

Contents

Club News and Views

Editorial	3
President's Patter	4
New Members	6
DX an' all that, <i>Don Field G3XTT</i>	9

Out and About

FH/G3TXF: Mayotte re-visited, <i>Nigel Cawthorne G3TXF</i>	16
To Split or not to Split in Contests, <i>Roger Western G3SXW</i>	19
Suggestions for DX Pile-ups, <i>Uncle DX</i>	21
Freezing in Finland, <i>Roger Western G3SXW</i>	23
Railway Signalling, <i>Peter Chadwick G3RZP</i>	25

Regular Features and more

IOTA News, <i>Roger Balister G3KMA</i>	27
The RTTY Column, <i>Phil Cooper GUØSUP</i>	28
Contest, <i>Lee Volante GØMTN</i>	31
Letters and E-mails to the Editor	35
<i>Not</i> the GB2RS News	36
Digest Prize Crossword	37
DX and Events Calendar	38

CDXC Committee 2005-2006

President	Neville Cheadle G3NUG Lower Withers Barns Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HY	(01568) 750560 president@cdxc.org.uk
Chairman	John Butcher G3LAS Westlands, Westland Green, Little Hadham, Herts SG11 2AJ	(01279) 842515 chairman@cdxc.org.uk
Secretary	Peter Hart G3SJX The Willows, Paice Lane Medstead, Alton, Hants GU34 5PR	(01420) 562914 secretary@cdxc.org.uk
Treasurer	Nigel Cawthorne G3TXF Falcons, St.George's Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0BS	(01932) 851414 treasurer@cdxc.org.uk
Digest Editor	Martyn Phillips G3RFX 17 Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1BA	(0117) 973 6419 editor@cdxc.org.uk
Other members	Jim Kellaway G3RTE 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1QW	(01707) 657309 jkellaway@btinternet.com
	Dave Gould G3UEG 2 Mayfield Close, Harlow, Essex CM17 0LH	(01279) 427788 dave@g3ueg.co.uk
	Simon Pearson M0CLW 8 The Pastures, Edlesborough Dunstable, Beds LU6 2HL	(01525) 222106 m0clw@yahoo.co.uk

Contest Manager	Lee Volante G0MTN Warnbrook, 25 Baccabox Lane, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5DD	(01564) 822958 contests@cdxc.org.uk
Awards Manager	Jim Kellaway G3RTE (see above)	
Webmaster	John Butcher G3LAS (see above)	webmaster@cdxc.org.uk
Digest Picture Editor	Simon Pearson M0CLW (see above)	

Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

Spring is in the air. Or so my wife (I dare not call her XYL...), the lovely Jane, assured me today when she took me on an extended tour of our front garden, enthusiastically pointing out the undeniable beauty of the snowdrops, camellias and crocuses now bursting into life and reaching for the sky. Although surely she ought to know by now that they all look the same to me - and that even on a good day I can't tell the difference between a tulip and a daffodil.

With those other things of undeniable beauty, amateur radio antennas, it's another matter and I notice the difference straight away. Until recently I had four of those, but now I'm down to only three. Some new neighbour of ours decided that he (I'm assuming it was a he...) didn't like the look of my tallest erection, a Cushcraft R7 vertical, on this 1822 Grade II listed building of ours - even though it had been up there for almost 12 years - and complained about it to the local council.

A tricky one, this, especially as I'd somehow forgotten to apply for listed building consent for any of my erections in the first place. And with listed buildings there's no 'four-year rule'. Either way, I was extremely lucky in having a very understanding local planning officer on the case, so eventually an amicable arrangement was reached. Basically nothing would be said about my other three, less conspicuous antennas if I took down the R7 which, with its long Kevlar guys on four sides, did indeed make the place look a bit like the aerial rigging on an ocean liner. I very rarely used the R7 anyway, seeing as with any more than about 50W on 20m in particular I would

immediately get a phone call from our dear neighbours next door, informing me that once again I was coming through at 59+40 on the hot water tap in their en suite bathroom.

So all in all, while the snowdrops, camellias and snowdrops in our front garden are now reaching for the sky, somewhat sadly my trusty old Cushcraft R7 isn't any more.

A somewhat lengthy start to this month's Editorial, I do agree, but not totally irrelevant in that I'd be very interested to also receive any contributions for the *Digest* on planning issues, indeed any relatable experiences along these lines. They could well be of interest to us all.

And talking of ocean liners: Chairman John, G3LAS, is now back from his round-the-world cruise. So why is there no 'Chairman's Chat' again in this issue of the *Digest*? Well, after you've been having a swell time on the ocean waves for so long, it takes a while to get back into the normal landlubber routine of things. Somewhat understandably there are so many other more important issues to sort out once you're back on the relatively dry land of rural Hertfordshire.

Meanwhile I'll leave the rest of this month's *Digest* content to speak for itself. It's all there on page 1, together with all the usual regular features courtesy of our expert columnists. A big 'Thank you!' to them too. Without them the *Digest* would be but a shadow of its current self.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

The CDXC Annual Dinner will soon be upon us. If you haven't already booked, please do so as soon as possible by sending an e-mail to Peter, G3SJX, our Secretary. Why not bring a friend, possibly a non-member, who may be interested in joining CDXC? The Dinner takes place on Saturday, 18 March 2006, at 7.30 pm at the Corus Hotel, Crowthorne, Bracknell, Berks. We meet in the bar from 6.30 pm onwards.

We have responded to members' requests to find a less expensive hotel. The Corus Hotel should be convenient for many members with good access from the motorway network. We have been there before, when it was known as the Wellington, and we were looked after well. There is a sizeable bar with draft beer!

John, G4IRN, has kindly agreed to give the after-dinner talk which will, I think, be of interest to our members and to their partners. John sent me the following note:

John, G4IRN, has always had the travel bug. After returning to the hobby in 2001 after a lengthy absence, he was able to combine his love of travelling with his interest in CW DXing by going on a number of one-man DXpeditions.

Showing slides and a video of his trips to The Gambia, the Seychelles, Mayotte Island and Swaziland, John will talk about the issues of one-man travel: DXpedition planning, getting there while avoiding excess baggage charges, finding the ideal QTH and, once there, seeing the country itself. John even has video of his encounter with a Gambian crocodile – Crocodile Dundee would be proud! On the radio front John will talk about planning for propagation, getting the licences, the

performance of the various radios and antennas that he has used while on his DXpeditions - and will describe his 'dream DXpedition kit bag' to accompany him on his travels.

Although his talk is primarily about his one-man travels, John couldn't resist including a few slides of his recent trip to Mali with the VooDoo Contest Group for CQ WW CW 2005. This was the first time he had been involved in a large multi-multi contest operation, so hear what he has to say about the pros and cons of this versus one-man travel.

Above all, John will convey that perusing the adrenalin rush of the pile-ups, whether solo or not, is something that is relatively easy for anyone to do these days.

Membership numbers

Nigel, G3TXF, our Treasurer, has recently circulated the following data. The current CDXC Membership (Year 2005-06) stands at 792, which is 100+ up on our total last June. Broadly speaking:

We ended last year with 688 members. 29 members resigned and 22 are still on the potential lapsed list. Total loss on renewals = 51 (these are fairly typical figures).

New members through CDXC's own efforts = 34. New members through the ML & S promotion = 121. Total new members in year (so far) = 155.

We are all very grateful to Martin Lynch for this excellent initiative, which he proposed at last year's CDXC Annual Dinner. Without this promotion we would have been 17

members down compared to last year. In fact the return from our last mailing was relatively poor. On examining our database it looks as though mailings targeted at G stations who work DXpeditions organised by CDXC members are the most effective. Our thanks too to the three companies who made this promotion possible. Kenwood came on board first, followed by Yaesu and then by Icom.

3B9C QSLing

Following my note in the Digest at the end of last year, four members sent me e-mails requesting their 3B9C cards and these were turned round quickly. If any other members need their cards, just e-mail me the QSO details and a mailing address.

We continue to receive substantial batches of cards from the Bureau, although the flow of direct cards is finally drying up, nearly two years after the DXpedition. We have just broken the 90K confirmed figure with 90,663 confirmed; that is 59.2% of the total. 43.7% went via the Bureau and 56.3% direct.

Dealing with multiple requests has been a problem, as some stations request cards by e-mail, direct and through the Bureau. We have responded to all direct requests, provided adequate postage was enclosed. It's been surprising that a number of stations don't bother to include a self-addressed envelope (around 3%), but we respond to these with direct cards anyway. Other stations seem to send cards to the Bureau every six months or so for the same QSOs. This is a real bore, so we have adopted the policy of not responding to second requests through the Bureau if a card was sent by us within a year.

