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**CDXC COMMITTEE 2002/2003**

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 20 APRIL****CHILTERN DX CLUB - The UK DX Foundation - Aims and Objectives**

*"The aims of the Club are 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 of membership are available from the Club Secretary (address above).

**Subscriptions:** The annual subscription is currently set at £15.00 for UK members, and £20.00 for overseas members. The subscription for new members joining between 1st January and 30th June is 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions become due on July 1st in each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer (address above).

**Digest:** This Digest is published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Digest Editor (address above) by the published deadline. *Please note that opinions expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.*

**CDXC Web site:** <http://www.cdxc.org.uk>

# **CLUB NEWS AND VIEWS**

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## **EDITORIAL**

***Don Field, G3XTT***

March already. Where is the year going? We've got Ducie, Sudan, Marquesas and Australs (to name but a few) coming up in the next several weeks, so the good times are still with us.

### ***Cluster joys***

These days we very much take the PacketCluster for granted although, for me at least, it doesn't seem five minutes since it first started and made such a huge change in our DXing habits. I was involved with Ian G4LJF in getting GB7DXI (the UK's first Cluster) licensed and chaired the meeting at G3LNS's (now 5B4AGC) QTH at which the UK Cluster Working Group was founded. Nowadays UK amateurs are just as likely to connect via always-open Internet as they are by VHF packet.

This universal connectivity brings problems which weren't evident when Cluster first came along, in that almost any spot, even of something fairly mundane, brings an instant and huge pile-up. It often seems that the callers don't even feel the need to hear the DX – why bother when they can see it spotted on the Cluster (even if by a station on the other side of the globe with completely different propagation!)? I've noticed especially on 160 that, whereas in the past the appearance of a DX station would be greeted by a handful of callers, mostly drawn from the 160m aficionados, nowadays once the DX gets spotted there is an immediate cacophony of callers, many of whom would never have even bothered with topband in the past.

The good thing, of course, is that for those with relatively little time and, perhaps chasing slots for one of the tables or for

their own satisfaction, it allows them a life while not missing anything (especially if they use one of the systems that alerts them by handheld or SMS when a needed one comes along).

Mind you, don't even begin to believe the calls that get spotted on the system! Just a couple of recent examples. Both D44TD and 9Y4/DL6RAI have been extremely active in recent weeks, with hundreds of spots each, so you would expect that anyone with Cluster access would know and recognise these calls. But I've seen several spots for T44TD, DV4TD, PY4/DL6RAI, etc – all of these notable not as typos but as misread calls, either through similar sounds (on SSB) or adding or removing the odd dot (CW). So if you do go chasing Cluster spots, do listen for a callsign before you log it! Cluster has bred some bad habits among DX stations too. It seems that, as long as there are callers, some DX stations feel in unnecessary to identify. Even quite mundane DX stations can go ten or fifteen minutes without an ID. I guess it's the time penance we have to pay for not having to tune around to find the DX in the first place!

### ***Photos & Other Stuff***

Just a word about photographs. As I have said before, Neville G3NUG compiles the photo pages but I understand his e-mail system has been creaking occasionally when contributors have sent a large number of high-quality photos. He makes the plea that you pre-sort them, choosing no than 4 pictures (of which we'll probably publish two). Files of around 50/100kB give perfectly adequate levels of definition.

73 Don G3XTT

## Chairman's Chat

*John Butcher, G3LAS*

Let's hope this is the last CC for a while in which my first thoughts turn to the cold weather, although I fear the March edition also will not be composed on the beach. Winter conditions on the HF bands have not been exactly thrilling, reinforcing the view that the solar cycle is really turning down. Sadly, my quest for ZK3 is not over. 5W1SA finally made it to Tokelau but he seemed very reluctant to work into this part of the world. All the spots were either in the middle of our night or on unproductive bands. I'm not aware that he worked any Gs at all but somebody somewhere probably made it.

The recent unannounced expedition to KH3 also didn't prove very helpful for the UK. It seems that conditions were mostly to blame, with the morning propagation slowly creeping westwards towards us and dying on most days when it got to F and ON. Probably we will be forced more and more towards the lower frequencies for these long-haul contacts.

Of course, Johnston Island now joins the growing list of DX locations where access is becoming very difficult due to the increasing emphasis on nature conservation, in the case of KH3 as an alternative to decommissioning of chemical weapons. Maybe we should persuade our children to take up careers in forestry and marine biology so that our retirement DXing can be preserved along with the wildlife.

The lower frequencies have somewhat saved the day. Trying to practice what I preach, I did trawl 40, 80 and 160m during January to see if I could amass a respectable score in the Penallt Trophy race. It was gratifying to find quite a bit of DX around, especially on 40m, between 2200 and midnight on most evenings. Sadly, I must have worn out the wire of my 160m aerial, because it expired on January 29. Does anybody feel like climbing a 90ft poplar?

My comments on "Freeband" last time don't seem to have stirred up much response, or indeed any. So how about another of my hobby horses – band abuse – for this time? I still can't forget the shock of returning to the HF bands about 5 years ago after an absence of 15 years to find that operating standards had sunk so low as to be unbelievable. Every pile-up is a cacophony of inconsideration, incompetence and general abuse, contests obliterate large sections of the bands almost every weekend, certain groups lay claim to exclusive use of "their" frequencies and deliberate jamming of legitimate QSOs is commonplace.

You may say all these things have been apparent for many years. Possibly so, but surely it's getting worse, and this at a time when pressure on our frequency allocations is undiminished. My particular gripe is that none of our representative bodies seems interested in doing anything about it. I have tried to draw the attention of a few national societies to some particularly blatant cases but I have either had no response at all, a disclaimer that it is not their responsibility or a protestation that it is technically too difficult to identify and pursue the culprits.

I suggest that the kinds of band abuse I've mentioned constitute a serious threat to the future of our hobby. It seems to me that national societies and the IARU could, if they chose, make sufficient impact to act as a deterrent to those who, through ignorance or for reasons known only to themselves, seek to spoil the enjoyment of others. A co-ordinated programme within Europe ought to be able to identify and impose sanctions on at least some of the abusers.

What can we do as individuals? First and foremost we must not be tempted to join in, even as well meaning "policemen". Second, we can seek to improve standards by helping newcomers and backsliders to adopt good practice. Third, we can report abuse with as much corroborative evidence as

possible and keep pressure on the “representative” bodies to take action.

Turning to in-house news about CDXC, I am pleased to announce that there is to be a considerable turnover in the Committee membership. Pleased not because three valued members are stepping down, but because we have been fortunate in obtaining excellent replacements.

The new, but not unfamiliar, names are as follows. Martyn Phillips, G3RFX, is taking over from Don, G3XTT, as Digest Editor. Don will be a hard act to follow but I’m sure Martyn will bring his own inimitable style to the job. Nigel, G4KIU, has had to step down due to heavy business commitments but we are delighted that another Nigel, G3TXF, has agreed to take on the Treasurer’s role. If he is half as good at that as he is at working the DX from home and abroad, we need have no worries. Finally, Tim Kirby, G4VXE, is taking over from Paul, G0WAT, as Contests Co-ordinator.

Thanks to Don, Nigel and Paul for their efforts in the past and welcome to Martyn, Nigel and Tim.

By the time you read this, the CDXC Annual Dinner will be imminent. At the time of writing bookings are going well and another good turnout looks certain. There might still be places available, so hurry, hurry to avoid disappointment. For the last time, it’s at the Boxmoor Lodge Hotel, Hemel Hempstead on Saturday, March 22, 2003. Our guest speaker is Martin Atherton, G3ZAY, who will talk about his recent trip to the Antarctic, a treat not to be missed. You will find details of the menu and a booking form on the web site, [www.cdxc.org.uk](http://www.cdxc.org.uk), or contact Shaun, M0BJL, on [secretary@cdxc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cdxc.org.uk).

Finally, the Committee apologises for the late publication of the accounts for 2001-2002. This was due to a very heavy business and domestic workload experienced by the Treasurer and we would like to point out that the delay was in no way the responsibility of our Auditor, John Linford, G3WGV.

73 es gud DX  
John, G3LAS

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## **Presidents Patter**

### **Neville Cheadle, G3NUG**

I was interested to read the letter from Roy DU9/G4UNL about contesting. As a reminder to our members, the aims and objectives of CDXC as stated clearly in our prospectus and in every Digest are as follows, *“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”*.

I have to say that I have mixed views on the contesting issue. I am not a contester myself but many of the guys with whom I go DXpeditioning are outstanding testers and most have won at least one contest

either as an individual or as a team member.

On my first major DXpedition to the Spratly Islands as 9M0C, I learnt a great deal from the contesting types. They all had very good ears, picking out calls from huge pile-ups with little difficulty and logging very accurately. And they generated high rates sometimes exceeding 400 QSOs per hour for significant periods. They all kept a marvellous rhythm and adjusted their sending speeds when called at a slower speed. They kept control of the pile-ups. There was no question of making lists or working by numbers – both were quite unnecessary. I will not mention any individuals but these guys were a joy to watch and then to try and emulate. I really

do believe that a leading contester makes a very good DXpeditioner, DXer and operator generally.

The second reason that I support contests is that they generate activity on the bands. "Too much", some would say but have a tune around the HF bands during the weekdays when there are no contests and no DXpeditions. There can be huge amounts of spectrum with virtually no signals. I suspect this is exacerbated by the Internet as much of the rag-chewing has disappeared and, I suspect, has been replaced by e-mail. If we do not use the amateur spectrum, then we deserve to lose it. Contesting and DXpeditions are major factors in generating activity and are therefore, in my view, to be encouraged.

Having said this, then why am I not a keen contester? I have a good station, plenty of time available and I believe I have reasonably good ears and technique, no doubt developed partly from the 9M0C and D68C experiences.

I think the answer to this question is twofold. My main interests for many years as a DXer have been to work new IOTAs and new band-slots and these are becoming increasingly more challenging and difficult.

The second reason, and this may surprise many of you, is that I do not like sitting on my backside for hours on end working station after station. I just get bored! I think this is very much part of my psyche, my make up. When I was running a major professional practice, I could rarely be found in my office and would spend most of my time with clients or with the various project teams. Two hour board meetings were long enough for me!

I very much respect those who can operate for 24 hours non-stop but, for me, about four hours is enough! Even when I was operating one of the D68C stations I used to get fidgety after about 3½ hours. I enjoy trying to get a rate of over 300 QSOs per hour – it did happen occasionally – but my real thrill was watching the central server

peaking at around 1,600 QSOs per hour with all the stations going flat out. The real challenge to me of DXpeditioning is to get the project management right so that these huge rates can be achieved as well as building a cohesive DXpedition team.

In fact, having said I am not a contester, I am nevertheless sometimes quite active during the contest weekends. In the CQWW contest I will try and work all zones on one of the HF bands or 150 countries on one band just for the hell of it! Actually, with PacketCluster, it is not that difficult from here.

I understand those who complain that there is not enough spectrum available during the contest weekends for the non-contesters. But of course, there are the other modes and there are the WARC bands. It is perhaps unfortunate though that there seems to be some contest during most winter weekends. I realise that the major international contests need lots of spectrum, in fact, it does not bother me at all hearing CW signals in the SSB part of some of our narrow bands and vice versa. But perhaps limiting the spectrum used for some of the smaller contests would help, a real challenge for the new IARU team!

These are just some personal views on a controversial subject. Your comments would be welcome.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the CDXC Annual Dinner on 22 March.

### **FOR SALE/WANTED**

I have a large quantity of IRCs (all new style) and \$1 notes for sale - 55p each, plus postage. Call first for availability (01270 663330). Dave, G3NKC

I am looking for a ring rotator, but not having much luck. Could any member help? Many thanks, John Scott M0RDX (m0rdx@btinternet.com)

## Secretary's Update

### Shaun Jarvis, M0BJL

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Call	Worked	Name	Location
G0SWS	259	Terry Stow	Lincs
G4DRS	276	John Wayman	Dorset
G4PIQ	250	Andy Cook	Suffolk
G4YRF	296	Ken Amos	Beds
GD4PTV	341	Brian Brough	Bride, I.O.M
GU4CHY	200+	Richard Allisette	Guernsey
M0BBB	100+	Stavros Tsiakkouris	Cambridge
M0BUI	139	Les Styles	Cornwall
M0CSD	202	Tom Quinn	Middlesbrough
M5AIQ	102	Alan Bain	Great Shelford
M5MDH	145	Mark Hampton	Hants
MU3EFB	118	Keith Boutillier	St.Andrews, C.I
MW0DHF	147	Philip King	Penarth

### Jim Maxwell, W6CF, SK

*(From The Daily DX and ARRL Letter. Jim was a CDXC member and well known to many of us – ed.)*

Another venerable top DXer has passed from the scene. W6CF, Jim Maxwell, reportedly died of a brain haemorrhage. The ARRL reports he was only 69 years old. He was the Pacific Division Director of the ARRL. ARRL President W5JBP, Jim Haynie, said "Jim Maxwell was a gentle giant of a man. He was one of the best assets amateur radio could have in a leadership position." K1ZZ, Dave Sumner, added, "Jim Maxwell was one of the most brilliant people I have ever had the privilege to know. He was also one of the most unselfish and one of the most modest. Putting them all together, he was truly in a class by himself." Maxwell was a member of the Northern California Contest Club and the ARRL DX Advisory Committee from 1988-1994. His previous call was W6CUF. The ARRL reports Jim spearheaded archiving efforts at ARRL Headquarters, cataloguing documents from the early years of ARRL. He had an extensive collection of Hiram Percy Maxim (ARRL founder) memorabilia. Maxwell wrote a seven-page retrospective on ham radio covering 125 years that was published in the January, 2000 issue of QST. Maxwell had PhD degrees in both aeronautical engineering and biomechanics. He retired from Lockheed Missile and Space Corporation in 1992 and from Scitor Corporation in 1998. W3UR, Bernie, knew Jim personally. Says Bernie, "Jim was an absolutely great guy and was very much a DX librarian."

## CDXC Accounts 2001-2002

For 2000/2001 – see Note 1

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>1998-1989</b>	<b>1997-1998</b>
Subscriptions	6719	5946	5869	5078	4501
US Dollar Subs	0	235	58	330	130
Member Donations	618	218	189	259	123
Software Sales	0	0	23	25	70
Advertising	675	253	1147	260	115
Misc Sales	267	363	375	193	79
Raffles	401	380	20	355	250
DX Donations	0	0	200	0	0
Bank Interest	22	19	0	0	0
Dinner	1470	598	1031	1289	58
Dinner uncleared	0	0	0	0	936
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>10172</b>	<b>8012</b>	<b>8912</b>	<b>7789</b>	<b>6262</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Newsletter	3639	3343	2832	2099	2536
Postage	1631	1585	1255	1054	0
RSGB/Licence	55	15	38	20	35
Insurance	105	105	0	0	0
Committee Exp	160	358	175	204	83
Trophies	149	214	612	403	248
Expenses	643	390	39	193	89
Bank Charges	8	15	0	0	0
DXpeditions	2000	2800	1935	825	1150
Dinner	1375	789	1054	1449	994
Adv/Logo	364	117	0	488	0
Marketing	927	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11056</b>	<b>9731</b>	<b>7940</b>	<b>6735</b>	<b>5135</b>
Excess of income over expenditure	-884	-1719	972	1054	1127

### BANK ACCOUNT STATEMENTS

<b>Current A/C b/f</b>	1772	2669	3666	2535	1541
Income	9483	8011	8912	7788	6262
Uncleared	-700	700	-400	0	0
Transfer from Deposit	5580	1000	0	0	0
Transfer from US Dollar A/C	0	385	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16135</b>	<b>12765</b>	<b>12178</b>	<b>10323</b>	<b>7803</b>
Less expenditure	13575	8978	7940	6735	5136
Transfer to Deposit	900	2000	1000	0	0
Adjustment	-34	15	481	-400	0
Less cash	0	0	31	-8	23
Less US Dollars	0	0	58	330	130
<b>Current A/C c/f</b>	<b>1694</b>	<b>1772</b>	<b>2668</b>	<b>3666</b>	<b>2514</b>
<b>Deposit A/C b/f</b>					
Deposit A/C b/f	3836	2817	1805	1796	1787
Transfer to Current	-5580	-1000	0	0	0
Other direct receipts	2497	0	0	0	0
Transfer from Current	900	2000	1000	0	0
Interest earned	22	19	13	9	9
<b>Deposit A/C c/f</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>3836</b>	<b>2818</b>	<b>1805</b>	<b>1796</b>
<b>Assets</b>					
Current A/C	1694	1073	2669	3266	2514
Deposit A/C	1675	3836	2817	1805	1796
Digest Float	500	500	500	0	0
Cash	34	0	31	-8	23
US Dollar A/C and cash	0	0	358	440	130
<b>Total</b>	<b>3903</b>	<b>5409</b>	<b>6375</b>	<b>5503</b>	<b>4463</b>

Note 1: The previously issued accounts for 2000-2001 included the costs of five Digests.

These have been adjusted to account for the six Digests issued during that year.

<b>DXPEDITION EXPENDITURE</b>		
T19M		250
3AD0DF/FR		100
VP9SDX		300
5U1A		100
FO/SP9FIH		150
T88SI		100
S9LA		250
8Q7ZZ		250
XR0X		350
H40XX		100
VK9ML		300
PY0T		250
3D2CI refund		-500
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>2000</b>

### **CDXC MEMBERSHIP**

During the year, CDXC membership increased to 540

### **FINANCIAL PERIOD**

This financial statement covers the period 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002

Nigel Peacock, G4KIU, Treasurer CDXC

### **AUDITOR STATEMENT**

In my opinion this Financial Statement is consistent with the accounts of CDXC for the financial year ended 31 March 2002

John Linford, G3WGV, Elected Auditor CDXC

## **RSGB Morse Test Service – 17th Anniversary Weekend**

County Morse test teams will again be on the air during the 17th anniversary weekend of the 10/11th May 2003. For ease of identification, all stations will use a special event GB0 prefix, followed by the county code suffix; e.g. the Isle of Wight will use the callsign GB0IOW and London GB0LDN. The Chief Morse Examiner will use GB0CW and the Deputy Chief Morse Examiner GB0MTS.

There will be a minimum of 27 stations active and a Morse Test 17th anniversary certificate will be available to any amateur who makes contact with at least 10 of the GB stations. The cost of the certificate is £2.50 (cheque or postal order made out to RSGB), \$5 or 6 IRCs. Applications should be sent to the Chief Morse Examiner, David Waterworth, G4HNF, 116 Reading Road, Woodley, Reading, Berks. RG5 3AD. QSL cards are not required to claim the award, which is also available to listeners.

Activity will be concentrated in the 80 and 40 metre bands and in order to encourage newcomers to apply for the award each team will spend some time calling slowly in the Novice CW section of the 80 metre band, above 3560kHz. The event is not a contest and examiners will be happy to reply at any preferred calling speed. There are no restrictions on the type of Morse key used, all are welcome to call in and enjoy the friendship.

David Waterworth G4HNF. Chief Morse Examiner

## POSTBAG

From Phil G3SWH:

### ROBBEN ISLAND EXPEDITION 2003

Robben Island counts as IOTA AF-064 and is listed amongst the top 500 most wanted IOTA groups in the latest IOTA Directory. There have been several fairly low-key operations in recent years, mainly on SSB only. We plan to activate the island between 4th and 7th April 2003 and, propagation permitting, have two stations on the air on a 24 hours a day basis. One station will operate SSB and one will operate CW on all bands 40 to 10 metres.

Our team consists of Phil, G3SWH; David, G3UNA; Andrew, ZS1AN; his YL, Stacey, ZS1SC; Vidi, ZS1EL; Kosie, ZS1SR and Malcolm, ZS1MC.

We have been allocated the special call of ZS1RBN. QSLs will be handled by G3SWH, either direct to his CBA with SAE and return postage or via the RSGB bureau.

73 for now, Phil G3SWH

*From Nigel G3TXF:* I hope to be operating from Anguilla as VP2EN from approx. 7 to 11 March to include the Commonwealth Contest (8/9 March). I first used the call VP2EN some 30 years ago, whilst on holiday in Anguilla after taking part in the 1973 CQWW SSB Contest as FG0ZZ/FS7 from St Martin. Depending on time, there may well also be some operation from St Martin (FS) on this trip too.

73 Nigel G3TXF

*From Roy WA2SON:* Dear Don, If you or any CDXC member could help me obtain a QSL from the following stations I would be most grateful:

VS9AAI, 1961, Mr. Tony Hope  
VQ9V/F, 1968, Mr. V.C. Harvey Brain

I have checked several DX journals, but am unable to find any information as to who might have the logs/QSLs for the above.

Thanks and best wishes in 2003!

Sincerely, Roy Lehner WA2SON

(5464 OakWood Dr., North Tonawanda, NY  
14120, USA)

*From Roy, DU9/G4UNL:* Dear Don, I am sorry my letter came as a shock to you and, if you haven't received my letter, then I apologise.

However, I did not consider SJJ's letter tongue-in-cheek and I and the majority of hams around the world consider contests a pain in the neck, and contain some very rude and arrogant people, and ruin most people's pleasure at the weekends. I have been fortunate to work abnormal hours in the entertainment world so avoiding them. Your love of contests is sometimes over the top and, seeing as you mentioned RadCom, December is a fine example in the December issue when you can't resist using a page and a half on contests when there is a separate section for this by Tim Kirby.

What I replied to Chris's article was basically:

1. Contesters operate outside of their designated frequencies.
2. They jump on frequencies without asking if it's free
3. No doubt use more power than they are supposed to legally.

### Now, in reply:

Contesting – an element of radio mythology where everyone is 5and9 even if they have to be asked for their callsign four times.

Of course, it takes an intelligent person to sit calling “CQ Contest, CQ Contest” for 24 or 48 hours, and contesters take the exam to do this.

Contesters can't hold conversations or “Waffling” unless it's on contesting because it's too difficult.

I could go on, but what is the point? Chris sounds like a real bore and should learn to

live and let live. In other words, there are many facets to our hobby, and articles like the rubbish of SJJ's shouldn't have been put in the magazine. I joined CDXC because I now live out here, and hoped I would be of help to amateurs visiting here like Ken Frankom G3OCA. I thought CDXC was about DXpeditions, and not a contesters outlet. I enjoyed reading the reports of these adventurers.

I obviously had the wrong impression of the organisation – we'll agree to disagree, once again I am sorry if I went over the top. CDXC is not for me.

73 Roy DU9/G4UNL

*From Larry, N7NX (commenting on CDXC's Local Heroes award to 3B9FR):* Gentlemen, I applaud your giving an award to a ham who has kept his "entity" on the air and made it available on a regular basis to the rest of the world. I am certain it has not been easy and not always fun. Any of the "one-man" countries, Mt. Athos comes to mind, is inundated by the demands of the rest of us for QSOs and QSLs. If only they, 3B9FR included, would all have easily accessible and reliable QSL managers. I have made two contacts with 3B9FR (and

they are not easy from western North America) and have waited over 10 months for the QSL cards (two separate submissions with sae and more than adequate postage). Unlike some who get upset at such a wait and call Robert a dollar collector, I realise he does QSL, and I try to be patient. (I have two acquaintances who contacted him long after I did who received their cards back in a couple of months.) Why doesn't he get a QSL manager?

