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

# Club News and Views

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## Editorial

**Martyn Phillips, G3RFX**

To say that Roger/G3SXW's article 'Money Talks – even in DXing' [*Digest*, May 2008] created quite a reaction would be the understatement of the year. In fact it produced the biggest – and perhaps most interesting – reaction to any *Digest* article in the five years since I've been Editor. You'll find three 'E-mails to the Editor' on the subject, the first of which I received a matter of hours, aye, after the postman had delivered this particular *Digest* to its Scottish destination. The other two are printed in the order in which they were received.

You'll also find references to Roger's 'Money Talks' elsewhere in this month's 60-page *Digest*, more particularly in Don/G3XTT's 'DX an' all that' and Phil/G3SWH's 'DXpedition Practices'. And as Phil says by way of a conclusion to his deliberations, "Others may disagree, so let the debate begin!" Well, in Roger's case it long since has.

I hasten to add that I do not see it as my job to comment here in any way. Nor, in the case of what might turn out to be a controversial article, do I see it as my job to automatically hunt around for – or actively solicit – contributions which represent a different point of view for reasons of 'political correctness'. After all, where would this end? Also, what is controversial for one person might not be so for another. It also goes without saying that all *Digest* readers have the automatic right of reply to any views expressed in these pages. Let's face it: at the end of the day I can only publish what I get.

On the debit side this time round we have no 'Borneo Bulletin'. This is because for much of the month of June Steve/9M6DXX was here in the UK and we agreed that 'Exmouth Bulletin' didn't have quite the same ring to it. After which Steve was due to head off to the 'Ham Radio' in Fred's Harbour, jawoll! A delightful part of Germany, I hasten to add. By the time you read this, those of you who were going to Fred's Harbout will have long since returned home. I hope you had a great time ("Hic!").

Nor do we have an IOTA News in this issue. What we do have instead, though, is a delightful piece by Gill B. entitled 'A Cautionary Tale'. You'll find that on page 51.

Finally it's Steam Engines on the Air (or SEOA). Last weekend Jane and I popped up to Kidderminster for a trip on the truly excellent Severn Valley Railway. I was very tempted to take a radio along and perhaps dish out a few QSOs from the footplate of one of the engines on duty, in our case (for steam train buffs) 2-6-0 42968 and 4-6-0 7802 'Bradley Manor'. But it was not to be. Nor was there any point in getting steamed up about it.

Anyway, shortly after Bewdley the train came to a very sudden halt, seeing as it was rather windy and part of a tree had fallen onto the line. So we had to wait for a few minutes while the engine driver climbed down and removed it. Afterwards I couldn't help saying to the guard, "Well, this *is* a branch line...".

73 Martyn, G3RFX

## Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

As I write this, on June 20<sup>th</sup>, *Digest* deadline day, I'm keeping a very careful eye on the weather forecast. Tomorrow is A-day, when, with a little help from my friends, I am supposed to be putting up my new SteppIR aerial. Well, it isn't exactly new, having been in the garage for two years waiting to be erected, but you know what I mean. I decided to retire my faithful Mosley Pro-67C after ten years of good service, largely because I always felt a bit nervous when the wind blew with over a hundredweight (50kg to our younger members) of metal waving about 60ft (18m) in the air.

For a long while I couldn't believe that the SteppIR could be reliable, relying as it does on six stepper motors driving copper tapes through somewhat bendy fibreglass poles. However, the amateur community has now been using them happily for several years, so I decided to have a go. Maybe I'll find out whether the old traps were quite such a bad thing as some people claim. Watch this space for a report – unless I wreck the thing first by shoving 400W up the spout while it's on the wrong frequency.

Actually, I have tried to guard against this eventuality by acquiring a gadget at the Dayton Hamvention which is supposed to automatically shut down the linear while the SteppIR is tuning – we'll see if it does!

Speaking of the Dayton show, it was my first visit there and I was struck by two things above all: the sheer size of the event (hundreds of trade stands and a couple of thousand stalls in the flea market) and the sheer size of the people attending. The guy at the entrance renting out buggies for those who were too large to walk must have made a fortune. I have never had such a graphic demonstration of the follies of the US

lifestyle. However, it did have the merit of making me feel quite slim.

Of course, the US amateur market is huge by comparison with ours – or any other, with the possible exception of Japan. To me, the greatest benefit they have is in the huge number of people and small companies making all kinds of ingenious gadgets for solving problems which we all have but often fail to solve; such as stripping coax neatly, tipping large aerials on towers etc. If you are into the microwave bands there are even more great products. I guess that most of these things are obtainable in the UK, either online or through agents, but you first have to be aware that they exist. That must be a key justification for spending exhausting hours trailing round a place like Dayton.

My other memorable encounter was with a guy running a one-man band company to market theft- and vandalism-proof antenna systems. He is a vet who became tired of having his guy ropes cut and other violence perpetrated on his antenna. His answer was to design and make what he calls the 'Super Bertha' system – reminiscent of the Big Berthas sold by, I think, Telrex, many years ago. How many thieves would take on a 300-foot rotatable steel tower, self-supporting, with up to a dozen large yagis on it like an enormous Christmas tree? If you have \$50,000 or more to spend, give it a go, but that price will only get you the 50-foot version. He hasn't sold any in the UK yet, so you may get a good discount. Of course, it would help if you happen to be the Chairman of your local planning committee - and live on a large rural estate with no natural beauty or conservation value.

The temporary lack of any aerials (back to UK English) at the G3LAS QTH means that I have only a vague idea of what's been

happening on the HF bands recently. Of course, I keep an eye on the CDXC reflector etc., but that's not the same as being there. I get the impression that it has been a typical low-sunspot summer, with a few modest expeditions and the occasional encouraging lift in conditions. The predictions regarding the next solar cycle are as varied as the weather forecasts I've been watching. We'll just have to wait and see.

Those of you who monitor our reflector will have seen the news from John, G3WKL, about the so-called DQ Cluster, aimed at fighting the deliberate QRM which causes such havoc on the bands from time to time. How many times have you heard someone whinge along the lines of, "Why don't THEY do something about it?". Well, THEY are doing something now.

John, who is the RSGB Spectrum Manager, together with others including CDXC members, has managed to convince the RSGB and IARU that there is a need for

action. He has written a short information piece which appears elsewhere in this *Digest*. The bottom line is that he needs your help in developing a methodology which will identify the blighters who annoy us so much. Please respond and contribute as required. Maybe we will be able to help THEM to take some effective action at last.

Finally, some of you will read this before the CDXC AGM and Summer Social on Saturday, 19 July – full details on the website. There is still time to let Chris, G3SVL, know you are coming. We are looking forward to a great day at Neville's place in Herefordshire. Why not make a weekend of it? There are plenty of interesting places in the vicinity. Rachael and I are going into GW on the Sunday to see the red kites feeding.

73 es gud DX

John, G3LAS

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## President's Patter

**Neville Cheadle, G3NUG**

By the time members receive this *Digest* we will have mailed around 700 potential UK members who we know are active, seeing as they worked 3B7C. They have all received an invitation to join from Yours Truly, a back issue of the *Digest*, a list of DXpeditions supported, a note from Gordon, G3USR, on why he joined CDXC and an application form. Let's hope for a good response.

The 3B7C QSLing has gone like a dream and we are now receiving only 10 to 15 direct requests each week. So far nearly 61,000 QSOs have been confirmed, that is 45% of the total. 72% have been sent direct.

I estimate that we have received around 9,000 letters to date, but around 50 letters from various parts of the world never reached us (we have been tracking second requests carefully) and about 25 outgoing letters never reached their destinations. Russia and Eastern Europe continue to have postal problems, but letters have gone missing from the US and even within the UK. I know the Hereford sorting office managed to shred three outgoing letters in particularly flimsy envelopes. Fortunately I was able to decipher these shredded envelopes. The message here is that if you don't get a response to a QSL request in around three months, write again or e-mail

for a status report. Your letter could be one of that small percentage that went astray.

One member has commented that perhaps there were too many pictures in recent *Digests* of members enjoying themselves with a glass of beer, etc. I just comment that there is a strong social element to CDXC and that groups regularly get together at events such as Visalia, Dayton, Friedrichshafen and the HF Convention. It's great to talk to like-minded individuals.

At long last I have started work on the antenna installation here. I put the project on hold until I got the all-clear health-wise. All the planning permits and leases are in place; we have to cross one neighbour's field into another field owned by a different neighbour. It's an interesting mini-project as the two Versatowers are around 270m from the shack.

I've purchased 270m of LDF 550 and 4-inch sewer pipe in which to run the cables. 1200m of control cable are needed to feed the two rotators and two remote switch boxes. There will be five concrete manholes strong enough to bear the weight of a heavy tractor and the pipe needs to be buried one metre below the ground so as to prevent damage from ploughing. We used a diamond headed 70mm bit to drill through the stone wall of our barn and through the foundations of the boundary wall.

We then 'moled' under our neighbour's tarmaced drive. We now have to divert a stream temporarily so that we can run the pipe well under the stream bed as the water is very fast-flowing in the winter. Finally, we have to build the bases for the two heavy-duty Versatowers and fence around them to stop cattle and sheep eating the cables. So far the weather has been kind to us and progress is good.

I've been reading the correspondence regarding the sponsorship of DXpeditions. As the team leader of 9MØC, D68C, 3B9C and joint leader of 3B7C I would just comment that, without sponsorship, these major DXpeditions would not happen. The team members cover all their travel, accommodation and food costs and make a contribution to logistics as well. The cost of logistics is very high including items such as ship charter, container shipping, insurance etc. We try to operate for at least 18 days to cover three weekends and to have big signals so that everyone gets a chance to contact us. Everyone gets their kicks from different aspects of a DXpedition, but I get a particular thrill when I get notes with cards along the following lines and there are lots of them.

*"My first QSO with Africa"*

*"Your efforts have re-awakened my interest in ham radio"*

*"I'm just 13 and was really thrilled to make a contact"*

*"I went out and bought a new radio after my QSO and am now really back on the air"*

Apart from this we have received hundreds of notes thanking us for a new DXCC entity or for new band-slots. I will say no more!

Trish and I look forward to seeing many members here on Saturday, 19 July, at the AGM and Summer Social. Anyone for croquet?

73



G3NUG

## New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i><b>Call</b></i>	<i><b>Name</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>
2E1BWN	Shaun Imms	Rowley Regis
G1DYN	Jeff Snowling	Runcorn
G1FON	Mike Mangan	Newton Abbot
G3LTV	Bill Robinson	Liverpool
G3WDS	Denis Spooner	Whitley Bay
G3ZVW	Steve White	Axminster
G4CCC	Chris Young	Caversham
G4CGG	Richard l'Anson	Hull
GI4FUM	David Hutchinson	Muckamore
GI4SJQ	George Frazer	Craigavon
GMØWED	Ed Holt	Kirkwall, Orkney
MØDHO	David Honey	Crookham
MØFAK	Ray Chick	Chard
MØGHQ	Max Cotton	Christchurch
MØGID	Geoff Dunne	East Halton
MØKPB	Ken Blanshard	Stevenage
MØOVL	Jon Hirst	March
MØSUF	Simon Batley	Woodbridge
VE6DXX	David Evans	Sherwood Park

### New CDXC Club Membership Badge

The new badge bears the CDXC logo in red, with personalisation comprising name and callsign in black against a silver background. The actual size is 75 mm x 45 mm and the badge fixing is by a magnet on the back. The cost is just £8.00 each. Ordering is straightforward and the process is detailed below. Either use the order form in this *Digest* or print one off from the Club website. The form is available to members as a PDF and can be found by navigating to 'Merchandise' and selecting 'Callsign Badges'. Or you can send your details to Gordon, G3USR, by e-mail (see the address on p. 2 of this *Digest*).

Payment must be in advance and should be made either by a direct bank transfer (preferred) to CDXC, NatWest Bank, sort code 60-60-02, Account no. 44532385 with your callsign as the reference - or send your cheque made payable to 'CDXC' to Gordon. Non-UK based members might like to consider ordering a badge at the same time as they remit their annual subscription. Alternatively contact Gordon via e-mail for the foreign payment arrangements.

Please note that the delivery time may be up to 12 weeks, as orders are batched to obtain a reasonable price. However, you may receive your badge considerably sooner as actual timings depend on the number of other badge orders received at the same time. Your Committee hopes that you like the new badge - why not order one today? NB: the old-style CDXC badge has been discontinued.

## CDXC Annual Accounts to March 2008

	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
Subscriptions	11,165	9,942	11,869	10,011	9,984
Dinner Ticket Sales	1,643	1,421	929	1,094	1,118
Advertising	1,147	1,015	855	708	808
Donations Received	709	846	788	340	586
Summer Social	-222	182	341	463	688
Bank Interest	450	294	207	135	19
Misc Sales	92	0	103	91	191
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>14,984</b>	<b>13,699</b>	<b>15,091</b>	<b>12,842</b>	<b>13,393</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Digest Printing/Postage	7,115	6,769	6,491	6,660	6,762
DX-pedition Funding	3,000	2,900	1,257	2,431	2,600
Dinner	1,743	1,470	928	1,036	1,275
Marketing and Mailshots	44	59	799	1,102	1,518
Trophies and Badges	192	397	478	263	346
Website and Expenses	446	380	389	334	765
Secretarial Expenses	34	76	136	139	84
RSGB/Licence	44	44	58	58	15
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>12,618</b>	<b>12,095</b>	<b>10,535</b>	<b>12,022</b>	<b>13,365</b>
General Reserve	2,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Surplus in year</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>4,556</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Capital - Reserves</b>					
O-Bal	16,278	12,691	6,422	4,867	4,255
Surplus in Year	366	1,605	4,556	820	29
Reserves / Accruals	898	1,982	1,713	734	583
<b>Capital - Reserves</b>	<b>17,542</b>	<b>16,278</b>	<b>12,691</b>	<b>6,422</b>	<b>4,867</b>
<b>Bank Balances at year-end</b>					
Current Account + Cash	692	793	701	-212	253
Deposit Account	16,850	15,485	11,990	6,634	4,614
<b>Total Bank + Cash</b>	<b>17,542</b>	<b>16,278</b>	<b>12,691</b>	<b>6,422</b>	<b>4,867</b>



<b>Membership</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
O-Bal	680	797	685	661	598
New Members Joining	37	27	161	73	102
Members Leaving	-22	-144	-49	-49	-39
C-Bal	<b>739</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>739</b>

<b>DX-PEDITION FUNDING : 2007-08</b>			
<b>Operation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>£</b>
3C7Y	Equatorial Guinea	Elmo EA5BYP	200
5L2MS	Liberia	Henk PA3AWW	200
5T5DL	Mauritania	Andreas DL7ZZ	150
8P1RW	Guyana	Phil G3SWH	100
9X0R	Rwanda	Antonio EA5RM	200
CDXC Local Hero	Zambia	Brian 9J2BO	200
CY0ZZ	Sable	Duane WV2B	150
E4/OM2DX	Palestine	Mike OM2DX	150
IREF	IREF Donation (IOTA)	Mike K9AJ	200
J5C	Guinea-Bissau	Gérard F2JD	150
P29NI	Papua New Guinea	Derek G3KHZ	250
TI9K	Cocos Island	Andreas DH8WR	200
V8FDM	Brunei	Tom GM4FDM	100
VO2/G3OCA	Canada - IOTA	Ken G3OCA	100
VP6DX	Ducie	Carsten DL6LAU	350
VP8DIF	South Georgia	Lars MM0DWF	100
VY0/G3OCA	Canada - IOTA	Ken G3OCA	-100
ZS8T	Marion Island	Don N1DG	300
<b>Total for Year 2007-08</b>			<b>3,000</b>

#### **FINANCIAL PERIOD**

This financial statement covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF, Treasurer CDXC

#### **AUDITOR STATEMENT**

In my opinion this Summary is a true and fair view of the CDXC accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2008.

John Dunnington, G3LZQ, Elected Auditor CDXC

# **CDXC AGM and Summer Social 2008**

The Annual General Meeting of CDXC will be held on **Saturday, 19 July, at 1200** at the QTH of Neville Cheadle, G3NUG, Lower Withers Barns, Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HY. Thank you to Neville and Trish for offering to host.

## **AGM AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the 2007 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

Committee nominations and items for AOB must be given to the Secretary prior to the commencement of the AGM.

Our ever popular Summer Social follows the AGM in the garden and all members and families are most welcome to what is always a very enjoyable occasion. Come and meet your fellow members - there should be something of interest for everyone. As usual there will be food and a BBQ for which a charge of £8.00 per adult will be made. There will be no charge for children under 16 and of course there is no charge for members who will only be attending the AGM. Soft drinks will be included but bring your own wine and beer.

Please bring a folding chair as only a limited number of seats are available.

We will be holding our famous Raffle during the Summer Social with a top prize of an FT-897 donated by Yaesu UK Ltd. Donations of prizes from members are most welcome. Raffle tickets are only available on the day, but in response to requests and as an experiment this year, members attending the Summer Social may buy tickets on behalf of members who are unable to attend, provided they agree to carry home any prizes for that member.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending so that we can plan the catering requirements. A return slip is enclosed with this Digest. Alternatively, and preferably, send an e-mail with your information to [sec@cdxc.org.uk](mailto:sec@cdxc.org.uk).

Chris, G3SVL, Secretary CDXC

## **Directions to G3NUG's QTH, Lower Withers Barns**

### **From the Ludlow area (north)**

Take the A49 south, by-passing Ludlow in the Leominster direction. After about 5 miles pass through Ashton village and immediately turn left - signposted Middleton on the Hill and The Hundreds. (This turning is on a sharp right-hand bend just after Ashton) Keep going (one mile) through the first hamlet, down the hill to the crossroads. Turn left - signposted Middleton. Keep going for another mile through the next hamlet and down the hill past new barriers on the right-

hand side of a sharp left-hand bend. We are next on the right - signed Lower Withers Barns. Take the entrance at the corner and follow the red drive to the rear of our barns.