That's all from me for the time being. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Annual Dinner.

73



Neville, G3NUG

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

Subscription £15.00 for UK members, £20.00 for overseas members (US\$30 or 30 Euros). New members joining between 1 January and 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer.

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

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

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
2EØSMO	Steve O'Neill	Wickham	G7MMF	Steve Morris	Rainham
2W1ETN	R. Price	Pembroke	G7OTE	Stuart Barlow	Flixton
DJ9ZB	Franz Langner	Ettenheim	G7PTM	John Taylor	Raunds
GØADH	R. Razey	Wallingford	G7UUK	Mike Hooper	Weston-s-Mare
GØFIH	Gerald Haselden	Tarporley	G8DQZ	Anthony Lord	Bury St Edm
GØFSM	John Bent	Rugeley	GI7FGQ	P. Faulkner	Newtownards
GØHWW	Darren Long	Bury St Edm	GM6GRE	Derek Rattray	Inverness
GØKDZ	Mike Birch	Thirsk	GM7TUD	James Pedley	Dumfries
GØKOK	Peter Love	Broadstairs	GWØUZK	Andrew Rushton	Bridgend
GØLCS	Kerry Rochester	New Barnet	GW4VZG	Roger Jenkins	Swansea
GØOBG	A. Cox	Byfleet	MØCRY	Robert Scott	Erith
GØTNC	George Stephenson	Grantham	M1AGJ	David Walsh	Tonbridge
GØUCF	George Knox	Hove	M1CDP	Allan McDade	Corby
G1JCC	Ian Jefferson	Luton	M1ELK	Michael Dawson	Reading
G1LHL	Barry Mayson	Rochester	M3JTI	Stephen Smith	Leeds
G1SUM	Terry Cull	Ponteland	M3KSO	Alan Jackson	London
G3DBJ	David Buggs	Leiston	M3LIH	Glenn Glidden	Morley
G3JHM	Don Hayter	Alton	M3MFT	Alan Hill	Loughborough
G3RGR	M. Niblett	Ramsgate	M3OBX	Ian Sanderson	Rotherham
G4POP	Danny Beschizza	St Austell	M3OTO	Jim Kirk	Margate
G4WMH	Warwick Hall	Solihull	M3TTG	Anthony Kennedy	Oldham
G4XEC	L. Booth	Emsworth	MIØMAP	James Phillips	Banbridge
G6AHY	Mark Freeta	Marlborough	MIØPSU	Sean Ward	Londonderry
G6CNQ	Terry Genes	Wickford	MMØSTX	Stewart Mackinosh	Dundee
G6EZG	Ivan Prince	Hull	VP8NO	Michael Harris	Stanley
G6XTW	John Humphrey	Peacehaven			
G6ZFG	Paul Wood	Wolverhampton			
G7CUA	Ian Cookson	Preston			
G7CZZ	Chris Woodward	Kettering			
G7HGQ	John Horwood	Rickmansworth			

With thanks to **Martin Lynch & Sons** for their outstanding support of CDXC by way of the ML & S 'new member' initiative. Also to **Kenwood, Yaesu** and **Icom** for making this promotion possible.

CDXC Annual Dinner 2006

URGENT! Please contact G3SJX *immediately* if you wish to attend

The CDXC Annual Dinner will be held this year at 7.30pm on Saturday, 18 March, at the Corus Hotel, Duke's Ride, Crowthorne, Bracknell, Berks RG45 6DW. We have used this venue successfully before in 1999, 2000 and 2001 when it was known as the Waterloo Hotel. The Dinner will be followed by a talk, the details of which are still being arranged. Full information will be given on the CDXC website as soon as they are available. We would like to encourage as many members as possible to come along, together with partners and friends, to what promises to be an excellent evening.

Menu

Mushroom and Tarragon Soup with Soured Cream

Breast of Chicken filled with Stilton wrapped in Bacon served on a Julienne of Vegetables with a Cream Sauce

Brandy Snap Basket with Vanilla Ice Cream and Fresh Fruits

Coffee or Tea and chocolate mints

Vegetarian and other dietary menus available on request.

The cost of the Dinner and evening's entertainment is £29 per ticket. You will find a booking form enclosed with this Digest which should be returned to Peter Hart, G3SJX.

For those of you who will be travelling some distance, you may wish to stay overnight. Room rates at the hotel are £31 for a single room or £62 for a double and include a Full English Breakfast. Make room bookings directly with the Corus Hotel quoting 'CDXC Dinner' on (0870) 609 6111.

Directions to the Corus Hotel can be found in the January 2006 Digest.

The CDXC LF Challenge 2006

Aim: To work as many DXCC entities during the month of March 2006. Each DXCC entity is counted ONCE only.

When: 0001 UTC, 1 March 2006, to 2359 UTC, 31 March 2006.

Bands: Only the 1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz bands maybe used.

Modes: No restrictions.

Logs: Send a list either by e-mail or post. The list must contain the headings in this order, please.

DXCC entity, Date, Time, Band, Mode

Entries which are NOT submitted in this format will be disqualified

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

Logs to be sent to jkellaway@btinternet.com or by post to Jim Kellaway, 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1QW. Logs to be received not later than 30 April 2006.

Please note: do NOT send to any other e-mail address I have had in the past as it will not arrive here

Awards – Multi-band:

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

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

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

Awards – Single band:

The leading station on each band (1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz) will also receive a small engraved plaque which will be retained by the winner.

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

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

So 3YØX has come and gone, with over 86,000 QSOs in the log. This makes it something like the 4th biggest DXpedition ever, in terms of QSO numbers. Their third attempt to pull this one off coincided with pretty much the bottom of the cycle, so that's a great result from a really tough location. If you have watched any of the video clips on the website you will be well aware that this was no picnic. UK stations made it on all modes, and on 160 through 12m (I have no reports of 10m QSOs, which is hardly surprising). 160m was amazing, with big signals for quite long periods. But, despite this high total, I am getting e-mails from a number of my RadCom readers to the effect that they didn't work or, in several cases, didn't even hear 3YØX. I trust that CDXC members fared better. We are, after all, supposed to be the more dedicated DXers and presumably aren't content to struggle with 100W and a half-size G5RV or similar. Yes, it was tough at times, with some bad behaviour from this end (the EU lids on 40m, for example), but those who tried were rewarded. I note G3TBK with 17 band/mode slots, for example.

Other DX News

Glorioso has been postponed again, and we await a new date. But the recent Desecheo operation has now been approved by the DXCC desk, which is encouraging news. To my mind probably the most interesting upcoming one is the VU4 Hamfest, scheduled for 18-20 April. A number of well-known DXpeditioners are scheduled to attend, including the DL gang, who always do such a good job on LF and will be allowed to operate (hopefully for several days before and after the event, too), so there ought to be a chance to fill those missing band slots across the board. In general, though, there are fewer DXpeditions announced than one might

expect at this time of the year, almost certainly because of where we are in the solar cycle. The solar minimum is forecast for later in the year and we can then hope for an upturn. I was chatting recently with Kerry, GØLCS, who is primarily a 6m DXer and he was reflecting on how recent solar maxima have each tended to be worse than the previous one. Those US DXers who came on to 6m in time for the 1957 maximum assumed that the excellent conditions at that time were the norm, but it's been downhill ever since! DX results have improved, largely as a result of improved equipment, more DXpeditions and generally increased levels of activity, but we can't automatically assume, for example, that Pacific DXpeditions at the solar peak will enjoy global 10m propagation. But watch this space in four or five years time and be ready to be surprised (we can but hope!).

Thanks to DX Magazine, and to our own G3SXW and G4VXE, who helped in the compilation and analysis, we now have the results of the latest Most Wanted survey. Here are some highlights:

#	World	Europe
1	BS7 Scarborough	BS7 Scarborough
2	VU7 Lakshadweep	3Y/P Peter 1
3	P5 North Korea	KP1 Navassa
4	3Y/P Peter 1	VU7 Lakshadweep
5	7O Yemen	KP5 Desecheo
6	KP1 Navassa	P5 North Korea
7	KP5 Desecheo	KH7K Kure
8	3Y/B Bouvet	3Y/B Bouvet
9	FR/G Glorioso	ZL8 Kermadec
10	VU4 Andaman	VP8O South Orkney

Is it a sign that I am getting old that I have Navassa and Desecheo on 9 bands each? Kure

and Peter 1 ought to feature much lower by the time of next year's survey. But I suspect Scarborough Reef will remain at the top for some time yet. And there are no plans for Bouvet at the moment, as far as I know, although I understand the Australian government may be setting up some sort of permanently-manned scientific base there.