Anyway, you have recognised an important aspect of DXing and I applaud you for it.

73, Larry Harmon N7NX

Salt Lake City, Utah

*From Tom DL2RUM (forwarded by Phil G4OBK):* I've got a short answer from the ARRL concerning the DXCC credit for A35TL: "Hi Tom, Sorry about the delay, our computers were down for about 3 weeks total and I could not get any info from there to check. I show both of your operations are OK for DXCC. If anyone contacts you on this please refer them to me and I'll correct their record. 73 Bill Moore NC1L"

Now all should be okay.

73 and best DX de Tom, DL2RUM

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## IOTA CORNER

### ***New IOTA Reference Numbers Issued***

AS-166 EP Hormozgan Province group  
OC-254 V63 Mortlock Islands  
OC-255 VK4 Queensland State (Gulf of Carpentaria) North group  
OC-256/Pr P2 Kilinailau (Tulun) Islands  
OC-257/Pr P2 Nuguria Islands

### ***Provisional IOTA Reference Numbers as at 1 February 2003***

OC-251/Pr VK3 Victoria State West group  
OC-256/Pr P2 Kilinailau (Tulun) Islands  
OC-257/Pr P2 Nuguria Islands

### ***Operations from which Validation Material is awaited as at 1 February 2003***

EU-186 TB05GF Gokceada Is (Aug 2002)  
EU-186 YM05GF Gokceada Is (Aug 2002)  
OC-251/Pr VI3JPI Lady Julia Percy Island (September 2002)  
OC-256/Pr P29VMS Tulun Is (Jan 2003)  
OC-257/Pr P29VMS Nuguria Is (Jan/Feb 2003)

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

## NICE TO KNOW

*(Most of the items in this section come from the Internet, so are already in the public domain. However, I include those which I think may be of interest, or useful to refer back to in the future. Due to space constraints, several items have been held over until the next issue. – ed.)*

### **Limited "Logbook of the World" Testing is a Hit**

The long-anticipated "Logbook of the World" (LoTW)--the ARRL's secure electronic contact-confirmation system--took a major leap toward public release this month with several weeks of limited--or "alpha"--testing. Dozens of Amateur Radio operators checked out a preliminary version of the LoTW software, which is still under development. Once it's ready, LoTW will provide a means for participants to qualify for awards such as DXCC or WAS without having to first collect hard-copy QSL cards.

"This is cool!" exclaimed one alpha tester. "I got the certificate and was able to upload my 2002 CQ 160-Meter CW log just by following the simple directions." Declared another tester, "Slick! It's pretty neat so far. This looks like a good start."

ARRL staffer Dave Patton, NT1N, said the limited test run has produced some tangible results for the League's electronic logging and awards project, and getting actual user comments was extremely helpful. "One of the main things that will come out of this phase of testing is a good package that will be ready to give to logging program developers to incorporate into their software," he said.

ARRL Web and Software Development Manager Jon Bloom, KE3Z, explained that the League hopes that logging software vendors will choose to add value to their products by integrating LoTW client-side functions. "But the software we provide to individual amateurs will be sufficient for basic use of LoTW," he added. ARRL will not be releasing the LoTW server code, however.

Linked via e-mail, the LoTW testers spent two weeks registering their call signs, uploading logs and attempting to push the

system to extremes. One tester was amazed at its robust nature. "I exported a 45 MB ADIF file from DX4WIN that contained a complete station log, about 320,000 QSOs. When I opened it with the LoTW tool and saved it, it had been trimmed down to about 35 MB," he said. "Then I sent this blob expecting it to croak the server, but it didn't!"

Another tester credited the LoTW developers for doing a great job. "After a few minor glitches, I successfully uploaded my 2003 ARRL 10-Meter Contest log--734 QSOs--in Cabrillo format. I got one confirmation already!" said the happy user. "I can't tell you how thrilling it was to see the specification turned into reality."

Not unexpectedly, alpha testers found a couple of bugs in the LoTW software. They also came up with a number of suggestions for fixes and reported them all to a special bug-reporting site that Bloom had set up. Logbook of the World Project Leader Wayne Mills, N7NG, says LoTW won't spell the end of QSL cards. Instead, he says, it will provide an avenue for increased speed and accuracy for hams chasing awards, as well as remove some chances for human error that can occur in the traditional process.

"This is really a system to offer credits for awards," said Mills, who is also ARRL's Membership Services manager. "It will minimise opportunities to 'game the system' or otherwise cheat--something that's not always possible to detect even with paper QSL submittals."

Mills emphasised that the League has no plans to do away with accepting traditional QSL cards as it's been doing all along. "We're not replacing the whole paper QSL scheme with Logbook of the World," he said.

Unlike electronic QSLing systems now in use, LoTW is not set up to exchange QSL "cards" via the Internet. The main idea is that ARRL will maintain a secure log database that will be constantly updated by DXers, contesters, DXpeditions and thousands of individual amateurs. Registering and uploading electronic logs cost nothing; the only time a user will incur a charge is when applying accumulated contact credits toward an award.

LoTW beta testing for the general Amateur Radio public is expected to begin soon. The ARRL has not announced a specific inauguration date for Logbook of the World.

### ***Most Wanted Surveys (from The Daily DX)***

A DXpeditioner's favourite tool are the annual most wanted lists. Results of two of the leading Most Wanted lists were recently completed. This week 425 DX News released its results of their 2003 survey. There were 2,663 participants of which just over 1,200 were from Europe and just over 1,000 from North America. The survey was for DXers who have not worked all countries. It was based on mixed need and QSLs in hand. The DX Magazine has released their 2002 Most Wanted results. The top 25 countries for both appear in the table.

The results of the two are amazingly close. The biggest difference being SV/A Mount Athos. On The DX Magazine it ranks 18 and 425 DX News has it at number 27. P5 North Korea is another one that is 8 positions higher on The DX Magazine than 425 DX News, which is probably because there are more active Europeans who worked North Korea than North Americans, thus heavier emphasis on P5 by the DX Magazine, which may have a larger North American influence. If you take the results of the two and combine them the top 10 countries are:

1 - VU4, 2 - BS7, 3 - VU7, 4 - FR/J and 3Y/P, 6 - KP5 and 7O, 8 - KP1 and P5, 10 - YV0. For complete details on the results of the 425 DX News Most Wanted Survey check out <http://www.425dxn.org/surv2003/>. The complete results of The DX Magazine's Most Wanted Survey can be seen in the January/February issue. N4AA, Carl, also has the results posted on his Web page at [http://www.dxpub.com/dx\\_news.html](http://www.dxpub.com/dx_news.html).

<b>Rank#</b>	<b>DX Magazine</b>	<b>425 DX News</b>
1	VU4 (And)	VU4 (And)
2	BS7	BS7
3	VU7	VU7
4	P5	3Y/P
5	7O	FR/J
6	FR/J	KP5
7	3Y/P	KP1
8	KP5	YV0
9	KP1	7O
10	YV0	FT8X
11	FT8X	KH7K
12	KH7K	P5
13	FR/G	ZS8
14	FT8W	FT8W
15	ZS8	3Y/B
16	3Y/B	FR/G
17	VK0/H	ZL8
18	SV/A	VP8/O
19	ST	3C0
20	VP8/O	VK0/H
21	3C0	KH9
22	FT8Z	FT8Z
23	ZL8	T33
24	KH0	XF4
25	CY0	KH5

### 7P8/3DA0

Anyone want to join several of us from TDXS and go on this DXpedition to 7P8 and 3DA0? We plan on working the IARU contest from 7P8. If anyone would like to come or meet us there let Andre ZS6WPX hear from you. He does the other end.

Charles Frost  
Frosty K5LBU  
WWW.dxsafari.s5.com

### ST2X Story

The ST2X story is now available on my web site at [www.dx.to](http://www.dx.to) and can also be downloaded in PDF format (as well as the JW0PK story).

There is a possibility that I will be active from Sudan again after March 16. Latest detail and final announcement will be available via my web site.

Kind regards, Gerben – PA5NT  
[pa5nt@dx.to](mailto:pa5nt@dx.to)

## 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GMDX CONVENTION AND DINNER

**Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2003 at King Robert Hotel, Stirling**

Once again the GMDX Committee is pleased to announce that the above convention will be held at the King Robert Hotel, Whins of Milton, Stirling, on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2003 starting at 12.30pm.

Our provisional programme is:

- 12:30 Registration and Welcome
- 13:00 Contest Station HC8N by Don G3XTT
- 14:00 Coffee/tea break
- 14:30 Antenna Computer Modelling by Alex G3ZBE
- 15:30 Break
- 16:00 Sierra Leone by Andy G3AB
- 17:30 Convention wrap up and Raffle draw
- 19:30 DX Dinner - please book
- 21:30 Hotel bar

The cost of the afternoon's convention is £7 which includes tea or coffee, whilst the dinner is priced at £17 per person. We would be grateful if you could pre-book to give us an idea of numbers – please return the booking form below. Booking your dinner tickets is particularly important as numbers are limited. The King Robert has given us a special rate for convention delegates – this is £22.50 per person BandB for a double room and £35 per person BandB for a single room. If you would like to stay at the hotel please contact them direct and mention that you are attending the GMDX Convention to get the special rates. We suggest you arrange your accommodation as early as possible to avoid disappointment. The King Robert Hotel telephone number is 01786 811666.

### BOOKING FORM

It would help us arrange adequate facilities for the day if you could pre-book. Please fill out this form and return it with your remittance to Sheree Ferguson, 19 Leighton Avenue, Perthshire FK15 0EB. Please make cheques out to "GMDX Group".

Name and callsign
DX Convention tickets £7
DX Dinner tickets £17
Total remittance enclosed

**CELTIC**



**CONNECTIONS**

The GMDX Group introduces “*Celtic Connections*” to encourage activity by all radio amateurs worldwide to contact areas with Celtic origins. This is purely an activity weekend and will enable participants to pursue the Celtic Knot Award Scheme and provide an interest in contacting Celtic areas of the world. The event is to be held on the third weekend in April each year. It is hoped this event will also help promote participation in the other GMDX Group awards - The Islands of Scotland Award, and the Worked All Scottish Prefix Award.

Reports on activity are welcome and certificates of participation will be awarded to anyone who submits a report. If sufficient reports are received the leading participants from the Celtic and the non-Celtic areas will be presented with a commemorative Quaich (a small Scottish drinking cup)

**The 2003 Weekend will start at 00:00z on Saturday 19 April 2003  
and last until 24:00 on Sunday 20 April 2003.**

Activity is encouraged on all amateur HF bands by individual licencees, Novices and Club Stations or the use of a special event callsign from radio amateurs in the following areas:

- EA1 - Galicia and Asturias areas of Spain
- EI - Republic of Ireland
- F - Brittany area of France, (Departments:- 22- les Cotes d’Armor, 29- le Finistere,  
35- I’lle et Vilaine, 56- le Morbihan)
- G - Cornwall area of England
- GD - Isle of Man
- GI - Northern Ireland
- GM - Scotland
- GW - Wales
- VE1 - Nova Scotia area of Canada

**Suggested operating frequencies**

CW	Phone	Novice
1.813 / 833	1.872	1.952
3.503 / 013	3.772	3.572
7.003 / 013	7.072	
10.103 / 013		10.133
14.003 / 033	14.172 / 272	
18.073 / 083	18.136 / 162	
21.003 / 033	21.172 / 272	21.133
24.893 / 903	24.936 / 972	
28.003 / 033	28.472 / 572	28.133

**Further Details from:** Mr. Drew Givens, GM3YOR, 5 Langhouse Place, Inverkip, PA16 0EW, Scotland, U.K. or from GMDX Group web site [www.gmdx.org.uk](http://www.gmdx.org.uk)

# GENERAL TOPICS

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## Pacific Palms, Balmy Breezes, Reef Sharks and Parrot Fish *Or Tutuila and Ofu another IOTA duo DXpedition*

**Glyn Jones GW0ANA (gw0ana@aol.com)**

Following on from the re-reading of my DX article to ZD7 and ZD8 in March of 2001 (see [www.dxpedition.co.uk](http://www.dxpedition.co.uk) and November 2001 CDXC Digest – ed.). I was beginning to get that DXpedition bug again. Then out of the blue, I had an e-mail from my old friend Dr Markus DL9RCF, (who also operated as 3E1DX, KH6, HP1) asking me if I would be interested in going to the Pacific to activate an island or two. Well, DXing and DXpeditions always interest me but, and it is a big but, “what would my XYL say”? if I took off again so soon after my South Atlantic soirée.

So I took the bull by the horns and asked her if she would like to come to a “Hot and bug invested jungle island out in the middle of the Pacific”. She said, “you must be joking!” I then asked, could I go with my friends one more time and play with my radio toys. I waited until the request registered: then she said, “if you go there I will go off to EA8 land for a holiday with my Yoga friends.” I said that was fair, so we had a deal. (Love you Midge. XX). With marital harmony restored, I e-mailed Markus that I would be interested but where are we going to in particular? Markus informed me that Larry Gandy AH8LG and his XYL Uti KS6FO, who lived in American Samoa on the beautiful island of Tutuila had offered us the use of their QTH for a base. Also we may be able to combine this with a trip to one of the other islands in the American Samoa group.

With this in mind Markus started to assemble a DXpedition team. He picked two great guys from DL, these being Roger DL5RBW and Thomas DL6OI. I asked my friend Doug G0WMW to join us, to which he readily agreed. Doug also suggested

Dave AH6HY from Hawaii who had operated on Tutuila and Ofu and, given his local island knowledge, it would be very useful. David was approached and he also agreed to become a member of the team. So now we have our team, Markus DL9RCF, Roger DL5RBW, Thomas DL6OI, Doug G0WMW, Dave AH6HY and Larry AH8LG with myself Glyn GW0ANA. After a group discussion, I was elected “Team Leader”, so as leader my first job was delegating tasks. Doug became logistics manager, Roger our antenna expert coupled with propagation predictions guru, Thomas our CW king and Dave went out first as our “Pathfinder” then air transport commissioner and US licensing guru. Markus did the P/R work in DL and Team artwork (Got to have T-shirts, hi.). While I did the sponsorship collating deals and other treasurer’s duties, with Larry and Uti giving valuable local advice and our most gracious and wonderful hosts to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude.

### ***The plan comes together***

We planned the operation to start around the end of October 2002 so a lot of work had to be done, therefore we began at once. E-mails and letters flew all over the place, plus lots of phone calls. The plan developed into a joint operation with the team splitting into two groups and operating from both Tutuila and Ofu at the same time but we needed more information from David if we were to succeed with this ambitious project. The project was further refined and polished logistically at a meeting in Friedrichshafen in mid summer. Then due to work commitments and other personal problems Doug G0WMW was forced with great disappointment to leave the team. But he offered as his replacement Nigel G4KIU of

D68C fame. Nigel was approached and he accepted the invitation to join us. This further strengthened us by the addition of his computer and Web-Page design skills.

When you are organising a DXpedition time just flies by. The weeks and months are soon eaten away as each problem appears and is resolved. After David AH6HY reported back on the logistical matters, like antenna positions, accommodation on Ofu and other such things from his exploratory trip to Ofu, the team agreed it was possible to mount a double expedition operating from both Tutuila and Ofu at the same time. This would mean splitting our forces, but with good planning we could do it. We would use Larry's superb station equipment on Tutuila but we would still need to take with us two full stations including antennas plus back-up spares for Ofu as, once there, if things go wrong radio wise, we would be on our own, stuck in the middle of the Pacific, with nothing much around us but palm trees, coral and reef sharks.

So at last the day of departure arrived. Nigel and I met up at Heathrow and we went into United Airways luggage check in, with our mountain of boxes and my "Ski-bag" holding the R7000 plus 20ft poles and guys. The check in clerk looked at our load, shrugged his shoulders and loaded it all on a special trolley for "VIP service" to the aircraft. (Thanks guys Fly United). Once in the departure lounge we looked for our DL friends who were missing. Due to a flight delay in DL they arrived at the aircraft just minutes before take-off, much to our relief and theirs. With the team now together we all settled down for the long haul to KH6 with a change at Los Angeles.

### **QSY to Zone 31**

We landed at L.A. where we all had our first "Bud beer" (it was ice cold beer, not liked at all, hi) while we waited for the connecting flight to KH6 and the island of Honolulu. After another long flight we arrived on the sunny island of Hawaii and after checking in to our penthouse; well it looked like it to me with those double king size beds. It was

out to the famous "Waikiki Beach" for a cool German beer under the stars, and a little look at the beach scenery of Bay Watch girls; the "Hang Loose" DXpedition had arrived in the Pacific.

### **Bright-eyed (but quite mad!)**

Bright eyed, but a little jet-lagged we had breakfast and then set about checking our gear, computers, logs, numerous leads and keyer. Then we erected the new Titanex DXpedition vertical dipole in the park across from our hotel. The locals thought we were mad as 5 guys pushed up a 40ft tube in the midday sun then, once up, started breaking it down again, hi. The Titanex was so easy to assemble and take down; we were very satisfied knowing it would be great for our island operation on Ofu. We also checked out the IOTA rig and being a contest weekend we fitted a random length of wire to it and were surprised to hear Jim Smith on Norfolk Is calling CQ in the contest, so we called him. He gave us a 5/9. Not bad for 5 watts and a bit of wet string. Well, we were 18 floors up looking at the Pacific, hi. We also divided our gear into two piles of boxes ready for K8T and K8O. After which we slept off the jet lag to get adjusted to Pacific Time.

With all this work to do the time passed quickly and soon the time came for us to go out to the airport and fly via Hawaiian Air, one of our sponsors, to KH8. I had arranged for us to go in style in a big white "Lincoln Stretched10 seat limo", but when it turned up they could not get our very large tin trunk with its 2 amps, 4 computers, power supplies and rig in the boot. So unfortunately we all had to go by a Ford truck. The "Hang Loose guys" really wanted that ride to the airport in a stretched limo, but it was not to be. That's life!

Once at the airport we were met by a very large queue that wound around the barriers. It was very hot and humid and, looking at the people, they did not look at all happy. It appeared that new Fed security measures were now in place and every one was being searched very fully and this took a great

deal of time. I thought what will they make of our great pile of luggage full of electrical gear. Well, we have come this far without problems so we must wait and see. After around 2 hours or so we arrived at the check in. The clerk saw our pile of gear and got out his excess payment calculator. I said we have Hawaiian Air clearance on luggage arranged by Mr David Flack. He checked the list and smiled - it looks good to me - and our gear went down the chute and away. Thanks Dave and Hawaiian Air.

Then it was into the security area, and the arms of "Murphy". Poor Thomas, after he had hand-carried his precious "Gold Plated CW Key" he hands it to the security guard for checking and she dropped it!! It fell like in slow motion as Thomas watched in horror as it hit the stone floor and shattered. The guard knew exactly what Thomas called her ##### @@@#### even though it was in German. Poor Thomas, he bent down and picked up the bits of smashed paddle. Who said, "Big boys don't cry"? Thomas did and so would all CW purists. By now we had all passed security except Nigel who had a problem convincing them that his homeopathic remedies were ok. But once he had explained their use and even eaten one the Feds allowed him through. Now the team at last were as one and ready for the next leg. Our plane was waiting with engines revving, we were soon airborne and heading out into the Pacific for KH8.

After a pleasant flight we touched down in Pago Pago and there waiting for us in the customs hall was our host Larry Gandy. He greeted us all with a big smile and a fb welcome. But first I had to get our mountain of gear clear of customs. I approached the good officer loaded down with crates and boxes and went through the normal formalities with my explanations of what these crates and boxes of "Ham Radio gear contained". I then showed him our licence plus a letter from the Governor welcoming us to American Samoa. But I could sense there was something not right between us. Then judging from the look on his face he was not grasping my explanation of what

the hobby of "Amateur Radio is." He then asked me again, why do you need all this fast amount of electrical equipment when you can easily "phone people"?

### ***Don't panic, it's only Amateur Radio***

I must confess at that moment I was at a loss and panic was setting in, when Larry suddenly appeared like a "White Knight" at my side. He explained to the officer, that he and his wife Uti also use "Amateur Radio" to talk to their friends and other Samoans around the islands. The customs officer looked at Larry and said:- Yes I know your Samoan wife Uti, she talks on radio, OK, I know now, so it's all OK, you go. So I did, with all our gear. Yes, once again, local help and knowledge is worth its weight in gold. Thanks again Uti and Larry. The team left the airport and entered the heavy humidity and heat of Pago Pago.

We had arrived in KH8 and the adventure had begun but first, off to Larry's QTH to rest up as it was now 1.00am early morning and I was feeling whacked.

The sky was black and full of stars as we pulled into Larry's driveway after a great journey from the airport. The strange sound of night creatures, coming from the jungle undergrowth around his home was wonderful. It was like listening to a National Geographical nature program. We then entered Larry and Uti's wonderful home, so cool and fresh, and were given a fantastic cup of tea and tropical fruit from the garden with cool juices. It was paradise and we had not yet set foot in the shack; that pleasure was yet to come.

After we had freshened up Larry took us into his shack. We walked into a cool and pleasant workshop with a shack to one side and what a wonderful layout it is. First a Kenwood TS950S with TL922 amp with computer link-up. Next a Yaesu FT1000MP and the top line Alpha, again with full computer link-up. Then there in the corner yet another Yaesu FT1000MP and Alpha, for RTTY, PSK and SSTV. All this dream gear connected to a tri-bander at 80 feet. Wow, what a set up. These babies were

switched on and glowing with expectation just like the K8T crew.

So without too much delay Marcus and Thomas went into action. CQ CQ CQ de K8T K8T K8T Tutuila Island IOTA OC-045 on both SSB and CW. Almost at once the pileup began with ON4IZ being first into the log SSB and JM1HJG on CW.

The rest of the crew sorted boxes and settled into their rooms as Nigel and Thomas made ready to fly to Ofu and join David AH6HY who was awaiting their arrival at the Asaga Inn on Ofu. At around 5am Nigel and Thomas left us and headed to the airport to board a small 18-seater Otter of Samoa Air due to depart at 7am. On arrival at the airport the guys were told the plane was now flying at 6am and they were too late to join it. The next flight was tomorrow and that was full. The lads now had a big problem. But after Nigel's diplomatic discussions conducted with staff of Samoa Air over the unpublicised time change, which caused them to miss the plane, promises of help were offered and telephone numbers were exchanged so our Ofu crew left the airport for Larry's QTH for a rest, hoping and praying something would turn up.

At around 9.30 the same morning we had a telephone call. It was Samoa Air, asking if Mr Peacock's party could fly at 10am today as there was a cargo plane going to Ofu. As both guys were asleep we said could they hold the plane to 10.30 (Well, this is the Pacific) which they agreed to do. So with ungodly haste the guys got ready and Larry took them again to the airport and they took off all OK for Ofu, the only passengers on board. I guess it was the massive excess baggage payment the guys paid on the trip that made it financially viable.