### **From the Leominster area (south)**

Take A49 north by-passing Leominster in the Ludlow direction. After about 3 miles turn right signposted Middleton on the Hill and The Hundreds just after passing the Berrington Hall grounds on the left. (This turning is on a sharp left-hand bend just before the village of Ashton.) Keep going (one mile) through the first hamlet, down the hill to cross-roads. Turn left signposted Middleton. Keep going another mile through the next hamlet and down the hill past new barriers on the right-hand side of a sharp left-hand bend. We are next on the right signed Lower Withers Barns. Take the entrance at the corner and follow the red drive to the rear of our barns.

If in difficulty telephone Neville on 01568 750560.

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## **Report on the 2008 CDXC LF Challenge**

**Jim Kellaway, G3RTE**

Wow! What can one say? After years of getting on average 7 logs for the LF Challenge per year I suddenly get 46 logs. However, one has to say that this is thanks to Michael/G7VJR's ClubLog. I am sure one or two people might unwittingly appear in the table, but I am sure they will not mind. Even Yours Truly entered with a small number of 80m QSOs. There were also two paper logs and several e-mailed entries.

Congratulations go to David Deane, EI9FBB, who after a hard battle was the outright winner and is also the winner of the Penallt Trophy. David had a total score of 141 DXCC countries. This was achieved using a Kenwood TS-850S, Linear Amp 572B. His aerials were a 40m performance plus Windom and an 80m dipole.

Close behind in second place was Alan Jubb, 5B4AHJ, and he is the winner of the Tindle Cup. His score was 127 DXCC countries. Alan was using an FT-1000MP, Quadra amplifier and his aerials were 40m/80m low inverted V dipoles.

In third place with 110 DXCC countries was Pete Weymouth, M1SOM. Pete was using an Icom Pro Mk3 plus an Expert Amp. Aerials were a G2DYM trapped dipole and a SteppIr ground-mounted vertical.

It was interesting to note that none of the leading stations were using massive LF arrays. So let's hope that next year we get even more entries.

In total there were 183 unique DXCC countries worked. On 160m it was 61, on 80m it was 137 and on 40m it was 168.

Individual band leaders were 160m: Don Field, G3XTT; 80m: David Deane, EI9FBB; 40m: Alan Jubb, 5B4AHJ.

I still think there maybe some confusion in the rules that will need to be sorted out for next year.

Thanks to all of you who entered and I look forward to seeing an even bigger entry in 2009.

## 2008 CDXC LF Challenge: The results in full

EI9FBB: Penaltt Trophy  
 5B4AHJ: Tindle Cup  
 M1SOM: Silver miniature plate

Position	Callsign	160	80	40	Unique DXCCs
1	EI9FBB	7	102	106	<b>141</b> ClubLog
2	5B4AHJ	1	75	114	<b>127</b> ClubLog
3	M1SOM	0	53	67	<b>110</b> ClubLog
4	GW3KDB	0	18	88	106 by post
5	G3XTT	37	67	73	96 ClubLog
6	ZL2IFB	6	24	88	91 ClubLog
7	M0BJL	19	34	88	88 by e-mail
8	G3NKC	0	44	67	81 ClubLog
9	M0BKV	0	46	62	77 by e-mail and ClubLog
10	G3VPS	0	16	59	74 by e-mail
11	G4OWT	32	43	48	68 ClubLog
12	G0MTN	2	30	31	63 by e-mail
13	ZS3/G3LZQ	7	30	39	55 ClubLog
14	G4WGE	6	41	38	52 ClubLog
15	G3ZQH	3	37	42	50 ClubLog
16=	G4KHM	0	14	34	48 by e-mail
16=	GM7TUD	0	10	45	48 ClubLog
17	G4FVK	0	26	18	44 by post
18	G3PSM	0	21	26	38 ClubLog
19	G7VJR	0	16	30	37 ClubLog
20	G4LWB	0	6	29	35 by e-mail
21	GM3ZBE	0	29	9	34 ClubLog
22	G3SED	3	8	18	24 ClubLog
23	G0KBL	1	12	15	23 ClubLog
24=	G3RTE	0	15	0	15 ClubLog
24=	G4PTJ	4	10	3	15 ClubLog
24=	G3ZSS	2	5	12	15 ClubLog
25	G4OBK	2	4	8	14 ClubLog
26	G0HSA	0	5	11	13 ClubLog
27	G6UW	0	0	11	11 ClubLog
28	VP8NO	0	1	10	10 ClubLog
29	G0PHY	0	0	9	9 by e-mail
30	G4DYO	0	0	8	8 ClubLog
31	G0UZP	0	3	3	5 ClubLog
32	M0TBF	0	0	4	4 ClubLog
33	G1VDP	0	0	2	2 ClubLog
34	G3LZQ	0	1	0	1 ClubLog

# DX an' all that

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

There are still widely conflicting views on how the new sunspot cycle will pan out, but meanwhile we continue to muddle through for most of the time without any sunspots at all. This hasn't stopped folk like G3TBK working well over 200 countries already this year, but the 'money' bands have been 40, 30, 20 and 17, with little happening on the higher bands most of the time. Anyway, at least we have been enjoying the summer Sporadic, with some of the traditional transatlantic multiple-hop openings on 10m late at night. These 'odd' openings are what make the hobby fascinating and explain why the Internet (CQ-100 and all that) will never replace 'live' radio any more than flying a simulator can be considered a substitute for going up in a real plane. But it will certainly be nice when we get some regular F2 propagation on the high bands again (assuming the doomsayers are wrong, and we really aren't heading for another Maunder Minimum).

## Same old laments

Thanks to Harry, G3NGX, an enthusiastic collector of amateur radio memorabilia, I was recently working my way through a collection of post-war Short Wave Magazines. They make fascinating reading, not least G6FO's editorials and G6QB's DX column, which between them cover such topics as the benefits that competitive activities such as contesting and DXing bring to the hobby (by encouraging the development of improved equipment and antennas, for example), the problem of pirate call signs on the bands and gratuitous QRM, laments that the ready availability of war surplus (read 'commercial') gear is killing home construction and complaints from some readers that recent increases in the allowed power levels on some bands are 'unfair' on those who don't have the ability

or finances to upgrade their stations. *'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'*, as our French friends would say!

## Prefixes

Whenever I send our esteemed Editor (well, Martyn/RFX - not sure about the 'esteemed' bit!) the Diary of upcoming operations, he invariably comments about the large number of special event prefixes. And he has a point. They really do seem to proliferate these days. The WPX contests are a good example. You work all sorts of strange prefixes and it can easily be 30 hours or so into the contest before you work a bog-standard W1, SP3 or whatever. I recall, in my early days, that a serious prefix hunter would be up around the 500 mark after a few years of effort, whereas nowadays it is possible to work the best part of 1,000 prefixes in a contest weekend. I suppose it helps to keep us amused and trains us in the art of knowing not just the standard prefixes but the more obscure ones too. But when we find TO5E coming up from St. Barthelemy and TX7LX from Mayotte one begins to wonder whether such prefixes are helpful or simply confusing. And as for the opposite situation, with prefixes like KL7 or KH6 coming up from mainland US and calls like K5K being used at different times from Kingman Reef and Texas, this is equally confusing. There really ought to be enough calls to go around to prevent this from happening!

## Money grabbing?

Roger/G3SXW's piece about DXpeditions and money in the last issue brought a wry smile to my face. Roger seems to suggest that this is a new phenomenon and certainly there are now a lot more expeditions than used to be the case and DX Foundations

ready to help many of them out with funds (usually circumscribed in some way – for example, only to cover costs over and above travel to the nearest airport, accommodation, etc.).

But not long ago I was reading the YASME book, detailing the Danny Weil and Iris and Lloyd Colvin expeditions and much of the book describes the trials and tribulations which Danny faced and the huge amount of effort he and Dick Spenceley, KV4AA, put into fundraising to keep Danny's round-the-world expedition on track. This required buying him new boats every time he sank one (an all-too-frequent occurrence!) and the day-to-day expenses of running a yacht that was crossing the world's oceans. And these costs weren't amortised over tens of thousands of contacts – each port of call would typically generate about 2,000 QSOs, at best. We are talking over 40 years ago – as I said, the issue is by no means new! The Colvins were very different, of course. They were independently wealthy and funded their own travels each year, the YASME Foundation simply helping out with the massive QSLing duties.

Then one sees announcements like this one:

*'Amateur radio operators from Djelfa, Algeria, will be active on 10-80 metres as 7Y46ND on 1-31 July. QSL via 7X2DD. A special certificate will be available for EUR 5.00 or USD 7.00, if requested with the QSL card'.*

\$7 for a 'certificate' for making one QSO with yet another of the vast number of 'special' prefixes. Maybe Roger/SXW does have a point about money-grabbing!

## Skimmer

*"And now the technology is going to improve yet again. I have personal assurances from some engineer friends of mine who describe the near-future amateur radio as requiring the smallest amount of human interaction yet. The*

*computer/receiver removes the noise and leaves nothing but signal. And each signal will show up on a band monitor scope/computer. CW/data signals will be easily decoded and the software will determine callsigns and display them next to the blips on the screen. Function keys or the computer will allow the operator to sit back and reflect on the tens of thousands of capital dollars sitting in the shack as the computer works the contest"*

No, not a recent Internet posting, but part of Dave Patton/KW9KW's editorial in the January/February 1997 issue of National Contest Journal (NCJ). Well, we're there, only it doesn't require tens of thousands of dollars. An SDR radio, a K3, etc. and a modern PC along with Skimmer and/or Winrad software, and you're there.

Skimmer has been endlessly debated in the context of contest operations, but little has been said about it in the context of DXing, possibly because it isn't perceived as offering anything particularly new. If a DX station shows up, it will probably be on the Cluster within a matter of minutes and you'll have plenty of time to work it, so how would it help to have software which can monitor the whole band for you and display callsigns of stations which it can 'hear'? I'd be interested in views but, for example, I guess it could be useful on 10 or 12m when the bands are quiet, alerting you to a lonesome CQ call. And maybe it will alert you before the Cluster spot – its output can easily be linked to your logbook so it only sets the alarm bells ringing when it's a new one for you. But frankly you don't need to be there at all – just configure it to call and work the station for you. You can still get that glow of satisfaction – after all, you put the station together and installed the antennas (one article which did cover the use of Skimmer for DXing was the VK6VZ piece in the March 2008 RadCom, p.14 – well worth a read if you haven't already done so).

## Wet squares

Just looking at a 6m spot for a /MM station operating from a rare square, I am prompted to wonder why square-chasing has never caught on on the HF bands? We like to have new ones to work and it's getting harder to invent reasons for new DXCC entities (though it cannot be denied that the ARRL has been pretty creative in this regard in recent years!). But chasing squares would give us much more scope and would help to get round some of the access problems, because many of the squares would have to be activated /MM. The scope is enormous. Instead of ignoring those round-the-world yachtsmen until they get to somewhere 'interesting' (ie an IOTA or DXCC counter), we would be chasing them from square to square just as the WAB gang chase /M operators as they drive from WAB square to WAB square. For the 9-band square chasers there would be more of a challenge, especially on the lowbands. Maybe a multi-square FSDXA operation, for which the team would need to charter and oil tanker, being the only type of vessel with a deck area large enough for multiple HF antennas including a 160m Titanex, 80m

4-square, etc. But enough, I'm heading into the realms of fantasy (or am I?).

XE1CI, SK

Finally, for those who hadn't spotted the announcement, XE1CI, Nellie Saltiel de Lazard, passed away on Monday, 16 June, after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. Nellie was a seasoned DXer and DXpeditioner and was recently inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame. She was the first YL to operate from Palestine (E4) and will be remembered by many CDXC members for the various DXpeditions in which she took part.

73 Don, G3XTT

**CDXC**  
CHILTERN DX CLUB  
The UK DX Foundation

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## Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

**Membership** Full details are available from the Secretary.

**Subscription** £18.00 for UK members, £24.00 for overseas members (US\$48 or 40 Euros). New members joining between 1 January and 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer.

**Digest** Published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Editor by the published deadline. Please note that views expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.

**Website** <http://www.cdxc.org.uk/>

# UK DXpedition to Syria: YK9G

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

## How it all started

It must be quite unusual for a major DXpedition to be started off by a random exchange of e-mails with an RSGB President. But this is what happened with YK9G. Roger, G3SXW, was contacted by Angus, MM1CCR, following a holiday visit to Damascus during which Angus had met Omar, YK1AO. Omar is Syria's best known amateur radio operator. During the meeting Omar had put the idea to Angus: "Why doesn't the UK organise a DXpedition to Syria?" This was in late 2007.

Angus, MM1CCR, put Roger, G3SXW, in e-mail contact with Omar, YK1AO, and from there the YK9G project started. Given the potential significance of an operation from Syria (with it being in the Top 20 most wanted countries on the West Coast), and after some prodding by G3TXF, it was decided that G3SXW and G3TXF should both visit Damascus on a recce trip in order to find out if it indeed would be possible to mount a DXpedition to Syria.

G3SXW and G3TXF flew to Damascus in mid-January where were met both Omar, YK1AO, and Marwan, YK1AU. The two YKs were both most welcoming and helpful. During the short two-day visit Omar and Marwan took us to see the YKØRJ club station, which would be the site of the operation.

We were also shown hotels which were near the station. YKØRJ is housed in a Syrian Telecom Establishment (STE) building on the edge of Damascus. STE is the Syrian PTT.

We were also able to inspect the roof of the building so that we could plan the antennas. There was already an HF tribander and 40m beam on the roof.

## YKØRJ club station: SSTARS

Syria's first ever post-war amateur radio operator was Rasheed Jalal, YK1AA. The call of the Damascus club station (YKØRJ) is in his honour. The official IARU body in Syria is the Syrian Scientific and Technical Amateur Radio Society (SSTARS). It was the SSTARS who would be the official host of the UK DXpedition. Later on during the operation we would meet many SSTARS members. All were keen on amateur radio, but most were not active on the air. We were also to meet Hakmit, YK1AM, who is the son of Syria's original ham, YK1AA.

## From two-man team to UK DX-pedition

The short recce visit to Damascus went well. There was, however, one significant change. G3SXW and G3TXF had gone to Damascus in order to plan what would have been a typical two-man operation. However, Omar, YK1AO, clearly had other ideas and advised us that given the nature of amateur radio in Syria it would be better if there could be a 'group' of operators from the UK, rather than just two.

Omar assured us that the various permissions required would be obtained and that we would receive an appropriate callsign for a DXpedition from the UK. This was originally to be YKØG, but in the event was changed to YK9G. We therefore returned home from our brief mid-January visit to Damascus with the objective of recruiting a small team for the UK CW DX-pedition to Syria.

A detailed visit report was drafted, covering all the key issues of the planned DX-pedition. Roger, G3SXW, got to work on the e-mails and within a couple of weeks three more top CW operators (Rob,



GM3YTS; Fred, G4BWP, and Lionel, G5LP) had been recruited and had made a commitment to the YK9G operation.

Once the operators had been recruited Omar was able to pass along the names and callsigns of the operators who would be formally part of the YK9G operator group. By now it was early February. We were targeting being on the air in late March or early April.

### **Other YK DXpedition operations**

Although there is a small amateur radio population in Damascus, much of the YK activity is generated by the occasional DXpedition. In late 2007 there was a Greek DXpedition (YK9SV) to Syria's only island in the Mediterranean (Arwad, AS-186). Several years earlier there had been DXpeditions to Damascus for some CQ WW Contests (YK0A in 1994 and YK9A in 2001). Omar, YK1AO, had been instrumental in every DXpedition operation from Syria.

Syria is not the sort of country where you can go and immediately 'do your own thing' for a DXpedition. Amateur radio is alive and well in Syria, but is only on a relatively small scale, with Omar, YK1AO, as the driving force. Every visiting DXpedition has to operate from a designated STE location. Although we were to operate from the main club station in Damascus, the Greek DXpedition, YK9SV, had operated from an STE facility on Arwad Island.

### **Trip preparations**

Once the team had been recruited, we had to agree on the dates for the operation. Omar advised us to avoid being in Damascus during an Arab Summit due to be held in late March. So we chose dates in early April, and once agreed the four team members travelling from the UK then each made bookings on the same Austrian Airlines flights via Vienna. Fred, G4BWP,

would be travelling to Damascus from Dubai.

On the recce trip in January we had arrived, after some delays, at Damascus airport at 2am. This BMI flight via Ankara would be no good for the main trip if we were hoping to be met at Damascus airport at a sensible time of day. Other options included Syrian Arab Airlines, which also arrived in Damascus late in the day, and Austrian Airlines, which has a daily service from London to Damascus, but via Vienna. All DXpeditioners know that changing planes en route can often lead to annoying delays with, or even loss of luggage. However, with Austrian Airlines the tight connection through Vienna worked fine in both directions.

### **Equipment preparations and packing**

The WARC antennas were assembled and checked before being finally packed. The Acom 1010 amps were tested with the new FT-2000D radio. Check lists were drawn up to ensure that nothing important was left behind. A website, [www.YK9G.com](http://www.YK9G.com), was set up for the trip and Marios, 5B4WN, provided help with setting up his LogSearch within the YK9G website.

The YK9G team departing from London ended up taking some 14 pieces of heavy luggage. The two Acom linears plus the FT-2000D with its accessories accounted for a good part of the weight. There were also two WARC antennas in a ski box. Fred, G4BWP, travelling from Dubai brought a large heavy suitcase full of useful antenna mounting accessories which proved valuable when setting up the antennas.

### **Early morning start from Heathrow**

The meeting point for those travelling from the UK was Heathrow Terminal 2 at 3.30am. Lionel, G5LP, drove down from Wellingborough. Rob, GM3YTS, had stayed overnight chez G3TXF. Roger, G3SXW, arrived by taxi. It was an early start. However, once we had checked in and

paid for our not inconsiderable amount of excess baggage, the two-hop journey to Damascus on Austrian Airlines was problem-free.