Joe W1JR did his usual end-of-year review and believes the following entities were not activated in 2005:

AF (16): 3B6, 3C, 3CØ, 3Y/B, 5A, 9U, 9X, D6, E3, FR/G, FR/J, FR/T, FT/Z, TN, VKØH and ZS8.

ANT (1): 3Y/P.

AS (7): 7O, BS7H, BV9P, E4, P5, VU7, XZ.

EU (1): 1AØ.

NA (4): KP1, TI9, XF4 and YVØ.

OC (16): 3D2C, FK/C, FO/A, FO/M, KH1, KH3, KH4, KH5K, T2, T31, T33, VK9M, VK9W, VP6/D, ZK1/N and ZL8.

SA (6): CEØX, HKØM, PYØT, VP8G, VP8O and VP8S.

Feedback

My last column provoked quite a bit of feedback, not least to correct me on my misrepresentation of some of the datamodes. My apologies for that. After all, I did cover them in my revision of the RSGB Operating Manual, so have no excuse other than that the column was put together in some haste and the general point was about manual versus machine QSOs, the exact datamode being largely irrelevant to the argument. Anyway, here are some excerpts from my postbag:

From Roger G3SXW

Dissatisfied Dxers

I don't think there is a conundrum and I don't think that 'lite expeditions' are mounted in order to avoid criticisms which might come from dissatisfied DXers. Each DXpedition, no matter how small or large, is an individual project and mounted for the satisfaction and fun firstly of the travellers, and secondly of the DX callers. On our recent trip to C21 we only had really marginal openings to Western Europe and could work only the Big Guns. But we faced little criticism. Kure, conversely, seems to have stirred up a lot of negative comments. Why the difference? Two possible explanations:

1.

Expectations: many DXpeditions these days create a lot of marketing hype in the build-up to the trip. I can't quite think why. When those expectations are not met, many folks are frustrated. As you may have noticed, on our trips we do not build expectations in this way. We just go. Better to surprise pleasantly than to disappoint.

2.

Operating choices: trips to the Pacific usually state that they will 'prioritise Europe'. And then they don't maximise these openings. When G4IRN finally broke through the USA pile-up on 40m, the K7C operator went straight back to working Ws. He should have been sharp enough to realise that the band was open to Europe and to ask US stations to stand by. We have all heard examples of this operating failure. I would hope that DXpeditioners will not delay their projects until the sunspots return, but instead will pick their targets with this in mind, and will ease off on the expectation building.

Machine QSOs

I would like to think that the steady march of progress would not entirely take over our hobby. Operating skill is the main thrust of DXing, along with station/antenna engineering. I occasionally get a request for a specimen QSL card from some remote island from a collector of postcards - nothing to do with amateur radio. Fair enough, an entirely different hobby. The same could be said for 'Machine QSOs': applaud the skill and technological development, but this is a different sub-hobby. Maybe they need their own DXCC category.

Travelers' Century Club

I forget now who it was, but a radio amateur in W6 set up this organisation some years ago. This is why their list of 'Countries' looks so much like our DXCC. I too read and enjoyed Ben Fogle's book, noting for the first time the phrase 'BIOT': British Indian Ocean Territories. A similar book is called 'The Last Pink Bits'. A small group of UK DXers counts 'DXFC' points, the 'F' standing for 'Feet', so you have to step foot in a DXCC entity to score a point.

It's amazingly hard to get to the magic 100 mark. I am currently on only 78, but G3TXF has 120 and G3WVG has 129. During the OH DX Cruise last January we all scored a new point when the ship docked briefly at OHØ: the crew thought we had gone completely mad when a bunch of us walked down the gangplank at two in the morning, stepped onto the quay and came straight back on board. No, we didn't bother trying to explain ourselves!

One day I will spend a long weekend driving around UA, UA2, LY, YL and SP: five easy new DXFC points for me! Hmm, and HBØ is just down the road from Friedrichshafen!

From Bryn G4DEZ

Just to sort out a few small errors in the bit about VHF DX. The modes as specified are not quite correct. JT6M is for 6m (or 4m) for weak signal work, usually MS (meteor scatter), but very often for weak signal tropo or ionoscatter QSOs. It is not designed specifically for Moonbounce and is rarely if ever used for EME. Moonbounce uses a different mode, ie JT65 and its variants A, B or C. Most usually A. FSK441 is the preferred mode on 2m for MS (it superseded JT44 some time ago).

You mention the Cluster system for arranging schedules. Yes, sometimes clusters are used, but more often it's the ON4KST chat rooms, which are specifically designed for like-minded persons to set up schedules on all bands from 6m up to microwaves. There is even a chat room for those who DX on the LF bands! These 'Chat' rooms also cater for those who use SSB or HSCW (high speed CW or even hand-sent CW). However, a lot of Chat room talk is also quite technical and in many languages.

Mind you, I would say that a very high number of 'tests' are run on a truly random basis, ie a CQ call is made on the 'calling frequency' and a QSO progresses there or on another QRG by putting the following after the CQ call: "CQ G4DEZ JOØ3 236", which means I am calling CQ here (which would be 50.230 MHz) and listening on 50.236 MHz. When I hear a signal replying on 236 I will QSY and complete the QSO on 236.

Your comment: 'when Tropo or Sporadic E is absent': I worked Sporadic E on New Year's Day on 6m to 24 countries (SSB, CW and a few on the digital modes). Yesterday (Friday, 13 January 2006) I worked into CT on 6m on SSB at S9+ (the opening lasted for five minutes and only up to JOØ3), and once again a few stations on digital. There have been

numerous E openings already this year, some of which even I have missed. Sporadic E is not a summer-only affair (albeit more common then); it can happen at any time of the year and at any time of the day or night. Even when Es disappears, for 99% of stations in UK (when they think it is all over) it is still there. Sporadic E does not just stop like somebody turning off a light switch. The ionised area becomes less dense, but reflections from it can still be made if you can run enough power and have good enough receive capability. The geometry seems to change and even further DX can be worked. I have often worked Ukrainian stations into the early hours of the morning on 6m low level Es. It is a pity Russia does not have the band.

One mode not mentioned is Ionosscatter. This is very prevalent at 6m and even on 4m, but a bit rarer on 2m. However, I work lots of stations on 6m on this form of scatter - especially to Scandinavia, but often to Poland and Slovenia (here on 4m also). No, the stations at the 'other end' are not running mega-stations with kilowatts and massive arrays, but maybe up to only 100W and small 5-element single antennas. Some stations I work on Ionosscatter run considerably less power and smaller antennas than that mentioned above. Yes, I do work them on digital modes, but the difference is I CAN HEAR them. They could be worked on CW or even SSB.

Talking about hearing these stations, I can also HEAR the EME signals on 6 and 2m (I haven't checked 70cms or above).

Last night (13th January 2006) I was working on digital 6m using JT6M and working EA5AAJ, who was suffering a total lack of signal from me either on MS or on Ionosscatter. I was copying him on both propagation modes and was actually hearing audible signals from my loudspeaker, even though the WSJT program was showing that

the signals were MINUS 18dB below the noise level. This is by no means unusual. A vast majority of the signals are below the 'noise level', but can be heard audibly; the human brain is a wonderful filter system. On occasions I do resort to SSB - or more likely CW - just to prove that the path is there for other mere mortals!

By the way, in over 30 years on HF I have probably had fewer than 50 QSOs on CW. However, on VHF and above, where DX is much more difficult to work than on HF (that will rattle some cages), I have used CW thousands upon thousands of times.

HF and VHF are totally different worlds, and I hope they will stay that way. I operate predominantly VHF and above, but even I will go on HF if I have a crazy half hour. Don't think I do not know how to work DX on HF. I have run massive pile-ups when I used to live in Lesotho and Hong Kong and various other countries, and even at times succumb to exchanging contest reports on HF (I've got a few first-place certificates as well). However, my main love is working DX and competing in contests on VHF and above.

Yes, we do use digital modes to work the real DX on VHF and above, but it takes skill in knowing when to test and to understand the many forms of propagation (more than on HF), deciding whether or not a text of signal is valid or not - and how to set up equipment to best effect. I still remember working my first W6 on 2m before I ever worked on HF.

I would much rather get DXCC on VHF or above than on any HF band: that would be much more difficult (assuming I ever decided to go in for a DXCC certificate)! I still think it takes a lot more skill setting up and using effectively a VHF to microwave system than anything on the HF bands (not including 136 KHz, which looks quite interesting). I guess I'll get blacklisted now!