With the split team en route to Ofu and the Tutuila crew in full swing in a pile-up, I was at last breathing happier. So I celebrated with a fantastic breakfast of ham and eggs US-style washed down with fresh juice and bananas picked from Uti's garden. After breakfast I relieved Markus on SSB and was

soon into the pile-up rhythm.

Roger, our antenna wizard, now set about building wire antennas for 80 and topband. He also laid out a Beverage RX antenna. There was an interesting phenomenon displayed in the meter readings whilst he was doing this. Although the radials were placed on the ground in the normal way, Roger realised they were not actually on true ground but volcanic lava, which is a bad RF ground. This is due to the fact that volcanic rock is very porous and has lots of air pockets in it, caused by escaping gases when the rock cooled. This gave the effect of elevated radials and gave Roger a reading he was not expecting. But once the problem was realised Roger extended the radials and all was well. Interesting phenomenon but it caused Roger a lot of questioning and brain searching.

### ***Ofu QRV and Murphy joins the team***

The Ofu crew arrived safely to be met by Dave at the airport in a truck borrowed from Peka the owner of the Asaga Inn. Soon they arrived at the hotel and set about building up the two stations as per David's plans. The R7000 vertical was placed close to the ocean and the new Titanex vertical dipole erected at the other side of the building to stop RF coupling and other nasties. The Titanex antenna was mounted on a DXpedition insulator as used at Campbell Island DXpedition the "Beer Bottle insulator" being a Bavarian brew. Thomas swears it has better qualities. It was fed with open wire feeders and connected to a superbly built 4 to 1 high power Balun made by Hans Gall DK3YD, builder of high power Baluns. (For all your RF engineering needs check out [www.bausch-gall.de](http://www.bausch-gall.de))

With both LF and HF antennas up it was time to put the station transceivers together. The FT900 was checked in KH6 and was A1 but once on KH8 Mr Murphy paid us a visit, as he loves to go DXing, and joined our team at the first opportunity. The FT900 was dead on receive which was a blow to us. So David broke out the spare SSB rig and all was well. Now Thomas connected

up the linear to his rig for CW and there was a lovely smell of frying and a waft of black smoke; yes, Mr Murphy was working overtime. So now the K8O crew had a dead rig and a linear that had gone QRT. Well, these things happen, so the only thing to do was press on with 100 watts and go “Micro Light” as our friends in South Georgia did. (At least the guys had sunshine and coconuts and no Penguin Poo, hi.)

Meanwhile back on Tutuila our big gun station was up and running with no mishaps. Our plans to concentrate on Europe during their openings was working well. We all stuck to our policy, to identify our station and QSL route at regular intervals and to stay with a call sign, once we had picked up a phonetic come what may. The propagation from Northern Europe and G land, to this latitude is very strange. As having to beam over the Magnetic Pole the RF signals have a very pronounced “Wobble and Warble” on them. Also the openings are short and were mostly as per Roger’s propagation predictions. As our time on Tutuila wore on we racked up the QSO count, giving the deserving their band slots and new modes, such as SSTV, RTTY, PSK31 and even 6 metres and that elusive one from KH8 TOP BAND.

But from these southern latitudes you are ruled by propagation and when the bands close they close solid and all you hear is the big “Fish Fryer” in the sky. So when this happens we took the opportunity to take in a bit of sightseeing and filming around the island. We all climbed into Uti’s big 4x4 truck and took off around the island and what a beautiful island it is too. One would never go hungry as the place is full of “Breadfruit, Paw Paw, Mango, Avocado, Pineapple, Banana, Coconut, and Sweet Potato of all kinds” and the ocean is full of fish from Tuna to Lobster. It is a natural larder for all. So if you are looking for your paradise go to American Samoa. After our delightful day out, it was back to working the bands and the never-ending pileups. Our time on Tutuila was running out fast as it always does when one is having fun. It was

now time to go to Ofu.

Having established that the guys on Ofu had had a problem with their rig and amp, our host Larry offered us the loan of his Kenwood TL922 amp and Rig. We appreciated his generosity and made them ready to take to Ofu. The day for the changeover dawned and we proceeded to the airport and flew to Ofu with no problems, although the TL922 amp did have its own seat in the little “Otter” with Roger shepherding it around like his baby.

### ***QRO from Ofu***

Once on Ofu we were met by David and taken to our base at the Asaga Inn. Very soon the amplifier was plugged in and K8O went QRO. What a pile up that caused into JA and Stateside but those guys are so well behaved. I guess the “EU Zoo” have a lot to learn from these gentlemen, hi. All was now in place, so as the original K8O crew were not due to fly out to Tutuila until the morning, the whole team sat down to a T-bone Steak dinner and swapping yarns. It was a great half way moment and one to be treasured. Early next morning the K8O crew flew off to Tutuila and we settled down to the pileups using the 1kW from the Kenwood TL922 into the Titanex to its full advantage. With its superb low angle of radiation it worked wonderfully. It was our “Big Gun” and we were hunting for real and the QSOs rolled in. We worked the bands night and day listening for Europe when openings allowed and were very pleased that we could work a few M3 licence holders. Their signals were only just above the noise floor but we got a few in our log.

Like all Pacific DXpeditions you get a chance to jump into the clear blue ocean and see the exquisite marine life just under the surface. Their wondrous colours take your breath away. I have never seen so many beautiful fish in my life and the warmth of the water makes one want to stay in it all day. One particular day David was swimming along minding his own business taking underwater shots when a large shark swam up, took a look at him and swam

away. I guess he had just eaten, hi. Well what with great hospitality from our Ofu hosts at the Asaga Inn, who could not have done more for us. I asked for fish one day and they went out and fished the Pacific for me. What a meal that was. "Parrot fish" is very tasty. Then the fantastic pileups to enjoy plus the great company of friends. I did not want this Pacific adventure to end, but these halcyon days were slowly drawing to a close. Mr Murphy tried again with an incredible tropical thunderstorm with lightning and heavy rain but he could not dampen our fun. We just shut down, disconnected the antennas, opened a cool bottle of beer and hung loose until it passed over. That's the pace of life in the Pacific and you cannot fight it, just live with it. The storm passed and, with a concentrated effort by us all, we did our last full night of operating. Come daybreak it was with great reluctance that we pulled the plug and started the station pull down.

With all our gear safely packed away and loaded onto the pickup truck we said our sad farewells to Peka and her wonderful family for making the team's stay at the Asaga Inn such a pleasant experience. On behalf of the team and for future visiting radio hams I presented Peka with an engraved statue of the "Welsh Dragon" symbolising the friendship of nations across the sea brought together in the spirit of "Ham Radio". With smiles and in the warmth of friendships forged we said goodbye and left for the airport and back to Tutuila.

At the airport we had another rude awakening to the commercial realities of taking such a lot of equipment on a small plane. First it was the cost, around \$300 excess baggage charge and secondly they could not get it all on board with us. So they left it on the island and we flew away with all our baggage on Ofu. On arrival at Tutuila we were assured we would get it the next day. Next day arrived but only part of the baggage came. We only had one day left before we all flew to KH6. Larry and I went out to the airport yet again and after further discussions with management we were

assured that they would fly a special plane out to Ofu and pick up the heavy trunk. Come our final day we phoned and were told our luggage had at last arrived in Tutuila. Great news; we had 5 hours grace, that's close, but what the heck "Hang loose", this is the Pacific. We now had all our luggage and the lads were still knocking off the QSOs at K8T and our dear Hostess Uti was preparing a fantastic celebration steak dinner as our final meal together. As dinnertime approached, again with regret I had to close the final station down and wrap up the K8T end of the operation. So with IK4IKW in RTTY as the final QSO in the bag I pulled the big switch.

K8T and K8O were now QRT; now off to join the team at a fantastic dinner greatly earned.

### **Reflections**

As with all DXpeditions there are highs and lows, my high was working Mike and Jan on Swains Island, wish it was from GW though, hi. Then there was Jim Smith's QSO in KH6 on a bit of wet string. Pulling out an M3/QRP from heavy static crashes. Lows are Mr Murphy and delayed luggage and Airport Security. But the greatest high for me was the fantastic hospitality freely given to us all by Larry and Uti Gandy as they showed us all the true meaning of those elusive ideals "International Friendship and Ham Spirit".

Like all good things they must end and our Pacific DXpedition was no exception. We would soon be on our way to Honolulu for a couple of days stop over and then home. So it was with a heavy heart that the crew again said their goodbyes to our wonderful hosts Uti and Larry at Pago Pago airport and boarded the plane to Honolulu. Again thanks to the great service given to us by the staff at Hawaiian Air we had no problems with luggage and settled down for the 5-hour flight to KH6.

Arrived at Honolulu and off to our hotel. With so much gear to handle, this presents us with yet another logistical hurdle. But

with so much practice we cracked it this time by going by local bus and filling the underside lockers. Hawaii is such a beautiful place for R&R but poor David landed home and it was straight back to work. They work them hard in his particular salt mine. But the rest of the crew just chilled out and savoured the expedition over the odd beer or two.

Next day Markus received a phone call from Kimo Chun KH7U a famous Pacific DXer (Palmyra Atoll plus others). He had invited the team to dinner at a local restaurant to meet a bunch of KH6 operators.

So off that night we all went for a fantastic night meeting up with Kimo KH7U, Pat NH6UY/KH5, Ron AH6RH + QSL with Miss Universe 1997 hi, Jim Yuen and his XYL Bev AH6NF. A great night was had by all, then after an amazing meal Kimo took us all into town for a famous KH6 ice cream. I tell you no lies it was a monster I could not eat the king size cone but Kimo and Markus did them justice. So after a great evening and taking in the sights of Honolulu at night we all said our 73 and 88 and headed for home during which Kimo said he had arranged a surprise trip for us all next day. It was to be a full circle tour of the island and what a trip that turned out to be.

We saw it all: - from the volcanic grandeur of the high peaks to the spectacular cliffs and thunderous Pacific rollers as surfers shoot the curl and ride down the tunnel. Then out to famous Byodo-In Japanese Buddhist Temple. Its golden Buda and Coi carp pool is wondrous to behold. We even made a detour to KH6AB, a local ham's station, so I could have KH6/GW0ANA as another personal prefix. Well after yet another amazing day we ended up at a Korean restaurant and cooked all we could eat from a brazier in the middle of the table - fantastic. With yet another aching stomach full of great food we headed back to our hotel. With our farewells to Kimo and the KH6 gang it was off to bed and to dream of our DXpedition as tomorrow it was the

flight back to GW and the cold and wet of November in the UK.

After a long flight with United we arrived back at Heathrow. Yes it was raining and cold but who cares about the weather. I was glowing inside with pride as I had had the honour of being part of a great international DXpedition and I had made lifelong friends from the other side of the planet. What a hobby and what great people in it.

### **Thanks**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their fantastic support and I would also ask that you too support them, as it was their efforts and help that made this expedition possible. Check them out on our web page ([www.ukdxers.co.uk](http://www.ukdxers.co.uk)) under sponsors and take a look at the great Asaga Inn at [www.asagainn.com](http://www.asagainn.com). Who knows, you also may care to visit and if you do you will be sure of a great welcome.

But most of all the K8T/K8O crew and I would like to thank you, the DX community, for working us. As without you it would not have happened.

Our best 88 and 73 as they all say in KH8 land "Hang Loose" life is a joy.

CUGN SN in the pile up de Glyn GW0ANA - K8T/K8OTeam leader.

**PS** Larry rebuilt the wrecked Morse key for Thomas. He even made the new paddles in beautiful gold leafed plastic to match the keyer and engraved his call into them. With a few to spare, Thomas is now a very happy bunny.

PPS, I have produced a video of this "Pacific odyssey". For copies contact Glyn on [GW0ANA@AOL.COM](mailto:GW0ANA@AOL.COM). Cost of video £15 or EU20 or \$20 plus postage around \$2.

The proceeds of this will go towards our next DXpedition. Best 73 cuagn in the pileups.

## Who needs 3X?

**Frank Rutter, DL7UFR**

“No one will need 3X after you QRT” writes W0SF in the guest book of our DXpedition 3XY7C. Sigi, DL7DF’s team was active from Guinea from 31<sup>st</sup> October until 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002, putting 52,480 QSOs from 160m to 6m into the log.

Even as our expedition to Togo (5V7VJ) and Burkina Faso (XT2OW) finished in October 2000 (*see November 2001 CDXC Digest – ed.*) Sigi DL7DF, Dirk DJ7UC and Frank DL7UFR were thinking about the next one. Over the coming months many contacts and enquiries were made. Thanks to the support of Francois VE2XO, who had personally already been active several times from Guinea, our next goal became clear. Among other things, Francois provided the contact with Khalil, a local. It was Khalil who ultimately sorted all formalities for us in Guinea so that by May 2002 we already had the licence in our hands.

In parallel with this our technical preparations were also going on. The goals of the DXpedition quickly became clear. Operation on 160m to 6m, with particular emphasis on the lowbands, WARC and 6m. Parallel operation of up to 4 stations, three stations for HF and one station for 6m. As a result we generated the following list of equipment: 2 IC735, 2 IC706, 3 PA TY900, 5 Notebooks, 1 SCS PTC II, 2 V80E, 1 3el. Mosley Beam, 1 A3WS, 1 R7, 1 6el. Yagi for 6m, 500m coax, glass fibre poles, wire for wire antennas, etc. By virtue of the extent of the luggage it became necessary to enter into negotiations with the airline. We tried to make all arrangements at Berlin’s Tegel airport in advance to ensure there were no problems.

30<sup>th</sup> October 2002, and so far so good. At 0600 Sigi DL7DF and his XYL Sabine, Tom DJ6TF, Dirk DJ7UC, Manfred DK1BT, Wolf DL4WK, Tom DL7BO and Frank DL7UFR meet at the airport in Tegel. From Berlin it goes to Paris and, after a two and a half-hour delay, off to Conakry. At

1700 the Airbus set down in Conakry. As we had anticipated difficulties with immigration as a result of previous experiences, we had asked our guide to be there to help with the formalities. But would Khalil still be waiting after the two and a half-hour delay? Our hope was fulfilled. Khalil was waiting at the airport and settled all formalities for us and within two hours we were on our way to our hotel. In the meantime it was not appropriate to think about antenna building because it was dark. Therefore we used the evening to sort out all formalities at the hotel and for supper with Khalil and his wife.

### ***We rent an antenna field***

The next morning we inspected the hotel area and decided on locations for the antennas. Since space in the hotel grounds was limited we had to look for alternatives. In this situation Khalil helped us. We visited the neighbour’s ground and rented part of it for the duration the DXpedition as a site for antennas. Since this rented land contained parts of an unfinished building, we were able to use the steel mesh as an earth net for the V80E for 80m. Here we could also set out the parts for the 3 el. Mosley Beam. In the hotel garden we sited the V80E for 160m and the A3WS. As for the R7 and the 6 el. Yagi for 6m we obtained the hotel manager’s permission to mount them on the hotel roof. By late afternoon on 31<sup>st</sup> October we had all the antennas set up with the exception of the V80E for 160m. Considering the temperatures of over 35C, we decided to set up this antenna first thing the next day.

Quickly we set up the stations in two hotel rooms. All QSOs would be logged with K1EA’s CT. Each transceiver was linked to its PC by a remote interface cable and a CW cable. That had worked well for earlier DXpeditions. Now, after all this work, 3XY7C was **"on the Air"**. Time to face the never-ending pile-ups.

Although Guinea has many mineral resources (among other things oil, gold, diamond and bauxite) and plenty of energy resources such as water power, Guinea is one of the poorest countries in the world. The gross domestic product is just \$508 (US) per inhabitant. Average life expectancy is 45 years. These facts are quite obvious when you travel to the country. The electricity supply in Conakry is extremely unreliable. There are power failures several times a day, often over many hours. Our hotel had a diesel set. When the mains power failed, this would start up within a few minutes. This explains the occasional breaks in our operations. Unfortunately the standby generator also had a problem during the last two days, which condemned us to inactivity for hours, always waiting for power.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November we finally erected the V80E for 160m. Now all the antennas were available to us. The team could start the radio operation. Within the first three days we had about 20,000 QSOs in the log.

Several times a day we backed up the logs from the PCs and once a day merged them for uploading to the online log. The complete log was prepared using DL3DXX's BINLIST program for transfer by means of the program Airmail and PTCII over the ZS5S Winlink mailbox to the Internet. This usually happened between 0400 and 0500. The e-mails with the log data were then regenerated automatically by the log robot of DL6MHW and read into the online log database. Our thanks to Bernd - DF3CB, who supervised the entire process and requested additional data if necessary, as well as keeping the Website maintained. Thanks also to Michael DL6MHW and Joost ZS5S for their support to the DXpedition.

Wolf DL4WK worried about the 6m activities of the DXpedition. By Saturday morning we had still heard no signals on 6m. We continued to put out regular transmissions and suddenly the band opened

up. First of all we reached stations from the south of Europe. Later propagation moved to the north. At the end of the day we had 400 QSOs in the 6m log. Sunday was even better.

The band began with an opening to the east of Europe, then later to the north and finally the first US stations were in the log. Later propagation moved to W6. After two days we had 1000 QSOs in the log. Every day the band offered new openings. At the end we had approximately 2400 QSOs.

### **RTTY & SSTV**

After 20,000 QSOs we didn't want the digital community to have to wait any longer. Manfred DK1BT put one of the stations on RTTY. In the following days we were regularly active in RTTY. Participation in the WAE contest on 9/10 November formed the peak of the RTTY activities. We neglected PSK31 in favour of RTTY. Finally, we also announced some activity on SSTV. Manfred had everything prepared for it. Using JH3HHT's SSTV program MMSSTV we made our first SSTV CQ. The response was very good. Quickly we developed a technique for handling the SSTV Pileups. On SSB we compiled a list of stations wanting an SSTV QSO, then called each of them in turn on SSTV. So the pictures of SSTV QSOs on our homepage came in.

As well as operating the four stations round-the-clock where possible, we also found some time to make excursions in Conakry, to Iles the Loos and Viole de la Marie.

To conclude, we believe the effort and expense was worthwhile. At this point we would especially like to thank Khalil for support in the country. Our thanks also to Francois VE2XO, the staff of the hotel Riveira Guinee, Bernd DF3CB, Joost ZS5S, Michael DL6MHW and Dietmar DL3DXX. In addition, to all sponsors, without which this DXpedition would not have been possible. A list of them is on our homepage <http://www.qsl.net/dl7df>

# The 2002 VK9ML Mellish Reef DXpedition

David Gemmell, VK4GL ([davidgem@optusnet.com.au](mailto:davidgem@optusnet.com.au))

## **Why do we do this?**

What were some of your dreams when you were twenty-something?

## **Picture this...**

A cold, dark, wet and stormy night some 25 years ago...

We were racing multihulls up the East Australian coastline. In the dark, we talked of DXpeditions to remote and idyllic Pacific Islands... of the warm breezes... of swaying palms... of buxom ladies in grass skirts... of walking into "L'hotel du Pacifique" or whatever with an FT-101E under one arm and asking, ... "Avez-vu le 240 volz?"

A lot has changed since then. The norm seems to be "multi-everything" "instant-website" "all-dancing" but we still love sailing, and we still love the hobby of Amateur Radio. So there's not much better than doing both things at the same time.

DXpeditioning by sailing there is just... great!

## **So where is Mellish Reef ?**

Mellish Reef is about 1,000km East of Cairns off mainland Australia, virtually half way across to Vanuatu, centrally located in the Coral Sea. The reef itself is approximately 10km long by 3km wide but is totally submerged when the sea is above half tide. The only landmass is "Herald Beacon Islet", a 600m long by 120m wide sand cay which stands about two metres above the high water line. Native inhabitants include a few varieties of birds in the thousands, hermit crabs, occasional spiders, and ladybirds.

## **What is actually there?**

When we first started planning the trip, this question was really cause for some concern. Mellish Reef is off the general shipping lanes for Australia and New Zealand. It is far enough from the Australian coastline to make it difficult and expensive to access for

charter fishing trips, so it seems that the only people who actually want to go to Mellish are crazy DXpeditioners. (Sorry – that's a tautology.) The last major trip to the reef was in 1993, and there had been a number of severe cyclones through the area since then. There was a strong possibility that the sand cays could have been swept away and there was no longer anything above water at high tide. Since it would have been most embarrassing to bring a team from all over the world, and then find we had nowhere to land (Oops!), we decided to conduct a survey trip to the reef. We wanted to check overall feasibility, landing problems, site conditions, etc. Oh yes - and while we were there, we could also make a few QSOs as well.

## **The 2001 Survey Trip**

For transport for the survey trip in April 2001, we used a 43ft sailing Catamaran "Bach and Byte", owned by David – VK4GL. The same boat had also been used to take a team of VKs to Willis Island VK9WI the previous year.

Off we set with a crew of five, a few radios and antennas, a small Honda 1kW generator, some food, and a tent... There was just a little bit more to it than that, but it all seems very easy in retrospect.

We found that the reef was still above water, the swimming and fishing were good, an anchorage was accessible, and the bands were 40 over S9 with stations chasing a contact with VK9M.

## **Assembling the Team**

Feedback from the survey trip indicated a desire for extensive CW and low-bands operation, so we set about gathering an international team with proven expertise in those areas. Sailing ability, although not a prerequisite, was highly desirable. For the 2002 trip we would need two boats to carry the larger team and bigger inventory of

equipment. Geoffrey Toomey very kindly offered the use of his catamaran “Spellbound” from Brisbane.

Our final crew comprised (in family name order)

- Peter Garden - VK4APG,
- David Gemmell - VK4GL, (Skipper of “Bach & Byte”)
- Don Greenbaum - N1DG (Americas Pilot)
- Frank Hunt - ZL2BR,
- Hisato Kobayashi - 7K1WLE (Japan / Asia Pilot)
- Adam Maurer - VK4CP (Chief Pilot / Webmaster)
- Alan Meek - VK4WR,
- Yutaka "Ted" Nomura - JJ1LIB,
- Katsu Ono - JH7OHF,
- Lester Price - ZL4PO,
- Bill Rothwell - G0VDE (European Pilot)
- Eric Scace - K3NA,
- Steve Taylor - G4EDG,
- Geoffrey Toomey (Skipper of “Spellbound”)
- Hiroyuki “Hiro” Tsukahara - JP1TRJ.

### **Pilots**

According to the good books, the role of a “pilot” for a DXpedition is to ensure timely and responsive, two-way communication between the DXpedition team and our world-wide “audience”. Our pilot team was superb! We maintained a highly reliable two-way communications link with the DXpedition via E-mail on HF radio thanks to SCS PACTOR-II equipment. Twice a day log data was downloaded for our website and a summary of feedback from our four Pilot stations came in from Chief Pilot and Webmaster, Adam Maurer VK4CP in Brisbane via a 20m radio link on board “Bach and Byte”. The feedback from around the world was printed out, taken ashore, and posted on the notice board for review when the operators had chance.

