
10/07-20/07	MM/EA1CRK: Skye (EU-008), Orkney (EU-009), Shetland (EU-012)
14/07-16/07	N3RW and KG6RWI: Anacapa Island (NA-144)
15/07-24/07	SX2A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air
16/07-19/07	CT9P: Ilheu de Cima (AF-014) lighthouse
21/07-25/07	G3RCV/P and M8C: Isles of Scilly (EU-011)
21/07-18/08	GB6LOG: special station (Liberation of Guam)
21/07-25/07	YE1P: Peucang Island (OC-237) by YBs

22/07-25/07	MJ/home call & MJØDLQ/P: Les Minquiers Isl. (EU-099) by ONs
23/07-25/07	EA1/ON5FP/P and EA1/ON4CJK/P: Mouro Island (EU-142)
24/07-25/07	CS7T: Berlenga Island (EU-040)
24/07-25/07	CT9X: Porto Santo (AF-014)
24/07-25/07	EJ2MT: Bere Island (EU-121)
24/07-25/07	HI3/ON4QX: Dominican republic (NA-096)
24/07-25/07	IC8M: Licosia Island (EU-031) by IZ8EDJ and others
24/07-25/07	IU7I/P: Isola Grande di Porto Cesareo (EU-091)
24/07-25/07	TM8N: Noirmoutier Island (EU-064) by F8DVD
24/07-25/07	RSGB IOTA Contest
25/07-03/08	SX1A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air
26/07	G1VDP: The Lizard Lighthouse
27/07-29/07	ZB2: Gibraltar by ON5FP and ON4CJK
29/07-06/08	7P8DA and 7P8NK: Lesotho by K4SV and VA7DX
30/07-01/08	EA9: Ceuta & Melilla by ON5FP and ON4CJK
31/07-01/08	VO2/VA2RC (Zone 2)
July-September	IIØP: Sardinia (EU-024) by IZ1EPM
August	ZB3ØØ: special prefix to celebrate 300 years of British Gibraltar
01/08-15/09	J42ØØ4: special prefix
02/08	G1VDP: Trevoze Head Lighthouse
04/08	SX9A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air
05/08	SX8A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air
06/08-10/08	IY6GM: special Marconi station
06/08	SX7A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air
07/08-11/08	3DAØSV and 3DAØWC: Swaziland by K4SV and VA7DX
07/08	SX6A: Athens 2004 Countdown On The Air

from G4FKH

From 21 August to 19 September 2004, I will again be in Mauritius (3B8).

I've already applied for a licence, which I know is being dealt with because a relative who is in the police force has been informed. Checking with the police is one of the procedures that is carried out there, one of the last ones I may add. So I'm confident that this time I will get my licence!

I will be taking my FT-100, with 100W output into a vertical, which tunes from 20m through to 10M, CW only I'm afraid.

I will be signing 3B8/G4FKH once more.

Letters to the Editor

from G7GOD

Dear RFX,

In your comments on page 46 of the May 2004 issue of the CDXC Digest [Not the GB2RS News], at the end of the second paragraph you state ‘...*now living happily with his six wives in Utah...*’ and thus imply that most people living in Utah have multiple wives. Such is not the case, and indeed, such is as illegal in Utah as in any other state in the Union.

In addition, Utah is well known as the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (often incorrectly referred to as the Mormon church), of which I am a member. There is a common fallacy doing the rounds among non-members that members of this church practice polygamy, when the truth is that the Church discontinued the said practice well over 100 years ago.

You can read details of the official stance of the Church regarding this and other issues on their website at www.lds.org/ (Newsroom for News Media > Quick Facts > ‘Myth-Conceptions’ About the Church).

I feel that I must therefore request that an apology for the above comment be included in the next issue of the CDXC Digest.

Best wishes from Riley G7GOD / KB8PPG.

[Riley, I apologise for the offence caused. It was not my intention to imply anything of the sort - or to upset anybody. This ‘Not the GB2RS News’ column is written very much tongue in cheek. Ed.]

from 9M2/G3TMA

Dear Martyn,

A group of us have just returned from an IOTA trip to Borneo. We are Derek, G3KHZ, Maury, IZ1CRR, and myself Ian, 9M2/G3TMA. Some of us are CDXC members, but none of us are FOC members. Despite these social disadvantages we made over 10,500 QSOs from V8PMB, Pulau Muara Besar, OC-184. Derek & Maury then went on to 9M8PSB, Pulau Satang Besar, OC-165 and made a further 4,500 QSOs.