By the way, self-spotting is also seriously frowned upon at VHF. I do not like the use of clusters or chat rooms for VHF contests; I think they should be banned, as is the case with HF contests. Unfortunately, whichever way you turn, there are people who are trying to dumb down amateur radio.

From Dave G4RGK

I feel I ought to correct you on the inaccuracies in your column under 'Machine QSOs'. The program you refer to is called WSJT and is written by K1JT. JT6M is NOT designed for Moonbounce; it is designed for Meteor Scatter. JT65 is designed for Moonbounce. JT44 is NOT designed for Meteor Scatter; it is designed for Moonbounce, but has been superseded by JT65. FSK441 is designed for Meteor Scatter on 2m. It does not work well on 6m. The current version of WSJT has three modes of operation: FSK441, JT6M and JT65. More info at <http://pulsar.princeton.edu/~joe/K1JT/>.

My thanks to each of the above. Where I would take exception is with Bryn's statement that "HF and VHF are totally different worlds, and I hope they will stay that way".

Yes, there are differences in propagation (although some significant overlaps around 10 and 6m), but I believe HF and VHF DXers each have something to teach the others and I would love to see much more interaction between the two, which is why I am delighted to have his input to this column which, I suspect, is read mainly by HF DXers.

I feel very much the same way about HF and VHF contesting, which have largely existed in separate domains but which, again, I believe have much to learn from each other. Anyway, I guess that's one for our contest columnist!

Sports radio

Those of you who follow the goings-on at RSGB will have spotted my co-option to the Board as Board Member for Radio Sports. This appears to encompass DXing and Contesting (including Award Chasing and ARDF). I don't have specific Terms of Reference, but will effectively act as a conduit between the RSGB and those members who are interested in the competitive aspects of our hobby (which I guess includes all CDXC members!). This is not a task I have taken on lightly, as I suspect it may be an uphill struggle at times, but I will be doing my best. Feel free to contact me regarding any specific issues, concerns etc. you may have. I expect my role to mesh nicely with that of Colin, G3PSM (Spectrum matters), and John, G3WKL (HF Manager), along with several other worthies such as Justin, G4TSH (HF Contests), Andy, G4PIQ (VHF Contests), and John, G3LZQ (HF Awards). No surprise that most of these are CDXC members too!

CW table

As it is still early in the year, it's probably worth a reminder that the annual CW table continues to be run by John, G3WGV. This was started back in 1983 as a head-to-head between G3TXF and G3SXW, but has grown over the years to include many regular participants. Historical data appears on Nigel's website (www.g3txf.com) and current scores, plus a web-based updating facility, appear on John's website (www.g3wgv.com). Anyone may join in. Perhaps curiously, no one in those 23 years has set up a similar facility for SSB or RTTY DXers. Maybe there is no demand.

See you all in the pile-ups!

73 Don, G3XTT



9TH Annual GMDX Convention and Dinner

Saturday, 1 April 2006, at the 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, 1 April 2006, starting at 12.30 pm. Bar lunches will be available from 11.30 am.

The main raffle prize is an FT-8900R VHF/UHF rig generously donated by Yaesu UK Ltd.

- 1230 Registration and Welcome
- 1300 FTdx9000 demonstration by Paul Bigwood, G3WYW
- 1400 Ragchew Break
- 1430 Multi-Multi from Mali, TZ5A, by Roger Western, G3SXW
- 1545 Coffee/Tea Break
- 1615 Contesting and DXing in the Antipodes by Chris Tran, GM3WOJ/ZL1CT
- 1715 Convention wrap-up and Raffle draw
- 1930 DX Dinner - please book
- 2130 Hotel bar

The cost of the afternoon's convention is £7, which includes tea or coffee, whilst the dinner is priced at £18 per person. We would be grateful if you could pre-book to give us an idea of numbers. Booking your dinner tickets is particularly important as numbers are limited.

The FTdx9000 will be available to test drive during the afternoon after the presentation by Paul Bigwood.

Display also of vintage Radios by GM3WOJ.

DXCC, WAZ, WAS, IOSA and RSGB awards: card checking will be available during the day.

The King Robert has given us a special rate for convention delegates. This is £45 B & B for a double room and £30 B & B 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.

It would help us arrange adequate facilities for the day if you could pre-book. Please send your remittance to Sheree Ferguson, 19 Leighton Avenue, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0EB, making cheques payable to 'GMDX Group'.

OH6ØBH

[with thanks to the Daily DX]

Another decade is turning for the chief operator of OH2BH when his 60th birthday cake will soon be served for those in Martti's immediate brotherhood. The past decades include some 45 years of making DX and providing elusive DX counters to those in need. The years also include more than three decades of happy marriage to Leena, OH2BE - and now a first grandchild due in May. Martti will become a Grandpa DXer. Read more on Martti at

http://www.bcdxc.org/martti_page1.htm

The Finnish Telecom Authority has released OH6ØBH, OH-sixty-BH, to be used from March 2006.

Several interesting activities are planned for this Jubilee year, including one more rare DX counter that will hopefully serve as the actual venue for the party. Ten years ago it was the Republic of Nauru (C21BH), but this year it needs to be rarer, still for a reason, since for the 70th birthday party, landing may be by means of a wheeled walker, if any!

The plans are in place to retire and leave the

daily gaming to others. But it may be a painful struggle, just like trying to quit smoking. And indeed, running pile-ups in the morning and handing out a few more QSOs in the evening has become part of the routine landscape. It is just like your morning porridge. But since the road uphill has been successful, perhaps Martti will prove that the exit can also be handled with no pain.

Where Do We Go Next, then? Several options are in the works - maybe a local country club, now in the Azores, will have a new member full of interesting stories to share.

Following a Caribbean cruise you might still catch Martti in Belize as V31BH (as of 28 February). Our DXpeditioner extraordinaire will be doing what he knows best: running off a string of QSOs and providing a quick moment of happiness to those who Deserve another BH counter.

To make the on-the-air reception run smoothly, the designator for Happy Birthday will be BH: "Birthday Happiness".

Special V31BH QSL via OH2BN

BV2A/BV2B

Tim S. H. Chen, known as the 'grand old man' of Taiwan ham radio, who held the Taiwan callsigns BV2A and BV2B, has become a Silent Key, apparently on 22 February. He was 92 years old. For years Tim was the first and only amateur radio operator from Taiwan. Many of us had our first Taiwan QSO with Tim. The CTARL (national Taiwan ham association) headquarters has set up an e-mail address for all of Tim's ham friends worldwide to drop a line, if they would care to, bv2a@ctarl.org.tw. The messages will be forwarded to Tim's family. Tim was the founder of CTARL. A memorial page can be found at <http://ctarl.org.tw/bv5ya/bv2a/bv2a.htm>. [Daily DX]

FH/G3TXF: Mayotte re-visited – January 2006

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

nigel@G3TXF.com

Mayotte – an outpost of France

The French possession of Mayotte (FH) which lies in the Mozambique Channel, between the northern end of Madagascar and Mozambique on the African mainland, is somewhat of a geopolitical oddity. Geographically Mayotte is part of the Comoros group of islands. Before independence in 1975, the French colony of Comoros used the FH prefix. When the other islands in the Comoros group became independent and changed their prefix to D6, Mayotte alone decided to stay as part of France and continued to use FH. Both the Comoros (D6) and Mayotte (FH) became new DXCC entities in July 1975. The former French colony of Comoros (FH, FB8) then became a deleted DXCC entity.

Today Mayotte usually figures within the top 100 most-wanted countries. In the most recent 'DX Magazine' (Jan/Feb 2006) survey Mayotte is the 82nd most wanted in the World and 96th in Europe. But in the US, FH is the 63rd most wanted on the East Coast and 44th on the West Coast. Interestingly, D6 does not figure in any of the current Top 100 most wanted countries listings. Not because there is any regular activity from the Comoros. There isn't. But because of the lasting impact of the UK-led major D68C DXpedition in 2001.

CEPT licensing and the use of FH/homecall is one of the delights of operating from Mayotte. It is six years since Roger G3SXW and I made 21,740 CW QSOs operating as FH/G3SXW and FH/G3TXF from Mayotte for ten days at the height of the sunspot cycle. As part of a much needed winter-sun break in early 2006,

it was decided to revisit Mayotte and run some more CW pile-ups as FH/G3TXF.

Getting to FH

For the FH operation in 2000, we had travelled to Mayotte via the Seychelles, flying from the Seychelles to Mayotte on Air Austral. This option was not available in 2006. In January 2006 the journey was from London to Mauritius (3B8), and from there to Réunion (FR) and on to Mayotte (FH) with Air Austral.