This allowed us to keep track of feedback comments and modify our band-plans and

operating schedules as we went. We also received advance notice of several severe solar mass ejections, which were to cause us severe propagation problems for a large part of the on-air time. Our efforts at providing timely log-updates were greatly appreciated the world over. We had a great deal of positive feedback on this. Thanks to Marc Robinson VK2BUA from PCA.CC in Sydney for the loan of the Pactor gear.

### **The trip there**

The plan said “three days of nice sailing through the Great Barrier Reef and on to Mellish.” The reality was just a little different... For four days, we had high winds from the wrong direction. For the safety of team, we took shelter at night among the outer reefs of the Great Barrier Reef. The upside of this was we got to see seldom-visited parts of the reef, and have some great fishing and diving experiences. The problems of finding these anchorages, sometimes after dark at night in strong winds and high seas, is yet another story...

### **Arrival at Mellish:**

Finally, after six days of sailing, we arrived at Mellish at about midnight local time, and found anchorage in the lee of the reef using GPS and RADAR navigation aids. After a big breakfast (the first food some had managed for many days) the two skippers went exploring the reef access with hand-held GPS and notes from last year’s trip. They chose an anchorage near last year’s site, within wading distance from shore. The advantages of the two catamarans were that they could be beached for ease of unloading of gear, and could be anchored in only one metre of water at low tide.

### **Site Set-up**

There was extensive pre-planning of the site layout, antennas, cabling, and task allocations by Lester ZL4PO. This meant everyone knew what had to be done once ashore. Stations were on-air 12 hours after landing. One important aspect during set-up was to ensure the logging system was up and running before any contacts were made.

This would help minimise hassles down the track and avoid having QSOs logged by hand on scrap bits of paper.

### **Station Layout:**

We used two geodesic dome tents, one with three stations and two in the other, one crash tent, and one annex for the filter farm and communal sun shelter. Frank ZL2BR supervised the layout, while Steve G4EDG managed the station hardware assembly.

### **Radio Gear**

We owe a great deal of the success of the trip to our JA team members, Ted JJ1LIB, Hiro JP1TRJ, and especially Katsu JH7OHF, for the excellent liaison with Yaesu in Japan. Yaesu provided us with a superb range of equipment, tailored exactly to our requirements. Because of the weight and power limitations, we had decided to run a single linear amp only for the 160 /80 /40 bands. Yaesu also provided one of their new FT-1000MP MkV Field units for field evaluation. All the radio equipment performed flawlessly. The receivers were exceptional in handling the pile-ups, enabling the operators easily to pull call signs from the incredible pileups.

THANK YOU Yaesu!

### **Antennas**

Force 12 supplied a full suite of HF antennas. These Switched Vertical Dipole Antennas (SVDA) were lightweight, compact to store, and simple to assemble - ideal DXpedition antennas.

Following our excellent experience on Willis Island VK9WI, the team constructed a copy of the famous Battle Creek Special for 160/80/40 with help from the boys from Battle Creek, Michigan themselves. Thanks guys! The 6m Yagi was from Peter VK4APG, the same antenna that was used by VK9WI, H44PT, and VK9ML in 2001.

### **Filter Farm:**

To eliminate inter-station interference, we used HF Bandpass filters from Array Solutions. These were mounted on a board

with five labelled patch leads going off to each station. The output of each filter was permanently connected to its own antenna. The inputs had hi-visibility Velcro tags denoting the frequency of the filter/antenna. To change bands, an operator simply moved his station patch cable to the new filter, and took the labelled "Band-Tag" back to his station position. In this way, all could see which station was on which band, and which antennas were spare. This was simple and neat, and the result? No fried filters.

The low-band station was also equipped with a clever 1kW auto-switching filter built and loaned by John Loftus VK4EMM. This easily handled the 400 watts output power.

### **Headsets:**

The unrelenting noise from the local bird life has to be heard to be believed, so a good noise-cancelling headset that was comfortable to wear for extended periods of time was an absolute must. As expected from previous experience the HEIL headsets again demonstrated they were easy to wear and trouble-free. The loud ambient bird noise never bothered the VOX, so the noise cancellation feature worked a treat.

### **Generators**

We used two Honda EU10 1kW generators, and an EU26 2.6kW. These are latest technology units from Honda, lightweight, fuel-efficient, and quiet. They use switchmode converters to provide regulated and reliable power. They performed really well.

### **Logging:**

Our logging system consisted of six laptop computers, five spread over the operating positions and one for the central server. All laptops were running special software from John G3WGV and were interconnected using 2.4GHz wireless LAN technology, a first for any DXpedition. Wireless networking meant fewer cables to trip over (and was trez cool!). The logging performance and statistics this system provided was invaluable for the whole

operation, and for balancing the focus of the DXpedition to try to satisfy all conflicting requirements.

**Band-Planning:**

Eric K3NA took on the daunting task of juggling the conflicting data from prop predictions, actual band openings, gear availability, CME fadeouts, operator capabilities, feedback from the pilots, and log information. Twice each day, he wrote up the operation schedule on our white-board planner. Our log shows how well he succeeded, with all bands and modes well covered.

**Food**

Provisioning for 11 hungry people isolated at sea and on a deserted island for up to three weeks is quite a task. While on Mellish, one of the team was daily rostered to prepare a favourite meal aboard one of the boats. This helped to ease the catering load a little for our long-suffering provider

**QSO Details**

Peter VK4APG. The midday meal became a social highlight of the trip. Since band activity dropped off around noon, we used this time to get everyone together aboard one of the boats, swap stories, review the e-mail feedback from our pilots, and generally have a great time.

**Website**

Our website drew favourable comment from around the world, with DXers appreciating the fastest ever on-line log updates. Well done to Adam VK4CP.

<http://www.qsl.net/vk9ml/2002/>

It's difficult to imagine how DXpeditions were planned in the days before the Internet and E-mail. Our web server was used to maintain a database of version-controlled drawings and documentation. Our e-mail file total is over 4000 messages, which is an indication either of the level of planning we carried out, or that we really need to get a life?

**Band by Band Breakdown**

<b>Band</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Band Totals</b>	<b>CW QSOs</b>	<b>SSB QSOs</b>	<b>RTTY QSOs</b>	<b>AM QSOs</b>
<b>160</b>	1.1%	560	558	2	-	-
<b>80</b>	3.0%	1,534	1,150	384	-	-
<b>40</b>	7.2%	3,677	3,191	486	-	-
<b>30</b>	5.9%	2,989	2,989	-	-	-
<b>20</b>	17.6%	8,979	3,587	4,836	556	-
<b>17</b>	12.3%	6,261	2,769	3,492	-	-
<b>15</b>	19.3%	9,872	4,480	4,668	724	-
<b>12</b>	11.6%	5,916	3,036	2,880	-	-
<b>10</b>	13.6%	6,946	3,124	3,729	93	-
<b>6</b>	8.4%	4,298	1,469	2,627	146	56
<b>Totals</b>		<b>51032</b>	<b>26,353</b>	<b>23,104</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>56</b>

For more statistics, please see our website at <http://www.qsl.net/vk9ml/2002/>

## **QSOs and Records**

Considering the band conditions, we were very pleased with the overall result. More importantly, the feedback from the Website, pilots, and the Clusters told us that we'd made a lot of people very happy.

Our 6m specialist operators, Katsu JH7OHF, Peter VK4APG, and Alan VK4WR managed to set a new world record of 4298 contacts on 6m from a DXpedition.

In addition, Katsu managed to set a new VK long-path 6m record for VK9, working PY5CC, a distance of 25517.3 km. Now - that's a record that should last for a while!

## **QSL report**

As of end of 2002, we have confirmed 24,000 VK9ML 2002 QSOs direct and 800 via the buro. The backlog of cards that arrived prior to the delivery of our VK9ML QSL cards was cleared in October and now QSLs are being returned at the end of their week of arrival.

## **Sponsorship**

MANY Thanks to our major sponsors, YAESU, BT Exact Technologies, NCDXF, Nancyatte DX club, GXDF, CDXC, NJDXA, EUDXF, NODXA, GMDX, Array Solutions, Danish DX Group, Heil Sound, Honda, Force 12 antennas and the 5-Star DXers Association. Please support these organisations who do so much to support our great hobby. Additionally, we received fantastic assistance from so many individuals, too many to mention here, but please see the website sponsors page for our grateful acknowledgement.

## **Next Trip**

There's a short-list of possible destinations that we're checking out. Although it's getting harder to get a leave-pass these days, stay tuned to our website for details.

73 de David – VK4GL, S.V. “Bach and Byte”

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# **YE2R KARIMUNJAWA DXPEDITION 2002 - THE STORY**

*reported by YB2MTA (yb2mta@yahoo.com)*

## **Preface**

Karimunjawa archipelago is situated on the north side of Java Island, between Borneo and Java, surrounded by the Java Sea. There is a total of 29 islands there, population concentrations are on the five biggest islands. The biggest population is on Karimunjawa. The smallest is on Nyamuk Island. Actually Nyamuk only has a handful of inhabitants. Only Lighthouse guards and their families live there. Nyamuk in English means mosquito.

The Government of Indonesia has designated the Karimunjawa archipelago a Maritime National Park because it has a very beautiful coral garden throughout the entire archipelago, among the top 3 of Indonesia's coral reefs. Every island, especially the small ones, is surrounded by coral. In daylight, it provides an

unforgettable view under the sun.

One hotel with 25 rooms is available there, as well as several houses that also offer rooms. These include YC2MBL, Arfani, who rents rooms to visitors. Some other residents rent dive equipment, boats and fishing equipment, all at competitive prices. Snorkelling equipment can also be rented in order to view the coral. The favourite island is Menjangan Besar and Menjangan Kecil (unpopulated), only 15 minutes by boat from Karimunjawa. The archipelago is part of Jepara County government, Central Java province. This area is in YB2.

## **Preparation**

This expedition was a collaboration between four ORARI Clubs from Banyumas, Purbalingga, Cilacap and Jepara. It started with regular ragchews, with some stations

becoming enthusiast when the topic changed to IOTA DXpeditions. By the end of the ragchews, everyone had agreed to go to Karimunjawa.

So, the team developed. Every preparation was undertaken. Documentation was processed. Especially important, the special call sign YE2R that would be used. Government permission was required to get the call sign. The reason for the special call sign is that some of the operators are not allowed use their home calls to make DX QSOs. But when they use a special call sign this restriction does not apply.

Radios and also antennas were being tested carefully. We tested them during the SEANET Contest and the IOTA Contest. Everything seemed smooth so far.

We also try to find sponsors. A search of the Internet found IREF as the only sponsor for IOTA activity. So, YB2MTA sent an application to AD5A. After reviewing our application IREF agree to a grant of \$400 (US) provided we made a minimum of 500 QSOs. At this point we were able to make an announcement via 425DXN, The Daily DX, DX News (XE1BEF) and via [www.islandchaser.com](http://www.islandchaser.com)

The date was planned with consideration to the weather. The best months are from March to September. After discussion, we decided to go in August.

### **Process**

First we decided to go on August 21. But some team members were busy with the celebration of Independence Day. So we shifted it to August 28. When we were getting close to that date some team members suddenly said they couldn't go. Two of us had to cancel due to family problems. Kadek YC9BU informed us that he also couldn't go due his activity in connection with his city. Then one day before we went, two more friends became sick with influenza. So, there were only four persons remaining on last day before we went: YB2BFZ, YB2MTA, YD2KVU and YD2JWM. But by then it was impossible

for us to delay or cancel. With only four people we started our trip. First we had to go to Jepara port, 320km away. There we had YC2CTE who helped us with his truck for some of the logistics. As previously planned, YB2BFZ was to stay on Java Island, standing by to help with any possible situation. Those who would go to Karimunjawa were YB2MTA, YD2KVU and YD2JWM. On Karimunjawa, YC2MBL was already standing by, waiting for us.

But the biggest problem showed up. The regular ferry that should take us to the island was still not available in the port. We knew that the ship was under maintenance. But on the schedule that we got from the Port Administrator, the ship would be ready in the first week of August. It was 4 weeks behind schedule. We didn't have the option of cancelling this operation. The only boat available was a small wooden boat, about 15m long and 4m wide, owned by Karimunjawa's fisherman. The reason we risked this is that we heard there was a strong possibility that the regular ferry would be ready on Saturday August 31, so we could cruise back to Java from Karimunjawa on Monday September 2 using the ferry. So, we decided to reduce our load. Since we would only work two bands, we brought only two radios, an Icom IC-745 and Yaesu FT747GX. We also brought some food and water as preparation.

And then, the most dangerous trip (for us who had never taken a small wooden boat to cross the open sea) began. On August 28, morning 0700 local time (-7 hours to UTC), we crossed the Java sea to Karimunjawa. The boat was loaded with about 30 passengers. The Captain said it would take at least 6 hours for the crossing of about 49 nautical miles. For the first 2 hours everything looked okay. But for the next 4 hours the boat started "dancing", following the waves. The waves were getting higher and the wind was getting faster. So, none of us could hold out. We were heavily seasick during the last 4 hours!

Finally, we stepped out onto Karimunjava at 1430 (0730 UTC). After meeting with YC2MBL, Arfani (resident), we started to install all our equipment. By 1000 UTC all our equipment was ready. When the island got the electric power, we tried the radios. And we had one another problem, the Yaesu wouldn't work well. Sometimes the radio suddenly powered off. Possible this was a result of the rough crossing, causing something to become loose inside. We decided to operate on 15m that night and hope that we could get the second radio going on 20m the following day.

Propagation was not too friendly to us that week. After sunset, we started the operation. We had a very big pile-up, but only about 350 QSOs on first night. Every pile-up technique was applied. But it didn't help. It seemed that everyone was using all the equipment at their disposal to call us, so all were loud and similar in strength. We started the operation at 1130 UTC. But by about 1900 UTC all signals were getting low. We stayed on 21.260 until 2000 UTC but by then no one was hearing us. So we stopped the operation. Only 8½ hours QRV with about 350 QSOs. We needed a good sleep after the long cruise.

The second day, we tried to repair the second radio. Unfortunately we couldn't find the problem. Besides the limitations of tools we had with us, also there was no power at noon. There was nothing that we could do to repair the second radio. We only had one radio and chose to QRV on 15m phone. The propagation was still the same. We started at about 1130 UTC. The pile-up was also the same as the previous day. But we got a surprise when G3KMA also worked us at the end of the second day's operation.

The third day, we heard the worst news. The ferry would still not be available for another two weeks. Hearing that news made us feel like we had lost our bones. We remembered vividly our seasickness on the voyage out. The biggest problem is the boat to Java is not regular since the boat owner operates it.

Only when they need to will they go to Java. We asked Arfani YC2MBL to collect information about the boat. Before sunset, we knew that there would be one boat available the following day. Arfani didn't know when the next one would be. He also informed us that this time the boat would smaller than yesterday! So, we decided to go back to Java on Saturday August 31, because we don't know when the next boat would be scheduled. It might be on next day or next week or next month. So, on the last night on the island, we decided to try both radios. YD2KVU and YD2JWM would use the IC-745 and QRV on 15m. YB2MTA would use the Yaesu and work CW on 20. The 745 gave no problems. But the Yaesu only gave 6 QSOs on 20m. W stations logged on 20m were KD7GTI and W6JD. The rest were DL, HS, RK and LA. The radio suddenly powered off two times in the course of the six QSOs. So YB2MTA decided to stop activity on 20m and we continued with just one radio active on 15m SSB. Propagation was still the same. After 2000 UTC, no one that we can hear. Even so, we continued to call CQ for about half an hour every day after 1900 UTC.

During the 3 days of operation, we were also disturbed by a station trying to jam NA stations. Every time we called NA or SA only, sometimes we heard just one station with a very big signal laughing and saying AAAAAAAAAA OOOOOOOOOO AAAAAAA. Or even just using my RX frequency to make a CQ or ragchewing. But it didn't happen when we called other continents. This happened every night. So, it's very hard to us listen for NA or SA. Sometimes one friend who was helping me told me that several NA stations were already standing by and waiting for our call. But when we called NA, we were disturbed by this QRM.

Saturday morning August 31. Usually people are very happy when Saturday arrives. But for us it was really traumatic. When we arrived at the port we were almost desperate, seeing a boat even smaller than before. This one was a wooden boat 12m

long and 3m wide, loaded with about 15 passengers and some iced fish in drums. We didn't have a better option. The best and only thing to do was just to pray and hope it would be okay during the cruise.

Unfortunately, our prayers were not fully granted. God only protected our lives but did not give us a happy cruise. The weather was worse than before. Waves as high as 3–4m. It was very windy that day. The boat couldn't move at top speed since it would endanger the boat itself. We needed about 7 hours to cross. The worst experience in our lives, being seasick (again) for 6 hours.

At 0900 UTC (1600 local time), we saw Jepara port with YC2CTE Ahmad and Johan YB2BFZ standing there. They laughed when they saw our faces. They said we looked like dead men. Yes, we were almost dead on the sea.

But when we put our feet on Java again, we agreed that this was the best experience of our radio amateur activity. Endangering our life just to serve other friends in another part of the world, even though we could only hear their voice or just the chirp of their CW.

### **The Result**

The YE2R DXpedition logged 829 QSOs on 15m SSB and 6 QSO on 20m CW in 3 days. The NA stations we logged included 97 QSOs on 15m (11.7%) and 2 stations on 20m (33%). Total NA is 99 QSOs. We also have 10 stations from SA. The rest is EU,

AS, AF and OC. Some NA stations that we know are W9DC, W3UR, VE3LYC, AA5AT, W2JZK, N8DX and others. The EUs are G3XTT, G3KMA, G3LAS, G0UIH and others. From YB land, we have YB5QZ, YB0AZ and YC9WZJ.

QSL Manager is EA7FTR Francisco Lianez Suero. Some friends advised us to use a QSL manager since it will reduce postage costs. Especially when the manager is from EU. It takes only a very cheap stamp to reply all over the world, because the EU is in the middle of the amateur radio map.

### **In Closing**

Special thanks to all our friends who helped us prepare this expedition. Also to VE3LYC and DK2PR for assistance. For all friends from DX news, thank you for putting YE2R in your bulletin. Also to the RSGB IOTA team, G3KMA, G0UIH. From YB-land, special thanks to YB2BGZ and YB2ERL for support.

Special thanks also to the IREF team, AD5A. Thank you for support and the grant. Also for WLH team F5OGG and W9DC.

The most special thank you is to God who always keeps us alive through the wildest waves.

This DXpedition would have been impossible without all your help and support.

CUAGN ON NEXT DXPEDITION. 73  
CHERIO

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## **Penallt Challenge Report 2003**

**Bob Beebe, GU4YOX (bob@beebe77.freemove.co.uk)**

After reading in the last Digest of 2002 that the Penallt challenge was again upon us in the month of January, I thought that joining in with the fun might be an opportunity to increase some of my band/mode totals on 40, 80 and 160m. Indeed, perhaps even one or two new ones could be achieved. So I decided that I would have a bash and see how well I could do. (Details of the Penallt

challenge are available at [www.cdxc.org.uk](http://www.cdxc.org.uk))

I have a modest set up for the low bands, inverted vee's for 40 and 80 at around 40' and an Inverted L at around 65' for 160, when the tower is fully extended. For receive antennas I have a couple of Beverages, one at 290° and one at 180°.

However, these are only a wavelength long for 80m but do perform well on all three bands. I have carried out considerable work in the summer on my radial system and have installed close to 2400' of radials to the base of the Inv-L. This has helped considerably in providing a reasonable signal on 160m. My winter season highlight so far was to work HC8N on 160 in CQWW CW with only 65 watts! A recent addition to the station has been the investment in a FT1000MP MkV and VL-1000 Quadra amplifier, completing the set-up.

It was a busy month for me in January, not only working the Penallt challenge but also decorating the hall, landing and stairs of our home and working not only in GU but also in G, GJ, and GD! After starting at the beginning of the month in earnest, I realised that I had to use the time I had to best effect, knowing that I would be working away from the island for nearly ten days of the month. Initially, I concentrated on 40m, notching up most of EU and also a considerable amount of Asia. I was hoping to take part in CQWW 160m at the end of the month which would help my 160m totals and maybe secure a few rarer countries for the challenge.

In contrast to a weekend contest where full commitment is required for 48 hours in addition to antenna, radio setting up, etc. this was something very different. I knew that all available time had to be used to full effect, especially at greyline. After a month, it was quite a strain on domestic activities. The other interesting element to the Penallt challenge is wondering who else was enjoying the challenge. After a couple of weeks I started to hear a few familiar calls chasing not necessarily DX, but countries that had not been worked through the month on the low bands. GW3JXN, G4IRN, G3LAS and others were often heard. The give-away was when I was asked to QSY up for a QSO as being that elusive GU!

I thought to open things up I would call CQ on both CW and SSB at strategic times around greyline time most mornings and

create sometimes enormous pile ups which are always good fun. But working endless DLs and OKs etc was not helping the totals count, so a spot of search and pounce was also required. In all though, a blend between the two seemed to work reasonably well. I eventually ended the month with 1388 QSOs worked. I think this is the most QSOs I had ever worked in a month from home! DXCC was achieved on 40 metres, and I worked 132 unique entities across the three low bands in the month of January. A large number were worked on all three bands and I did work several new band/mode slots and three all time new ones to take me to 266 worked.

There was some choice DX around as well, working entities such as: 5T5, 3C5, ZD7, ZF2, EP3, FP, S9, V31, XT2 and others not often found on the low bands. 5T5 and S9 were all time new ones for me.

#### GU4YOX Band Totals January 2003

BAND	160m	80m	40m
CW	61	20	62
SSB	1	30	71
Total	62	48	100
Total Claimed Entity Count	132		

In summary, an interesting challenge and good fun. Also a great way of increasing your band/mode slots on 40, 80 and 160m. I think that missing greyline every evening due to work restraints was a disadvantage. On saying this, I did have three weekends to catch up on early evening greyline activity. My only developmental comment to the challenge would be to consider summing up all countries worked across the three bands. This would further encourage greater activity across the three bands and would reward for working the rarer countries (e.g. JA) on three bands rather than the once.

Best of luck to all other entrants.

73 de Bob GU4YOX

## Description of XF1K operation, Isla Pelicano, 7 – 9 February 2003

by N6VR

Preparation for the NA167 IOTA operation started 2 months beforehand with the efforts of Hector, XE2K (ex XE2DN) in obtaining licences and landing permission. Originally, plans were for four Mexican operators and me, but in the end, it came down to XE2K, XE2ZY, Emigdio and N6VR, Ray.

Hector had previously gone through the authorisation and licensing efforts with Mexico City for his 2002 Angel de La Guardia Island operation (XF1DN), NA163. Therefore, the contacts and procedure were in place. My concern was for my authorisation. Hector always says, no problem, and there were none. It appears that as long as an XE ham initiates the licensing effort, and the 50/50 rule of operators is followed (50% Mexican and 50% others), Mexico City will issue licences. My only effort involved applying for a XE2/N6VR licence and a tourist visa. Other than that, I was considered a guest of the XF1K operation.