We took the Malaysia based CDXC FT-900 with us and are very grateful to CDXC for the use of this radio. It is quite clear that this has never been used on CW before as we had to rewire the Bencher keyer and to adjust the sneakily located sidetone potentiometer from its zero audio position. This radio now has full documentation for further entries into Brunei. We have paid the relevant import duties and no further payments will be required on subsequent visits. At the conclusion of the trip we have various items which we would like to donate to CDXC to complement the Malaysia FT-900. These items are:

a) Tent sufficiently large for operating table and lined with mosquito netting, b) Folding table complete with seats, c) Cold box, d) Fan, e) Table lamp, f) Two waterproof torches, g) Two large mosquito nets.

This hardware is currently held at my apartment in KL. I can be contacted on my handphone 012 222 8270 (0060 12 222 8270) or at g3tma@aol.com.

73 Ian

from G3KZR

Murphy and all that

I am thankful to GM4FDM for revealing his engagement with Murphy (Letters, May 2004 Digest) as his misadventures made me feel that I am not alone!

It reminded me of the 2003 visit of Jacky, ZM8CW, to the Kermadec islands. ZL8 was the last 'ought to have worked' entity on my DXCC list and I was still having difficulty catching up with him when he was spotted late-ish in the evening on 17 CW. I found him soon enough at readable strength but, even though he worked a string of Gs, I made no impact.

When it was all over it dawned on me that he was probably long path and my beam was stuck, due to a faulty rotator controller, on short path. I was therefore 2-3 S-points down.

The galling thing is that I had previously climbed a ladder to hand-rotate the beam to SP specifically because I knew he was QRV and I was hoping for a mid-morning opening on 17 or 20m! However, even if I had twigged quickly enough, I really was not in a position to climb a ladder in the dark to undo the mast stub and twist it round 180 degrees. (You know what would have happened by the time I had done that and galloped back into the shack...) So ZL8 remains on my wanted list.

As for 3B9C: having knocked them off within 48 hours on 80 CW I was confident of a quick win on 160m. The signals were moderately good if rarely strong – even audible an hour before my sunset! The worst problem was the regular deep QSB, so that any strong (S7) periods lasted for one QSO or so.

In the event and after a fortnight the best I got was 'QRZ 3K' twice - and both times trumped by a DL (not a '3' or a 'K' in their calls). By the time the best conditions had gone and the

consistency of operations had reduced I found that Murphy had cut the lead to the radials of my inverted L in the direction SE to SW during a scrub clearance effort! Hasty repairs were made, but it was all too late to matter. I shall have to have a serious correspondence with Robert to get him onto 160m!

With 7Q7MM the battle was on 30m (160m was not viable for me). They were putting a lot of effort into the band and had good signals, but the pile-ups were as big as they get. Moreover, I also knew that my three-halfwave inverted V had a dead spot into south central Africa – and so it proved.

On the very last day I decided to unhitch one end of the inverted V and swing it round about 15 degrees in the hope that the null would move enough for me to get through. Early that last evening the signals were again very good, but after 15 minutes or so they went QRT – I suspected for the last time.

So Murphy had won again. However, on checking later, they were back but barely readable (I think they were down to barefoot operation before tear- down). Despite the poor signals, Murphy did not strike again and I was picked out of the ruckus by Steve, G4EDG, to make a QSO.

As for T33C: I was delighted that Murphy kept well clear and I got the three new band Cs I'd hoped for – the best was the stunning opening on the last day of the expedition on 15m, which finally landed me my first single band 300 C score.

Thanks again, GM4FDM (and colleagues), this time for keeping Murphy at bay

73 Ian

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The following CDXC goods are available from the Secretary:

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This is a square marble effect paperweight, fitted on the front face with an enamel CDXC logo. As this item is heavy it is not available mail order, but can be purchased at the various functions, e.g. RSGB HF Convention, CDXC AGM, etc.

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This is an imitation black leather fob fitted with an enamel CDXC logo.

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