We were met in the customs hall in Damascus by one of Omar's contacts. Our 14 items of baggage were on trolleys and were wheeled past the customs officer, who appeared to be expecting us. After a quick round of handshaking and smiles, we were whisked out of the customs hall, where we had also met Omar, YK1AO, and Marwan, YK1AU.

Thanks to the highly efficient organisation of Omar and Marwan we were then sped, together with all our luggage, in two large vehicles (one for us and one for our luggage) to the station, where we unloaded the items which were to be left there. We then continued to the hotel.

Unlike on many other DXpeditions where it has been customary to try to get on the air as quickly as possible after arriving, on this occasion things were more orderly. After unloading the equipment at the station and our own stuff at the hotel, we agreed to call it a day. We arranged to meet Omar, YK1AO, at the station at 8am the following day. The station set-up and antenna work would then start in earnest. Meanwhile we all got a good night's sleep after what had been a pretty long day for everyone (except perhaps for Fred, G4BWP, from Dubai!).

### **Setting up the station**

The flat roof of the STE building had plenty of space for antennas. The existing YKØRJ HF tribander and 40m beam were on a short tower at one end of the 150ft-long roof. The two WARC antennas were quickly installed at the other end of the roof. The WARC antennas consisted of a full-size 30m quarter-wave with four radials and a 12m/17m trap vertical dipole.

As the proximity of the 40m beam to the tri-band beam would have made operating on

40m and an HF band impossible, it was soon decided to string out a separate 40m/80m dipole. Later on in the operation Fred, G4BWP, imaginatively used a long length of twin lighting flex to make a combined 80m and 160m dipole.

However, once the HF antennas had been set up the idea was to get QRV as soon as possible. The first hour's operation was quite frantic. G3SXW started out on 20m CW, while G3TXF opened up on 17m. During the first full hour 400 CW QSOs were made by the two stations, both at this stage still running barefoot.

Once the stations were more fully installed with the Acom linears, an operating rota was introduced. This had been carefully designed by Roger, G3SXW, and proved most effective while all five operators were present. It ensured that the station was fully manned at all times and that operators got a reasonably equivalent amount of 'off time'. At the beginning and end of each operating session there was a 20-minute walk (or short taxi ride) to or from the hotel.

Fred, G4BWP, had masterminded the wireless network in the shack. The two stations at YK9G used Win-Test linked to a third PC which was acting as back-up log. Win-Test worked faultlessly throughout. The copious application of ferrite rings solved the majority of RFI problems in the shack caused by the proximity of some of the antennas directly outside the window.

Operators had five hours on the air, followed by either a five- or ten-hour break. This rota worked well. There was always enough activity to keep two stations fully occupied during the daytime and for the early part of the night. During the last few hours before dawn there was usually only one station able to work anything. However, immediately after dawn more bands sprang into life and both stations could be fully QRV again running CW pile-ups.

Our hotel accommodation was about one mile from the station. The ultra-modern hotel was in a shopping mall, which included a restaurant. This made logistics really easy. Operators would meet up at various meal times, depending on their shift.

### **Single mode - CW only**

In its original two-man format the DXpedition to Syria would have been CW-only. Even when the operation was expanded into a UK DXpedition and the number of operators was expanded to five, it seemed sensible to continue to focus on doing one mode well and on working as many stations as possible on that one mode across as many bands as possible, rather than diluting effort by working the same station again on other modes.

CW is the favourite mode of the five operators at YK9G, so we stuck to it. Yes, it probably meant that several diehard SSB types may have had to make a special effort to work us with their computer sending software and their CW decoders. This was evident from some of the 'strange format' QSOs we had on CW. Several stations were seemingly locked into PC generated 'standard format QSOs' on CW. They were probably not familiar with the more snappy QSO procedures used on CW DXpeditions. But if it encouraged them to make a QSO with YK9G on CW, in whatever form, then so much the better!

### **LoTW – the lucky break**

We were particularly lucky with Logbook of the World. Uploading any DXpedition log immediately after a trip has always been our rule. [We would strongly argue that there's no excuse whatsoever for the deliberate delaying of the uploading of a DXped log, but realise that others may disagree with this, for whatever reason.]

However, for the YK9G trip we dared to go one stage further. Prior to the YK9G operation the ARRL DX Desk had told us,

quite rightly, that because of the relative rarity of Syria, they could not issue us with a LoTW certificate until we got back from the DXpedition and had provided them with the relevant documentation. There was no surprise there.

It was then that we had a major stroke of luck. As it happens there was an IARU meeting being held in London over the weekend just prior to our departure for Syria, and Dave, K1ZZ, of the ARRL was in attendance. Not only that, Dave was also due to visit G3TXF's neighbour and fellow CDXC Member Olof. GØCKV, on the evening before the YK9G team were due to leave for Damascus.

During a brief visit to the G3TXF QTH we were able to show Dave, K1ZZ, all the detailed documentation that we already had for the trip to Syria, including tickets, visas, licences, letters of authority from the STE and our detailed correspondence with Omar, YK1AO. Thanks to the positive support from the ARRL we were able to upload the YK9G logs to LoTW during the operation. This was a great boost to us all.

However, in practice uploading the logs to both LoTW and to Marios/5B4WN's excellent LogSearch facility was not quite as straightforward as it might seem. The only Internet access easily available to the team was back in the hotel. This meant that at the end of each operating session a copy of the log would be put onto a spare laptop which was then taken back to the hotel and uploaded to both LoTW and Marios/5B4WN's online LogSearch.

With the non-operating breaks sometimes being only five hours long, G3TXF found several times that by the time he had walked back to the hotel, had a bite to eat and then sorted out and uploaded the latest YK9G logs to both LoTW and LogSearch, it was then already time to walk back to the YK9G shack ready for the next operating session!

However, we hope that the live uploading of the log both to the ARRL's LoTW and to Marios/5B4WN's LogSearch added to the fun of chasing YK9G around the bands.

## The radios at YK9G

We had brought three radios with us. Roger, G3SXW, and Rob, GM3YTS, brought their K2s. We also brought along a new FT-2000D. The two main stations were the FT-2000D and G3SXW's K2, each with an Acom 1010 amplifier brought along by G3TXF. The second K2 was on standby in case of any problems with the other rigs. In practice there were no problems and the second K2 returned home to Scotland without being used. As a token of support to the SSTARS organisation (which is also a member of the IARU) the YK9G group of operators left behind the FT-2000D at the end of the operation. Hopefully this nice new Yaesu radio will be used from time to time by various members of the YKØRJ club station.

## YK9G nine-band breakdown

With Syria being positioned just on the periphery of Europe, it is not surprising that the vast majority (77%) of QSOs were with Europe. Despite the difficult path to North America, and in particular the auroral path to the West Coast every effort was made to work the USA during the short openings available. 20m provided the only contacts with the West Coast. Roger, G3SXW, ensured that any possible opening to the West Coast on 20m was not missed.

Band	QSOs	EU	Asia	N-Am
160m	786	93%	5%	1%
80m	2,187	87%	5%	8%
40m	2,865	83%	6%	11%
30m	6,524	76%	15%	8%
20m	8,106	74%	14%	11%
17m	6,009	77%	18%	3%
15m	1,583	73%	22%	-
12m	38	60%	10%	-
10m	2	-	100%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,100</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>

There were just two nine-band QSOs. One was with CDXC Member Alan, 5B4AHJ, on Cyprus and the other was with Omar, YK1AO, who made every effort to work us from his home QTH on the other side of Damascus. Thanks to Fred/G4BWP's valiant efforts in getting a 160m antenna to work, we were QRV on Top Band for the last two nights. As can be seen from the QSO table, 20m was the power band with over 8,100 QSOs, followed by over 6,000 QSOs on both 30m and 17m. The QSO totals in the table exclude duplicates. In total 29,473 CW QSOs were made in the six days and 19 hours of virtually continuous operation at YK9G.

## Return journey

QSOs were still being made right up to the last possible minute before closing down just under one week after starting up. As Lionel, G5LP, had left for home a few days early, it was just four of us who were taken to Damascus airport by Omar's colleagues. We were once again whisked effortlessly through the various formalities. At the airport we said goodbye to Fred, G4BWP, who was heading back to Dubai. Meanwhile Roger/G3SXW, Rob/GM3YTS and Nigel/G3TXF were once again back on an Austrian Airlines flight, but this time we were heading back home to London, via Vienna.

## QSLs – flowing fast

Despite the potentially delaying effects of the orthodox Easter and of the May Day celebrations in the Ukraine, Gennady, UX5UO, was able to get the first wave of YK9G QSLs delivered to us within three weeks of our return.

Within two months of the end of the operation, 5,600 QSLs had already been shipped, representing about 20% of the QSOs made. In addition to those requesting QSLs direct in the mail, packages of YK9G QSLs have already been air-mailed directly to about 25 major QSL Bureaux around the

world with the reply YK9G cards for requests received by e-mail.

### **Thanks to the SSTARS!**

The YK9G UK CW DXpedition happened for three main reasons. First there was the chance meeting of Omar, YK1AO, with RSGB President Angus, MM1CCR, in Damascus. Secondly this initial contact was then followed up assiduously by Roger, G3SXW, who - with occasional help from Nigel, G3TXF - turned it into a successful CW DXpedition. Angus, MM1CCR,

continued to help significantly during this period too. Thirdly there was the magnificent support of the three top-notch CW operators Rob/ GM3YTS, Fred/G4BWP and Lionel/G5LP, who took the plunge into the unknown and joined the YK9G team.

However, the key player in the YK9G operation was Omar, YK1AO, President of the SSTARS and leading light of amateur radio in Syria.

Shukran, Omar!

### **A scale of DX pile-up signal levels**

Ed, N4II, offers the following in connection with pile-up operating

P0: Can't hear the DX. Can't hear the pile-up either. Have critters eaten into the coax again?

P1: Can't hear the DX, but can hear the pile-up working him. Lucky stiff.

P2: Can't hear the DX. Can hear the pile-up and can also hear the policemen on the DX's frequency.

P3: Can detect that there might be a DX signal present. Copy a CW letter, SSB word or Data symbol, every now and then, but can't copy a complete callsign. Pile-up and policemen are Q5 copy. Keep the rig on in the background while working on that new antenna design.

P4: DX is readable when policemen are not transmitting - and would be workable if it were not for the stronger signals of everyone else in the pile-up. State of maximum frustration.

P5: DX workable after a long, hard battle against propagation, pile-up and policemen. State of maximum satisfaction.

P6: DX is Q5, and worked after just a few calls. You marvel at how efficient the operator is and complement the DXpedition in your spot on the cluster system.

P7: DX worked on the first call. Why do people think this is so hard?

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# DXpedition Practices

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Shortly after the article about our February 2008 trip to Guyana as 8R1PW appeared in the May 2008 *Digest*, Jim, G3RTE and I both received a private e-mail from Roger, G3SXW. This e-mail followed sharply upon the heels of his own hard-hitting and thought provoking article entitled 'Money Talks – even in DXing' that was published in the same issue. Now, other than the usual 'enjoyed your article' type of comment, this was the first ever feedback of any sort that I've ever received following the publication of one of my articles – and I've been writing them for a number of years. Consequently, I was slightly taken aback, initially at least. Was this some sort of a personal attack? I'm not normally paranoid, just convinced that everyone's out to get me!

Roger is never backward in coming forward with his opinions and we certainly don't always see eye to eye, particularly over some of his comments in his regular *Digest* column. However, after some thought I reasoned that an open and reasoned debate could only be healthy and suggested to him that we put our various comments into the public domain via an article in the *Digest* for consideration by and comment from a wider audience, to which I'm pleased to say he agreed.

Here are Roger's specific comments, followed by Jim's and my own responses. The wording in italics is taken from the Guyana article:

## Duplicate QSOs

*'Jim is slowly coming round to my way of thinking, which is never to log duplicates'.*

Roger's comment [G3SXW]:

I used to agree with this, but no longer do. I agree that it is frustrating when struggling to dig a weak one out of the noise only to discover that it's a dupe. But I allow these days that the dupe is probably for the very good reason that the guy thinks that he did not make it into the log the first time. You know how it is with QRM, QSB, frequency cops etc. I disapprove of the 2nd dupe (3rd QSO) or more, but surely we should give him the benefit of the doubt on the first one. So, these days I log duplicates, simply so that QSLing is more efficient, hunting for the QSO in the chronological log. Also, a BIG point: to get a LoTW match you need to be within 20 minutes of each other. Suppose he only logs the second QSO but you log only the first one, he won't get his LoTW QSL.

Jim's response [G3RTE]:

There might be a slight misunderstanding on this. I used to log all duplicates. If a station called me five times on the same band and mode then I would log him/her. I now only work a station twice.

My response [G3SWH]:

Roger and I have discussed this previously, although not for some years, so I was a little surprised to learn he had changed his attitude. Naturally, Jim and I have discussed the issue more recently. I can certainly understand the logic behind Roger's point about LoTW matching (which I always understood to have to be within 30 minutes), QRM, QSB etc. What I do find most annoying is that when the QSL request arrives, it lists not only the first, but all the duplicate QSOs in far too many cases, which indicates to me that there was probably no problem with the first QSO anyway.

Historically I've always followed the practice of confirming with paper QSLs those claimed QSOs where the exact date and time don't match the DX-pedition log, mainly because so many stations don't maintain accurately their own date/time data. Hunting the chronological log these days is never a problem with computerised logs. Searching for a busted call with inaccurate date/time data from the applicant continues to be a problem, though.

## Antennas

*'Will I ever persuade him that a doublet is better than a dipole?'*

G3SXW:

Hmm, interesting. Surely resonant antennas are always best, if available. No lossy ATU needed. No RF in the shack. But I know that many DXpeditioners (eg G3AB for one) prefer the doublet as it's the only antenna needed. I'm not a doublet-lover (but we use one to good affect on NFD!).

G3RTE:

I asked Phil to add this bit into the article as a bit of a joke as it is something we don't agree on. I believe our differences have been mentioned several times in other articles and during talks.

I think it is very hard to get a doublet to be a truly balanced aerial unless you are lucky enough to have the operating position where the feed drops down vertically from the aerial and the legs are horizontal and in 'free space'. In actual practice this doesn't happen very often! The feeder will normally come away at an angle and then have to pass through a window with a metal frame or something that will unbalance it. The 'horizontal' section is often very far from being just that. One of the legs might slope or pass over a building, for example. Thus the whole system becomes unbalanced and becomes a radiator of RF. Nothing wrong with this, but the feeder will pick up any

noise generated by electrical appliances or any other RF generating device. I also think a problem can arise when you have two stations working close together and the aerials are doublets. Because of the unbalance then a lot of RF is floating about.

I discovered this when we were down in VP2V. Phil was in a room about 50 ft away from mine. Our doublets were spaced about 100 ft or so from each other. We found that we always had to use our Dunestar filters. I also had a noise level that wasn't high, but enough to mask weaker signals. During a lull in openings I changed the aerial from the doublet to a dipole. The first one I knocked up was for 20m. I hung this from a tree just outside the room. (Phil's expertise with a catapult should be noted here). I left the doublet up. The first thing I noticed was the noise level dropped. I thought maybe the dipole was not working, but when the band started to open it soon became apparent that signals were better on the dipole. Signal strengths were much the same, but with the drop in noise it made life that much easier using the dipole. I also noticed that I no longer needed to use the filters and I wasn't hearing any background signals from Phil. I also knocked up a 40m dipole to use later and that worked very well.

During the VP2M operation I used dipoles throughout apart from 80m. The aerials were a bit further apart, but as far as I can recollect we had no mutual interference problems.

Down in Guyana we did have a problem with power-line noise. I did swap to a 66 ft top fed with 450 ohm feeder. The feed came away at an angle and passed through the sliding door. It was right up against the metal frame. For some reason on both 40 and 20m the powerline noise was down considerably compared to the sloping dipoles I was using.

Anyway, the upshot of this is that if I was on an operation on my own I might very well use a doublet. It is much lighter for

transporting and no problems with changing bands during the night. Who knows what lurks outside at night in some of the places we have all visited? However, I always feel happier with a bit of coax and a dipole. I doubt whether a dB here or there is going to matter too much on these operations, but things like noise and inter-station interference can.

Just as a side thought, I have often wondered why we don't use long wires a bit more.

G3SWH:

I've tried all sorts of antennas whilst travelling on my own and with Jim, from multiple wire dipoles on a common coaxial feeder to an R-7000 trap vertical (another of Roger's suggestions). In Sri Lanka the airline 'lost' the R-7000, which was then impounded by Customs. In Greece the airline 'lost' the 10-metre telescopic aluminium mast that I'd taken. Such disasters severely compromised my enjoyment of those DXpeditions and prejudiced my future choice of antennas. Consequently I've tried to use as simple an antenna as possible and one that will coil up and go in my suitcase. It was Alan, G3XAG, who suggested the doublet to me some years ago and I've used it with great success ever since, finding it very easy to erect and effective on the air. I particularly like the ease of changing bands, which is a great advantage on a DXpedition. I continue to be amazed at the success I've achieved with such a simple antenna. Even when I went to French Polynesia it out-performed (in terms of QSO numbers) the companion SSB station using a three-element tri-band beam and an amplifier! Obviously it's a compromise and resonant antennas are best, if (as Roger says) they are available.

## Licences and ARRL

*'Copies of the licence and supporting documentation have been submitted to - and accepted by - the DXCC desk at ARRL.'*

G3SXW:

My understanding is that this is not necessary – unless the DXCC Desk asks you for it, and they only do so for a very limited list of countries where they know licensing to be difficult. I'm under the impression that this (unpublished) list is only about 30 long, but is a movable feast over time when licensing circumstances change. I have never ever submitted documents to DXCC for the 64 countries that I have activated - until Syria! That was evidently one of their 'Documents Needed' countries.

G3SWH:

Now this didn't ring true to me at all, so I took it up directly with Bill Moore, NC1L, at DXCC Desk. Here is the text of his response:

'DXCC requires supporting documentation for about 1/3rd or so of all the entities on the list and docs may vary depending on different licensing requirements and other issues like access and other permissions or restrictions.