### **Permits & Planning**

Hector also applied for and received permission to stay on the island since it is located in a protected reserve area. Permission was issued by the director of the Sonora Environmental authority.

As far as the planning, there were the usual e-mails and phone calls about rigs, antennas, batteries, generators, cables, tents, food, etc. Hector had travelled to El Golfo de Santa Clara a month earlier to arrange the boat, fuel and help on the island. The goal was to have at least two stations on the air.

On the day of the operation, 7 Feb, we left Mexicali about 1pm and arrived at El Golfo, a small fishing village in the late afternoon. We immediately began loading the boat located in front of the home of the boat owner. After loading, the boat was towed by a 4-wheel drive truck over the sand into the

Gulf, about ¼ mile away. We climbed in and were off.

The trip to Isla Pelicano took around 20 – 30 minutes. The Island is mainly mud and sand with an elevation of about 6 – 9 ft (3m). The tide movement is amazing; the difference between low and high tide is up to a ½ mile (1000m) in distance. We arrived at sunset; about 500 ft from the hard sand ready to go not but realising the effort to come. When you jump off the boat, you immediately sink to your knees in mud. We had probably a twenty items to carry 150m to the hard sand through the sometimes knee-deep mud. After the difficulty of the first load sloshing through the mud, we came up with a way to sled many of the containers, batteries and generators over the mud. Since it had turned dark, we had to place a light on land and the boat to find our way back and forth. It took a full hour to unload all the gear onto the island. After all that, we were totally exhausted. However, the thought of operating from a rare IOTA kept us going. By the time we finished unloading the boat, the tide had retreated 200m, the boat could not move! The crew stayed the night on the island with us.

### **Set-up & QRV**

It took us about one hour to set up the operating and sleeping tents, the tribander Yagi at 25 ft, R7 vertical and the 80m inverted V at 45ft. I was the first on the air, 14.260MHz. Within 30 minutes Hector took over 20m SSB, Emigdio was on 80m SSB, and I was on 40m CW.

Over the next few days and nights we were able to keep two stations on the air, and sometimes a third. Propagation was fair with 20m closing about 9pm local time (0500z). We would then move to 40 & 80m. I often slept from 0700z to 1300z, and would open on 40 or 80m. At sunrise, I would attempt to move to a higher band but

found that with the R7 vertical nothing was open until 1700z. By then 10, 12 & 15m would be open. There was another slow period from about 11am to 3pm (1900 to 2300z). The phone station with the A3S tribander was able to work the bands longer.

A special effort was made to work Europe and the Middle East. We did work many Europeans, but only a few Middle East and Central Asia stations. Of course, there was the continual calling by some of the Southern European stations that made QSOs very difficult at times.

The weather in the morning was very cold, 40 to 46°F, 4 to 8°C. There were strong winds at times that made it even colder. During the day, the temperatures were nice, in the mid-60's, 18°C. One comment about food: Hector's family had prepared some beef to make burritos, which was very good. We also had soup that one just adds hot water. However, I can tell you, the canned corned beef and canned chicken I brought were not so good. The beef looked like dog food, while the chicken looked like cat food. I hope they were not mislabelled!

### ***Wrap-up & Departure***

In total, we made about 4000 SSB and 2000 CW QSOs. Our goal was 3000 QSOs so we far exceeded our goal.

Leaving the island was even worse that getting on! The boat was stuck in the mud ½ mile (800m) away from our operating position. Fortunately, we had help. Hector and I had to make only one trip to the boat. No matter, it took me 45 minutes to pull my box of radio gear over the mud. I had to stop every 30 to 40ft to catch my breath. It took more than an hour to get all the gear and equipment into the boat. As before, the tide had retreated and the boat was left in the mud 300 feet (100m) from the water! We did not want to wait 2 – 3 hours for the tide to return, so we ended up pushing the boat across the mud to the ocean. This took almost 45 minutes.

The 20-minute boat ride to El Gulfo went fast. Emidio had left a day earlier, so we had to leave the antennas and a few large containers in El Gulfo for their later return to Mexicali. On the way back, we had to go through two military drug checkpoints and unload and open a number of boxes and cartons to show them that we were not drug runners. Hector's smooth words made it easier too.

The most unusual thing I discovered about Isla Pelicano is the mud and tides. During extreme tides, there may be only a little of the island exposed, 100m by 300m. During the low tides, while we were there, the island was perhaps 1km by 3km in size. No one lives on the island and there are no buildings or structures. Only on the highest points of the island does some short 6-inch grass grow. The main activity on the island is clam digging. We crazy IOTA operators are the only other people that would want to be there!

Another interesting amateur radio point is that another similar island, Montague, NA163 is only 8 - 10 km further west. Montague and Pelicano are separated by the border of the Mexican states of Baja California and Sonora, therefore the different IOTA references.

### ***XF callsign system***

There is an explanation for the XF1 callsign. Mexican islands are issued "XF" callsigns with the number "1" area covering islands in the states of Baja California, Sonora and Sinaloa. XF2 is for the Gulf of Mexico, and XF3 is used for Mexican islands in the Caribbean. XF4 is for Revilla Ggedo and other islands in the southern states of the Pacific area.

There will be other operations the Mexican islands. With XE2K's IOTA efforts, other Mexican amateurs in the area and Baja are becoming interested in doing the same. There is hope!

## **DXpedition to the end of the world : The Rapa experience**

***Antoine D. R. N'Yeurt, FO5RK / 3D2AG***

Rapa Island (IOTA OC-051) is the southernmost island of the Australs group in French Polynesia, lying 1240km to the south of Tahiti. My DXpedition began at the Naval wharf in Papeete, Tahiti, where we boarded the French Navy vessel 'La Raillieuse' which was to take our 14-member scientific team to Rapa, for 6 weeks of study of the marine fauna and flora of that far-away island. There is no airport on the island because of the impracticability of making a runway, and the only links with the outside world are inter-island vessels about every two months, or military patrol vessels such as the one we were lucky to board. The trip takes 48 hours by clement sea, which was fortunately the case for us. Life aboard the military vessel was strict, and we had to adhere to inflexible meal times, and were restricted to our quarters during the frequent military exercises of the crew. Maritime mobile operation was of course out of the question; otherwise the crew members were quite friendly to us. At daybreak on the second day at sea, there was a magical moment as the island of Rapa began to be visible on the horizon, its jagged peaks silhouetted against the red hues of the sunrise. An ancient volcano with peaks culminating at 650m and steep outer cliffs, the island offers from the sea a desolate, eerie landscape to the first-time visitor. That picture gradually changed as the boat got closer to the main bay, home to the 500 souls spread in two villages (Area, and Ahurei) that make up the population of Rapa. There is a small wharf at Ahurei, and we were greeted by almost the entire population of the village who had come to welcome us with garlands of flowers, and singing of traditional hymns. There are few visitors to this remote and windswept Austral island, and those that make it are surely well-received, with a genuine hospitality that has been long-lost in tourist-filled islands such as Tahiti and Bora Bora.

Once we landed, we were overwhelmed by

our welcome, and a French Polynesian 'truck', the local bus, was waiting to take us to our dormitory and a traditional feast or 'tamara'. However, the military boat could only stay a few hours and we first had to unload our material (including my antenna!) from the hatch. That having been done, I had time to reflect during the short ride to the village on the best way to mingle my scientific duties and give a 'new one' to thousands of radio-amateurs who still needed OC-051. Fortunately there was a continuous supply of electricity to the village, so generators were not needed. After a most delicious meal in the presence of our Rapan hosts, I enquired about a suitable place to set-up antennas and a station, and was kindly provided a small space in the hall behind the church, in the same building as the men's dormitory. Thereafter that afternoon, our time was occupied setting-up the scientific stations and laboratories, and attending preparatory meetings, so ham radio had regretfully to be temporarily set aside. It was decided that we would do a couple of dives every morning, have a break for lunch (either at sea or land) then another dive in the afternoon, after which scientific samples had to be sorted out and filed away. All that meant that operating time on the radio was extremely limited, and basically could only occur before breakfast, for 45 minutes after breakfast, during lunch break (if it took place on land!) and late afternoons for an hour or so before dinner, and after dinner until bed-time (which was early, since we had to wake up at 4a.m. local!). In UTC that translated to being QRV from 1430 to 1530, 1600 to 1700, 2200 to 0000, 0300 to 0430, and from 0600 to 1100 UTC each day, propagation permitting (Sunday was off, so more flexible times were possible). The next afternoon, I found some time to assemble the 2-el HB9CV antenna for 20, 15 and 10m (kindly donated by Toshi, JM1PXG) and put up the Windom antenna in an inverted-

V configuration for 40m and the WARC bands. Because of the strong winds which are frequent on Rapa, the antennas had to be well secured, and turning was with the 'Armstrong' method! The station consisted of the Icom 706 MkII, and a Bencher paddle for CW operation (absolutely imperative after 0800 UTC, when most other expedition members were luckily asleep!). Preliminary trials indicated that propagation was best by short path to Europe and USA between 1500 and 1700 UTC on 10 and 12m, and on 20m short path USA between 0300 and 0600 UTC. Europe was open via long path on 20, 15 metres between 0900 and 1100 UTC on several days a week; on the other days high noise levels about S7 strength was making reception in the evenings quasi-impossible, even with all filters activated. At first I thought a machine nearby was intermittently being put on, but such was not the case. The answer lay in the fact that Rapa is way south, past the tropic of Capricorn, and auroral noise is quite frequent, especially in summer. Temperatures on the island are quite cool compared to the rest of Polynesia, with a minimum of 6°C in winter, and a maximum of 22 degrees in summer (which means fruits like peaches, apples, nectarines, and vegetables like carrots and potatoes thrive; however coconut trees are rare and never produce fruits). Fortunately the weather was nice to us during the first weeks of operation, but on the last week a freak tornado while we were at our farewell lunch pulled up the HB9CV from its mast, and it

fell on the ground. Luckily, no serious damage was incurred because the antenna is so light, and it was quickly put up again with the kind help of locals, for a few more hours of operation. The station was officially QRT about an hour before boarding our ship back to Tahiti via Raivavae, on December 8. It was a rainy, foggy day and the sea was rough, totally unlike our coming, an uneasy feeling adding to our sadness at leaving our newly-found Rapan friends. On the deck of the 'Raillieuse', through tear-filled eyes we customarily threw our 'leis' or flower garlands into the foamy sea, a promise we will return one day to that isolated, forsaken, but so humanely hospitable shore.

Despite all the restrictions in operating time and natural QRN, some 3000 QSOs had been logged by the end of the 5-week expedition, mostly on 10, 12 and 20m, about 75% of which were on CW. That may not have been enough to satisfy all the demand for OC-051, but at least the lucky ones who made it could proudly claim a rare 'new one' for their IOTA programme. I am particularly grateful to the people of Rapa for their overflowing kindness, unparalleled welcome and unselfish help during our stay with them, and also to I.R.E.F. for support towards the expedition.

*(the bulletins report that Antoine will be on vacation in the Australs until 20 March, with plenty of time for radio – ed.)*

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## MADAGASCAR 2002

***Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH (Phil@g3swh.demon.co.uk)***

Madagascar is such a big island that it is impossible to see everything in a single visit. Consequently, Jan and I decided that we would make a second trip in 2002, but this time to different parts of the country. I kept in touch with Solofo, 5R8ET and the gang in Tana by e-mail and were horrified to learn that, following the Presidential

elections in December 2001 there had been no outright winner and that both candidates were claiming victory amidst accusations of fraud and vote rigging. The incumbent President, Didier Ratsiraka was popular in the provinces and the challenger, Marc Ravalomanana, a millionaire businessman, was popular in the capital, Antananarivo

(Tana).

A considerable amount of unrest followed, which was largely unreported in the press. For a time, the BBC News web site was the only source of reliable information about what was happening. For several months the country teetered on the brink of civil war. National support for Ravalomanana grew steadily over the following six months or so, but the fragile economy of this desperately poor country was severely damaged. A return to normality only came in early July when Ratsiraka fled to Paris and Ravalomanana was able to form a relatively stable government.

### ***Planning amid Uncertainty***

Whilst our chosen destination appeared to be tearing itself apart, Jan and I continued with the French language tapes and spent many hours poring over the map and guidebooks planning what we wanted to do and see in the hope that matters would be resolved sooner rather than later. Even when the crisis itself was brought to an end, it was obvious that it would be some time before things would get back to normality. We had originally hoped to travel in September and had been bombarding Cortez Expeditions, our travel agent in Tana, with e-mails to agree a workable itinerary. Air Madagascar resumed a weekly flight from Paris in August, but it was impossible to get seats so we decided to travel in November instead.

Solofo, 5R8ET was once again most helpful in arranging with OMERT for my 5R8HA call to be re-issued for a further three-month period. The cost this year was only 500,000 FMG (about £68 including charges), which was once again transferred via Western Union. As I would be using the same transceiver, there was no need for it to be checked for spurious emissions, hence the lower fee.

Our travel plans followed the tried and tested formula of a week or so of intensive travelling and a few days relaxing on a beach, preferably on an island where I could play some radio. This year, I hoped to be

able to spend some time on the air from the main island (AF-013) but we did have a very hectic schedule. Having activated Ile Ste Marie (AF-090) last year, Jan wanted to go somewhere else this year, so we agreed on the islands off the northwest coast. Nosy Be itself is probably the best known, most touristy and commercialised part of Madagascar. We dislike touristy places, so decided to stay at Les Floralties Hotel on Nosy Komba, a small island close to Nosy Be, which would also count as AF-057.

Our flight from Bristol to Paris, Charles de Gaulle airport left at 1715 on 4th November and the girl at the check-in desk didn't blink at the 55kg of baggage between us (not including hand luggage), even though the tickets only allowed us 20kg each. The Air Madagascar flight didn't leave until 0215 the next day, so we had a lot of time to kill. Check-in was chaotic. There was no problem with the hold baggage, as the tickets allowed 30kg each, but they insisted on weighing the hand baggage, which contained the IC-706, laptop etc. After fruitless argument and negotiation, the laptop was transferred to other hand baggage, the bag with the radio marked "fragile" and consigned to the hold.

The flight was uneventful and we arrived at Itavo International Airport on time to be met by Solofo, 5R8ET, his wife Irineé; Fidy, 5R8FV and Patrick, 5R8EW. With Fidy's help we cleared Customs and Immigration in record time and set off into town to the Royal Palissandre Hotel where we were to stay for two nights. After a quick drink with the gang, accompanied by the spectacular nightly electric storm, we unpacked and relaxed for the evening.

Next morning, Solofo took us first to Cortez' office to collect our various airline tickets and accommodation vouchers, then to OMERT and then to the Radio Nederland office to meet his new boss, Leo, PA0LOK/5R8HE. That evening, Solofo and his wife hosted a small party for us, which was attended by Sigi, DJ4IJ/5R8GT; Albert, 5R8GZ; Patrick, 5R8EW; Jean-Claude,

5R8GO; Eddy, 5R8FT and his wife Nancy when I was able to distribute the numerous incoming QSL cards for the stations I undertook to manage last year. As our travel schedule required us to be up at 0400 next morning for an early flight to Morondavo, we left the party rather early.

The baggage allowance for the internal flights was only 20kg each, so we left most of our baggage at the Royal Palissandre and travelled light for the 90-minute flight. Arriving at Morondavo airport, we were met by our guide, Theo, driver, Christian and cook, Tavo with a four-wheel drive vehicle. We set off on the 50km drive to the Kirindy Forest Reserve where we were to camp for the night. En route, we passed through probably the most photographed and picturesque place on the island, the Avenue des Baobabs, which was truly spectacular.

Arriving at the camp site just before lunch time, we set out almost immediately with Theo on a walk through the tinder dry deciduous forest where we saw many species of birds such as the crested coua, reptiles such as the spiny tailed gecko and our first sighting this year of lemurs – Verreaux's sifaka, our favourites. The temperature was over 30°C but there was no shade. In spite of drinking plenty of water, we both severely overheated and suffered mild heat exhaustion as a result. Jan recovered quickly, but I was not myself for the rest of the trip. After lunch and a short rest, I looked at the possibilities for antennas. The camp clearing was well supplied with suitable trees, but there was no electricity. Although there is an ecological study centre on the site attended by students from all over the world and a generator for their use, it was not permitted to connect to it. We took another walk in the forest after dusk, as the area is particularly noted for its nocturnal mammals, but saw little except a number of grey mouse lemurs.

Theo woke us at dawn and we took another walk before the day got too hot. I was still feeling unwell and we decided to head back to Morondavo earlier than planned and

checked into our hotel for the night.

### ***QRV among the Palm Trees***

Chez Maggie is a small hotel wonderfully located on a wide expanse of beach overlooking the Mozambique Channel. There was a stunted palm tree close to our room and I was able to rig a very low antenna facing east/west. Electricity was available on a 24-hour basis. The IC-706 suffered no apparent damage in the hold of the aircraft and I set up the station in the room. There were two problems – all the metalwork of the station was “live” and gave a nasty tingle when touched, and the transmitter would not produce more than 50 watts output. A check of 10m around 1500 revealed Bob, G4HZV calling CQ, so I replied for the first QSO. He gave me a very encouraging report and we chatted for several minutes before leaving the frequency to me for a run of 50 or so mainly European and USA stations in an hour's activity. A further session the following morning before leaving for the airport brought the QSO total to 200, again mainly Europeans with a few far eastern stations but surprisingly no Japanese.

Solofo met us at the airport in Tana again but we had time for no more than a quick chat before setting off for the Royal Palissandre Hotel for the night. Our travel schedule again required a 0400 start the following morning for the flight north to Diego Suarez, so another early night was needed. We now had our full complement of baggage but the check-in clerk didn't worry us. It was raining very heavily when we arrived at Diego to be met by our driver, Charlain and guide, Gerard and whisked off for a tour of the area taking in the main beaches at Ramena and Sakalava. The roads were poor and the rain made them slippery, so that the four-wheel drive was often engaged, but we saw numerous chameleons and a number of different birds, such as the sickle billed vanga.

That night we stayed in the Hotel Colbert in the centre of the town, so there was no chance of putting up any antennas. Being a

Sunday, the hotel restaurant was closed and we were given a voucher to go for dinner to a local restaurant a few hundred yards away.

Next morning, Charlain – now known as Charlie - and a different guide, Laurent collected us for the 27km drive south to the Montagne d'Ambre National Park, just outside Joffreville and which is a splendid example of upland rainforest, enjoying its own microclimate and a very high rainfall. We saw innumerable frogs, a leaf-mimic chameleon little more than 2cm long, crowned lemurs and many birds, including blue vangas and stonechats. We were lucky that Cortez had booked us into the Benedictine monastery in Joffreville for the night, otherwise we would have had to travel back to Diego. There were several possibilities for antennas, but AC electrical power was only available after dusk for two hours or so. Battery powered secondary lighting was charged from solar panels. The accommodation was quite Spartan, with a cold-water shower and a toilet down the corridor but actually quite comfortable.

Charlie and Lauren travelled back to Diego for the night to collect the tent for the next stage of the trip, which was to the Ankarana Special Reserve, about 110km south of Diego. This was to be our second camping experience and the site was equipped with barbecues and picnic tables. Apart from more species of lemur, we particularly wanted to see the massif of spectacularly eroded karst limestone pinnacles known locally as “tsingy”. No sooner had we arrived and started setting up camp than a very tame, female crowned lemur visited us with her baby. Although strictly against the rules, we did feed her and got some wonderful photographs. After lunch, we set off into the dry, deciduous woods towards the nearby outcrop of tsingy and were delighted to see a troop of Sanford's brown lemurs in the forest canopy. Shortly afterwards we saw our first lepilemur peering at us dozily from a small hole in a tree. Also known as sportive lemurs, they are both nocturnal and particularly vocal. We also saw many different birds, including

several paradise flycatchers and black vasa parrots before clambering down hundreds of steps to the floor of a canyon to watch a large colony of fruit bats in their cave.

There was no possibility of any radio activity and we were early to bed and slept well in our small tent, despite the efforts of the sportive lemurs. Next morning, after an early breakfast and a last walk in the forest, we set off south again towards the town of Ambilobe and then to the small port of Ankify, where we were to stay the night before crossing to the island of Nosy Komba, arriving at Le Baobab Hotel during the mid afternoon. There was ample opportunity to play some radio but the generator was only switched on at dusk. Again, secondary lighting was provided by solar power. I rigged the antenna facing north between two low palm trees, the IC-706 produced a full 100 watts and I managed an hour's activity on 10m before being dragged off for a pre-dinner drink. This brought the total number of contacts from the main island to 288, all on 10m CW.

### ***Murphy borrows our boat***

After a good night's sleep, we were up early eager for the boat to take us across to the island. By some strange process of logic, it had fallen to the hotel on Nosy Komba to provide the boat, and the staff at Le Baobab had no idea of when (or if) it would arrive. After several telephone calls to Les Floralties and to Cortez in Tana it was obvious that something had gone wrong and we eventually hired a local boatman to transport us, the cost to be deducted from the hotel bill. On arrival at Les Floralties, situated on the north side of the island and overlooking the neighbouring island of Nosy Be, we found that the owner, an ex-pat Frenchman called Laurent had gone fishing. Our room was tiny with a double bed complete with mosquito net, an en-suite cold-water shower and a toilet that was flushed by pouring a bucket of water down it. There was no electricity and most importantly, no power point. A cloud of

gloom started to appear over my head, which was quickly dispelled when Laurent returned from his fishing trip. Allocating a larger room to us, he arranged to install a power point in it, explained that although the generator normally only ran between 1700 and 2200, I could run it whenever I wanted during the day to power the radio and had no objections to me erecting an antenna.

The new room was much larger, on the first floor of one of his traditionally constructed beach houses and reached by a rickety flight of steps. The same type of shower and toilet were at the bottom of the steps, which made for interesting nocturnal visits in the rain. As promised, Laurent installed the continental style power point, which he connected into the common lighting circuit serving the ground and first floor rooms. The antenna was slung between the ridges of two buildings, facing roughly north and was some six metres high. I set the station up on a table next to the power point but the IC-706 would again only produce about 50 watts. The first CQ on 10m CW was answered immediately by UA9LR at 1123 UTC on 15th November and AF-057 was on the air. A nice pile up developed and I worked 102 stations in about an hour's activity before Jan took me off to explore the local village.

The village itself is a tiny, self-sufficient community living from fishing and farming. There are no motor vehicles and, surprisingly, no zebu. There are a couple of bars with simple accommodation – one run by an Italian and another by an American. In pre-crisis times, the villagers made a good living selling handicrafts to the tourists who came from Nosy Be to see the troop of semi-tame black lemurs, who are protected against hunting by a local taboo but at the time there were few foreigners other than ourselves. The lemurs live in the trees at the back of the village and for a fee of 5,000 FMG (50 pence) each plus another 2,500 FMG for bananas you are guaranteed a lemurs-on-your-shoulder experience – and more wonderful photographs. Only the

males are black, the females being chestnut brown with white ear-tufts.