Air Austral have just three jet aircraft in their fleet: two 737s and one 777. On this one trip we flew on all three of them. The short hop between Mauritius and Réunion was on a 737. However, much to my surprise the two-hour flight on the way out from Réunion to Mayotte was on a massive and virtually empty 777. The Air Austral 777 is usually used for their flights between Réunion and France. The return flight from Mayotte to Réunion was on the Air Austral's other 737. The flights between Réunion and Mayotte go over the northern end of Madagascar.

Réunion and Mayotte are both considered to be an integral part of France. As an illustration of this, if you are in Réunion or Mayotte you cannot say that you are travelling 'to France', because you are already 'in France'! Hence if you travel from Réunion or Mayotte to France you are travelling to 'la Métropole', ie to the Metropolitan area of France.

Mayotte consists of two main islands: Grand Terre (the main island) and Petit Terre. The airport is on the smaller of the two islands and there is a 20-minute ferry ride over to Grand

Terre. Hotel pick-up vehicles and taxis do not usually travel on the ferry. All luggage has to be unloaded to get onto the ferry and then re-loaded into another taxi when reaching the other island.

The location – Hotel Trévani

There are just three hotels on Mayotte, but only one of them, the Hotel Trévani, is on a north-facing beach. The Trévani has been used by several visiting radio amateurs on previous occasions including CDXC members G3SXW/G3TXF (2000), PA3GIO (2001) and G4IRN (2003).

Several other DXpeditions have been run from the Trévani, including DL and JA operations. The hotel is most accommodating to visiting hams. During our visit the hotel staff recounted how a visiting Japanese radio amateur ‘had spent all his time in his room and even wanted all his meals served in there too’. Nothing surprising there!

Although the Trévani location provides an excellent sea path take-off to North America, Europe and Japan, it is seriously blocked for South America and VK/ZL. As if to confirm this, there were a couple of ‘no trace here’ Cluster spots from PYs during the FH/G3TXF operation, and no South Americans in the log.

The beach in front of the Hotel Trévani is a public beach, and at weekends is quite busy with locals. This means that you need to keep a wary eye on the antenna which is parked on the beach. However, during the week the beach is all but empty and there is no-one to get in the way of the antenna.

The accommodation at the Trévani consists of a dozen or so small bungalows which are literally within a few metres of the beach. Visiting amateurs are able to run a short length of coax out of the front door of the bungalow, across a small path and straight onto the beach.

Nothing much had changed at the Hotel Trévani since the previous visit six years ago. A small new annex had been built at the far end of the beach, which is where John FH/G4IRN operated from in 2003.

Antenna on the beach

As has been reported by many DXpeditioners, there’s nothing to beat a vertical antenna right by the sea for simplicity and effectiveness, provided there is a clear sea take-off in the directions of interest.

For FH/G3TXF a SteppIR 40m vertical was set up directly on the beach in front of the Hotel Trévani. The SteppIR has the advantage of being a full-size quarter-wave vertical on any band from 40m to 10m. No traps, no coils. The wire element inside the antenna is driven up and down by a step motor. There is a facility within the small control box for the SteppIR which allows it to be driven directly by the rig. As you change band on the radio, the antenna sets about re-tuning itself.

For the FH/G3TXF installation a dozen or so random-length radials were stretched out over the beach. The antenna itself was positioned at the high-water mark. This meant that the radials, many of which were in the water, needed to be repositioned after each high tide, because the radials got ‘washed-up’ to the level of the antenna. This constant re-arranging of the radials is a small price to pay for having a vertical antenna which, for much of the time, was close to the water’s edge.

FH/G3TXF QSOs and analysis

5,000 CW QSOs were made during the four nights of operation. 40m and 17m proved to be the main bands, with the majority (65%) of QSOs being with Europe and 23% with North America. 196 QSOs (4%) were with UK stations.

Band (m)	QSOs	%
12	150	3.0
15	540	10.8
17	1,700	34.0
20	270	5.4
30	720	14.4
40	1,620	32.4
Total	5,000	100.0

Continent	QSOs	%
Africa	12	0.2
Asia	580	11.6
Europe	3,244	64.9
N-America	1,160	23.2
Oceania	4	0.1
S-America	0	0
Total	5,000	100.0

The band analysis is vastly different from the 2000 FH operation, when the main volume bands were 10m and 12m. This time there was only a handful of QSOs on 12m and nothing on 10m.

Equipment and Operating

The same Kenwood TS-570DG has been used on DX trips for the past six years and still proves to be a convenient radio for use when travelling. For CW pile-ups the usual operating style is a mixture of computer sending and manual electronic keying. However, on this occasion all 5,000 CW QSOs were made using a manual electronic keyer with no memory facility. It wasn't planned to be that way. Soon after arriving in Mayotte someone walked off with my laptop. Fortunately the theft was before the start of the operation and there were no logs lost (nor indeed any other data).

Return journey and QSLs

The original plan had been to operate as FH/G3TXF from Mayotte for four nights, followed by a similar-length operation as

FR/G3TXF from Réunion. In practice it did not work out like this. On the flights from Mauritius to Mayotte the local Réunion papers were full of stories about serious health problems being caused by the mosquito carried 'bending sickness' (chikungunya), which was striking people down all over Réunion. Hence after the FH/G3TXF operation on Mayotte it was decided to skip the planned FR/G3TXF operation from Réunion and to carry on back to Mauritius, where we had a non-radio beach holiday for the rest of the trip. The original intention had been to operate from FR/G3TXF during the FOC Marathon. Unfortunately this never happened.

There's something odd about visiting a DXpedition location for a second time. However, Mayotte was certainly worth a second visit. The set-up at the Hotel Trévani is ideal and FH is still high on the wanted lists. There are some real advantages to making a return visit. You know exactly where to put the antenna, as well as the ins and outs of the particular location.

The FH/G3TXF QSLs were designed and ordered from UX5UO within hours of the return from FH. Direct QSLing started within three weeks of the end of the operation. The FH/G3TXF log has been uploaded onto LoTW. Further details on FH/G3TXF and other operations can be found on www.G3TXF.com.

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
 The UK DX Foundation

To Split or not to Split in Contests?

Roger Western, G3SXW

g3sxw@compuserve..com

That is the question. The VooDudes have debated this more and more often recently. We need input to help us decide the question. What do you think?

For DXpeditions there is a well accepted norm: go split whenever the pile-up is so big that the QSO rate is depleted. This is to everyone's advantage. It is acceptable to all because the extra frequency spectrum occupied is probably underused anyway, and very few people are inconvenienced. The balance is strongly in favour of going split and there are very few complaints about the practice, so long as the bandwidth used is not too wide. Both sides of the pile-up are pleased with the outcome: the caller gets through more quickly and at the same time the DX station can satisfy his main objective of handing out as many contacts as possible and maximises his operating enjoyment.

But in the contesting context this involves different parameters. In the major contests like CQ WW the bands are full of participants, so occupying more than one frequency may disadvantage other contesters and be seen as selfish. This has been the generally accepted norm until very recently. Is this now changing? Split pile-ups are occasionally to be heard in contests nowadays. On the one hand the band is already crowded, so it is not fair to consume more than one frequency, but on the other hand if the QSO rate of the DX station (handing out valuable points and multipliers) is increased substantially, then a lot more contesters are happy to log the rare station - perhaps many more than the few who might be inconvenienced by occupying the extra bandwidth.

Firstly, let's establish that we are discussing here ONLY the big contests where pile-ups on rare stations are common. This probably only includes CQ WW, WPX, ARRL and IOTA. In the case of smaller contests the issue does not arise, because there is already unused bandwidth (empty frequencies) so there is no more inconvenience to others than in the DXpedition situation. Also, we are only talking about stations who are rare enough to generate large pile-ups, not the 'big guns' who have the signal to do this. In my experience co-channel operating can slow down the QSO rate substantially, when repeats are necessary to get through the QRM caused by folks (especially Europeans) calling at the wrong times or calling for too long.

Let's do some sums. Take the case of 40m from West Africa. If operating co-channel and when only attracting two to three callers at a time, we can log 150 QSOs an hour. When the pile-up builds this can drop to 100 (let's stick with round numbers here). This band is open for only 28 hours in the weekend - the large pile-up exists for about 20 of those hours. At a loss of 50 QSOs per hour, this is a total loss of 1,000 QSOs. Our normal 40m achievement is around 2,500 QSOs, so maybe this could be increased to around 3,500 by going split. That's a BIG difference.