Many people travel to entities and send me documentation even for entities where it is not needed. This is not a problem. What I often do is for each entity where documentation is required I usually try to make at least one attempt to contact the operator to get paperwork as I find that many have no idea about this. For one, if you have problems getting a license or where any restrictions apply it is OK to consider that DXCC will probably require supporting documentation. I usually say when in doubt, send docs.

Documentation requirements are even stricter for LoTW since besides the DXCC aspect there is also the security in LoTW that needs to be maintained. I don't think Roger's thinking is flawed as he has done a lot of travelling and he bases his thinking on his past experience, but I would not rely



100% on it. Again, when in doubt, send docs, you can't go wrong with that.'

My interpretation of Bill's reply is that you may not need to send in your licence for the less rare entities, but you will certainly have to before they will issue a LoTW certificate. I think I will stick to my established practice on this one.

## QSLing

*'Logs will be uploaded to LoTW after I have weeded out as many of the inevitable busted calls as practicable, probably in early 2009'*

G3SXW:

C'mon, feller - that just doesn't wash, you've been rumbled! Everyone realises that it's simply a way of trying to squeeze a few extra dollars out of DXers, by blackmailing them into direct QSLing, rather than waiting for LoTW (See my CDXC *Digest* article: 'Money Talks'). If you have a typical 1% Busted-Call rate then you would upload 100 busted calls from a 10,000 QSO log. So, what? They don't get a match, so are simply ignored. Meantime, the other 9,900 have to wait for a year. Go ahead and upload. If you are keen, then keep a record of the 'busteds' and make a new subsidiary log just of those 100 and upload it 'next year.

G3SWH:

Actually, Roger is raising two important but different points here. Firstly about delaying the uploading of logs to LoTW and secondly about the perceived practice of blackmailing DXers into claiming confirmations direct. Roger also makes some fairly contentious comments in his article about how DXpeditions are funded. I will deal with all three points separately.

- **LoTW**

Since LoTW was first introduced, my own policy and practice has been well established and has always been to wait for

an arbitrary year before uploading the logs. As far as I can remember there has never been any ARRL policy or guidance on when to upload and it has been left to the DXpedition operators to make their own decisions as to when (and if) to upload. I suppose that it's a measure of LoTW's success that there is now a clamour for instant gratification, as is being seen in so much of modern society. Personally, I upload my G3SWH log to LoTW once a year, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, although it appears from comments on various reflectors that it is becoming commonplace for some operators to upload on an almost daily basis. Roger's own YK9G exemplary DXpedition earlier this year demonstrated what can now be achieved, whereas the equally successful VP6DX DXpedition has received justifiably and almost universally bad press for their approach and attitude.

I've actually kept a record of the numbers of busted calls in the logs of the VP2MTE and 8R1PW DXpeditions, mainly as a bit of fun to compare Jim's and my own logging accuracies. Based on the number of confirmed QSOs in both logs to date, the rate is about 1.8%, which seems to be about the norm.

Don, G3XTT, recently posted some relevant comments on the CDXC Reflector in relation to 3B9C and the FSDXA's attitude towards LoTW: "But this brings us to whether log cleansing makes sense. Our error rates are typically 1 - 1.5%, better than contest error rates because there is less time pressure with expeditions. But still potentially about 2,000 busted calls per trip. So do we upload immediately and get 2,000 irate e-mails, or do we QRX. (Even during the trip we get enough e-mails complaining about busted calls in the online log, so the problem is very real). There is no right answer, but we have historically tended to QRX until after the first flurry of direct cards, so that at least some cleansing of the log can take place. My personal view is that this becomes less necessary as time goes on because broadband, and improvements in

the LoTW server, mean that it is much easier than was previously the case to reload the log from time to time (as John, G3WGV, has just done with the 3B9C log).”

Whilst I would not wish to compare Jim’s and my own meagre efforts to those of the FSDXA, the principle of log cleansing still applies and I would certainly agree with Don that it’s sensible to wait until the initial flurry of direct cards has been processed. I established my own policy of waiting an arbitrary year when LoTW was in its infancy and maybe it’s time to review it in the light of recent improvements in the system.

However, at present LoTW works only with DXCC and WAS. Maybe IOTA will follow shortly, but there are a number of other, highly collectable awards that are not easy to qualify for but that still require QSL cards, e.g. the RSGB’s Commonwealth Century Club and Worked ITU Zones.

- **Direct versus bureau QSLing**

My own website at [www.g3swl.org.uk](http://www.g3swl.org.uk) sets out in quite a lot of detail my approach to QSLing, and is based upon the IARU’s ‘Ethics for QSL Management’ as well as a few rules of my own distilled from many years’ experience. I handle cards for almost 100 different callsigns, including my own and, as a founder member of the QSL Managers’ Society, am proud to say that I follow this code to the letter.

I make no excuses for strongly and publicly recommending sending cards direct with return postage rather than via the bureau, especially if you want a card for a ‘new one’ of any sort. The principal reason for this is the inordinate delay introduced by the bureau system. Whereas about six months maximum is a reasonable response time for a direct QSL, a bureau card can take as long as five years, or even longer. I’m afraid that I’m just not that patient.

On average, bureau cards take around two years to reach me from the date of the QSO. I receive cards in large quantities direct from the bureau in boxes weighting up to 15 kg, normally only once or (sometimes) twice per year, which then take me up to a year to process and return to the bureau. Logic would then dictate a further two-year wait before the card is delivered to the recipient. Obviously, some cards take longer, others arrive sooner. The use of e-mail to request cards not only halves the time involved, but also reduces the pressure on the bureau system.

The bureau system is mostly run by volunteers and any one card passes through a number of different hands. Unfortunately mistakes do occur and I often received cards for G3SXW, G3TXF and others. Internationally the system groans under the weight of indiscriminately sent cards, such as those sent by those highly active European special event and contest stations for all the QSOs they make, often stating ‘no reply necessary’. About 30% of the incoming cards that I receive via the bureau fall into the ‘indiscriminate’ category and go straight into the recycling. The remaining 70% are diligently replied to, but it takes a lot of time. In my view the international bureau system is on the point of collapse and many of the smaller ones are closing, thus making it impossible to send cards to amateurs in those countries via the bureau.

Yes, sending direct is a little more expensive than using the bureau and there is very often a modest surplus of a few pennies which helps the operator or manager with his printing, consumable and bureau postage costs. However, I absolutely do not suggest that we all start sending direct cards for run-of-the-mill QSOs. But is it reasonable to suggest that by recommending direct QSLing is to blackmail DXers? I think not! As is so often the case, a balanced approach is required and an intelligent, individual judgement made.

- **DX-pedition funding**

Now this is an altogether more contentious subject and Roger and I have very different views here. I fully accept his arguments about the pros and cons of DXpedition sponsorship, which he clearly states are his own. Wouldn't it be great if we all had sufficient time and cash at our disposal to be able to take the high moral ground and say "if you can't afford it, then don't go". Roger's arguments would evaporate overnight!

As far as those DXpeditions mounted by Jim and myself over the years are concerned, none of them have been particularly rare in DXCC terms, ie in the top 50 'most wanted' entities. However, we have sought and obtained modest financial sponsorship from various sources, primarily DX clubs such as (and including) CDXC. This has always been on the basis that we are happy to meet the costs of transport to and from the target DXpedition location, but are seeking sponsorship and donations towards our living expenses on site, printing QSLs and the like. It is also made abundantly clear that any surplus would be equally distributed between the operators to offset their personal contributions.

We must assume that these applications are assessed on their merits and in many cases, a gratefully received award has resulted. The GM-DX Group have a declared policy that they will only support DX-peditions in the top 100 'most wanted' entities and I understand that Jim, as a CDXC Committee member, has always been asked to leave the room when our funding applications have been discussed.

On average, and in my experience, the total value of the sponsorship covers about 15-20% of the total cost of the DXpedition. There are no secrets of the amount of such awards, as they are published by CDXC (and others) in their magazines, websites etc. Often there are strings attached, such as printing logos on QSL cards, methods of QSLing, a requirement for a write-up and

the supply of photographs etc., none of which are particularly onerous.

In my view, this practice is entirely above board. If it wasn't, then the sponsorship wouldn't be forthcoming from so many different sources. Consequently, I believe it falls into Roger's definition of what is OK, ie "if the DXpeditioner travels and operates for the love of the hobby and pays his fair share for having enjoyed a fine holiday". Mind you, anyone who treats a serious DXpedition as a holiday won't have much success and I certainly wouldn't have selected some of the places that Jim and I have visited as a holiday destination in the first place!

I'm afraid that I don't recognise the suggestion that DXpeditioning can be turned into a business. Of course, many DXers enclose an extra dollar bill or IRC or two with their QSL request. There is certainly no obligation and many do not. On a major DXpedition, such as D68C, these extra donations can amount to a significant sum, albeit a fairly insignificant one in relation to the overall cost of the project. Whether the DXpedition in question is a major one or one of the smaller-scale versions that Jim and I put on, they are certainly most welcome as a way of supplementing the budget.

Would Jim and I go on trips anyway if sponsorship cash was not forthcoming? Probably yes, but we may not go so far afield or for so long.

The same criteria apply to QSL managers, who also come in for some of Roger's criticism. He cites as an example the case of F6FNU from some years ago, who was quite correctly censured by ARRL for demanding excessive return postage (eg US \$2 when return postage was the equivalent of US \$0.50) and the application of restrictive rules. Although the majority appear to agree, others speak very highly of him. I believe he acted for a number of rare DX stations and the unsubstantiated rumour

is that not only was he was prepared (for a price) to confirm non-existent QSOs but that he also made some US \$50,000 per annum from his activities. Maybe the unsavoury and unacceptable part of his activities were the basis for the IARU's 'Ethics for QSL Management'.

Roger is absolutely correct in that it most certainly does **NOT** cost US \$3 to post a direct QSL to any country in the world. I believe that at one time K1XN, who runs the excellent GOLIST QSL manager database, included this figure in the notes against most non-US based managers, (including myself), but I'm pleased to report that he has now removed it.

From time to time other stories surface of DX stations themselves, rather than their QSL managers, who are alleged to be pocketing the dollars and failing to respond to QSLs. These appear to be in a very small minority and the real reason is most probably mail theft. It does, however, beg the question as to why those guys who know they have a mail theft problem don't appoint a reliable QSL manager in a less vulnerable part of the world.

It's certainly important to monitor and control the cost of any project, but the suggestion of a business implies that the objective is to make a profit (ie an excess of cash over expenditure), which, in my case and experience, is neither an objective nor a possibility. Perhaps Roger should name and shame the DXpeditioner and/or QSL manager that he knows who manages to make a profit – as well as providing the evidence to support his assertion.

This is a very long article on what I sincerely believe to be a very important subject and is intended to stimulate a healthy and reasoned public debate. I don't purport to lay down the law about how either DXpeditioning or QSLing should be executed, nor to hold myself up as 'holier than thou' in any way. Furthermore, I believe that my approach has always been honest and transparent but, I am not averse to being persuaded otherwise.

Others may disagree, so let the debate begin!

73 Phil, G3SWH

### **CDXC Local Hero Award**

The Committee is seeking nominations for this prestigious annual award. It is for a resident amateur in a DX location who has given long-term support to DXers in providing QSOs and QSLs without massive financial rewards. Full details and criteria may be found on the CDXC website.

Please send nominations with a brief citation to either

Chris, G3SVL (sec@cdxc.org.uk) or John, G3LAS (chair@cdxc.org.uk)."

# 4U1UN – On the Inside

**Roger Western, G3SXW**

*g3sxw@btinternet.com*

The USA has no jurisdiction over the United Nations headquarters building in New York City because it is 'International Territory'. Hence it counts as a separate DXCC entity. So this one station is much sought after by DXers the world over. On 17-18 May 2008 I was lucky enough to be invited to operate this station for a few hours, making several hundred CW QSOs.

## Location

The UN HQ is right in the middle of Manhattan, New York City, at 40° 44' 55" North and 73° 58' 06" West, at the far east end of 44<sup>th</sup> Street. It is situated immediately beside the East River, which runs roughly North-South, so this is an ideal take-off to Europe. The Secretariat Tower has 41 storeys and is called locally 'the slab', for obvious reasons. The Locator is FN30AS.

The roof is some 400 ft above ground. The antennas are on the roof. Phew! The top UN officials are based in this building, so security is very strict. The 4U1UN station is located on the 41<sup>st</sup> floor. To get up to and past the 39<sup>th</sup> floor we must use an elevator that requires special access.

## Security

It goes without saying that this building is locked down really tight, and so it should be! Every visitor passes the normal 'tourist' metal detector screening to enter the General Assembly part of the building, but to enter the Secretariat Building requires a pass, and I had to be accompanied by a 4U1UN club member every step of the way, every moment, even to the loo! There are cameras everywhere. This is the major restraint on amateur radio activities. Any work, for example, on the roof must be supervised by official maintenance staff. It is to the credit of the tiny band of 4U1UN

members that they have gradually inched their way towards an acceptable arrangement for the club station to remain active. I can only imagine the administrative hoops that they must have climbed through.

## The Station

Johnny, LA5IIA, is an IT Telecoms Officer for UNICEF, based right across the road from 4U1UN. In recent times it is he who has re-established the station, including new antennas and station equipment. Among other operations Johnny will be remembered for his long QRV as YA8G, T68G and also as YU8/LA5IIA in Kosovo. At last he is based somewhere where shooting and bombs are somewhat less!

The club station is located in a secure room, also used by security and IT (non-ham) staff. There is plenty of room for two stations and storage. The two side-by-side operating positions now contain a FT-1000 + Acom 1000 combo, and a Icom Pro 756 + TL-922, plus computer logging with N1MM. The set-up, feeders, antenna switching and so forth are installed to a high calibre, obviously by a professional.

On the roof there are now two antennas: a Cushcraft R8 vertical, for 40 to 6m (the one with counterpoise spokes at the bottom) and an Alpha-Delta dipole, 100 ft long, which covers 160-80-40m. For my little operation I simply took my own CW keyer/paddle (ETM-9C) and headphones. I operated the FT-1000. The operating environment is very comfortable.

## Travel

My son and family live in upstate New York state, so it was very convenient to fly London - New York, then domestic to Rochester and back to NY for the 4U1UN

visit. The Delta Airlines transatlantic flights were OK, but in ageing aircraft. A 3-hour delay on leaving Heathrow (technical fault) meant I missed the connection, which bit into the 36-hour visit with my grandkids.

The domestic flights were with jetBlue, referred to as a low-cost airline. This was £100 round-trip JFK - Rochester, about an hour flying each way, so not cheap-cheap like Ryanair or easyJet, but for my taste they have the balance just right: seat numbers, leather seats, excellent leg room and a private satellite receiver at each seat with 36 TV channels and 100 audio channels! I'd recommend jetBlue to anyone.

The flight back to New York JFK arrived on Saturday morning, 17 May, and I was able to check in to my hotel early. Hotels in Manhattan are not cheap, similar to what one would expect in central London, so the Bedford Hotel at £125 a night was good value.

The return flight to London, by the way, was uneventful. Also a big thank you to Allen, N2KW, who gave us a lift back out to JFK. That is an airport which desperately needs to be knocked down and re-built!

## **QRV**

I met my old friend Johnny, LA5IIA, at the UNICEF building to collect the 4U1UN keys and he then briefed me on security procedures. I went through the normal metal detector as any tourist does when visiting the building. Johnny, with his employees badge around his neck, carried my bag (keyer etc.) through a separate entrance. He had pre-arranged this visit and we were then allowed through the barriers into the Secretariat Building which ordinary visitors cannot normally enter.

We then screamed forty floors upwards in the security elevator (three ear pops in rapid succession) and climbed the stairs for the final floor. By this time it was 3pm local (1900 GMT). New York also has daylight

saving – it is five hours behind GMT - so local summer time is four hours behind. I opened up on 30m, while Johnny operated on 20m.

There were the usual minor frustrations of learning into a new logging program. I had never used N1MM before, but it is mostly intuitive for an ex-CT user. Programs such as N1MM assume regular steps in the QSO process, each stepped with Return key. When you need to go out of step (very often when running pile-ups) to correct a call sign or make an extra transmission then you need familiarity with the program which takes time to build. Resorting to the mouse can be frustrating!

## **The Bands**

30m offered a good opening to Europe, but at first signals were weak, building over the 4-5 hour operating period. By 2000z signals were strong. We had some minor amount of inter-station hash, but only enough to cover the very weakest of signals. Johnny has receive stubs in place, but not yet any bandpass filters. That afternoon we operated barefoot, 200W from the FT-1000 (30m) and 100W from the 756 Pro (20m). His EU opening on 20m provided weak European signals and we thought conditions were pretty poor, but then amazingly 20m opened to JA. Johnny ran 125 JA stations on 20m, a rare opening apparently. Of course 4U1UN is least needed in North America, and pretty rare in Europe, but very rare in JA, so this opening was an excellent opportunity.

Sunset then approached, at 2400z or 8pm local. I had said that I would go to 80m just before sunset. However, we discovered that the antenna was only resonant on 3.560 MHz and very sharp. Time was of the essence. No-one would find me up there and my mobile phone was not working to alert folks to this bizarre frequency. So I decided on the hoof to go straight to 160m. I was able to communicate this to Nigel, G3TXF, on 30m and he passed on the news.

By this time Johnny had switched to 40m and was singing its praises: “Wow, Europeans are S9+20”, he shouted! I started calling G3TXF on 1.820 MHz about 15 minutes before sunset and every minute or so until 20 minutes after. Zilch! Nada! But it was mid-May after all. During this time Jack, VE1ZZ, dropped by to say that he had heard one or two EU stations, but that signals usually peak an hour after sunset. I persuaded Johnny to stay a little longer and kept pounding away. I worked 42 W/VE stations and kept listening for EU. Nothing. But at least I tried.