### ***Operating and the IC-706***

The bands were dead most mornings, only opening around 1200 UTC. Conditions were fairly good, and I was delighted to work many US stations on 10 and 12m. A foray onto 30m at 1800 UTC the first evening produced an enormous pile up which I had trouble controlling. Unfortunately, I do not find the IC-706 to be a good CW receiver, as it is not possible to turn off the AGC, only to vary it from “slow” to “fast”. Even on “fast” it is still too slow to prevent strong signals blocking the weaker ones. If anyone has any details of a modification to switch off the AGC completely, then I shall be delighted to hear from them.

I managed to get on the air for a few hours on each of the four days spent on the island, spending most of my time on 12m and making almost 50% of the total QSOs on this band. Again, there were a few Far Eastern stations, but I worked only one Japanese.

All too soon it was time to pack up and leave. Our journey home started with an hour-long pirogue - a sort of dugout canoe with two outriggers and an outboard motor - trip to Hell-Ville, the port of Nosy Be. Our bags stowed neatly below the simple deck and several locals joined us, taking advantage of a free trip.

In Hell-Ville, we crammed the bags and ourselves into an ancient taxi and set off for the airport to find we were four hours early for the flight to Tana. Eventually, the check-in desk opened and we were, of course, first in the queue. The clerk took one look at our bags and immediately demanded an excess baggage charge of 27,000 FMG (about £27), which we had no option but to pay. The flight to Tana was on time, which was a relief as we only had an hour after arrival to make the connection with our flight back to Paris. Fidy, Solofo and Irineé met us at the domestic arrivals terminal and ushered us through Customs before presenting us with

crocodile skin belts, which are, in theory, a restricted export. Fortunately the flight was not full and I managed to get a row of three seats in the central block and was able to sleep for most of the journey. We arrived in Paris at around 0400 with the connecting flight to Bristol at 1000. When we did eventually arrive home, we calculated that we had been travelling for over 30 hours.

Special QSLs have been printed and are available from either my call book address or via the RSGB bureau. The relevant documentation has been submitted to (and accepted by) Roger G3KMA for both IOTA activities and to Bill Moore, NC1L at ARRL for DXCC purposes. My particular thanks go to my XYL, Jan; Solofo, 5R8ET for arranging the licence; Pierrot at Cortez Expeditions in Tana for the travel arrangements and the management and staff of Chez Maggie in Morondavo, Le Baobab Hotel in Ankify and Les Floralties on Nosy Komba, without whose help and

understanding these operations would not have been possible.

### AF-013

BAND	QSOs	DXCC
10m	288	41

### AF-057

BAND	QSOs	DXCC
30m	45	17
20m	76	23
17m	180	31
15m	12	10
12m	615	53
10m	352	40
ALL	1280	61

### ALL

BAND	QSOs	DXCC
ALL	1568	65

## Have you met Poppe, the Boy from the Deep North, and his Skewed Path?

*Martti Laine, OH2BH (martti.laine@kolumbus.fi)*

Once upon a time, there was an interesting boy, a dreamer - always dreaming of bigger antennas, stronger signals and higher towers - who lived deep in the Far North. Way up north where there was no sign of daylight during the winter months, and the only light he saw was the Aurora Borealis - Northern Lights.

Poppe had grown up in that deep forest, he ate only dried reindeer meat and kept himself warm in the sauna. Sauna...you know, the establishment where the temperature was high enough to make water boil. Such temperature fluctuation and the North's infinite darkness had certainly left their marks on Poppe.

Poppe lived up the hill in the northern DX wastelands where the soil was much too dry to grow flowers. Poppe's appearance looked

rather strange for the uninitiated, with the seat of his pants cut record low to reflect his true standing and his high totals in the finer spheres of life. Every short-lived summer Poppe enjoyed life outdoors, though - scampering in the woods and digging to plant miles of copper wire in the earth. His wife, one of the questioning types, had gone long ago!

In the winter, no one normally saw Poppe. The weather was too darn cold, the lakes were frozen over, and there was nothing other than the frozen lonely landscape. Poppe led an interesting life; he woke up early in the morning for the Short Path and finished the day on the Long Path. In between, he slept a wink or two, ate something from the deep freeze or just read ON4UN's Low-Band DXing.

But one day, Poppe decided to come hippety-hoppety down the hill to meet up with his cousin Blackout and talk. When Poppe spoke, others were listening. So, this was the day and there was the fountain of knowledge in sight! Evidently he had a message to be carried down. His snowmobile engine was on, but idling.

"I am talking every day to my spiritual brother Robert on the West Coast", he began assertively. "But now I have discovered something new". He continued: "It's funny that I cannot break through the auroral oval to Robert without some huge attenuation on the Short Path. Simply it is extremely marginal, so I have studied the ON4UN book and buried miles and miles of copper wire in the ground. I cannot easily break through. But when I try Long Path in the afternoon, I can talk with ease. Just one drop of the VOX, and they know I am here".

On he went: "But more recently, I have found out that while beaming to Brazil I can get connected. Measuring the distance to Brazil and from there to the West Coast, I see it's almost the same as my Long Path. Do you understand what I mean?"

Poppe's cousin was lost. His eyes were rolling in disbelief. "Don't you hear what I say? - this is pure science!" Blackout kept staring at Poppe and said this might be one of the Mysteries of the Ages for the multitude. It was something that Albert would advise the world to be prepared for. Something that might happen only once in a lifetime. Poppe leaned over in the shadow of an old spruce tree, in the glow of dazzling Northern Lights, and resumed his dissertation.

"Listen to me now," he intoned, "because we stand right at the gates of true DX knowledge. Son of a Gun! Listen, you must believe this, and you will understand. Here on the northern edge, that leads to a higher level of DX awareness. Believe!"

### ***No stopping Poppe now!***

There was no way of stopping Poppe now. The Knower of these thundering latitudes of the Deep North fixed his beady eyes on Blackout and, with his voice low, continued: "I have discovered that my Short Path is not only a Short Path but occasionally a Skewed Path. So, as a matter of fact, I have three Paths to talk to Robert - Long, Short and Skewed Paths. Three QSOs every day!" Even the educated types might have difficulty grasping the always shining logic of the Guru of Arctic DX Wastelands. Clearly, this was not for the faint hearted, and Blackout passed out, falling on the floor.

"You see the point? After all, my Long Path was working just great, and the Southern folks could barely figure out what I was doing. Now I had won the Atlantic route two to one, unchallenged", Poppe summed it up. The Mystique of DX! In any activity, there's always a top echelon - in amateur radio, it's the Low-Band Fraternity.

And so, Poppe went trotting away up the hill with a big smile, not wishing to miss what he would now call a Skewed Path opening to his friend Robert. He swung his beam around, firing over the Skewed Path - dropping the VOX once, and he was connected. "How are you, Robert?", came back a quick query, and they were well into their third QSO today.

Experiencing one of those blissful Moments of DX Enlightenment, Poppe had resolved a Mystery of the Ages, the one on the variety of Paths! Having finally one more Path than others, he lived his life happily thereafter.

This, then, was the story of Poppe, the boy from the northern edge. The one from the high end of the band, which is the only place for a DXer to be. Because 75m DX is for the strong and loud. Always!

# **DXLab – Possibly the Best Free Logging and Station Management Software**

*by John Butcher, G3LAS*

In the last few years, the rapid increase in the use of computer aids to operating has been accompanied by a similar increase in the number of software packages available. The range is enormous, from very simple loggers which do little more than act as substitutes for a paper log, to highly sophisticated and sometimes quite expensive programs which not only keep a log but also control transceiver frequency and mode, track operating awards, monitor DX clusters, decode and generate data mode signals and even rotate beam aerials to a desired target signal.

Many operators zero in on a particular program quite quickly, without carrying out a full survey of the alternatives. They may then become hooked on that program, assuming that its facilities suit their own preferences and operating habits. It is then relatively difficult to persuade them to change, even if another product promises considerably more functionality. To be fair, it can be a daunting task to convert several thousand QSO records to a new format, even if quite elaborate export and import facilities are built into the software. Data structures and field definitions are seldom the same for two different programs resulting in either the loss of data or a considerable degree of manual editing.

It is therefore a good idea to look carefully at the possibilities before ‘computerising’ and, if possible, to look ahead to a day when one’s requirements might expand in the light of a change in operating patterns. It follows that a comprehensive and versatile program is a good investment, provided that it is not correspondingly complicated to use.

The other important criteria for choosing a package are the quality of the support and developmental backup, and, of course, the cost.

DXLab is the generic name for a suite of

programs which can either be used individually or as an integrated whole, encompassing most of the likely requirements for logging and station control. It is written by Dave Bernstein, AA6YQ, and is downloadable free from the Internet. At present, the component programs are:

**DXKeeper** – for basic logging and award tracking.

**SpotCollector** – for receiving and sending DX spots from a cluster, using either a TNC and RF link or by a Telnet interface to the Internet.

**DXView** – for displaying world and country maps with a variety of information such as country boundaries, CQ and ITU zones, greyline plots, DXCC information, plotting of incoming cluster spots etc.

**WinWarbler** – for decoding and generating data mode signals. At present it covers only RTTY and PSK, but CW is in the development pipeline. The program links via a sound card to the station transceiver.

**PropView** – for calculating propagation probabilities for a desired path, given input data for solar indices etc.

**CI-V Commander** – for computer control of transceiver functions. Depending on the type of transceiver used, this might include main and sub-VFO frequencies, mode, selectivity, memories etc.

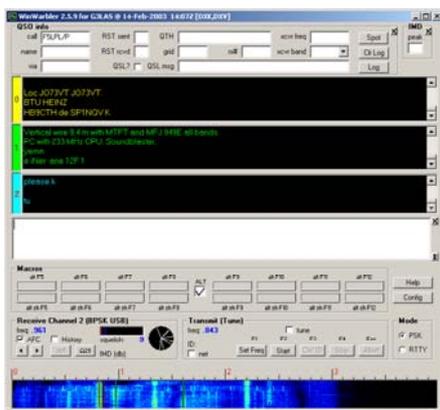
**Pathfinder** – providing access via the Internet to a variety of address and QSL manager databases including QRZ, Buckmaster, many national indexes and amateur listings.

**DXLauncher** – for starting up and closing down the user’s choice of DXLab programs by a single action.

## **System requirements**

The programs are all Windows-based and

will, in principle, run on all Windows platforms from 95 onwards. However, some of them make reasonably heavy demands on specific system resources, so a little care is needed. Certainly if you intend to run several of the components simultaneously, which you will in order to realise the maximum functionality, a reasonable amount of RAM is required, say, 256k or more. This is to some extent dependent on the operating system, since the various flavours of Windows manage resources somewhat differently. Processor speed does not seem to be a critical factor. Users of Windows ME should note that this OS is specifically not supported. The programs will run under ME but it has proved sufficiently problematical for Dave to disclaim any responsibility for its use. When running several of the programs together, undoubtedly the best options are either Windows 2000 or XP.



WinWarbler screen with three receive channels

## Functionality

It is virtually impossible to give a convincing description of a software system such as this in words. Each of the component programs is comprehensive, stable and surprisingly simple to use. The accompanying screen shots (see pages .....) show the most graphic applications, DXView and WinWarbler, in action.

Without doubt, the main feature of DXLab is the integration of the components and the fact that you can run as few or as many as you wish, given the system constraints mentioned above, without any special set-up

changes in so doing. The links are too numerous for me to describe them all. However, let's imagine a typical operating scenario.

An incoming cluster spot generates a warning audible alarm because the DX entity has not previously been worked. The spot line on the screen is also coloured red to denote the needed entity. Clicking on the spot line transfers the DX callsign to the log, sets the transceiver frequency and mode and rotates the beam to the desired heading. The call is also transferred to DXView where the location is plotted on the map and the position of the grey line can also be seen. The DXCC parameters, DX local time and other information can be read from the DXView screen which shows also the QSL status of that country for each band of interest. The callsign has also been transferred to the PropView input window so another click will generate an estimate of the propagation probability for the path.

All this might seem very complicated and confusing but it isn't – honestly! The operator can choose to see and use as much or as little of this information as he/she wishes.

It is apparent that DXLab is primarily intended for DX operating. It does not claim to be crafted for slick contesting, nor for the rag chewer. However, it is easy to keep it as a primary logging system and import contest logs, probably in ADIF format, from more specialised programs as the occasion demands.

Like most good logging programs, DXLab has peripheral functions for QSL label printing, log import and export, award tracking etc. These may not be individually the best available, but they are all more than satisfactory for normal requirements. Unusually, it is possible to send e-QSLs as required at the click of a mouse.

## Manuals

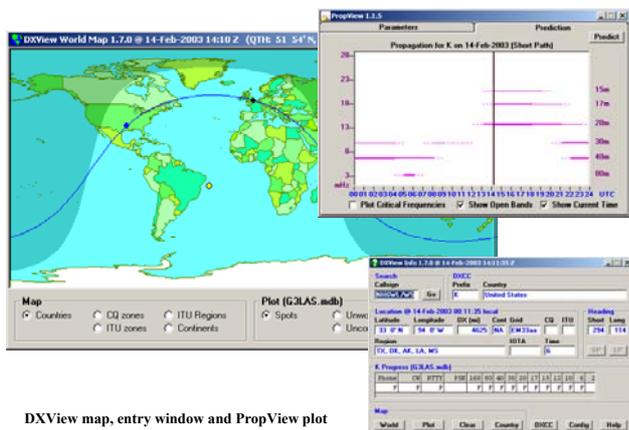
The web site has full instructions for downloading and installing the programs. There is also a development history file.

Each program has a comprehensive on-line help file which is context sensitive and which is kept up-to-date in spite of the rapid pace of development.

### **Support and Development**

Dave's method of support and user feedback, while not unique, is quite unusual. It relies heavily on a web-based reflector, where users report and discuss problems and suggest desirable enhancements. This approach can sometimes be somewhat frustrating if the response from the program developer(s) is slow and/or overly opinionated. The fact that it is outstandingly successful for DXLab is due entirely to Dave's attitude to his constituents and his phenomenal work rate in implementing bug fixes and new developments.

It is not uncommon to receive a reply to a query within minutes or a minor update



DXView map, entry window and PropView plot

within a few hours of a report being sent. The most elementary query is always treated with complete courtesy and a comprehensive reply provided.

The result of all this is a software system

development which is very much driven by the needs and opinions of the users. In addition, the implementation of upgrades is very fast. In a typical week one might see as many as half a dozen new versions of the various programs made available for download. This might be thought confusing for users, but in fact, you can choose whether or not a particular new version offers something desirable for you. If not, you can miss it out and wait for the next. If you choose to upgrade, the simple download and installation process can be carried out in a few minutes.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of DXLab is that it is all free! Add to that the fact that Dave has a very demanding "proper" job as well and it becomes incredible. Nevertheless, DXLab has been going for several years and shows no sign of slowing down.

### **Conclusion**

Some die-hards might say that this highly computerised approach to operating takes all the challenge out of chasing DX. This may be true to an extent, but I have no doubt that there is plenty of scope left for skill and technique. The software can only put you in the arena at the right time and the right place. It will not (yet) crack the pileup for you or kill the charging lion.

To refer back to the title of this article, DXLab may well be the best available free software suite for logging and station management. It must surely be the best supported and the most responsive to user input. To describe it adequately in detail is impossible. Why not download it and give it a try? The source is [www.qsl.net/dxlab](http://www.qsl.net/dxlab)

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## **Some interesting Web pages**

Do you have any amateur radio Web pages that you find useful, like the appearance of, or generally would recommend to Club members? Let us know. In the meantime, here are a few that you might like to take a look at:

Andy G3AB: [www.g3ab.net](http://www.g3ab.net)  
Nigel G3TXF: [www.g3txf.com](http://www.g3txf.com)  
OK1RR & OK DX Foundation: [www.qsl.net/ok1rr](http://www.qsl.net/ok1rr)

DL7DF: [www.qsl.net/dl7df](http://www.qsl.net/dl7df)  
DF3CB: [www.df3cb.com](http://www.df3cb.com)  
Granta Contest Group: [granta.digital-crocus.com](http://granta.digital-crocus.com)

## The 5MHz Experiment

*Tim Kirby, G4VXE (tim.kirby@btinternet.com)*

The first I heard of the 5MHz Experiment was on a bus in Finland. I was chatting to Steve, G4JVG on the way from the WRTC opening ceremonies in Helsinki to the summer camp in Himos. When Steve explained that a press release was due that day to announce the release of a new band, I was most interested.

As someone who's interested in propagation from DC to light a new band is always of interest to me! I knew that the propagation around 5MHz would be fascinating. Many years ago, long before I had an amateur licence I was a keen shortwave listener, on both the broadcast and amateur bands. I remember making many interesting loggings of 'tropical band' stations mostly from Africa, but also Indonesia around 4.8 to 5.0Mhz. Africa No 1, broadcast from a site in Gabon, on 4850kHz used to be a huge signal as you might expect – but there were other nice ones – domestic services from South Africa, the 'English Service' in Benin and so on which were more challenging to hear.

Reading the background to the 'FIVEMEGS' experiment, on the RSGB website, I was somewhat disheartened. The emphasis seemed to be on phone operation, in nets and to make matters worse, quasi military procedures seemed to be recommended. Without wishing to cause offence to anyone that is interested in any of the afore-mentioned operating styles, they certainly aren't in my preferred modus operandi! The credit for UK amateurs having the opportunity to explore this part of the spectrum must go to Gordon Adams, G3LEQ who has done marvellous work over many years, working with the RA and the MOD in order to open up the possibilities for us to experiment at 5MHz. Gordon's particular interest has been in emergency communications and also working with cadet organisations and perhaps it was not surprising that this was

the way that the experiment was 'slanted'. I was also somewhat surprised to see that it was intended to encourage reporting of signals in the SINPO code rather than RST. It didn't bother me, having had some previous experience in my SWL days – but did strike me as unusual!

### **Experimental Objectives**

The objectives of the FIVEMEGS experiment are to determine more information about Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) propagation. Apparently the RA and MOD felt that a good network of amateur stations spread around the country could provide some interesting data about this type of propagation. And who can argue with that.

Access to the five spot frequencies in the band was to be by Notice of Variation to our licence. An application form could be downloaded from the RSGB website and one of the questions was what you wanted to do with your NoV. I decided to be upfront and mention my own objectives which were somewhat more DX orientated than the experiment's stated aims. If I was refused a permit – fair enough! However, I was more than happy to make myself 'available' for intra-UK type QSOs if this supported the aims and objectives of the experiment.

### **Generating RF on 5MHZ**

Having applied for the permit, I decided that I'd better find a way of producing some RF on the band! This proved to be particularly easy. On the FT1000MP, a hidden menu allows access to an item which allows the rig to be converted to General Coverage TX – so there were no diodes to cut. Having only a limited amount of space here in Windsor, the bit of wet string down the garden appeared to be a good bet for NVIS propagation – I guessed that most RF would go straight up anyway!

In the course of a few days, the permit arrived from the RA and I could go on the air. A hurried few first contacts were made during the day. Several things were immediately apparent.

- The band is VERY noisy at G4VXE. Burglar alarms I think!
- Fading is very severe on daytime NVIS paths – some stations could go from S5 or so to nothing over a period of a few minutes.
- Low power PSK is very effective!

A keen experimenter on 5MHz is Peter Martinez, G3PLX (the inventor of AMTOR and PSK31). One of the pleasures of the experiment for me has been to ‘rub shoulders’ with Peter, who has such fascinating insights into propagation and many other aspects of our hobby.

Very quickly, recognising that we didn’t have much spectrum to play with (5 x 3kHz channels), the PSK types got very good at dropping the PSK carrier in at a sub-audible frequency in the channel. In this way, PSK and a phone net could co-exist – and a CW signal could be placed in the upper portion of the channel – allowing three modes/QSOs to be used simultaneously. For me, this was an impressive lesson in spectrum sharing.

Frankly, I have never liked net operation and have always made it a principle that I ‘vanish’ if someone else calls into a QSO unless they have very good cause to. I felt there were enough permit holders to operate on 5MHz in net type operation, so I decided to concentrate on CW and PSK type QSOs.

### ***Trying Crossband***

The ‘operating guidelines’ written by the RSGB were somewhat ambiguous, I felt, when it came to the prospect of crossband operation. They appeared to discourage it. However, following repeated careful inspections of the NoV and the main amateur licence document, I concluded that there was no reason not to try it! So I did. I waited until after dark, wound the keyer up

and called CQ on 5281 – whilst listening on 7MHz. The response was quite impressive – with many European stations calling in with reports. I was delighted!

Of course, the next day, the phone rang! Gordon, G3LEQ called. Very gently and politely he suggested to me that crossband operation was not allowed. Naturally, my intention was not to cause any embarrassment to Gordon, or to disrupt the aims of the experiment. So whilst feeling sure I was in the right, I promised to desist! In fairness, the day after that, Gordon called again – saying that perhaps he had been a little hasty. He did mention that the RA had felt that operating crossband might lead to ‘confusion’ and in any case, it was perhaps not the best use of the limited amount of spectrum available to the experiment. We left it that extensive crossband operation was probably not a good idea, but perhaps the occasional ‘discreet’ experiment with an overseas station might be interesting. And so they have been, from time to time, but I have respected Gordon’s wishes. I know however, that stations operating in the UK around dawn have received reports from as far away as New Zealand via e-mail or on other bands.

Since trying to work ‘DX’ on the band appeared unlikely to win me any friends, I decided that perhaps different lines of experimentation might be more tactful! I’d noticed with some interest on the 5MHz reflector discussion of chirpsounders for monitoring propagation on the band. Once again, Peter, G3PLX proved a fount of knowledge on this subject and if readers need an introduction to the subject, then they need look no further than Peter’s excellent article in RadCom. Armed with my PC, some software called ‘ChirpView’ and the HF receiver I was able to monitor some interesting paths on 5MHz, such as Windsor-Inskip, Windsor-Netherlands and Windsor-Elgin over the different periods of the day. An example plot appears below. One or two gaps exist – usually due to PC crashes – or the receiver being ‘borrowed’ to work some DX! Nevertheless, the general

‘shape’ of propagation can be seen. Monitoring other paths – for example to Inskip in Northern England showed signal strength building throughout the late afternoon and early evening towards sunset – but with greater variation of signal strength as darkness approached.

Although I suppose I could have conducted this experiment on any band, regardless of whether or not we were licensed to transmit on it, I’m glad that the 5MHz experiment encouraged me to try this fascinating investigation. And of course, it’s one that I’m repeating from time to time as the seasons change, to see the effect of the changed propagation on the path.

Another interesting ‘wrinkle’ to the band is that cadet and military stations are allowed to work amateurs. Quite a number of military stations have been worked in phone nets, but it wasn’t until I came across a military station calling CQ on CW that I worked one. It was great fun, though I had to brush up on a few Q codes that I’d never heard used before. The station proved to be on the Isle of Man – a Sea Cadet troop as I recall. There are other military stations active on CW as well, I believe. I thought it was fun to show the military operators that there is still some CW activity out there! Of course working cadet troops is another good way of introducing newcomers to the hobby – so if you hear a military station calling CQ – make sure you answer it!