We are starting to slowly talk ourselves into supporting the case for going split. The impact can be dramatic. In this example, up to 1,000 extra contesters could earn one more multiplier (and a QSO) just on 40m. If this sort of outcome is repeated on all six bands, perhaps some 4-5,000 extra multipliers (and QSOs) could be handed out. At the same time, of course, our score would rocket, about which we would definitely not complain. But

the fact that we have resisted going split until now surely confirms that this has, at least until now, been less of a deciding factor for us than the effect on contesting in general. We want to win but we take our contesting responsibilities seriously as well.

There is another factor which is more subjective: the more that contest DXpedition pile-up operators get that adrenalin rush of running bigger pile-ups as quickly as possible, the more they enjoy it, then the more likely they are to want to go back again next year. This is to everyone's advantage.

Which bands? Where the band is wide, maybe there is enough space to use a second frequency for the split, without filling the band with QRM. This applies to all bands except perhaps 160m (and 40m until everyone gets the extra bandwidth). This year for the first time the VooDudes (TZ5A) often went split on 160m by a tiny amount (500 Hz) and the comment often heard was that the split was not big enough to allow stations at the far end to hear us through the local QRM of other callers.

How much split? So, 0.5 kHz is not enough on 160m, but it may help on the HF bands. Maybe it needs to be the normal 1-2 kHz (on CW) to work effectively. How wide? Clearly, this is the big issue in so far as band pollution is concerned. If we keep it to a maximum of 1 kHz wide, this might be acceptable and would definitely help the QSO rate. But filling 3-4 kHz with calling-stations might block out a section of the band, to the detriment of other contesters. We are sensitive to the morality of this issue, but at the same time recognise the potentially big advantages to both ends of the pile-up. We certainly find it hugely frustrating to have to go back to a station two to three times before he hears us replying to him through all the QRM of other callers, and hugely frustrated that our operating skill (QSO rate) is deflated so much.

Trend-setting? The big worry is that operating split is NOT currently a normal contesting practice, but if some high-profile stations start to do it, then others might follow. This could lead to a worrying trend whereby even loud stations with smaller pile-ups, in unrare locations, also start to do it, as they realise that it aids their score. Contesters will do anything to win!

So, this is a far more complex issue than at first meets the eye. If it could be restricted only to those stations which are rare multipliers, then everyone benefits. So long as the split is tight, say 1 kHz. By the way, a tight but well separated split (eg 1 kHz, but RX well up the band) does not work as not enough callers are sufficiently skilled to call in the right place. Only some would do so, but maybe this would help to at least reduce the QRM on the DX frequency. Announcing the split in advance of the contest might also achieve partial success, but would have the undesirable affect of promoting the concept and encouraging too many unrare stations to start using this tactic.

So far our group has discussed this issue each year and moved very slightly towards adopting the practice, by allowing the RX frequency to slide up the band just 300-400 Hz, without announcing it. This helps a little to reduce QRM, but to have really useful impact, and to increase the number of QSOs as suggested above, we probably need to spread the pile-up across 1 kHz.

What do you think? If you are a DXer (non-contester), you would probably prefer us to use split to help increase our QSO rate and thereby help you to break the pile-up more quickly. But if you are a serious contester, would you prefer being able to get through the pile-up for a quicker QSO - or would you prefer the band not to be polluted? Maybe the 'big guns' who can command a frequency, and who can get through the pile-up to work the multiplier quickly, might prefer us NOT to

go split, whereas the 'smaller pistols' would love to use their operating skills to break the pile-up more quickly. Should we marginally disadvantage the 'big guns' in order to help the 'smaller pistols'?

Answers on a postcard please:

Do you: 1a) Agree; 1b) Disagree; 1c) Don't Care

Are you: 2a) a DXer; 2b) a contester, mostly CQing; 2c) a contester, mostly hunting



Suggestions for DX Pile-ups

by Uncle DX

By addressing some of the basics for DX behavior in pile-ups, we will increase our awareness and knowledge, help our ham buddies and make the DX journey successful and pleasurable. It takes two to tango, and both sides of the pile-up have responsibilities.

We can agree most of the differences in how we deal with these issues have to do with which side of the pile-up we are on, being a 'little pistol' or a so-called 'big gun' and perhaps just the size of our egos. DXers may have an ego!

Below are some of the terms and issues for DX pile-ups, together with Uncle DX's opinion on how to deal with them from both sides.

1. The DX station operators are in charge.

Yep, you bet. They are the ones who spent the money, lost sleep, have crabs and spiders crawling up their legs, perhaps risked their

life, been cold, hot, seasick, abused, etc. They are the boss. Period.

2. Operating Rules.

The DX station should make and adhere to their rules quietly and respectfully. The rules should be followed the same way by the other side.

3. By numbers (call areas, or areas of the world).

When the pile-ups are large (this is relative, but again the DX operator decides what is large), restricting the calling area is good and prevents using too much spectrum to enable a decent rate. By call areas or numbers is good for SSB - but EU, Asia, NA, SA, US, JA, VK/ZL, Pacific etc. do well for CW or all modes much of the time.

4. Split and spread out.

ALWAYS, PLEASE - even from the first QSO. The DX operator should listen where

they say, never using more space than absolutely necessary and being aware that existing QSOs may be in progress where they are listening. Some may say '200 to 210' and never get off 200! I'm still working on that one.

5. Signing calls by the DX stations.

I like giving the DX call sign to end a QSO and indicate it's time for others to call. Obviously this serves two purposes. If not the callsign, make and stick with the same thing like 'TU', QRZ etc. giving the callsign at least every 10 minutes.

6. Timing.

I put a LOT of stock into timing and pattern for a DX operator. Roger, G3SXW, Nigel, G3TXF and Andy, G3AB, are very good at this. Listen to them and learn, as it adds to their rate and improves the success and accuracy for ALL.

7. Dupes.

If the QSO is not certain, do it again, and the DX station should keep on trucking and not waste time saying 'B4' or 'dupe'. Don't break rhythm. We should all try to be better operators and not dupe.

8. 'Who first?'

This is hard. However, I believe the DX station should work the easiest and the ones which will provide them with the best rate, bearing in mind specific areas where the need may be greater (see #3 above). As the pile-ups become smaller, work the edge to give the 'little pistols' and those using low power a chance to have a QSO.

It must be said this practice will make better operators and station builders out of all of us trying to work the DX. Just as important is the fact that many hours have been spent

building and installing better antennas and/or stations, spending indecent amounts of resources, spilling blood and hurting for days from climbing trying to make a 'big' signal. They darned well deserve to be loud and work the DX first if possible.

9. Lectures (on the air).

Never, never ever by anyone. Period. Rise above.

10. Full calls.

Always. Any questions?

11. Gray line.

Know it, both sides - and live it.

12. Everyone should know their equipment and how best to use it.

Take pride in your CW note, the quality of your SSB audio, correct TX frequency and operating techniques. Listen and listen some more to the instructions by the DX station and then abide by their instructions. Call when you can actually hear them. Enough ESP, poor timing and guess QSOs. Give a chance for others to complete their QSO.

13. KC cops.

Forget it. It only builds the egos of those intentionally causing the problems (and they are sick). For those who are still learning to operate their radios, this is not the place and time to teach, and for the honest mistakes (and we all make them) they will discover their mistake without any cop's QRM.

Perhaps an 'UP' once is okay in some situations. Respectful help is authorised, but quick and seldom, for it will cost others that critical letter in their call and all that goes with it.

14. Spots.

Yes, and often by EVERYONE, not just a few. We should help others and not just sit back by reaping and never sowing, but please make them accurate. Sloppy spots are on the increase. Take pride. After all, your callsign is attached!

15. Comments on spots.

Keep any comments in the true ham spirit and not personal, or with a political/religious agenda. We are all equal in Ham Radio - no exceptions.

16. CW.

To run callsigns together at a fast speed, such as butting the prefix and suffix, too close is a

poor operating practice. We can generally figure out the DX callsign, but think about the DX station trying to get YOU in their log. Also, add a little time before that first letter after the DX has turned it over. Often it is too quick and slows the rate by requiring an 'AGN?'.

There may be more, but these are the high spots for both sides. Ladies and gents, let's clean up our act. Common sense always applies as well in helping our brothers and sisters make that special Q.

73/DX Uncle DX

[with thanks to DX Publishing Inc.]

Freezing in Finland

Roger Western, G3SXW

g3sxxw@compuserve.com

Each year there are two major amateur radio meetings in Finland. The biggie is 'Summer Camp', held each July, which appeals to all aspects of amateur radio. The last I heard was that there are some 2,000-3,000 in attendance. But in January each year the 'Contest Club Finland' and the 'OH DX Association' join forces for a convention. They attract 100+ people. Last year this was held on a cruise ship and was deemed to be such a success that it was repeated this January. So it was that several intrepid DXers and contesters from UK headed out to join in the fun and frolicking.