The next morning, Sunday, I checked out of the hotel, met Johnny and did a second session just for a couple of hours, me on 17m and he on 20m RTTY. I had to leave for the airport at about 2pm. EU signals on 17m were all weak, but I was happy to hear any at all!

I had worked lots of pals back in UK on 30m and none at all on 160m the day before. On 17m every QSO was a struggle and I worked only a few Gs.

### **QSOs by Band**

160	42	SXW
40	152	IIA
30	485	SXW
20	280	IIA
17	165	SXW
ALL	1,124	

These were all on CW except 89 RTTY contacts on 20m. Apart from 125 JAs on 20m these were all with North America and Europe, plus a couple of South Americans.

### **QSL + LoTW**

The QSL manager for 4U1UN is HB9BOU. Apparently there have been some problems securing cards in the past, but now that 4U1UN has digital logs hopefully this has been fixed. I cannot provide cards: I have no blanks.

As far as I know 4U1UN contacts have never been confirmed on LogBook of the World. I encouraged Johnny to support LoTW, even though it may be only QSOs in more recent years that are digitised. I hope to see this progress.

### **NCDXF Beacon**

The Northern Californian DX Club has established a network of 18 HF beacons spaced approximately evenly around the world. They transmit on five HF bands (20 to 10m), at four different power levels: 100W, 10W, 1W and 0.1W. They are all synchronised so that three minutes of monitoring will cover the world-wide cycle on any one band.

One of these beacons is located at 4U1UN and is maintained by the local club members. It transmits through the R8 vertical so – you guessed it – whenever the 4U1UN station is in use I’m afraid that the Beacon is switched off. Johnny simply threw a switch to kill the transceiver (TS-50), leaving the computer and GPS link in place until we were ready to leave the building, when he fired it up again.

DXpeditioners find this beacon system invaluable to quickly understanding propagation in an unfamiliar location. We sometimes notice that the network of 18 stations is occasionally missing one or two signals. Now I understand why!

### **Future Visits?**

A combination of watching grandkids grow and operating one of the rarest stations in the world is indeed very attractive. I would expect to visit 4U1UN again, maybe in the winter. It is clear that Europe needs 4U1UN on 160m, so we are discussing how to make that happen. Fingers crossed.

Of course there are many details associated with an operation such as this. We are discussing several issues which could help the club station to progress. There is also the

possibility of multi-operator contest entries, but this would require advance security arrangements. The absolute requirement of having one of the very few 4U1UN club members escort visitors at all times is another constraint to accommodating guest operators. Due to the nature of their work responsibilities club members are all professionally engaged at all times of the day, seven days a week, so work schedules and travel plans barely exist. To plan for operations in advance is therefore always tentative: more than one visitor has been cancelled due to sudden security measures in the building or because the escorting club

member has been called for duty assignments at short notice. Hence those who are not already closely connected with the station should not expect to be able to drop in and operate. It just doesn't work like that!

Many thanks, especially to Johnny, LA5IIA, for his help in making this brief operation happen. Also to Tony, N2UN, who came to meet us and to Allen, N2KW, for the ride back to JFK.

It's all in the good name of DXing. Long live DX!

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## **DXpedition to Rwanda – 9XØR**

**Fabrizio Vedovelli, IN3ZNR / WHØQ**

The seeds of the DXpedition to Rwanda were sown a long time ago in mid 2006, when we returned home from our Western Sahara effort. Many e-mails went back and forth between me, Tony Gonzalez (EA5RM) and others talking about the possibilities for our next trip. We chose to go to Rwanda. This particular DXCC entity attracted us for several reasons. The last big operation from there took place several years ago and it had moved up in rank to #45 in DX Magazine's 'most wanted' list of DXCC entities. Moreover, after 14 years from the start of the terrible civil war there, the country was finally a quite peaceful place.

For all these reasons we believed Rwanda would be a wonderful adventure for our old 'Desert Patrol' of Western Sahara. We were excited about the possibilities of our adventure, but the hardest obstacle was still in the middle of our road to success—yes, that little magic document called a 'licence'. After a lot of faxes, e-mails and useless phone calls in January, Tony decided to travel to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. This

decision was the key to our success. In fact after a lot of meetings with the Rwandan officials and the collaboration of Peter Stabuch, 9X5SP, and Colonel Diogene Mudenge, 9X1AA, head of the RURA offices, EA5RM came back with the licences for all of us, also opening the door for others. In the meantime our group of amateur radio operators, with the help of RURA (Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency), would try to establish the Rwanda Amateur Radio Union (RARU) as national amateur society. Our main RARU aims will be to promote amateur radio in Rwanda.

For that reason, as part of our DXpedition, we planned on donating a transceiver to Kigali University, teaching and training new amateur radio operators to help build a new radio club. So the good news from Rwanda coming to us in mid-January was that 9XØR was to become a reality. While Tony was still in Kigali we decided to go there as soon as possible. In only two and a half months, we put together our team, prepared the equipment, arranged the accommodation



and fulfilled the logistical needs for our twelve multi-national operators.

The nucleus of the crew was to be the Western Sahara veterans. We planned to have more CW operators for this DXpedition. We were aided in this decision by DXers everywhere. The survey of desired bands and modes completed by DXers using our website showed that you wanted contacts using the digital modes and CW, and you wanted to work us on the low bands too.

The operator team consisted of: Tony (EA5RM), Javier (EA5KM), Bernard (F9IE), Javi (EC4DX), Gerard (EA3EXV), Manuel (EA7AJR), Dima (UY7CW), Robert (EA2RY), Manolo (EA4DRV), Ruben (EA5BZ) and Fabrizio (IN3ZNR). Surprisingly, all these people were able to schedule themselves for a mid-March departure. With the offer of help from 'SteppIr' antennas, we planned to set up at least three different shacks, possibly four. That became a reality when we finally arrived in Rwanda. Our idea was to prepare four operating positions: one each for CW, Phone, Digital, and the last one mixed modes. All four positions were furnished with 1KW amplifiers, because of the sponsorship by 'SPE' of Rome, Italy. SPE loaned us the use of three brand-new 'Expert' 1K-FA (fully automatic), all solid-state amplifiers, the smallest kilowatt on the market. Moreover, we were happy to have the owner of the SPE factory, Gianfranco/IØZY, as a member of the DXpedition.

Having Gianfranco along gave him an opportunity to see his product in hard use and it gave me the chance to speak sometimes with someone in my mother tongue. Ninety per cent of the operators were Spanish, so the 'official' day-to-day language of the crew was Spanish, while the Rwandan official language was incomprehensible us all. Another widely spoken language in Rwanda is French. Some people, specially the young people, understand some English. It can be very

tiring to hear three different languages, then translate all in Spanish - all the while keeping a conversation going.

During February and early March our equipment list grew day by day, and a massive 300 kg of material was carried and stored in Madrid awaiting our departure date. Finally everything was ready to go. We all joined together in Brussels on the morning of 15 March. That same day, after an easy trip, the crew reached Kigali Airport in the late evening. The next day we had a long check-out by Rwandan customs, and also a careful inspection of our transceivers by the RURA (the FCC in Rwanda). By early afternoon everything was clear and we were able to travel to the Akagera Lodge.

Our QTH was in the middle of the beautiful Akagera Game Park, near the Tanzanian border. Being a small country, to reach Akagera was only a two-hour drive on very good roads. The Lodge was on top of a hill, with beautiful paths in all directions. A real dream location for hams! Moreover, our elevation was about 5,600 ft above sea level, so luckily not a mosquito was seen. Before darkness fell (as planned) we were already active with two stations on the air with one yagi and one vertical at full power.

After the first CQ, '9XØR, QRZ', we were suddenly faced with immense pile-ups. It seemed as though the world was awaiting us. The pile-ups continued to be large for the first days. The number of callers were more than we had ever imagined, suggesting Rwanda was higher than number 45 on the list. Shift after shift we operated almost all night long on the first night, although we were very tired from the trip and the station installation duties. Early the second morning all the crew not involved in their shift on the radio were working hard to finish the antenna set-up. Two more yagis, the verticals (BigIr by SteppIr) and other verticals – an inverted 'L' for 80 and 160m were erected in a day and a half. The weather was mostly overcast because we were at the beginning of the rainy season.

So luckily the antenna job was not unusually hot, but we had heavy rain beating down on us for an hour or two. After that rain the equatorial sun at this high altitude began burning our skin.

With very good passband filters we were able to keep three (and very often four) bands on different modes on the air at the same time. After some troubles in the first days we were able to upload our log data to our website. We used a very complete logging system which has been used by several recent DXpeditions. It is rich with interesting statistics for the DXer such as 'how many contacts with?' for mode, for countries, or CQ zone. Perhaps this kind of 'classified result for DXers' increases the pile-up for different modes or bands not even really needed for DXCC. Our goals were to work many North American and Asian hams; to use CW and digital modes more than phone - and to increase the number of low band contacts. For these reasons we paid attention to the Americas whenever the propagation would help us. Moreover, we were on the air very often with two stations on CW, one in digital and only the last on phone. We reached our goals for the first two targets. For the low bands, unfortunately, we discovered what many have come to call 'equatorial noise'. Almost every night some stormy weather with thunder and lightning filled 80 and 160m meters with a lot of scratches and crackles. The third day we set up a 'beverage' for the USA and EU, and this helped our Top Band specialist pick more stations out of the noise. I guess we had gone a little too far into the rainy season. December and January would be the better months on the equator for the low bands.

The accommodation and meals were good enough for the team, but we were always tired. Keeping three stations on the air 24 hours a day with only 11 operators is very hard work! There were very few guests in the Lodge, apart from monkeys! Yes, a group of baboons were always using the garden of the Lodge as a playground. Our

antennas were there, and one morning two monkeys were jumping over our beverage, playing with the wires. I screamed a lot to scare the group away, but I was not always very successful.

Our target number of QSOs was at least 60,000. We achieved this reaching 62,300. The last day and night we had a lot of power line failures. I believe that without these failures our grand total of QSOs would have been at least 5,000 more. Luckily this happened only at the end of operation. If it had happened in the first days our morale and mood would not have been nearly as good. But the big pile-ups kept our energy high to serve the deserving.

When on the aircraft on the flight back home, we already began talking about our next steps. Stay tuned, a new DXpedition with the 'Cuadrilla' (Squadron) is on the way! In the name of the 9XØR team I want to thank all the sponsors who helped us go to Rwanda, and particularly the EUDXF, the Clipperton DX Club, GMDX Group and Chiltern DX Club for their support. We will never forget the help they give every big DXpedition all over the world.

See you in the next pile-up!

Fabrizio

**CDXC**  
**CHILTERN DX CLUB**  
The UK DX Foundation

## 5T5DC – Nouakchott, Mauritania

**Rich, DK8YY and others**

Two years ago we tried to find a place for another 'holiday expedition'. After a few weeks of selecting we prefer Mauritania. It is a sunny area, closed to Europe and only a few miles crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Stateside. Around Christmas the Daily News spread out the information about cancelling the Rallye Paris-Dakar. It was a short time of discussing in our group. After some telephone calls and a handful of e-mails between the Embassies of Mauritania and Germany and ourselves, the gentlemen of the embassies told us there will be no problems. So our families and ourselves set the story once again on 'Go'.

In February 2008 a part of the crew had a meeting for packing the equipment. Our common goal was to minimise the whole luggage. We packed and weighed all until it was a 'small' overweight of 50kg.

All crew members got their visa just in time. But one week before the start we were waiting for an important paper. Four days before our planned destination a short e-mail from our friend Joan François, 6W7RV, gave us back the good feeling. Our licence! We got a nice call, but bad information. Only 100W will be allowed. No time to lose. The amplifiers were packed and we hoped getting a special licence for doing more power. Check-in at Frankfurt Airport: Rene, DL2JRM, did his best. Small talk with the guy at the check-in and we don't have to pay for our more-than-legal weight.

Three hours later we took a last beer in Casablanca. After another 3-hour flight we arrive in Mauritania early in the morning. The simple things of a DXpedition start. Build up the antennas, set up the first station and get on the air. After a short time of operation two friendly people knocked at the door. They'd like to see our papers.

Everything is OK. So the operation goes its way. The next days there were controls from time to time. So there was no way to get more power. Grrr! A lot of useless weight we took with us. But the reports on both sides of the pile-up were amazing.

For the higher bands we used two spider beams, the smaller one from 10 to 20m and the bigger one from 17 to 30m. 40m we managed with a solid ground plane, 80m and 160m we used Inv L antennas. Close to the Atlantic coast on a saltwater ground the gain of our antennas was unbelievable.

Ingolf, DL4JS, managed RTTY and PSK31 with his digital station. A smile on his face and you know what DX is! Most of us are CW operators. So we had to select time also for SSB. Oli, DL2ARD, was our SSB machine. Supported by the other guys we can push the SSB part up to 40%. Some really good openings on 10 and 12m and a nice operation on Top Band makes this activity a success. Our goal was to get 30.000 contacts. At least we managed over 76.000 QSOs. Open ears we kept for our Japanese friends. It wasn't easy for them, but we used the opening windows to Japan over the two weeks of staying in Northwest Africa.

Many thanks I can say to the European guys. They stand by while we picked up the weak signals from Asia. For us it was a pleasure to give a new one to every serious DXer in the world.

During our first days, while the show was running on the theatre floor, on the backstage there was a hard work to keep the time a good time. Several meetings with the chef of our hotel, a lumpy sum of dollars and we might put our antennas up in an extra, large field of the hotel.

Also we met the President of the Parti Mauritanien de Renouveau, Mr Rachid Moustapha. Of course it was a good sign for us and to the hotel administration to show the good side of amateur radio.

During a nice dinner with Mr Rachid Moustapha we learned more about this country as the 'door to Africa'. 750 km coast, lots of sand, sun and wind. During one of the last days we waked up in an unbelievable heat up to 45°C. A desert storm during the whole day set our equipment under a thick lake of dust. But everything works fine, also during that heavy storm.

For us, once again, it was a nice activity. We found new friends in another world. We

hope you enjoyed our adventure the same as we do! The crew:

Rich, DK8YY  
Oli, DL2ARD  
Rene, DL2JRM  
Ralf, DL3JJ  
Ingolf, DL4JS  
Dan, DL5SE  
Andi, DL7ZZ

In the background:

Uli, DH7WW, QSL manager  
Frank, DO1CTL, webmaster and pilot

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## QSL Cards – Yes, please!

**Lionel Parker, G5LP**

*lionel@g5lp.freemove.co.uk*

After two years it seems a distant memory now: WRTC 2006, World Radiosport Team Championships held in Brazil in the coastal resort of Florianopolis in Santa Catarina province. I was selected to attend as a Referee and for a week and a half it was a series of firsts for me: first time south of the equator, first visit to a South American country, first long-haul flight and, would you believe it, the first ever entry and leaving stamps in my ageing passport!

I am sure many words have been written and spoken on the organisation and the running of the WRTC 2006 – it was nothing short of stupendous. If you have a chance, have a look at the DVD; it's well worth the time. As a referee there were serious responsibilities to be undertaken and after the event the scrutiny and checking of the logs was carefully done with electronic details passing around the world for cross-checking and double-checking. There were

hundreds of logs submitted direct to the contest headquarters by e-mail immediately after the event and these were correlated into the system too. By the middle of the following afternoon the result was declared. What a supreme effort by all those concerned.

As for me I was 'drawn' to monitor a station managed and operated by Doug, K1DG, and Andy, N2NT. For their sterling efforts they finished in the top three: well done. A real pleasure to watch and officially monitor for 24 hours non-stop the artistry of a pair of world-class testers performing at the peak of their capabilities.

The QTH of the relevant stations for the event are drawn out of the hat as indeed is the Referee assigned to the station, so I wasn't aware of where or with whom I was going to be posted. The draw is made 24 hours before the start and bodies, gear and equipment is then despatched to the four

points of the compass. When we arrived at the designated station our Brazilian host was there to meet us, a mast with antennas had been erected, identical at all sites and a linear amp was also there. After that everything else had to be set up, tried, tested and made to work in time for the start of the contest. The callsign for each team was kept under wraps by the referee until 10 minutes before the 'off'. All top secret, hush-hush stuff in an effort to maintain anonymity of the competitors so that no advantage can be gained from 'home' support. So after watching all this frantic activity and having been advised that all the officials at WRTC were welcome to use their own callsign with a PP5 prefix, we were almost ready.

All that is history, as they say. So why the heading 'QSL Cards – Yes, please!'

I had been watching and making notes and following the referees' check list as our station took shape. I guess Doug and Andy were at it until the last, but they did take a

'comfort break' and ushered me across to see if I would like to make a few QSOs. "Yes please" was the instant reply. So at 1113 GMT I made a CQ call with PP5/G5LP – great to be QRV from Brazil. In an instant I was called by VE3NWA and we had a brief QSO. How do I know this? Well, I have to admit that if I did make a note for my log that scrappy piece of paper disappeared amongst the morass of notes and instructions I had, so I never really knew who my one and only QSO from PY was with. So I was very pleased indeed to find amongst my most recent batch of QSL cards from the RSGB Bureau the card from VE3NWA. Oh, how this one little piece of paper brought back all those wonderful memories, enough indeed to encourage me to sit down and write these few words.

So 'QSLs'? Yes, please!

Lionel, G5LP, and for one QSO only 'The Full Monty', ie PP5/G5LP.

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## Deliberate QRM

**John Gould, G3WKL**

*g3wkl@btinternet.com*

Late last summer (or was it the last floods!) there was quite a lot of comment in the *Digest* and within RadCom about combating 'Deliberate QRM' (DQ). In particular I presented some plans at the HF Convention as to how we were planning to move forward. As ever it has been a matter of snakes and ladders, but at long last there has been some positive moves on which to report and also a development in which we can ask CDXC members to join in the experimentation.