### **Some /P**

Time pressures since the late summer have meant that I’ve been pretty inactive on most bands and modes, but I decided that I would try some simple portable, low power operation over the Christmas period. Surely that would be very true to the aims of the original terms of the experiment in establishing a simple station and trying to communicate with other UK stations. I spent a wonderful Christmas at my parents’ home near Falmouth in Cornwall. I took my trusty FT817 as the transceiver (what a

delight that rig is – not a contest or DXpedition rig – but so handy in a variety of situations). I keep an ATU there and Dad has a bit of wire, around 60ft long in the roof of the bungalow for listening around the HF bands. I found it tuned up very easily against ground on 5.5MHz.

Operating portable is allowed on 5MHz, as long as you give your NGR or Postcode. Mobile operation is not allowed, currently. So, having tested things out, I tried a CW CQ call and was surprised to work G3HEJ in Surrey. Over a period of a couple of days, around 15 stations were worked with 5w output and the indoor antenna. Many of those were on SSB – and I would have never considered operating QRP SSB on any other band! The best DX was GM4EMX near Aberdeen, but a good number of interesting QSOs were had. I found these couple of days operating very interesting indeed and will look forward to repeating the experiment over the coming months at different times of year and from different locations.

So, there’s a quick summary of the 5MHz experiment so far – at least from my own perspective. Other people will have been trying other interesting tests on the band, I feel sure, and I’m looking forward to learning more about the results that other people have obtained in due course. If you have a 5MHz NoV – I do urge you to have a go – it’s an interesting band and as a DXer, you will have a great knowledge of propagation and will have much to offer the experiment in terms of your approach to finding out about propagation.

Finally, if you would like to have a listen to the 5MHz experiment – the frequencies are as follows:

5.2585 – 5.2615  
5.2785 – 5.2815  
5.2885 – 5.2915  
5.3985 – 5.4015  
5.4035 – 5.4065

## WRTC Finland 2002

*A video written and edited by James Brooks, 9V1YC*

*Reviewed by Steve Telenius-Lowe, G4JVG*

Most CDXC members will already be familiar with the high-class series of videos produced by James Brooks, 9V1YC. The latest release from James's '9V-Post' stable is a 60-minute record of last year's World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC) held in Finland.

I was lucky enough to be able to attend WRTC2002, albeit as a spectator rather than competitor, and so I was particularly keen to see this new video. I was not disappointed; it certainly brought back memories of a glorious week in the land of the Midnight Sun, when temperatures hit over 30 degrees and it never really became dark. But what about those who were not fortunate enough to have been there in person? Would they enjoy it? The answer is a definite "yes" - providing the viewer is a keen contester or DXer. WRTC is a contest within a contest, when the world's top contesters get together in one geographically small area and battle it out, using the same power level and identical antenna systems, thus eliminating almost all the variables that can so affect a contester's score. WRTC2002 took place concurrently with the IARU HF Championship, held on the second weekend of July.

This production is somewhat different from James's other amateur radio videos, most, if not all, of which have been records of DXpeditions. By way of contrast, WRTC Finland 2002 is a documentary of what was, in effect, a sporting event. The 'sporty' theme is well to the fore throughout the video, with the voice-over presented by a professional sports journalist, Singapore's English-language TV sportscaster.

The video starts with a roll-call of all the famous contesters who had gathered in Finland for WRTC2002 and it is then that it becomes clear what a large-scale event this was. With so many top operators from all

over the world in Finland it is amazing that there were sufficient stations to work in the IARU contest! The action moves on to the lead-up events, held in Himos, some 300km north of Helsinki. Here, detailed coverage of the discussions over the arcane rules for the contest arguably goes on rather too long and would only be of real interest to those who actually took part. However, the passionate nature of the arguments certainly shows that the competitors and officials took this event very seriously indeed!

The video really gets into its own with coverage of the contest itself. Three separate camera crews led by Dave Bell, W6AQ, were sent out and about and many of the teams are shown 'in action', including Team UK, Andy, G4PIQ, and Fred, G4BWP. During the contest, real-time scoring meant spectators could join in the excitement by following the leader board and watching as the top place changed when one team edged ahead of the next. This is particularly well covered in the video with some great graphics developed especially for the film by James. James told me, "the graphics took me an especially long time to create and their purpose was to give the video a 'pro-sports' feel" In this he has certainly succeeded.

WRTC Finland 2002 is an exciting amateur radio-sports documentary, with really professional production techniques, good 'tight' editing, and even humour, as when N6TJ uses his divining rod in an attempt to pick the best contesting QTH. Non-amateurs will enjoy the travelogue part of the story, with beautiful Finnish lakeland scenery and glimpses of Helsinki in mid-summer.

The VHS video (available in PAL or NTSC) costs US\$25, world-wide shipping included.

*(cont'd on p.54)*

# SWL NEWS

**Bob Treacher, BRS 32525**

So, just how good (or bad) was 2002 in terms of the DX available on the HF bands? David Whitaker BRS25429 had been doing some research to find out. Not only did he consider all the DX he had heard in 2002, but he trawled Arthur Miller GW5218's log too. The result is a pretty good idea of how many DX entities were available on SSB during 2002. David's results show that even though some of us thought that 2002 was not an exceptional year, perhaps David's figures prove otherwise. I will leave readers to come to their own conclusions.

Looking at David and Arthur's combined totals, these were the results. Between them they heard 279 DXCC entities on SSB during the year. In terms of "band slots" the statistics are quite startling, and show how much DX really was around last year – if you were in the right place at the right time.

10 metres	1236
12 metres	214
15 metres	262
17 metres	217
20 metres	255
40 metres	174
80 metres	147
160 metres	67

This was likely to be the last year this cycle when the high bands produce as much DX as they did. It will certainly be interesting to compare these figures against any that David produces for 2003.

Individually, David's DXCC entity score of 274 was the same as in 2001, but was eight fewer than the 282 heard in 1999. 186 countries on 12 metres was an all time best, but 231 on 20m was actually 26 fewer than he heard in 1979!

Just to make the figures complete, David heard 84 DXCC entities on 6m last year, in 365 different Grid Squares.

I'm sure that we all like analysing statistics, so if other listeners would like to send me some I will publish them if they either reflect a specific period(s), or compare statistics year on year.

### **DX so far in 2003**

Looking at Simon's and my own log, and reflecting on various reports for my "other" column, DX conditions so far this year had been fairly uninspiring. I have added no new "band slots" this year – and we are 7 weeks into the New Year as I write this. Being at the office all day, the HF bands were closed once I got up to the shack at, say, 2000z (although there were signs that 20m was staying open later – ZY0T heard at 2245z on 18th February! The LF bands had provided nothing exceptional, although 40m had offered regular loggings of JAs, HLs and YBs, while after 22z some strong signals had been heard from the Caribbean and Central and South America. Anyone embarking on 40m DXCC would probably have been quietly impressed – but not for those of us with a DXCC score of over 300 on the band! Let's hope that conditions improve as we head towards the spring – and the VP6D expedition!

The logo for the Chiltern DX Club, featuring the letters 'CDXC' in a large, bold, black, cursive-style font.

**CHILTERN DX CLUB**  
The UK DX Foundation

# *The RTTY Column*

***Phil Cooper, GUOSUP (pcooper@guernsey.net)***

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## ***What's happening on RTTY?***

During this year, I plan to tell you about some of the DX that has been, or will be around on RTTY, plus any other information I can glean.

Did you have a go in the ARRL RTTY Roundup? If not, you missed a good contest.

Conditions weren't good at the start, but they did improve on the second day, and I was lucky enough to pick up three new countries on 40m, which pleased me a great deal. They were VP5NN, XE1KK and A45WD.

VP5NN is via NN6NN, A45WD is via YO9HP. If you send a card direct to Ramon XE1KK, he asks for \$2.00 to cover postage, although he prefers bureau cards.

For the BARTG Sprint, conditions also started off quite bad, but this time, they didn't improve at all. It was almost as if there had been a large CME, because 20m just died during the evening. K4GMH was a good signal with me at around 2100, and I called and worked him, but by the time he had started to call QRZ? His signal was barely audible. Even 40m didn't fare much better, so I quit early. I gather from some other testers that stayed up past midnight, that 4 or 5 per hour was the highlight!

I got into the shack just after 0700, and the solar flux was still down in the dumps, but at least I bagged VK4 and ZL2.

No new countries for me in this one, but I did get asked by XE1YYD to "pls QSL via EA5KB for me pls", which I will do indeed.

Things were that bad during the early evening that I even loaded up my half-size G5RV on top band to work Bob GU4YOX in the 160m contest! Sadly, I couldn't raise

anyone else on that band, so it was back to the RTTY.

I had the usual "GU" hassle when calling CQ, in that I ended up with plenty of callers, who just kept calling and calling, even when I was trying to work someone. I was also constantly asked for my QSL route, and would I try 80m? Some went as far as chasing me up and down the bands when I was in SandP mode, a few getting almost rude when I didn't respond.

After the event, I had several e-mails complaining that I didn't work them, and that I didn't give them a fair chance! In about 12 hours of contest time, I was actually calling CQ for about one third of that time, but perhaps they must also realise that I don't always need another DL, or IK or SP, and will optimise my time by searching for those extra mults.

This time of the year is quite busy with RTTY contests. The weekend after the BARTG Sprint saw the FMRE (Mexican) RTTY contest. This one isn't well supported by many G's, but can be good fun.

Sadly, conditions were awful for the contest, although there was a lot of activity.

The contest started at 1800UTC on the Saturday, and when I set up Writelog just prior to the contest, 10m and 15m were absolutely dead, so I waited on 20m, and didn't find any signals in the first 30 minutes. In the end, I decided not to bother at all that evening, and get an early start on the Sunday. Well, 0700 was early enough, and the bands were behaving very oddly. Fifteen was OK, and I hit that hard, and had some nice runs for a while. Ten wasn't cooperating at all, so I just picked off the odd mult as and when I found them.

Around midday, I had a nice CQ run going

on 20m, with a steady stream of callers, but it was mostly close European stations, and even a few G's in there, but then I got called by VK4UC, who had a good signal here.

I was hoping to start seeing some W's at this time, but the only one I had in the log was VE1OP. In the end, I didn't get a W until almost 1600, but I then found a few.

Around 1730, I was finding F/ON/PA on 20, which isn't usual for me, but I then logged AD6WL. OK, he did have some flutter, but it was perfect copy, and no need for a repeat of the serial number.

I also managed an all-time new one too! It was PJ7/W1CX, and had I realised it, I would have chased him on the other bands.

I gave up at around 1830, as 20m had died, and there wasn't much activity on 40, so it was time for tea. When I returned to the shack, suitably fed and watered, there was a single RTTY signal to be heard on any of the bands, so I ended the contest with 229 valid QSOs and just 3 XE stations.

The weekend after the Mexican contest was WPX RTTY. This is always a well-supported contest, and this year was no exception. With only different prefixes as mults, it is quite easy to clock up a good score, especially so if you have good low-band antennas, as you get double points for 80/40 contacts.

Conditions had been poor in the weeks leading up to WPX, but they improved enough to make the contest great fun.

There was the chance of A51B, T88 and JU1T in this one, but I didn't see or hear any of them. However, I was lucky enough to bag that PJ7 again, on another band, so I was pleased enough with that. 9M2/G4ZFE was a nice one, and a new band fill on 10m, so I ended up a happy man.

15m was in great shape, with some fine openings, such as finding KH7X on 15m at about 1800UTC, and early the following morning, I saw him on 40m, but just couldn't make it.

There was some blatant disregard for the

rules, in that a number of stations were clearly self-spotting on the cluster, which I am sure will gain the attention of the judges. Despite all this, I didn't do as well as last year.

There has been some comment on the RTTY reflector about putting a carriage return before and after the exchange in the buffers, and I have to say that I agree with them.

This means that when you send the buffer, it starts on a new line, and generates a new line at the end as well, making your exchange stand out.

Some of the die-hard contesters feel this all wastes time, although I am not sure that a couple of CR/LF characters do take that much extra time. However, I suspect that they then end up wasting time trying to pick out a callsign from the lines of garbage!

In a RTTY contest, you need to make sure that the buffers are well thought out, and doing so can save you time in the long run. It is also important to be able to change them on the fly during a contest, depending on conditions.

The basic buffers you will need are a CQ buffer, a "call" buffer, and the exchange.

In a CQ buffer, I always put CQ at the end as well, as someone tuning past can then see that I am calling CQ, whereas if I put PSE K at the end, they won't know if I am calling someone else, or calling CQ.

For the "call" buffer, I generally stick to DE GU0SUP GU0SUP KN, and I insert an extra callsign if conditions warrant it.

If there are several stations calling on the same frequency, or are very close together, it can help if you put the called station callsign in front to ensure that you reach the right contact.

The one part that is important is to include the DE in front of your callsign, as a lot of the contest software needs to see the DE before it will recognise the callsign.

For the exchange, I always put the "to"

callsign, followed by the exchange, and end with my own callsign – for example : G3XTT UR 599 001 001 DE GU0SUP KN.

If you are repeatedly getting asked for repeats of the serial number, then it will pay to add another serial number exchange.

If you are asked for a repeat of the serial number, do not send the exchange twice, as that is not what they need. It is better to have a separate buffer with only the serial number in it many times, and make sure you use a couple of CR/LF characters at the beginning and end, to make it that bit clearer.

One thing I have noted since the popularity of the soundcard software is the way you get called when you are CQing. I often see GU0SUP GU0SUP GU0SUP DE XX1AB XX1AB. This is totally unnecessary, and can be quite annoying when you have a nice run going, as it upsets the flow. Not only that, but if there is some QSB about, I get my callsign in the clear, and there own call fades into nothing!

I also know my own callsign, and do not need reminding!

Another thing us RTTY types often use is the “friend” file. The friend file is a list of callsigns with names, and the name can be included in the exchange if you feel “friendly”.

In the example above, it would come out as G3XTT HI DON UR 599 001 001 DE GU0SUP KN.

I am in favour of this, as it can confirm you have the call correct as well. If I am on the receiving end, and see G0SUP HI PHIL etc, then I am confident that they have my call correct, and it was just a blip that removed the all-important U from my prefix.

There is an up to date friend file available from <http://www.af4z.com/ham/> but it is only for RTTY.

Do be aware that some folk do not like the use of this file, and it may be that the owner of the call is part of a multi op team, and not the one at the keys!

The basic friend file is a plain text file, so you can add names to it from QSL cards, or from any other suitable source.

One final thought from me regarding DVKs. I recently listened in to a contest station that was obviously using one of these gizmos, and they had a lovely female voice doing the CQ, which had real punch, and obviously attracted a lot of guys.

However, the contest exchange was delivered by a gruff male voice. This actually caused a heated debate on several occasions because callers were unsure whether it was the same station they had called.

### **Contests coming up.....**

EA RTTY 1600UTC April 5th to 1600UTC April 6th

Details at

<http://www.rttyjournal.com/rules/eaww.html>

SPDX RTTY 1200UTC April 26th to 1200UTZ April 27th

Details at

<http://www.rttyjournal.com/rules/eaww.html>  
l (but scroll down the page!)

Very best 73 for now de Phil GU0SUP

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*(cont'd from p.50)*

There is also a DVD version at the same price which has some interesting 'bonus' features like complete score breakdowns, past results, team line-ups etc. They can be ordered through the website: <http://home1.pacific.net.sg/~jamesb> or by e-mailing James, 9V1YC, direct: [jamesb@pacific.net.sg](mailto:jamesb@pacific.net.sg)

# QRZ CONTEST

**Paul Brice-Stevens, GOWAT**

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*Well hello and welcome to this issue's QRZ contest...and on with the show, over to you Brian...*

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## **CQ WW CONTEST 2002 ~ A Ghost of a Chance?**

**By Brian Devlin GM0EGI.**

The contest group of the Mid Lanark Amateur Radio Society once again participated as GM0B, in the SSB section of the CQ WW contest, from our contest site at Dunnet Head, the most Northerly Point on the U.K. Mainland.

Planning for the 2002 CQWW contest started almost immediately after we arrived home from the 2001 event, whilst all the mistakes and problems were still fresh in our minds. As "Murphy", had once again been a visitor to our group we hoped that we could stop him from making future appearances.

Our first group meeting "a post mortem" was just one week after the contest, during which we agreed the main aims for the following year would be ~ to arrange a better 40m antenna and to keep the 80m vertical standing for at least the duration of the contest. We also agreed to go up a day earlier, not only to give us more time to set things up, but to give us a little breather between physically erecting and mentally contesting.

We decided a directional antenna for 40m was necessary, but as we couldn't afford to buy a new monoband beam and as second hand 40m beams are not easily obtained, we decided to build a two-element delta loop. This loop complete with remote switch box and local controller would enable us to switch directions. It wasn't going to be as effective as a fully rotatable beam, but it would have some advantages ~ no rotator

required and instantaneous change of direction at the flick of a switch. My personal aim was that, as I had taken a lot of stick about the fact my homebrew 80m vertical had blown down in gale force winds in both the previous years, I was going to make sure it wouldn't happen again!

Our plans progressed and everything was going quite well for several months until "Murphy" made an appearance. In April Bob, GM4VWV suddenly collapsed and was rushed into hospital where he spent the next few weeks in intensive care. He slowly recovered, but was very doubtful for the trip North. Then again, just two weeks before the contest, Gordon GM7VYR, landed in hospital and we were informed that he definitely would not be going with us to Dunnet Head, (I am glad to report that both have now fully recovered and will be back with us for the 2003 contest.)

Fortunately we were going to have two additional operators with us this year. Craig MM0BUL who had previously operated as GM0B at Benbecula in 2000 and Lorraine MM0BCR who had recently joined the group and was full of expectation.

Out with the situation with Bob and Gordon, over which we had no control, everything seemed to be going satisfyingly well with our plans and before we knew it, it was once again time to head north. We would once again be going in convoy, three vehicles until Inverness, where we would be meeting Mark GM0WIB and Lorraine MM0BCR in the fourth. IAIN GM0OQV, who was working the day we were scheduled to leave, would follow us in his own car later that evening.

I was going to be taking John GM0XFK and John GM7GNK with me in my Isuzu Trooper, which would be towing our flat

bed trailer with about 2 tons of equipment. Kenny GM1MMK was taking Phil GM0LIR and towing our 60ft mobile trailer with his range rover. Tom MM0BHX and Craig MM0BUL were going in Tom's Renault Laguna V6 towing our latest purchase, a 30ft mobile mast.

I was waiting for the two Johns to arrive at my house, which had been pre-arranged for 7:30am, where they would leave their car and transfer to my vehicle. However, when they had not arrived by 8:00am I was beginning to get concerned, so I phoned Phil GM0LIR and asked him to contact John and see what was keeping him. Five minutes later Phil phoned back and said that you are not going to believe this, "John has had an accident on route and his car is a write off".

John GM7GNK had been involved in an accident with two other vehicles and had written off his BMW! Thankfully no one was injured. He advised he would arrange to get his mangled car towed home after which he would hire a car and follow us up later that night. Satisfied, no one was hurt and the problem had been resolved, the rest of our convoy headed North to meet Mark and Lorraine.

Fortunately, the rest of the trip was uneventful and the convoy arrived at Dunnet Head safe and sound with Iain and both Johns arriving later that evening none the worse for their ordeal. As usual on our first night we discussed our plan for the next few days and organised the teams to carry out the various tasks. Brian Sparks, who owns the Tea Rooms and holds the call GM4JYB had built a large shed and a conservatory since our last visit and both of these additions were going to make our life that bit easier. The shed had a workshop which Kenny commandeered and a large covered area which was ideal for laying out cables, radials and all sorts of equipment; as well as housing Brian's classic MG sports car. We decided the new conservatory would be used as a shack for the 80m and the 15m stations and as it is position on the top of the cliff overlooking the Pentland Firth and

Orkney Islands it would offer idyllic views whilst operating during daylight hours.

The next day arrived cold, wet and very windy with occasional snow, but we had to get on with our tasks, so the entire group donned their wet gear and went outside to start running cables, positioning masts and building antennas. I had now made the Mark-IV version of our 80m vertical, the Mark-II and III both having come down last year in the heavy winds, but with heavier materials I was confident that this year everything would be fine. I had also built the two element delta loop for 40m which was going to be mounted on our 60ft tower and positioned to radiate North East – South West. It took all of the team to get this antenna erected and eventually we had it up, tuned and operational. I also made a wire version of the Battle Creek special and we decided we would put this up as a spare antenna for 40, 80 and 160m in case anything went wrong!

We had taken some fibre glass poles that when joined together formed a mast of about 50ft, but the lightweight mast was very flexible and unwieldy, taking all eleven of us to try and stand it up using gin poles and a multitude of guy ropes. As it was very windy and cold outside, we were all wearing some form of headgear, a hat, hood or balaclava and as a result communication with each other during this task was nearly impossible. So I told everyone to take their hats off so that we could hear the instructions being shouted to raise this troublesome mast.

Everyone was holding a straining guy rope with the exception of Mark GM0WIB who had two, one in each hand. Just as we began to raise the mast and a thunderous hail storm started and whilst most of us managed to protect our heads with our spare arm/hand, poor Mark hanging on to two guys for dear life, was being pelted in the head and face with painfully stinging hail. After the storm passed, Mark cursed us for talking him into removing his hood and giving him two guy ropes to handle. Our considerable efforts to

get this mast up were in vain as it snapped on our final attempt.

By the Thursday night before the contest we had everything arranged; all six stations set up and operational, all the rotators rotating and all antennas resonating. I couldn't help but think that something must be wrong? We received a call that night from Bob GM4VWV, asking was it OK for him to come up and operate, as his XYL had given him permission to go as long as he did not do any heavy work. We told him, "he work is ALL done, see you tomorrow!"

That evening we went to the Chinese restaurant in Thurso, the same one we had gone to the previous year and again we had a most enjoyable meal and a relaxing evening ~ the following day we could "play radio". On the Friday we all went on air, to re-familiarise ourselves with the various rigs, amps, switch boxes and computers that we had assembled for the contest. Bob arrived and we had our final evening meal together before each one in their own way prepared mentally for the contest. Everything was looking good!

The contest commenced and we got on with the most enjoyable task of working the bands, in accordance with the operating rota we had previously prepared. This year we were not going to make the same mistake as previous years when everyone in their enthusiasm stayed up for the whole of the first 24 hours, then being below par the following day due to tiredness. Everything seemed to go well and we worked the bands as best as we could. Propagation did not seem to be as good as the previous year, but what could we really expect as we are going down on the sunspot cycle and we were as far north as we could be on the Mainland.

During the contest period we were aware of the increasing wind speed and hoped we were not going to suffer the same fate as the previous two years during which we lost several antennas. However, we were very lucky this year, or perhaps better prepared, as the severe winds didn't give us problems. By now the contest was in full swing and

everything was running to plan, the operators were working their shifts and the points were being accumulated.