We finished up with seven UK delegates: G3LZQ, G3XTT, G3SXW, G3TXF, G4XRV, G5LP and GM4AFF, along with other foreigners including the US contingent

(K2WR, K6AW of HC8N, and W3UR of the 'Daily DX') and EY8BA/EY8MM. Of course several UA3, OZ, ES, I and DL chaps were also present. The format is to embark on a massive cruise liner on the Friday afternoon, voyage overnight to Stockholm, and then back to Helsinki on the Saturday night. DX and contest presentations are available on the Friday evening and all day on Saturday.

This year there was a wide range of presentations: SO2R; using propagation software to determine the best location for winning CQ WW; an update on WRTC 2006 in Brazil with satellite-link to OH2BH and PY5EG; the KP5 story from W3UR; a report from WWYC, World Wide Young Contesters; oh, and some English bloke (G3S-something) describing the TZ5A operation in CQ WW

CW. Everyone, speakers and audience alike, spoke fluent English.

The cruise ship itself is magnificent and very comfortable. The food is outstanding and the entertainment varied: several bars and restaurants, night club with floor show, disco (at 150 dB!). All day on Saturday we moored up in Stockholm harbour and a dozen Swedish DXers and contesters joined in the fun. For DXCC Feet chasers there is even the added bonus of scoring a new point by running down the gangway when we stopped briefly at the Åland Islands, OHØ.

This year we (G3SXW, G3XTT, G4XRV and G5LP) took advantage of the Ryanair sale and flew from Stansted to Tampere for 1p each way. With airport taxes, this meant that we did five hours flying to get to Finland and back for the princely sum of £26. We went from Tampere to Helsinki by train (two hours each way) and this just added to the adventure. Finland is a highly civilised, efficient, clean and pleasant country. We saw no evidence of graffiti, jabs, spitting, chewing gum, drunken brawls, even arguments. Most European countries cannot claim that much these days. Except you know where.

A new experience for most of us were the extreme temperatures. On arrival (late evening) we were met with -24° C. The daytime high climbed up to -18° C. Wow! This was something to remember. Even the four-minute walk to our hotel was enough to feel that we were about to suffer some permanent damage. Gloved fingers as well as faces went numb. Faces the next morning were pink as if sunburnt. Indoors (even the railway station) was pleasantly heated: they know how to cope. The countryside was bedecked with snow, beautiful Christmas card scenes; the lakes were completely frozen; the Baltic Sea, near to the shore anyway, was frozen over, but our large ship seemed not to struggle to break through it. You certainly didn't want to venture out onto the outside decks of the ship because they were covered in ice.

All in all, a wonderful weekend with, naturally, much swapping of DXing and contesting stories with fun people. To be recommended. To see some great photographs of this weekend please visit www.g3txf.com.

Dayton DX Dinner

The South West Ohio DX Association is pleased to sponsor the 21st annual DX Dinner to be held in conjunction with the 2006 Dayton HamVention®. The dinner will be on Friday evening, 19 May, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, located in Dayton city center. This is the same venue as in years past. We expect to have another interesting program at the dinner and expect it to be a bit different than those in recent years. In addition, there will be some nice attendance prizes - last year the main prize was an Icom IC-756ProIII.

Tickets are \$34.00 per meal, payable in US funds to SWODXA (sorry, we do not process PayPal or Credit Card payments). You may order from Jay Slough, K4ZLE, at his CBA. SASE would be appreciated. We attempt to honor group seating requests when tickets are ordered together. In an attempt to provide a better view of the speaker, we are changing the seating this year. There are ten seats per table and space is limited. Come and join us for an evening of fun and fellowship where some of the best DXers gather during HamVention®. Further information from Jay at k4zle@arrl.net. With thanks to W8GEX, w8gex@aol.com.

Railway Signalling

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

g3rzp@g3rzp.wanadoo.co.uk

So what on earth has railway signalling got to do with DX? More than you would think, gentle reader. Read on:

Back in 1998, at a CEPT meeting of the Spectrum Engineering working group held in Siofok in Hungary, there was a proposal for a railway signalling system in the low HF region – roughly 4 to 8 MHz, using spread spectrum. In fact there were requirements for two systems, Eurobalise and Euroloop. Eurobalise is fitted by signals, while Euroloop uses a long leaky coax feeder to form a loop with the rail of up to 1 km in length. At Siofok, a number of radio people suggested that a common frequency could cause problems, but this was denied by the proponents. It turned out that the radio people were right, and so there is now a proposal to centre Euroloop on 13.56 MHz, with a spread spectrum modulation occupying a band from around 9.5 to 18 MHz. The power transmitted into the leaky feeder can be up to 25W.

So now can you see what railway signalling has to do with DX?

The leaky feeder is laid close to the actual rail and is energised when a train enters the section of track covered by the loop. There is some argument as to whether or not the presence of the train will reduce the radiation by screening, or whether it will lead to the production of what is effectively a slot radiator.

This matter was brought to the attention of IARU Region 1, and John, G3WKL, has been representing the IARU at the sub group of the Electronic Communications Committee Project Team SE24. I go to SE24 as part of my work, as for various reasons, I have a very

specific interest professionally in the ISM frequency of 13.56 MHz.

By the time you read this we should know if there's potential problem for amateur radio. G3WKL presented a paper at the January SE24 meeting in Copenhagen where he had done some calculation of the potential effects on noise floors caused by this system when ionospheric propagation was taken into account. There seemed to be an unfortunate lack of realisation in some quarters that the potential for radiation from a 1 km long loop that included the running rail was going to be very different to that measured at 10 metres from an electric locomotive. This is even more so because the EMC effects of the locomotive are more predominantly a vertically polarised electric field, while the loop produces a horizontally polarised magnetic field!

Fortunately I was able to help John, while we also had support from the Netherlands Administration, NATO and a Danish consultant who was interested. The Netherlands Administration have done some modelling in NEC4, but need some more measurements made to validate some of the models. There was agreement to get more measurements made, including ones at much greater distances than the 10 metre range used previously (10 metres is the standard distance for measuring the radiation of Short Range Devices at HF, but it's based on small loops, not ones several hundred metres long!). One problem here is the timing of the measurements since, obviously, decisions on system deployment have to be made as soon as possible, while outdoor measurements in Switzerland (where the initial system is installed) in February don't necessarily sound much fun.

So hopefully we will have found that the measurements allow adequate simulation to be carried out to allow the ionospheric propagation to be better modelled, and even more hopefully that there won't be a problem all over Europe to DXers in the 30, 20 and 17m bands. But I wouldn't recommend buying a house too close to a railway. If there is going to be a problem with ionospheric propagation of the aggregated power from a lot of these systems, of course the amateurs won't be the only ones affected, although we may be the worst off. I did point out that if John's paper had any validity, the aeronautical community should be told about this potential problem, so we may well see more interest from professional HF users.

The moral, if there is one, has got to be that it's only by being able to fund technical people to go to these meetings when necessary that we can manage any sort of defence of the amateur bands. Generally, for CEPT meetings, that means IARU Region 1 has to send someone – RSGB would be allowed to if they could afford to – and IARU is funded through national societies. So no matter how much you disapprove of the RSGB, the money that the IARU gets because of your membership of RSGB is vitally important in funding the defence of the amateur bands.

Finding the people who are willing to give up their time to represent amateur radio for the

IARU is another problem. Most of the people who do this are retired, and in a number of cases, wish to reduce the load. At 58, I'm one of the youngest, but I haven't retired yet, so my time is limited. Ideally, technically qualified people are needed, with a background in radio communication, especially in areas such as spectrum management and, even more ideally, with experience in international standards and regulatory matters. Fluency in English is a 'must', since the meetings of the ECC, ETSI (European Telecommunications Standards Institute) and the ITU are conducted in English. But someone with the technical skills in radio engineering who has the time and who is willing to learn the strange ways of regulation and standardisation can find this area of helping amateur radio very rewarding – and it can prove useful experience for a career progression! It also leads to knowledge of several European cities - and because of the necessity of 'networking' with other delegates, knowledge of more than a few watering holes and restaurants too.