The background is that at IARU level, at the behest some years ago of CDXC, the RSGB has managed to use its influence to get coordinated effort underway to recognise

the importance of the appropriate education and training for newcomers and also 'old hands'. As we argued last year, this will not be enough as any amount of education and training will not, we feel, change the intent or habits of those few who continue to disrupt the hobby though their deliberate jamming of DXpedition frequencies in particular. This is why we outlined a project to put in place some technology that might identify more closely the source of DQ.

The basic concept, outlined last October at the HF Convention, is to create a cluster of users who share information about instances of deliberate QRM. Following a trial version that operated during the 3B7C

DXpedition, the successor called the 'DQ Cluster' is now undergoing tests. At this stage it is limited in terms of what it can achieve because apart from bearings generated from beams and loops we have not completed the experiments on specific DF techniques. However, particularly on 20m and above there is some scope for those with suitable beams to participate, and obviously there is also scope for anyone with a rotatable loop to do likewise on any of the bands.

Of the snakes, we were quite disappointed at the unsuccessful outcome of an investigation into using the time-delay-of-arrival (TDOA) technique. The idea was to compare the arrival time of jamming signals received at different locations. Peter Martinez, G3PLX, who was already experienced in the basic technique, developed some specific software to test out the ideas between his QTH and mine. However, whilst he could get good results on relatively local signals, we decided to abandon the technique because the method wasn't sufficiently robust against multipath that would be experienced over trans-European length paths. We still have a few other ideas to investigate, but meanwhile we are keen to see what can be achieved by

using the beams and loops normally used for chasing the DX.

We are opening the trial cluster to CDXC members and a few invited amateurs on a 'beta test' basis. The whole concept of the cluster is to try and change behaviour, as it alone will not be able to locate the source of interference down to an individual; at best we hope that the system will be able to locate the area, or country, from where the QRM is being created. We would, therefore, ask members to respect that this is a trial version and not to publicise its existence or more importantly pass to non-members details to be found on the CDXC website as to how to access the cluster. Apart from stressing the system CDXC members can usefully experiment with generating bearings, using beams or loops, against HF stations 'running' a frequency. These 'test' spots can be sent to the cluster and plotted to show the location of the source – with such tests we do of course know the actual source of the transmission. Once we get enough users able to access and use the cluster, we plan to identify some specific DXpeditions and use them to properly monitor for DQ and exercise the cluster. You can be a part of this experiment!

73 John, G3WKL

### **Sheffield Amateur Radio Club - Press Release**

Once again the Sheffield IOTA contest team will be active from Kildonan on the Scottish island of Arran, EU-123 (IOSA CL-01, SCOTIA CS-14), from the 25 - 29th of July. On the 25<sup>th</sup> they also intend activating the island of Pladda (IOSA CL-07, SCOTIA CS-12) as GS3RCM/P. Throughout the contest the team can be heard as MM3M. We look forward to working you all at some point during our stay.

The team will be active on the 40m WAB net and all HF bands, CW/SSB, 6m, 4m, 2m and 70cm SSB/FM and DSTAR. This year the team are again being sponsored by LAM Communications and we thank them for their support.

For further information please contact the Team Leader, Colin/G3VCQ on (0114) 274 5376 or [g3vcq@sheffield-live.co.uk](mailto:g3vcq@sheffield-live.co.uk). QSL via G4FAL or via QRZ.COM for direct.

# The CDXC Members' DX Cluster

Michael Wells, G7VJR

The CDXC members cluster is like a 'normal' cluster, with a full feed of spots from all over the world, and a number of CDXC-specific enhancements.

You have to ask for a password before you can use the system (just e-mail michael@g7vjr.org). It's free, of course, provided you are a paid-up member of CDXC. Accounts are precious - and manually validated - so they only get issued when requested.

## Logging in

The cluster is accessed via Telnet. To connect, use the following details:

Telnet server: cluster.cdxc.org.uk  
Telnet port: 7300  
Username: your callsign  
Password: your password, issued by e-mail

Once you're connected, you will see a list of other members who are logged in, and a quick summary of recent spots.

## No external announcements

Too many folks use the 'announce' feature of the DX Cluster to chat to each other, or stir up trouble. These spots rarely serve any purpose in terms of finding or working DX, so the members' cluster quenches them completely.

For example, on a normal cluster you might see this:

10-Jun 1936Z de KI4LTH: THEY ARE  
UNDRESSING KENYAN DUE TO ILL-  
NESS(5Z4FT)  
10-Jun 1932Z de KI4LTH: BUT I WILL  
ANSWER WOULD YOU LIKE  
10105.0 YA/IZ1BWB 10-Jun-2008  
2146Z tnx qso es new one on 30 YA

<DL4KUG>

TO COME WITH US ON AN HIKING  
TRIP FROM SAY ATHENS TO LONDON  
THE CHEAP WAY???(5Z4FT)

10-Jun 1930Z de HG8PRC:  
http://hg8lxl.ham.hu/cgi-bin/spider.cgi  
(HG8PRC DXCluster)

10-Jun 1929Z de IW9HJL: 9K2CQ  
NEVER CONFIRM,SEND DIRECT SEND  
BUREAU NEVER NEVER RESPONSE  
NOT GOOD!!!NOT HAM SPIRIT

10-Jun 1928Z de KI4LTH: I AM NOT  
TALKING YOU ARE ASKING(5Z4FT)

50110.0 WP4LUU 10-Jun-2008 2145Z  
WKD LUIS 5X9 KP4

<YV5MM>

10108.0 FS/DL5CF 10-Jun-2008 2145Z  
FJ

<IZ8GNW>

10116.0 JA2BGH 10-Jun-2008 2144Z  
Thanks QSO JA

<SM0BRF>

50110.0 JW/PE1L 10-Jun-2008 2144Z  
TNX QSO JW

<OY3JE>

14086.5 BT1OB 10-Jun-2008 2144Z  
GREAT SIGNALS, TNX BY

<EA8CK>

14070.3 US5MHT 10-Jun-2008 2142Z  
BPSK31 SERGE > SVERLOVSK; UR

<ZP6GBA>

10108.0 FS/DL5CF 10-Jun-2008 2142Z  
but why simplex ? :-) FS

<UA3AGW>

10-Jun 1923Z de I2ADN: to ih9gpi ok G.  
ho appena coll. CT in 4m 5/9 a  
quest'ora!

10-Jun 1921Z de IW9DZV: visit forum del  
belice

10103.1 ZP6CW 10-Jun-2008 2142Z  
+ZP

<EA7WA>

10106.0 OZ1CTK 10-Jun-2008 2142Z  
OZ

<UA0BA-20>

10-Jun 1846Z de IZ8BRI-6: Dx-Cluster ->  
telnet://iz8bri.dyndns.org:9000

Instead, on the CDXC cluster you would see this (roughly - I'm simulating this):

```
10105.0 YA/IZ1BWB      10-Jun-2008
2146Z tnx qso es new one on 30 YA
<DL4KUG>
50110.0 WP4LUU        10-Jun-2008 2145Z
WKD LUIS 5X9          KP4
<YV5MM>
10108.0 FS/DL5CF      10-Jun-2008 2145Z
FJ
<IZ8GNW>
10116.0 JA2BGH        10-Jun-2008 2144Z
Thanks QSO            JA
<SM0BRF>
50110.0 JW/PE1L       10-Jun-2008 2144Z
TNX QSO              JW
<OY3JE>
14086.5 BT1OB         10-Jun-2008 2144Z
GREAT SIGNALS, TNX    BY
<EA8CK>
14070.3 US5MHT        10-Jun-2008 2142Z
BPSK31 SERGE > SVERLOVSK; UR
<ZP6GBA>
10108.0 FS/DL5CF      10-Jun-2008 2142Z
but why simplex ? :-) FS
<UA3AGW>
10103.1 ZP6CW         10-Jun-2008 2142Z
+ZP
<EA7WA>
10106.0 OZ1CTK        10-Jun-2008 2142Z
OZ
<UA0BA-20>
```

It's tidier, which makes it much easier to scan through by eye, but it's also a lot less grating! If you want to see the announces, just type 'sh/ann' at any time.

### **Members' spots are highlighted**

When a DX spot is made, the CDXC cluster will highlight it 'CDXC' if the spotter, or the person making the spot, is a member of CDXC. This works even if the spots are being made on other clusters (not just if they're made on the members' cluster).

### **You can find spots by, or about, other CDXC members**

The command to display DX is normally 'sh/dx'. If you prefer to look for spots by, or about CDXC members, then just type 'sh/cdxc' instead. Although less numerous, most CDXC spots are above average in terms of quality and relevance.

### **You can choose to make a 'closed' spot or a world-wide spot**

If you make a DX spot normally, you use the command 'dx'. This is fully supported on the members' cluster and distributes your spot to the world. However, if you prefer to make a spot which is only displayed locally - ie only visible to other CDXC members - then use the command 'cdxc' instead.

```
cdxc 3.525 g3abc Calling CQ DX    <---
only goes to CDXC cluster users
```

```
dx 3.525 g3abc Calling CQ DX    <--- goes
to the whole cluster network, worldwide
```

### **Other thoughts...**

Some kinds of spot do attract problems, especially sharing QSX ranges (particularly on CW I find!). Fewer and fewer 'top' DXers will make that kind of detailed spot, because it is encouraging newcomers not to listen, just to read and work what they see on the cluster. The reason for supporting both open and closed spotting is to give you more choice.

I don't have enough free time to provide technical support, but there are some pages on the web which could get you started. Try: [www.n2hos.com/digital/cluster.html](http://www.n2hos.com/digital/cluster.html) and also [www.dxcluster.info](http://www.dxcluster.info)

73 and good DX!

Michael G7VJR



# The RTTY Column

**Phil Cooper, GUØSUP**    *pcooper@guernsey.net*

As I begin to write this the summer Es season has begun, and 10m and 12m are buzzing with RTTY signals. I have been quite surprised to work so many 'new' ones, although I have to say that most are just Europeans. It is not generally that easy to work the closer EU stations, and I have managed a surprising number of new entities on 12m, such as ON, OHØ and even GM! Sadly, the propagation didn't seem to last too long before it all collapsed.

Oh when will it get better? Folk keep saying that it can't get much worse, and then it does! The solar flux recently fell to 65, a figure I believe is the lowest possible, unless anyone knows different?

In the last issue I mentioned that I had been trying MMD with MMTTY and DXKeeper. I am now using this almost all the time for general day-to-day operations and it really is very neat. I am now almost at the stage where I will stop putting new contacts in Turbolog 3 altogether, and leave it available for cross-checking only.

I did try TL4, but could not get on with it, and I guess that may in part be due to the fact that I only ever used it post-event, rather than for real-time logging. This was because TL had never integrated RTTY, or even a way to log from any RTTY software into TL directly.

DXKeeper is free and is an excellent tool, and the support from the author, Dave/AA6YQ, is amazing. Querying the log is relatively easy, as you use SQL to find what you want. The only problem for me is trying to structure the query in the correct way to produce what I want. Again, Dave is usually at hand to assist with this, if I get into difficulties.

It looks as though my RTTY WPX award is in the process of being sent, as I saw it mentioned in the latest CQ magazine. Indeed, I am being awarded certificate number 5, so I am quite pleased about that. I wonder how long it will be before I see the actual certificate!

I am currently in the process of organising my DXCC cards for submission at the Ham Radio event in Friedrichshafen this year. Nothing too amazing to be gained this time round, but I will increase my band-slots quite considerably.

I am also submitting cards for my CW DXCC. Like my RTTY application, this one will be a 'hybrid', using cards and LoTW credits. I was going to wait until I had 100 entities on LoTW alone, but I have been stuck at 86 for well over a year now, and finding new ones to work for LoTW are getting harder. The hybrid application will give me over 120 entities, which will be enough for a first application on CW.

It would seem that us 'RTTY-types' are far happier using LoTW! Sadly, my VP6DX QSL card has still not arrived, so that entity will have to wait another year before being claimed by me.

I am also going to take an application for the German DOK award. I have never really bothered about this before, but DXKeeper recently updated to expand the DOK info (as well as RDA, and other awards), and can now produce nice reports of the DOK's worked.

As it is a single-band award, I have concentrated on 20m RTTY only, as this is where the majority of my DL contacts have been. I am submitting cards for just over 260 DOKs on that band and will see how this works. If successful, I may well submit

my 40m DOKs next year, as I have over 100 on that band.

As you will guess, this is being written before my annual pilgrimage to Friedrichshafen, and I am hoping to meet some of you there. For those of you who have not yet made a visit to the Ham Radio event, I can thoroughly recommend making the trip. Getting there is comparatively easy, with direct (and cheap!) flights to Friedrichshafen from Stansted, or by flying to Zurich. I am told that you can buy a ticket for the train and boat from Zurich airport direct to Friedrichshafen. I'll let you know how this works, as two GUs are travelling via Zurich this year. My wife and I are both going, and we are making a bit of a holiday of it this time, staying for a whole week.

Looking at the NG3K 'Announced Operations' website, there really isn't too much to get excited about in the coming months. There may be a few countries for new band-slots, but nothing really exciting seems to be happening.

Rusty/K5LBU and friends will be in Mozambique from July 16 – 30, and I am sure RTTY will be used. Listen for QSL routes, as these may vary between operators. From August 10 to 16 look for JD1BLX and JD1BLY from Ogasawara. QSL is via JI5USJ and JI5RPT respectively.

At the time of writing, 4W6R was planned to be a big effort, but they are barely audible on CW and so far have only appeared briefly on 20m RTTY. I am not too bothered, as I already have 4W confirmed on 20m and 15m RTTY, but it would be nice to work on other bands.

The ANARTS RTTY contest was a bit of a washout for me, as I had been collared for a few jobs on Saturday morning, so did not get to start until well into the contest. Conditions were generally rather poor, although I did make four contacts on 10m, and a dozen or so on 15m during the afternoon. There was also a brief opening to

W6/W7 late in the afternoon on 20m, and I bagged a few extra mults there. Getting the six continents was harder, and my only South American contact was with LTØH, who also gave me maximum points. On Sunday, things got considerably worse, and I couldn't even hear any Stateside stations.

I did work John, 9M6XRO, late in the afternoon on 20m, so that was a bonus. My final score was way down on previous years, mostly due to the lack of call areas on the different bands.

In the week leading up to ANARTS, KH6GMP and KL8DX had both been on RTTY most mornings, and both were quite strong up until around 0830 UTC. Of course, for the contest I could hear neither of them. Oh well, such is life!

That's it for another issue, but please do send any comments or queries to me.

Good DX and I hope to work you on the bands.

73 de Phil GUØSUP

Forthcoming contests:

SARTG DX x 8 hour sessions)	Aug 16-17 (3
SCC RTTY (Slovenia)	Aug 30-31
Russian WW	Sep 6
CIS DX RTTY	Sep 20-21
CQ WW DX	Sep 27-28
Makrothen	Oct 11-12
JARTS (Japan)	Oct 18-19
WAEDC (QTC)	Nov 8-9
TARA RTTY Melee	Dec 6
OK RTTY	Dec 20

# Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

As always, welcome to the Contest column. There have been some flurries of activity in some of the more popular contests of late, with a sprinkling of inspiring propagation to boot. Generally, though, the summer months, with some notable exceptions, play host to a number of low-key contests organised by national societies. The summer is meant to be for station maintenance and upgrades, after all.

## The CW Skimmer debate rages on

The debate regarding how CW Skimmer could change the face of contesting, and how its use should, or should not be allowed in contests, has continued fervently on several of the Internet contest reflectors. In fact CW Skimmer has captured so much attention that there has not been very much said about any other facet of contesting during the last couple of months.

There are a couple of separate issues being thrashed out. The first is that CW Skimmer represents a new technology that should be embraced and accepted, similar to the other significant steps forward that computer logging, SuperCheckPartial, and automatic CW keying represent. It's argued that Skimmer should not be treated any differently, and accepted as a tool necessary to get to the Single Operator podium positions in contests.

For some of the proponents of the opposite viewpoint, the Skimmer discussion has made them question the accepted norm of the Unassisted category. For example, maybe there shouldn't be computer keying allowed in an Unassisted entry. Other people have suggested removing the Assisted category altogether. Several high-profile contest sponsors, including the Worked All Europe and Russian DX Contest organisers, already allow

DX Cluster use for each entrant. The waters are muddy indeed!

My personal belief is that it is beneficial to retain Assisted and Unassisted categories. This is borne out when scanning the results of contests that do acknowledge the difference in the sections, when seeing the difference in scores, and strategies employed by the leaders in them. The majority of entrants in these contests are unassisted – when given the choice they choose not to use outside assistance like the DX Cluster. This is a choice that should not be taken away.

Trying to work out a delimiter between Assisted and Unassisted is not easy, given the invention of CW Skimmer, as there is no clear line in the sand to draw. Any re-worded rules must be clear, and hopefully be applicable to CW, SSB and RTTY events, which is especially important for mixed-mode events. One obvious problem with the suggestion that any computer decode assistance places an entrant into the Assisted category is RTTY. By default everyone must be in the Assisted category – even without a DX Cluster providing a stream of spots. Historically 'Assisted' RTTY Contests have meant using outside support like the DX Cluster, so any change in the rules could disrupt historical high-score records. There are also mixed-mode events in the annual calendar which incorporate all three modes, so it will be beneficial that whatever rules are decided upon in the future can be applied to all modes.

One suggestion with a degree of support is that the delimitation should be based on bandwidth, perhaps allowing the audio bandwidth of a standard VFO to have signals decoded on them via a computer. This would permit RTTY contesters to

operate ‘unassisted’, and allow anyone using a Morse reader, CWGet, or their Writelog Morse decoder to be similarly unassisted. This retains the status quo regarding what most people would have considered as normal unassisted activity before the Skimmer furore erupted.

When people use computer logging, or PC keying, whilst it provides an advantage in terms of operator comfort, it should not be impossible for another operator to do just as well without these aids. If this was not true, maybe these facets should classify an operator as ‘Assisted.’ If I use a Morse reader on my run frequency, I won’t get a significant advantage over another human operator receiving ‘by ear.’ Perhaps it’s only when the automatic reception occurs simultaneously over many tens or hundreds of kilohertz, where the decoding of dozens or hundreds of callsigns occurs in a matter of seconds, then this cannot hope to be matched even by the best of human operators. At this point the activity must be classed as assisted.