On the Saturday night Mark GM0WIB finished his shift and went to bed for a few hours. Mark, who was sharing a room with John GM7GNK, woke up during the early hours, felt the room get very cold and saw a figure standing in the corner. "Finished your shift then John?" Mark said, but got no reply. The figure then sat on the side of the bed and Mark dozed off to sleep again. In the morning he asked John "what time did you come into the room last night?" John looked at him quizzically and replied "I didn't, I've been up all night".

As no one had been in the room that night, Mark asked Brian the owner of the house, "Has anyone ever mentioned anything strange about the back room?" "Why do you ask?" said Brian. Mark replied, "I saw someone in the room last night, but everyone denies being in there", Brian contemplated for a moment and then enquired "was it the figure of an old man?" Mark said it was a man, but he could not have been sure about the age because it was dark.

Brian told Mark, that although not having experienced it himself, he has had reports from other people staying in the room that they too have seen an old man, whilst others have experienced the smell of pipe smoke in the tea room. The story related is that the presence of man who died in the room in the 1920s seems to linger on, in the form of a ghostly silhouette in the bed room and as the strong aromatic smell of pipe tobacco in the tea room.

Mark said he was not worried in the least about the ghost, but when he found out his room mate was leaving a day earlier and the rest of us were staying until the following day, he was very keen for me to share the room with him!

All too soon the contest was over, Monday morning arrived and we had the rare situation of having to take down all of the

antennas, yes! even the 80m vertical. (I knew that I would eventually get it right!) For a change it was a dry wind free day, ideal for the working in the field and as a result the team worked like a well-oiled machine. By one o'clock in the afternoon everything was stripped, packed into the cars or loaded on to the trailer. We were prepared for our departure and yet we still had one more night to go. Some of the team went on a sight seeing trip of the area and some just hung around the house, whilst others caught up on the sleep they had missed during the contest.

The trip home was thankfully uneventful this year, we all got home safe and sound and the plans for next year are already underway after all, at the time of writing, there are only 9 months left till we start all over again.

What were the highs and lows of this year's effort? being a "young" contest group we are still learning and I think that it will be a few years yet before we really start to see BIG scores. Nevertheless, this year all the rotators worked first time, all the antennas stayed up and we worked DXCC on 10, 15 and 20m. We increased our scores on 40, 80 and 160 metres from last year, so we are definitely going in the right direction. The plus points were our newest member, Lorraine MM0BCR fitted into the group very well and will be back with us next year. I don't know how she managed to keep going on 40m and 160m when it seemed the bands were dead, but the result of her hard work was she worked A61AJ on top band. Craig MM0BUL who had not been at Dunnet head before really enjoyed the location and will be back next year, (RAF permitting, as there are things out-with his control). The main thing again was that the whole team, all eleven, spent six days living in each others pockets without the slightest hint of conflict, with great camaraderie and with a communal sense of achievement at the end of the contest (regardless of the score).

Plans for next year are to reduce line losses,

increase our output power with bigger amplifiers, obtain a rotational beam for 40m and after the success of keeping up the 80m vertical this year what have we done? purchased four 37ft high Chelcom CL80 verticals. These antennas will be erected in the form of a 4-Square array. Oh well, we are at least optimistic if nothing else.

Some of the situations that you get into as a member of a multi-multi group stay with you forever, some things that are done and some things that are said you will never forget. Here are a few of the "gems" that were said over the week of our trip. I am sure that tiredness, excitement, frustration or the like was the reason for their utterance. Names and call signs have been left out to protect the *INNOCENT* !

"It doesn't matter the length of the antenna as long as it is not too long or too short!"

"You may have heard me when I was listening on 40 metres!"

"When the bands are shut, they are not open!"

"If you drink red bull and Vodka, it makes you stand up really straight, until you fall down!"

"Hope to work you at the weekend, or Saturday, or Sunday!"

"I've forgotten the letter for K!"

Visit our web site at [www.gm0b-mm0bhx.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.gm0b-mm0bhx.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk) and if interested in the details of the 40m delta loop we used, have a look at [www.qsl.net/k4tx](http://www.qsl.net/k4tx) ( Clicking on the PY4VE link )

All that remains now is to thank everyone who helped us this year. Thanks to Brian and Tina, who own "our" contest site and for letting us take over their entire house for a week. Thanks to everyone who made the effort to work us, QSL cards will be printed in the next few months and sent out via the bureau. Direct cards will be sent by return of post as soon as we receive our cards from the printers.

Our Claimed Scores are as follows: -

BAND	QSOs	ZONES	CTY
160	178	6	43
80	548	14	68
40	658	20	77
20	1469	35	121
15	806	36	116
10	813	27	100
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4472</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>525</b>

Please work us again in 2003 when we will once again be GM0B from Dunnet Head,

The GM0B CQ WW SSB 2002 Team, were:

GM0EGI, GM0LIR, GM0OQV, GM0WIB,  
GM0XFK, GM1MMK, GM4VWV,  
GM7GNK, MM0BHX, MM0BCR,  
MM0BUL.

This story is dedicated to the memory of Alex Donaldson GM0LYM, who helped us with our contest efforts ~ our friend who became Silent Key in May 2002.

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*and now Roger has a word to say on organisation...*

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### **Advance Planning**

**By Roger Western, G3SXW**

We take it for granted that advance planning is essential for a successful contest operation. So much so that the preparatory stages are seldom described in detail in articles.

When the VooDudes put together one of our operations in West Africa each year (for CQ WW CW) you can imagine that the advance planning is highly detailed. It typically starts the previous November.

Last November we finished the contest (as XT2DX) and had our usual debrief discussions, with appropriate lubrication, naturally. This was the second year in Burkina Faso so we were ready to move on.

### **Where and how?**

Looking at the local map we see that Niger

(5U7) is immediately to the East of XT2 and that the capital, Niamey, is in fact only about 300 miles by road. Could this turn out to be a viable project? Our 1½ tonnes of equipment, or so, would have to be moved in a bus. Could this be done? Is the road passable? At this stage in our thinking we rather took as read the obtaining of a transmitting-licence and finding a suitable hotel QTH.

In order to determine whether such a trip could be made to work we decided that a 'recce' would be necessary.

### **Who and when?**

This would require two or possibly three members of the team. Fred/G4BWP and I volunteered. During the trip last November we had discovered a travel-company in Ouagadougou which could provide the transport and driver. We got a quote (£65/day).

Next we needed to build dates into our respective diaries. Fred decided that he'd like to do the ARRL CW contest from XT2 (single-band) so this put some shape on our project. He would go to Ouagadougou (capital of XT2) a few days before the contest and get set up. I would join him for the trip to 5U. This would involve driving over to Niamey one day, spending three nights and two days there checking out all the hotels to find a suitable site and starting the process of applying for licences.

In setting this up we got in touch with Jim/5U7JK and Jim/5U7JB, both Americans, and made hotel reservations. In fact my trip turned into a full week when trying to book air-tickets. To stay anything less than seven nights rocketed the fare to a ridiculous £1,500 (economy).

So, we finally got the whole thing arranged, after many e-mails.

- Feb 10 G4BWP flies to Ouaga
- Feb 11-14 Fred sets up for the ARRL contest and operates as XT2WP on WARC
- Feb 14 G3SXW flies to XT2

- Feb 15-16 XT2WP does ARRL CW single-band and XT2SX operates on WARC
- Feb 17 tear down the stations and put equipment back into storage
- Feb 18 we drive to 5U7
- Feb 19-20 we find the most suitable hotel-location in Niamey and apply for licences
- Feb 21 we drive back to Ouagadougou and fly home the same evening

During the course of this safari we will also learn a lot about the road-journey and the border-crossings. This time it will be relatively straightforward as we will not be taking any equipment so hopefully border-crossings will be painless, with only personal-luggage to be inspected several times at the various checkpoints.

How likely is that we will be successful in putting together a trip for November to 5U7? Well, we wouldn't be going on an expensive 'recce' like this unless we were very optimistic that it can be made to work. But we shall see. Many things could get in the way of putting together such a complicated project but we will depend on our wide experience of mounting such operations to at least give it our best shot.

#### **Watch this space!**

Meantime, if you heard our somewhat sporadic XT2 operations over this period you will now understand why we were not more serious in our efforts to mount a full DXpedition. But we were busy beavering away at a good cause!

*(A full report on this trip will appear in the next Digest – ed.)*

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*Thanks Roger and now it is my pleasure to introduce what I believe to be (under my tenure at least) the first SWL Contest report...over to you David...*

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#### **ARRL 10 METRE CONTEST- A SWL view by David BRS25429/EA8**

My latest holiday in Tenerife coincided,

rather conveniently, with the ARRL 10-metre contest held last December. I usually take a RX with me so that, when I get bored with all the sun (!) I can have a little play.

My RX, as it has been for many years, is the Kenwood R-2000. My antenna options, having only a hotel bedroom with balcony, are not very good. So normally it is hit and miss affair with a random length of insulated wire. This is normally draped around the bedroom and then over the hotel balcony. The QTH is not bad once you get used to all the aircraft taking off from the local airport!

This year I was half expecting a drop in band conditions as the sunspot cycle goes into decline. But, being that much further South from the UK, it was good to have some of the HF bands open well into the night. Which brings me nicely to my first visit on 10m for this year's ARRL Contest. My first surprise, on waking up around 0400, was to find the band open. Interesting I thought to myself. Or was it a just a dream I was having? Then I realised it was no dream but the contest had already started in South America! Yes, those SA contest stations started to dominate this contest with some colossal signals. So I left them to it and returned to my warm bed. The Canary Islands, as you will notice on your map, have an all sea path to South America hence the strength of their signals. So the first stations I heard in the contest were naturally from Brazil and Argentina.

After waking up at my "official" time I decided I would grab an early breakfast and then get back to some serious contest listening. Although the ARRL do not have a SWL section in their contests we had been invited to participate in a "Challenge" which had been organised by a SWL in Holland. Scoring was somewhat different but, as in the transmitting contest, we were able to log the different DXCC entities plus the USA States and Canadian Provinces. By 08.00 the band was in full swing with many European countries coming through loud and clear. Life was quite hectic at times but

enjoyable! Being near to the North West African coast I suppose I had a slight advantage over the Europeans by hearing many African countries. But this was offset by very poor propagation to Asia and Oceania.

The America's gave me many countries and conditions were good on the first day right across Stateside and Canada. Only a sprinkling of JA's were heard but my first real DX was hearing ZL1ANJ at 0847z. Then the disappointment. No VKs. But a nice surprise was to hear VR2KW booming in. He was very strong at 1114z but yet I was never to hear him again.

There was some nice African prefixes heard. 5U7JB was in early at 0748, 7P8ZZ at 1027z and 9S1X at 0904. D44TD was strong throughout the contest and possibly could be the winning entry from Africa. I was thinking at one time that the band was never going to open to the States. Normally, back in the UK I would be hearing them from 1100z. But it was a good hour later before the first one came through in EA8. By early afternoon I was into good runs from the America's. Then my conscious pricked me! I suddenly realised I had not seen the XYL and her two friends for over six hours! Glad to say I was forgiven after planting three cool beers by their sun loungers. Yes, although it was mid December in Tenerife the outside air temperature was still around 24°C. Magic!

It was getting into late afternoon now and I had to get changed for our evening meal. A few more listens to the contest and the skip nicely with the USA and Canadian West Coast. The only states I missed were Montana and Wyoming from seven-land. On coming back to the hotel I switched the RX on for one final listen of the day. At 2115z there was ZL1ANJ once again, this time coming over on the long path. Yet no other ZLs or VK. Still plenty of North, Central and South American stations audible. But at 2200z I left them to it!

The second day of the contest is usually a bit of an anti climax as quite often you hear

the same stations from the day before. It also gave me the excuse to be more sociable and join the ladies! But when they went off for their early afternoon siesta I took the opportunity to return to the contest in the hope of finding some new multipliers. Not too many I am afraid but I did hear my "old friend" ZL1ANJ again. Yes, at almost the same time as the previous night. I finished listening to the contest by hearing WP2Z, CB4Y, J37K, XT2TI, CV5D, PJ2T, ZF2AH and V44NK, all still hard at it with another two hours of the contest to go. Golly, there was some very high contest exchanges. I will be most interested to see the results.

Although this was not a serious attempt at the contest I was reasonably pleased with my overall score. In the scoring system I got 909 station points which were multiplied by 80 DXCC Countries and 49 States/Provinces. This equated to 3,641,680 points!

Given my poor antenna set-up I was pleased to hear so many stations and countries. If I do the contest again I feel a better antenna system is essential. One which would favour Asia! Yes, only six countries heard from this Continent. It was fun all the same and hopefully next year I can do better.

As I wind this piece up it may interest some of you that in my 14 day stay in Tenerife that "old" receiver of mine gave me 141 DXCC Countries. The HF Bands were good but somehow the LF Bands are always a struggle. But what to you expect with a bit of "crazy" wire slung out to sea! That's all for now - hope I have not bored you too much.

David A Whitaker, BRS 25429/EA8

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*Thanks very much for that excellent article David and now over to forthcoming events...*

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## **March**

8-9 Saturday 1000 - Sunday 1000

RSGB Commonwealth Contest CW

9 Sunday 0000 - 0400  
North American Sprint Contest RTTY

9 Sunday 0700 - 1100  
UBA Spring Contest CW

15-17 Saturday 0200 - Monday 0200  
BARTG Spring RTTY Contest RTTY

15-16 Saturday 1200 - Sunday 1200  
Russian DX Contest CW/SSB

29-30 Saturday 0000 - Sunday 2359  
CQ WW WPX Contest SSB

**April**

5-6 Saturday 1500 - Sunday 1500  
SP DX Contest CW/SSB

11-13 Friday 2300 - Sunday 2300  
Japan International DX Contest CW

12 Saturday 1500 - 1859  
EU Sprint Spring SSB

19 Saturday 0000 - 2359  
Holyland DX Contest CW/SSB

19 Saturday 0000 - 2400  
TARA PSK31 Rumble PSK31

19 Saturday 0500 - 0859  
ES Open HF Championship CW/SSB

19-20 Saturday 1200 - Sunday 1200  
YU DX Contest CW/SSB

19 Saturday 1500 - 1859  
EU Sprint Spring CW

**May**

3-4 Saturday 2000 - Sunday 2000  
ARI International DX CW/SSB/DIGI

10-11 Saturday 1200 - Sunday 1200  
Alessandro Volta RTTY DX RTTY

10-11 Saturday 2100 - Sunday 2100  
CQ-M International DX Contest CW/  
SSB/SSTV

16-17 Friday 1800 - Saturday 2100  
Anatolian WW RTTY Contest RTTY

17-18 Saturday 1800 - Sunday 1800  
His Majesty The King of Spain Contest CW  
17-18 Saturday 2100 - Sunday 0200  
Baltic Contest CW/SSB

24-25 Saturday 0000 - Sunday 2400  
CQ WW WPX Contest CW

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*So that's it from me for this issue...I have to offer a heartfelt apology for the omission of the next instalment of the MU0C story, both to the readership and my fellow MU0C team members...personal circumstances chez G0WAT recently have precluded as much devotion to QRZ Contest Column tasks as I feel it really deserves...it will appear next issue.*

*If you have taken part in any of the big recent events, ARRL DX CW/SSB, or are planning to take part in the upcoming BERU or CQ WPX SSB please let us know how you got/get on...in the meantime GL and bear in mind that in this changing world some things forever remain the same and that alone can cheer you up...*

‘Our earth is degenerate in these latter days; bribery and corruption are common; children no longer obey their parents; every man wants to write a book, and the end of the world is evidently approaching’

From Assyrian tablet written approx. 3000 years ago

*TU 73 de Paul G0WAT*

## DX AND EVENTS CALENDAR

*(tnx 425 DX News for most of this)*

till 2004 CN2PM: Morocco by G3WQU  
till 30/11 HL0KSJ & D88S: "King Sejong" (WABA HL-01) by DS4CNB  
till 15/05 HL5/VK2DXI: Korea  
till 31/12 II1D: special call  
till 10/05 IU5ONU: special event station  
till 01/06 J28UN: Djibouti by F8UNF  
till 02/04 J37LR: Grenada by VE3EBN  
till 31/12 JM6DZB/JD1: Iwo Jima (AS-030), Ogasawara  
till June JW0HU: Spitsbergen (EU-026) by SP3GVX  
till ?? LU1ZA LU1ZD LU1ZG LU1ZV LZ0A VP8ROT  
till 2004 R1ANZ: "Mirny" Base (WABA UA-07)  
till 30/06 ST1MN: Sudan  
till 2003 T30ES: Butaritari (OC-017), W. Kiribati by N1JSY  
till April V31JP: Belize by K8JP  
till June W2SF: Lower Matecumbe Key (NA-062)  
till April XT2ATI: Burkina Faso by EA4ATI  
till 31/12 ZS90SAP: special event station  
till 23/03 PJ7/W8EB and PJ7B: Sint Maarten (NA-105)  
till 20/03 9S1X: Democratic Republic of Congo by F5CWU  
till 31/03 HF2VL: Poland by SP2PI  
from February VP8CTR: Vernadsky base (WABA UR-01, AN-006) by UT7UA  
till 31/03 LZ1250: special event station  
05/04-19/04 VP5/GM3JOB & VP5/GM4ZNC: North Caicos (NA-002)  
06/03-20/03 CT3/DL3KWR & CT3/DL3KWF: Madeira (AF-014)  
08/03-09/03 CO00: special event station  
08/03-09/03 HP: NA-088 by F5PAC  
08/03-09/03 JQ1SUO/1, JF1CCH/1, JA2HMD/1: Hachijo Island (AS-043)  
**from 08/03 VP6: Ducie Island (OC-182)**  
08/03-09/03 WA6WPG/p: Anacapa Island (NA-144)  
08/03-15/03 ZK1EAA (?): Penrhyn (OC-082), North Cooks by HB9EAA  
09/03-22/03 3B8/ON4AME: Mauritius (AF-049)  
10/03-21/03 HH4/K4QD, HH4/N2WB, HH4/W4WX, HH4/K3VN: Haiti  
11/03-12/03 HP: NA-071 by F5PAC  
14/03-17/03 3G1P: Pan de Azucar (SA-085) by CEs  
14/03-17/03 DX0C: OC-120 by G3OCA, 4F2KWT and others  
15/03-16/03 HP: NA-203 by F5PAC  
15/03-10/04 ST1C: Sudan by IV3OWC  
15/03-22/03 ZK1EAA (?): Aitutaki (OC-083), South Cooks by HB9EAA  
19/03-20/03 HP: NA-072 by F5PAC  
20/03-26/03 4D0B: OC-092 by G3OCA, 4F2KWT and others  
20/03-27/03 XF2IH: Enmedio Island (NA-???) by XE1IH and others  
March DP1ANF: "Dallmann Laboratory" (WABA DL-NEW) by R1ANF  
March-November DP1POL: "Neumayer" Base (WABA DL-03) by DL5XL  
March JI5USJ/6 and JI5RPT/6: Daito Islands (AS-047)  
**March ST0RY: Sudan by DLs**  
04/04-07/04 ZS1RBN: Robben Island (AF-064) by Gs and ZSs  
16/04-21/04 VK: Waldegrave Island (OC-???) by VKs  
07/04-12/04 TM6ILE: Groix Island (EU-048) by F5SGI  
07/04-21/04 VK9XI: Christmas Island (OC-002) by VK3OT/VK3SIX  
11/04-13/04 CO0S: special event station  
19/04-26/04 F5JOT, F5LGQ, F6CKH: Chausey Islands (EU-039)  
19/04-24/04 3D2JX: Mana Island (OC-121), Fiji by JF6OJX  
19/04-02/05 IS0/IZ1EPM: Sardinia (EU-024)  
20/04-27/04 9H/OE8YDQ and 9H/OE8CIQ: Malta (EU-023)  
27/04-14/05 ZK1AYL & ZK1SIM: Aitutaki, So. Cooks by VK4SJ & VK4BP  
27/04-04/04 WQ7R/HR9 and HQ9R: Roatan Island (NA-057)  
**April-May FO0: Marquesas (OC-027) by I2YSB and others**  
April PY0S: St. Peter & St. Paul Rocks (SA-014) by PS7JN  
April V73KZ & V73SX: Enewetak (OC-087) by KC7OKZ & KC7TSX  
02/05-10/05 9A0CI: Palagruza Island (EU-090) by 9As and DLs  
06/05-29/05 BY: China by I0SNY and I8KGZ  
10/05-11/05 CO0E: special event station

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4. Enter the year after 1<sup>st</sup> July 200...
5. Enter your account details after 'Name of account to be debited' and your account number.
6. Complete the bottom part of the form with your name, address, date and don't forget to sign it.
7. THE COMPLETED FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO YOUR BANK BRANCH WHICH LOOKS AFTER YOUR ACCOUNT.
8. It helps our Treasurer if you also tell him that you intend to pay by Standing Order in future.
9. Check your bank statements after the first payment should have been made to ensure that your bank is executing the order correctly.
10. Thank you for helping CDXC by paying your subscription by standing order.

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## CDXC GOODS

The following CDXC goods are available from the Secretary.

### PAPERWEIGHT

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

### KEY FOB

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

### RUBBER STAMP

This is a rubber hand-stamp with the CDXC logo. Use for all your amateur radio correspondence.

### REPLACEMENT MEMBERSHIP BADGE

Replacement membership badges can be provided on request in the event of loss or change of call sign. As the engraving of badges is normally undertaken in batches, delivery may extend to a number of weeks.

### PRICING

Paperweight:	£2.50	not available mail order
Key Fob:	£1.50	including post/packing to UK
Rubber Stamp:	£6.00	including post/packing to UK
Replacement Badge:	£2.50	including post/packing to UK

### PAYMENT

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to CDXC and drawn on a UK bank. No foreign cheques please. Send your payment to MOBJL (address on p.2).

# CHILTERN DX CLUB

## CDXC MEMBERS QSL CARD PRIORITY ORDER FORM

Quantity	Price	Tick the appropriate box ✓
500 Cards	£36.42	
1000 Cards	£66.38	
2000 Cards	£122.78	
3000 Cards	£178.60	
4000 Cards	£234.41	
5000 Cards	£290.81	

*All the above prices are inclusive of UK VAT. Packing and postage within the UK included.*

**To customise your card please enter your details below:**

Callsign:

Name:

Address:

*Please Note: Delivery will be made to the address given in QSL details above unless notified otherwise.*

**Payment details:**

Name of cardholder (as given on card):

Card Number:

Card Type :      Mastercard    Visa    Switch

*Delete as appropriate*

Expiry date (Month/Year):

Issue Number (Switch cards only):

**Cardholders address if different to one given in QSL details:**

***E-mail this order form to:*** sales@hdprint.co.uk

*or fax to:* +44 (0)1920 463212

*or post to:*

**Hertfordshire Display plc    51 High Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9BA    UK**

**Tel: +44 (0)1920 461191**