Many contest sponsors have yet to decide which stance to take, instead waiting to see what others come up with. Randy, K5ZD, the new CQ WPX Contest Director, publicly asked the contest community to come up with definitions for what constitutes a ‘Single Operator’ with the present-day technological tools available. We can only assume that there will be a general consensus ultimately between the major contest organisers. At this point the jury is still out. Hopefully by the next *Digest* the contest community will have an answer to the question – even if some of us won’t like what the answer is.

### **Postscript – remote Skimmers in practice**

Have you ever been curious after a contest, wondering if any of your friends were operating? If they were on-air, what bands were they operating on, and when? If you were trying to track down a rare station, it

would be easy to do a DX spot search on the DX Cluster to find out the answer. But as a ‘humble G’ I know it’s possible to be very active in a contest and never be spotted at all. But now the combination of a network of Software Defined Radios connected to CW Skimmers has created a reverse beacon network which can be a boon for the curious contester. Rather than having stations spotted because they are rare, the Skimmer network spots any and all stations they can decode. I used it after one contest to see where I had been heard. From the many DX spots that had been sent, it was possible to see fairly accurately where I had been CQing, what times I’d changed band, and even when I’d been tuning up and down the band. Try <http://skimmer.dxwatch.com>.

### **On the air**

I recently received a new copy of the Torbay ARS contest report from Derrick, G3LHJ. What was pleasing to see was the variety of events that the club members have had a dabble in, including some USA QSO parties. From the contest calendars we know that there are usually several contests running each weekend, and a quick hour’s activity in some of the less well-known ones will be both fun for you, and the entrants. How many completely new events can you claim to have tried in the past year?

### **Baltic Contest**

Looking through my own logbook, the Baltic Contest was quite lively in mid-May. Whilst we in the UK are a little to the west of the centre of activity, the 80m conditions and high activity ensured it remained a fun event. The only downside is that the 10pm to 3am local time may not be to everyone’s taste. From my own station I found it difficult to run on SSB until quite late in the contest. This resulted in a flurry of new LY / ES / YL stations which boosted my rate in the dying minutes – great stuff. For a single band work-everyone contest, simple scoring, with single and mixed mode sections, this is another event to put on the

‘to do’ list, even if only once. If you can enter the RSGB 80m CC, there’s no reason why you shouldn’t enjoy this one.

## **CQ-M**

The CQ-M International DX Contest is also held in May. It’s over 50 years old, with the contest running each year since 1957. The letter ‘M’ in the contest title is an abbreviation of the Russian word ‘Mir’. This word can mean ‘world’, ‘community’, ‘people’, as well as the more common translation of ‘peace’. It’s a 24-hour mixed-mode event, where the leading operators make upwards of 2,000 QSO. Whilst runs to the USA can be difficult to achieve while the Solar Flux Index levels seem to be perennially below 70, if most of our target audience is in Europe this is not going to be such a problem. With great support from Russia, it’s certainly worth a look at. Look it up on the contest calendars, and have a look at the website [www.cq-m.andys.ru/](http://www.cq-m.andys.ru/). From the claimed scores page for the 2008 event it shows 17 UK entrants out of 1,060 logs received. Can we increase this for 2009?

## **CQ WPX CW**

I had hoped to have a serious attempt at the CQ WPX Contest. Unfortunately there were reasonably high winds in the Midlands, which meant I had to give up by the lunchtime of the Saturday. It was fun, if a bit galling, to still be able to work stations with my little tower wound down, and my yagi hiding in the undergrowth about 15 ft agl. Both 10 and 15m were open, with short skip QSOs to Europe being available, although the excitement of finally being on 10m must always be tempered against the thought that more points per QSO could be had by saving precious operating time until the evening and the low bands. Even so, the high bands did have some selective openings to the Far East and South America. The Sporadic-E QSOs were available very early in the morning too. It takes only a couple of seconds to check for activity, so there’s no excuse for missing out. ‘Assume

nothing and expect the unexpected’ is a good yardstick for a sporadic propagation mode, especially at 4am!

As an aside, one of the key preparation details for a contest is analysis of the previous year’s results. It has often been argued that entrants should subscribe to CQ magazine if they need to have access to the results as soon as they are ready, as it is a commercial interest relying on magazine sales. But should *all* of the entrants need to subscribe, each and every year? Last year’s full CW results were made available on the Internet on the day before the contest, which does not give much time for analysis and strategising. The ‘Top 10 lists’ were made available several weeks beforehand. Maybe this was due to technical reasons and beyond the organisers’ control, but if done deliberately it doesn’t seem a sensible idea to me to separate the leaders from everyone else in this way. It’s not a good incentive for ‘tomorrow’s top testers.’

The CQ magazine-sponsored events have seen good progress in the last couple of years regarding prompt certificate production, and a greater web presence with a results archive. I would hope that results will be freely available in good time before next year’s contest, and still allow the magazine subscribers to get a ‘premium service’ and see the results several months before the general public. (The full CQ 160m Contests results for 2007 are not yet generally available as I write this, several months after the running of the 2008 event.)

## **NFD**

It was heartening to read lots of tales on the UK-Contest reflector following this year’s NFD. With many events in the RSGB programme being fairly short events (by popular demand from the entrants, of course) there’s often not much to report on afterwards. But the perils of setting up a portable station, with temporary masts, generators, rampaging farm animals and the like, an event like NFD will stick in the

mind more than the March 80m CC Data event (for example!)

Many stations enjoyed Es propagation on 10m, which elevated the QSO totals to record levels for some groups, and the hard work finding elusive stations on 160m overnight. Even the weather was reasonable over most of the UK, which all too often at Field Day puts a very literal dampener on proceedings. I wasn't in the field myself this year, although did try to work as many entrants as I could for a few hours at home.

### **IARU HF Championship – GB7HQ**

This year's IARU HF Championship Contest is being held over 12 – 13 July, and this will be the 6<sup>th</sup> year as a multi-site multi-transmitter entry with simultaneous operation on all of the band-mode combinations for the UK national team entry. The callsign will be GB7HQ, which had a successful inaugural outing last year.

Several new operators and stations are joining the team this year, which has been busy discussing strategy for several months. In particular the 160m capability has been enhanced, including the use of extra remote receivers from other locations around the UK. A separate software team have been focussing on StarLog, which John, G3WGV, continues to refine for use in a multi-transmitter multi-location contest environment.

Once again there will be awards available for making a number of contacts with the station during the contest. There are four levels of award, ranging from the Bronze award (for contacts on three band/modes) up to the Platinum award (for making the maximum possible 12 contacts on all band/mode combinations.)

The GB7HQ Awards are *free*, but to cover postage, applicants are suggested to send £2. Award applications must list all contacts with GB7HQ in date and time order, and should be sent to: John Dunnington,

G3LZQ, PO Box 36, Gilberdyke, East Yorkshire HU15 2WX. E-mail applications to

johndunnington@johndunnington.karoo.co.uk

### **Russian Radio Team Championship 2008**

Forwarded from the WRTC reflector by Roger, G3SXW, there is news of the Russian Radio Team Championship (RRTC) This is an annual head-to-head 'Field Day'-style competition which is organized by the Russian Amateur Radio Union. This summer 20 teams of two operators will be invited, which represent the many different regions of the Russian Federation.

The contest will very closely mirror the upcoming WRTC 2010 event. The participants will be competing in the Greater Moscow region, about 60 km to the south of the city, a flat rural area which is mainly agricultural in nature. The distance between team positions is roughly 0.5 kms, so the antennas of the nearest two or three teams will be visible from each operating position. Organisers will supply teams with food, identical tents, tables, chairs, a 220V gas generator and fuel, a 10m-high steel sectioned tower and a tri-band antenna. Teams are required to bring the other station equipment, including the transceiver, computer, switches and filters. Just like in Field Day, the participants are also responsible for all antenna assembly and raising the tower.

To raise QSO rates, the teams will use new callsigns and exchanges every two hours. Unusual callsigns in the range R33AA to R33FZ will be used. On average 1300 QSOs by the top teams are not uncommon during the eight-hour contest. There is no limitation on band or mode changes, although only one signal can be transmitted at one time. Just like in WRTC, every team will be accompanied by an official contest referee,

who will monitor all actions and the audio signals. After the competition ends, e-mail logs will be accepted for a four-hour period immediately following the end of the contest. After that computer checking of the logs will commence, and the final results will be ready the following morning.

The contest starts at 0700 UTC on July 19th 2008 and ends at 1459 UTC. Everybody can work everybody, using CW and SSB on 7, 14, 21 and 28 MHz. Outside participants send RS(T) and their ITU zone number. The RRTC competitors send RS(T) and a three-character combination, eg 599 XYZ. Any contest logging software can be used which supports the IARU HF World

Championship. Only e-mail logs are accepted, and logs must be sent to ochr@srr.ru before 1900 on the 19<sup>th</sup> July – the same day of the contest. This should be a good indicator of what WRTC entrants will expect in Russia, and I like the novelty of being given identical building blocks of a portable station, and needing to ‘build it yourself.’

That’s all for this time. Don’t forget to send in reports from the IOTA contest. Any other material is always welcome – from strategy to software, and from station building to Skimmer.

73 Lee, GØMTN

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## E-mails to the Editor

### From GM4FDM

15 May 2008

Dear Ed,

Never before have I felt the need to put pen to paper as a result of a CDXC article, but after reading Roger/G3SXW’s rant on ‘Money Talks’ [*Digest, May 2008*] I feel the need!

Don’t get me wrong; there is much in the article that I do agree with, especially in his comments about QSLing and the extraction of money for QSL cards. Like Roger I abhor this approach and refuse to indulge in it. In fact after my latest trip to Jersey at New Year, my logs were put on Logbook of the World the day after I returned home.

I did find the effect of putting the YK9G logs onto LoTW on a daily basis of interest, and that’s OK if you have the time and the ability to do it, when the expedition is taking place. Sometimes, however, I feel we put too much emphasis on the uploading

logs during an expedition, a practise many of the amateur community have come to expect, indeed almost demand from an expedition.

Where I do take issue with Roger is his simplistic approach in that “If you can’t afford it – don’t go!”. I write this as ‘a true blue DXer’, an expeditioner, a Committee member of the GMDX Group and part of the team which decides how and which expeditions we will support as a Group. I have also sought and accepted money from groups like GMDX and CDXC in the past.

I must admit that I found Roger’s article a little contradictory in places. I enjoy travelling around the country after an expedition, giving talks and presentations to many Scottish Amateur Radio Clubs. Often I get the impression that people think I am a millionaire, or at least very rich, in being able to visit far-off places just to play radio. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have to work to pay for my hobby like, I guess, a majority of other amateurs who pursue the same interests.

“If you can’t afford it – don’t go!” smacks of a very elitist point of view and suggests that only the rich should be able to go on expeditions, irrespective of their operating abilities. How will this ever serve the DX community? It is pointless from a ‘true blue Dxr’ point of view for somebody to be able to afford to go to a rare location, but be a lousy operator when he or she gets there.

Personally, I have never sought financial assistance to go on holiday, even though I packed my K2 to allow me to make a few QSOs whilst taking the sun and enjoying a beer or two. That would be immoral. My wife and I will spend next January in Tenerife and I guess my K3 will go along too, but this, in my opinion, would not count as an expedition, just a family holiday. However, I feel that Roger’s approach is too black and white.

When I did seek assistance it was to travel to places like Banaba (T33), not to pay my personal contribution, but to help in paying the general expenses of the expedition. Last year when we went over to Brunei I paid my own travelling and living expenses but sought assistance in transporting a linear, amplifier and a 160m Titanex out and back to Brunei. We could have gone to Brunei without the amp and the Titanex, but we would have made NO QSOs on 160 or 80m - or if we did, only a few JAs. I did not go to Brunei for a holiday, I went there only to make QSOs. My logs were uploaded to LoTW within three months of my return.

I’m not so sure that financial support should be restricted to the top 50 in DXCC as there are several places which are do-able, but where you cannot get a licence: KP1, KP5, SV/A, E4, S2 etc. Just because a place is in the top 50 does not mean that’s its hard to get to or requires financial support.

Financial support should be available to assist amateurs to get to a specific difficult location, or for a specific function and should be judged individually on its merits. In GMDX we would never offer to pay

anybody’s airfares or subsistence expenses and I’m sure CDXC would be the same.

I’m not sure about sponsoring an amplifier or beam for a resident ham. This has been tried before. We in the GMDX Group helped to sponsor a K2 for a VU4 ham during the Convention after the tsunami and I have to confess that I have never heard VU4 on the air since. From reading expedition reports in our various magazines I read that equipment has been left or donated to club stations in different parts of the World, yet seldom do we hear them on the air.

By assisting a properly organised expedition we are (in general terms) assured of a good effort to make QSOs, assured the logs will be protected and be assured of getting QSL confirmation after the expedition has concluded.

Confining expeditioning to the rich??? Bah! Humbug!

Yours sincerely

Tom, GM4FDM

### From GUØSUP

I always enjoy reading the *Digest* and this issue was no exception. A couple of articles did, however, cause me to stop and think, and then pen these few comments regarding the articles from Roger, G3SXW.

In his first article entitled ‘Money talks – even in DXing’, he cites the rather ungentlemanly exploits of VP6DX regarding QSLs. I have to agree with his comments about this operation. As I needed VP6d for a new one, I sent off a donation, as did many others. This was done as support, and not to gain in any way in terms of a QSL. I had expected to have to send a card separately anyway, accompanied by a bit more than the return postage. I worked them on 30m RTTY, plus 40, 30 and 20m CW, and was quite pleased with that, although I would



have liked a 20m RTTY contact, but you can't win 'em all!

Soon after the operation, folk began saying they had received their credits on LoTW for this operation, and then it became apparent that those making (significant??) donations were the only ones to have gained LoTW credits. OK so far, as my donation was not 'significant', so what more could I expect? I then sent my direct card, in the hope of getting the card before I get my cards checked in Friedrichshafen.

As time went on, more folk were claiming they had credits, and some said they had made only a 'small' donation. I checked almost daily for my own LoTW credits and, to be brief, I have still not received any such credits! So far (a week before Friedrichshafen), I have still not received either the LoTW credits, or a card. What a great shame that such an otherwise excellent operation should employ such tactics.

Further to that, I am now considering my position on sending donations to other DXpeditions, especially those that imply donations will equal LoTW credits. I'm not sure what I will do yet, but the status of VP6DX has left a bad taste in my mouth, and I have to wonder what sort of knock-on effect it will have for other DXpeditions.

In his second article, Roger/G3SXW talks about the cluster from the 'hot end'. Excellent stuff, Roger, and totally true! The examples cited by Roger all occur during any major DXpedition and it is quite laughable why some folk insist on asking (for example) for 12m SSB from a CW-only team!

I feel that Roger missed a couple of points, though! Why do so many folk spot DX such as YK9G one after another? Surely one recent spot from your own region is enough? Then why do we see so many spots from the same country, often one after another, spotting the DX? What's the point of that?

Also, why do folk send 'worked up 1.6' as the comment? Most DXpeditions do not stick to one RX frequency so again, why waste the resources? We all know (don't we?) that DXpeditions always work split, so they are going to be UP by a bit. During the YK9G operation I was listening to them on 30m and heard the band policemen sending UP UP UP to one poor YO station. Said YO then did move up and call, but by only about 10 Hertz!

And don't you just hate those folk who call simplex, get told UP, and then work the DX on their next call!

Negative comments on the cluster seem to be the norm these days rather than the rarity. However, they are not just limited to DXpeditions. I try to ignore them, as they are mostly worthless and the point of view of just one sad individual.

On a recent foray on to 30m RTTY, I started seeing several cluster comments on WHY NOT SPLIT?? I didn't go split as it started as a sked with a DL9 friend who needed GU on 30m RTTY. Before our contact had ended, I was getting called by all sorts, and we had to prematurely end our contact. I managed to make a quick contact with a couple of stations without interruption, and these stations then went off and started to call CQ elsewhere on the band.

It wasn't very long before I was down to the TU 599 QRZ? style of operation, and that was when the WHY NOT SPLIT comments started appearing on the cluster! Well, a quick listen around would have readily resolved that issue! The band was fairly humming with RTTY from 10.135 right up to 10.148. Besides, I am not rare DX, so why should I take up a huge chunk of the band working split?

The final point I would like to make concerns that well-known IT9 call. Each time he is on, there are many pointless comments from Gs of all flavours about him. Wouldn't it be far better just to ignore

him, and to refrain from making comments on the cluster? I'm just thankful he doesn't use RTTY or CW!

73 de Phil GUØSUP

### From G3TXF

Dear Martyn,

The gratuitous criticism of fellow DXpeditioners and QSLers in Roger/G3SXW's rambling rant against DXpedition funding in the May 2008 *Digest* was far from constructive. The article lacked generosity and courtesy towards several fellow amateur radio DXers.

An article strewn with terms such as 'obnoxious', 'opportunist', 'mealy-mouthed', 'gutter tactic', 'cheap-skate', 'blackmailing', 'ripping us off' etc. deserves no place in the CDXC *Digest*, nor indeed anywhere within the hobby of amateur radio.

The overt armchair criticism of recognisable individual DXpeditioners and of recent major DXpeditions was unnecessary. The article made for uncomfortable reading. If a major multi-national DXpedition project involving dozens of operators, lengthy voyages across the ocean, inhospitable locations, massive logistics, complex funding and super-efficient amateur radio technology chooses to handle its QSLing in a particular way, then so be it.

Supporting worthy mid-range DXpeditions financially in a small way through clubs does no harm. Quite the opposite. Encouraging new DXers and new DXpeditioners should help the hobby. To suggest that DXpeditions only to countries in the Top 50 should ever receive any cash support is ridiculous.

Roger contends that the solution to his 'problem' lies with club sponsors, where DXpedition funding has 'increased dramatically' in recent years. While this

may just possibly be true for some clubs, a glance at the latest CDXC Accounts (published elsewhere in this *Digest*) will show that the total amount spent on DXpedition funding has increased from £2,600 to £3,000 over the past five years, but with smaller amounts being spent in two of the three intervening years. In terms of the total costs of mounting major DXpeditions these sums, when divided amongst a dozen or so operations, are very small.

However, many would whole-heartedly agree with Roger's argument that "If you can't afford it, then don't go". But support for an individual's DXpedition costs might come in many forms and from many sources, and not just from Club sponsorship.

73 Nigel, G3TXF

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### From MIØTMW

Could we have more photos in the 'CDXC Mag' about radio and antennas and not full of people with wine and booze on the 'go' all the time. Seven in the last edition. Wot's it all coming to? hi hi

**CDXC**  
CHILTERN DX CLUB  
The UK DX Foundation

# A Cautionary Tale

Gill B.

It was a cold, wet October evening when Roger made his way into the Village Hall taking a seat near the door, an apprehensive look at the seven other inhabitants, and a very deep breath.

A man on the opposite side of the circle, who seemed to be the leader of the group, looked up and smiled. "Welcome to RAA," he said.

There was a moment of awkward silence, a rustle of papers and a man on Roger's left rose slowly to his feet. "My name is Jim... and I'm an addict," he faltered.

An encouraging splatter of applause seemed to give him the confidence to continue. "Last week I cleared the household account and went over to Martin Lynch for a new linear. My wife had been saving for a new bathroom." An empathetic murmur ran round the circle as Jim sat down. There was a pause during which all seemed to be inwardly recalling similar events in their own lives. How could any one of them judge Jim - after all, a bathroom is just a bathroom, but a good linear makes so much difference on 80 metres.

The man to the right of the leader rose. The light glinted on his red and white lapel badges: ARRL DXCC 338, ARRL DXCC 10 metres, ARRL DXCC Top Band. His operating hand twitched incessantly. "My name is Ben," he recited, "and I'm an addict." Once more the applause echoed round the hall. "I took the wife and kids on holiday to the States. The kids thought we were going to Disney World... but it was downtown Dayton." Ben's eyes filled with tears and he recalled the children's disappointment, the anger, the row, the

empty house, the divorce, the loss of home, garden and aerial. A sympathetic touch on his arm brought him back to present reality. He sat down quickly.

A grizzled man jumped up. "My name is G3..." "No," interrupted the leader hurriedly, "no callsigns - your name is Mike." "My name is Mike," the man repeated obediently, "and I'm an addict. My wife has arthritis and we lived in a bungalow near the shops, but the council wouldn't give permission for a tower, so I sold the bungalow and moved to a perfect site two miles out of town. Good height. Perfect take-off. She's housebound now."

A fourth man now rose to his feet and resolutely faced the others. "My name is Brian and I'm a contest addict." His pale face and sunken eyes thoroughly bore out the truth of his statement. "The contest calendar rules my life, BERU, ARRL, CQ Worldwide, IARU... My Dad was ill last July, but it was a contest weekend. Dad was an old timer and I talked myself into believing he'd have wanted me to carry on with the contest, but he died that weekend. Mum said he had the rig beside his bed listening in to my contacts. He tried to call in, but I told him to stand by. Brian's voice broke as he remembered the Silent Key who had tapped Morse on his cot in lieu of bedtime stories, who'd bought him his first radio kit, who'd taught him to catapult aerial wire over trees, taken him on that first exciting field day. He buried his head in his hands.

Roger knew his moment had come and took a deep breath. This was going to be hard. "My name is Roger, and I'm an IOTA addict..."

## Not the GB2RS News

- Friedrichshafen 2008 re-visited
- New 2m beacon in Mongolia
- Bulgarian lighthouse on the air

As in previous years a great time was had by all at the 'Ham Radio 2008' at the end of June in picturesque Friedrichshafen, otherwise known as Fred's Harbour. UK visitors with a smattering of German were also heard attempting to help out the locals by translating 'Ham Radio' into German as *Schinkenradio*, only to be greeted by looks of total bewilderment on the part of the latter.

Similar attempts were made to make life easier for the locals in the context of that well-known German delicacy, the *Brathering*, or fried herring. Somewhat predictably the locals didn't understand this at all when pronounced the English way to rhyme with 'gathering'. Until it was pointed out that this was hardly surprising, seeing as the correct pronunciation is, in fact, *Brat* (roughly as in 'brought') plus *Hering* (as in 'herring'): *Brathering, jawoll!*

It was a similar situation with that well-known English expression 'if the worst come to the worst...'. How tempting it was here to enrol the services of that world-famous German delicacy, the *Wurst*, and end up with what sounds rather like a romantic encounter between two German sausages. After all, that's what you could well end up with if 'ze *Wurst* comes to ze *Wurst*'. Yes, German sausages have *sechs* lives as well, y'know. Whereas German cats have *neun*.

Any UK visitors with a bit of time on their hands, and wishing to learn a few words of very basic German, could of course once again take advantage of the special intensive language courses offered by freelance Franziska Frohmacher, invariably to be

found propping up the bar in the Fred's Harbour railway station buffet.

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A new 2 metre beacon in Mongolia will operate on 144.856 MHz with the callsign JU2TWO. Sited near the capital, Ulan Bator, at 4,450 ft asl, the beacon antenna is a horizontal doublet dipole. The power level is 0.1W using A1A mode. *[That's good to know, but of what possible relevance is this item to us here in the UK? Ed.]*

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Now the so-called HF DX News.

Several Bulgarian radio amateurs will activate the Varna Lighthouse next week using the special callsign LZ2ØØ8LIGHT. It is the first time that this lighthouse will have been activated this year. *[Whoopee! Ed.]*

Two Italian operators, Alessandro and Sergio, will be active next month as 9A/home call from the island of Sveti Nikola. *[Sweaty Nikola? I'd steer well clear of her if I were you. Ed.]*

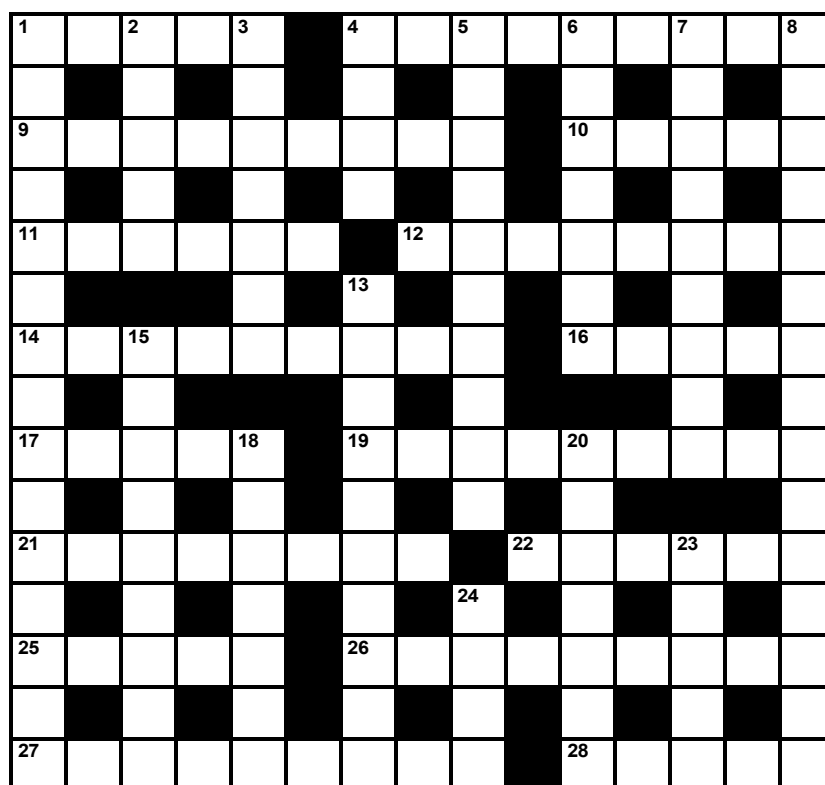
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### Solution to Prize Crossword 28

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

## Digest Prize Crossword 29 *by RFX*

The winner of Prize Crossword 28, May 2008, and that famous £10 note: Stuart Swain, GØFYX, Havant, Hants.



### ACROSS

- 1 Security devices you may meet on canal trips (5)
- 4 Great artist soon to retire from the teaching profession? (3,6)
- 9 Goes too far as an artist and shows a lack of balance? (9)
- 10 Politician in Ireland following the Yorkshire Times! (5)
- 11 In the office simply grow old and await the outcome, by the sound of it (6)
- 12 Porter's rules for making salad (8)
- 14 Stop bloke getting cleaner (9)
- 16 Spooky sort of vehicle seen in the outskirts of Shrewsbury (5)
- 17 Removed moisture from part of Airdrie distillery (5)
- 19 Criticise what the repairman's employed to do (4,5)
- 21 Interfered with a boy and a girl (8)
- 22 Not the latest bowler? (3,3)
- 25 Spikes Northern beers, by the sound of it (5)
- 26 The highest the wind, say, can blow? (9)
- 27 Language Cecil and I translated (9)
- 28 Hopes for a plaudit, we hear (5)

### DOWN

- 1 Vindaloo and rice cooked for 4 across (8,2,5)
- 2 Made triumphant noises on the radio in this junction town (5)
- 3 South-east Italian leader introducing Brindisi's second Casanova (7)
- 4 Old outlaw seen in Scottish port (4)
- 5 Record about temporary accommodation causes unhappiness (10)
- 6 Current head of security embraces very French performer (7)
- 7 I'm an adult travelling in an Indian state (5,4)
- 8 Was Italian story re-written for Saint Pancras, say, or Saint Lazare? (7,8)
- 13 Personal esteem you can practice in a mirror? (4-6)
- 15 Fossil I throw into ordinary container (9)
- 18 Water which supports no life at all? (4,3)
- 20 Man, we hear, is out of bed and prepares for long drive (5,2)
- 23 Port provided by top-class sports administrators after the end of March (5)
- 24 Initially operable twitch of the ear (4)

Deadline for entries: 20 August
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# DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 30/07	VC3C: special event callsign
till 15/08	VR2S: special event station
till 31/08	EY8/F4EOH: Tajikistan
till 31/08	II3PIAV: special station
till August	C91R: Mozambique
till 17/09	BT1OB: special event station (Beijing 2008)
till 17/09	BT1OH: special event station (Beijing 2008)
till 17/09	BT1OJ: special event station (Beijing 2008)
till 17/09	BT1ON: special event station (Beijing 2008)
till 17/09	BT1OY: special event station (Beijing 2008)
till 20/09	YU8/CT1FKN: Kosovo
till 30/09	9A73AA: special callsign
till 08/10	JX9JKA: Jan Mayen (EU-022)
till November	YE2IPY: special callsign
till 31/12	9A60A: special callsign
till 31/12	9A08P: special event station
till 31/12	9M1Cxx: special callsigns
till 31/12	AY0DX: special callsign (Argentina)
till 31/12	C4EURO: special callsign (Cyprus)
till 31/12	DR8M: special event station
till 31/12	HG1848I: special call (Hungary)
till 31/12	HG550REX: special call (Hungary)
till 31/12	ON1000NOTGER: special call (Belgium)
till 31/12	ON40BAF: special event call
till 31/12	ON70REDSTAR: special event station
till 31/12	PY100JA: special call
till 31/12	SB1658OZ and SC1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till 31/12	SH1658DK and SH1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till 31/12	SK1658DK and SK1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till December	HF0POL: Henryk Arctowski Station (South Shetlands)
16/06-24/07	UA3DBP/1: EU-147, EU-066, EU-153
21/06-31/07	HQ50RCH: special event station
from June	ZS8T: Marion Island (AF-021)
01/07-31/07	7Y46ND: Algeria
08/07-20/07	VK9XWW, VK9XHZ, VK9XOR, VK9XME: Christmas Isl (OC-002)
09/07-17/07	4O1/ON5JE: Montenegro
09/07-09/08	FH/F6BFH: Mayotte (AF-027)

15/07-31/08	VR2ØØ8O: special event station
16/07-31/07	C91CF, C91TK, C91...: Mozambique
19/07-26/07	CU2/F5LMJ: Sao Miguel (EU-003)
19/07-26/07	F4ELJ/P: Groix Island (EU-048)
19/07-03/08	LA/DL7AT: Bomlo Island (EU-055)
20/07-05/08	UT9IO/P and UX3IW/P: Zmeiniy Island (EU-182)
21/07-01/08	CU1F and CU1T: Goncalo Velho LGH, Sao Miguel (EU-003)
21/07-27/07	KL7DX: Chuginadak Island (NA-234)
23/07-29/07	GB8LMI: Les Minquiers Islands (EU-099)
24/07-27/07	ZW6GK: Tinhare Island (SA-080)
25/07-28/07	C6APR: Crooked Island (NA-113)
25/07-27/07	CG2I: Grosse-Ile (NA-128)
26/07-30/07	8J9HGR: Hegura Island (AS-117)
26/07-01/08	CU3/F5LMJ: Terceira (EU-175)
27/07-02/08	IG9/IK8YFU, IG9/IZ8FEV, IG9/IQ8PP: Lampedusa (AF-019)
30/07-04/08	VE3LYC/VO2 and VO2/G3OCA: Finger Hill Island (NA-194)
30/07-04/08	VE3LYC/VO2 and VO2/G3OCA: Paul Island (NA-205)
from July	ZD9X: Tristan da Cunha (AF-029)
03/08-17/08	TMØWPC: special event callsign (France)
04/08-17/08	TO8S: Les Saintes Islands (NA-114)
10/08-16/08	JD1BLX and JD1BLY: Chichijima (AS-031), Ogasawara
18/08-21/08	FM/F5IRO and FM/F8CRS: Martinique NA-107)
30/08-05/09	SX8WT: Alonissos Island (EU-072)
01/09-07/09	CQ4IPY: special callsign (Portugal)
06/09-20/09	TM8CDX: special event station (France)
23/09-02/10	VO2/GMØTQJ: Labrador

### March 2009 Spratly Islands DXpedition

The team members of the March 2009 operation from Pulau Layang Layang, Spratly Islands (IOTA AS-051), are John, 9M6XRO; Steve, 9M6DXX; Pete, SM5GMZ; Jay, W5SL, and James, 9V1YC. A sixth team member will be confirmed later. Callsign to be announced, and QSL information via M3SDE (direct or bureau).

The DXpedition now has a website at [www.spratly2009.com](http://www.spratly2009.com). You are invited to visit the website from time to time to read the latest news about the DXpedition. The organisers of the DXpedition would like to express sincere thanks to Col McGowan, MMØNDX, and Christian Buenger, DL6KAC, for their excellent work in setting up the website.

73 Steve, 9M6DXX

## **We are celebrating 60 years of WAE – celebrate with us!**

**26 August 1948:** W2IOP receives the first WAE Award

**60 years later:**

'Zeitgeist' and technological advances have not gone by the amateur radio hobby without a trace. Continuity and an interesting concept have kept the interest going in the WAE award programme. The award rules have been very carefully adapted over all those years, and the unchanged design of the WAE since its first edition still enjoys great popularity.

The changes to the WAE country list closely reflect the political and social changes that occurred over these decades. But other things have changed. From computers to mobile phones and the Internet, as well as aspects of amateur radio with the help of modern technical equipment of which the award fathers could never dream of.

Today, in 2008, we invite the world to celebrate this anniversary with us on the bands. At the same time, we want to use this opportunity to include these innovations in our celebration.

In the first place it will be about radio operating, which over all these years has been the prerequisite for the existence of our birthday child.

### **The WAE Marathon**

**9 August – 14 September 2008**

In order to allow the entire world to participate in this event, it is not enough to hold a party over the radio on the actual birthday. Therefore the two contests that are closely related to the WAE award, the WAEDC CW and the WAEDC SSB, will form the timing cornerstones of our Marathon. Especially for our friends outside of Europe this competition is a good possibility to receive lots of band points for the WAE Marathon.

### **We invite you**

The DARC Committee for DX and HF Contesting is the ideal host to invite the radio amateurs of the world to hold many contacts with their European partners. Participate as well, and maybe you will even go on a WAE expedition!

We are celebrating the anniversary with the issuance of an achievement certificate similar to the WAE Award in accordance with the current award rules.

Soon we will have all the information here:

<http://wae60.de>



You will find information about WAE in general here:

[www.dxhf.darc.de](http://www.dxhf.darc.de)

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are already many different electronic log and Internet applications in use in amateur radio. This fact will be used for applying for the WAE60 Marathon as well as for the award. In addition all participants will be eligible to take part in the draw for attractive prizes.

### **What interests the birthday guest**

#### **Marathon timing:**

Start: 9 August 2008, 0000 UTC (start of WAEDC CW)

End: 14 Sept 2008, 2359 UTC (end of WAEDC SSB)

**Modes**                      all legal amateur radio operating modes

(note for contest participants, ie in RTTY contests: during this time frame the competition logs for the WAE Marathon can be counted)

**Bands**                      all legal amateur radio operating bands

**Log deadline**              15 October 2008 (deadline WAEDC SSB) per e-mail

**Log formats**              ADIF, Cabrillo

After fulfilling the conditions for the WAE60 (analogous to the WAE requirements) a notice will be sent to allow you the possibility to print out the certificate over the Internet to the extent that a QSO from both partners is confirmed, it will be entered into the DCL (DARC Contest Logbook) and can be claimed for all WAE, EUROPA awards, EUDX und DLD.

**Fees**                          none

**We highly appreciate DXpeditions to WAE countries during this period.**

**Please inform us about your plans.**

**Announcements to: [dl2vfr@darc.de](mailto:dl2vfr@darc.de)**

73

Enrico (Ric) Stumpf-Siering, DL2VFR

Member of the WAE-Committee