So railway signalling isn't just men in signal boxes pulling levers that wag a bit of metal a mile away up and down by means of a wire being pulled. It can mean yet another darned noise source that comes up just as the DX almost gets to be workable

Australian special event stations for the Commonwealth Games

The 18th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia, contested by 4,500 athletes from 70 countries, will be celebrated by two special event callsigns: AX3MCG and AX3GAMES. AX3MCG (Melbourne Commonwealth Games) will be QRV daily from 1-31 March 2006, with operators David, VK3EW, and Peter, VK3QI, aiming to achieve at least DXCC. A multi-operator roster will also activate the call AX3GAMES, generally QRV daily on all bands. Special commemorative QSLs for both callsigns will be available via the VK3 Buro. Individual VK's may also substitute the AX prefix during the games period. VK3EW

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory – 40th Anniversary Edition

New IOTA reference number issued

AF-101 SU Red Sea Coast
North group (Egypt)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AF-032 5H1C Zanzibar Island
(January/February 2006)

AS-171 4S7PAG Barberyn Island
(December 2005)

NA-124 XF1K Cerralvo Island
(February 2006)

NA-199 FS/F5AHO/P Tintamarre
Island (November 2005)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

20 March 2006

Email: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk

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

Visit the website for the latest IOTA information.

At New York's Kennedy Airport today an individual, later discovered to be a NYC public school teacher, was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, protractor, set square, slide rule and calculator. At a morning press conference a White House spokesman said authorities believe the man is a member of the notorious Al-Gebra movement. The man is being charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of maths instruction.

"Al-Gebra is a fearsome cult," the spokesman said. "They desire average solutions by means and extremes and sometimes go off on tangents in search of absolute value. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns', but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of mediaeval, with co-ordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, "There are three sides to every triangle".

When asked to comment on the arrest President Bush said: "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of maths instruction he would have given us more fingers and toes".

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

Having just finished the CQ WPX RTTY contest, I am still feeling tired, but happy with my result. I ended up with six new band-slots, the best of these being ZL on 80m. This was especially pleasing, as I had opted to have a night's sleep to start with, and the aim was to be in the shack for 0600 or earlier.

Last year, I was still suffering with my broken arm, and made 480 QSOs for about 480K points and 366 mults. The aim this year was to beat that score, so I set a target of 500 QSOs and 500K points.

As it turned out, I overslept and didn't get into the shack until just after 0700. I decided to check 80m, expecting to pick up a few G, GM, ON, PA etc. mults, but heard ZL2AMI in S & P mode. I quickly found a spot and called CQ, which elicited a good run of the usual EU stations, but at 0740 there was ZL2AMI on the screen! To say I was ecstatic was an understatement. I was also a little surprised at working ZL so long after sunrise.

On Sunday morning I again overslept - and again checked 80m to start with. This time I managed to work 8P2K at 0739. He had just worked ZL2AMI, and this time I could barely hear the ZL.

WPX is one of those contests where you get double points on 40 and 80m - and mults count once only, not once per band. This generally means that you have to hit the low bands as much as possible, while trying to work as many non-EU stations as you can for maximum points.

When 15 and 20m are open you have to decide which of the two will give you the better rate. As it happened this year, 15m was all but dead, with only a few stations being

tempted to call CQ. On the other hand 20m was full of RTTY, from 14.060 MHz way up to 14137. I saw one cluster comment about RTTY being so high up the band that "it was in nosebleed territory"! Curiously, the spread of RTTY didn't elicit too many complaints from either the CW or the SSB end.

On the Saturday evening and during the night, the Dutch PACC contest was on, and this did cause a bit of hassle at the lower end of 40m, with so many RTTY signals competing for space. It is also worth remembering to check 40m during the day, where you could possibly hit a few of the close EU stations you may not hear after dark.

Looking at the claimed scores, there were clearly a few stations running high rates, but with low points, and few mults. This rather looks as though they were CQing on 20m for long periods, and not chasing the mults, or making the most of the lower bands.

Before any contest it is vital to read the rules, and to know what the mults are. It is also worth keeping in mind conditions, and checking the other bands at odd times.

I also find it useful to set a target. This helps in several ways. If, for example, you set a target of 500 contacts, and by the end of the first half of the contest you have only achieved 200, then you may have to revise your strategy. It also helps you to maintain a momentum, and keeps you focussed. If the run starts to slow down, go S & P, as you may find that you can work a higher rate this way, rather than calling over and over again for few replies.

During the last few contests I have noticed a lot of stations responding to a report with TU 599 001 001 SK, but with no indication of calls. This is poor practice and will often result in points being deducted for logging incorrect calls.

It is not unusual for two stations to be close together - and you have just taken a report meant for someone else as yours. The onus is on the calling stations to correctly identify the station he is calling, but be wary of such calls, and note the timing. If he responds a little bit too quickly, or there is a longer delay in his response, it may not be for you. Call QRZ AGN? and see what happens. If in doubt, I will often not log the contact.

I have also had situations where I am calling CQ, and station A calls me. I respond to station A, but then find station B calling station A. I repeat my over to station A, which station B takes as his from station A. Again, using callsigns at the beginning and end of the over would obviate some of this.

The RSGB 80m CCs are here again, and some of you may be unsure about conducting QSOs in RTTY. The principle is very similar to that of CW, and you ought to check your buffers and try to keep them as brief as possible.

When calling someone, there is no need for 3 x 3 calls. Just a DE followed by your call two or three times, depending on conditions.

When the caller responds to you, send something like GU0ØSUP TU 599 001 001 DE G3XYZ K and leave it at that.

If you get asked for a repeat of the serial number, have a buffer set to send the serial number once, and press the corresponding key as many times as you think necessary, again depending on conditions.

Also, try to respond promptly, but make sure you wait for the carrier to drop. If I am CQing,

I will wait about five seconds before calling again. You need to call me in that time, or I simply won't hear you.

When calling CQ I find it more effective to end the sequence with a CQ as well, so that anyone tuning across your signal will immediately realise you are open for business! When the QSO is completed, try sending G3XYZ TU NOW QRZ? DE GUØSUP CQ, which also has the same effect. If you are tuning across the band and you see DE GUØSUP PSE K, you will have to wait for the next transmission to see whether it was me calling CQ, or whether I was responding to a CQ call.

Lastly, if you find that you are one of several calling a station, and he responds with AGN?, it will pay you to wait and see if someone else tries to get in first. If so, then wait a little longer, then send your call.

Unlike CW (or SSB for that matter), several signals arriving at the same time simply produce gibberish. Your aim is to get your call in the clear. This is often a good time to send your call just once, and no more. This will often appear in the clear, and the caller will come back to you.

On the RTTY reflector there has been a bit of discussion about correcting calls. In general the consensus was that if you call someone, and they respond with your call wrong, then call again until they get it right. Don't send a report to them, and then try and correct your call! By then it is too late and they will be working the next station.

If someone is calling you, and they get your call wrong, I will often call CQ again, or use QRZ AGN? with my call sent three times, as a way of making them realise their mistake. If they still get it wrong, send a report, but don't log it!

Whatever your aim in a contest, the object is to enjoy it. If you want to enter a major contest and you make only 20 or 30 contacts, then that is fine. There are plenty of folk who do just this, probably just to give away a few points for friends, or whatever, and it is perfectly valid. However, if you start to make hundreds of contacts, then surely this has to be classed as a serious entry?

Whatever you do, please submit a log! If you can't be bothered to enter a correctly formatted log, then send it in as a checklog. Even that log with only a few dozen contacts is useful.

My pet hate at the moment are those stations that sit in a pile-up to work me, seeing me send and receive serial numbers, and then come back with name, QTH, proper RST, and various other details, and then tell me they are not in the contest when I ask for a serial number!

Firstly, I don't understand how they can fail to notice a contest is under way. Secondly, is this the way they would handle working some rare DX such as 3YØX? OK, so I appreciate they probably want GU on RTTY, but it isn't the best way to approach things.

I have also noted a few who will use 3 x 3 calls to call you, then respond with a contest report wrapped in 3 x 3 calls once more. I guess this is due to them using the standard buffers in their software, but I still don't understand why they do it. And why are so many stations sending the RST two or three times before sending a serial number?

I recently had this as a response:

```
GUØSUP GUØSUP GUØSUP DE XX1XX
XX1XX XX1XX RGR RGR AND TNX
UR RST 599 599 599
SERIAL NUMBER 049 049 049
TIME 1016 1016 1016
```

```
HOW COPY AND KEYS BTU AR GUØSUP
GUØSUP GUØSUP DE XX1XX XX1XX
XX1XX
```

which I thought was a little on the verbose side!

Ah well, at the end of the day it's just a hobby and done for fun!

Upcoming contests:

BARTG Spring HF	0200 UTC March 18 to
	0200 UTC March 20
EA	1600 UTC April 01 to
	1600 UTC April 02
SPDX	1200 UTC April 22 to
	1200 UTC April 23
ARI	2000 UTC May 06 to
	1959 UTC May 07

Check out www.rttycontesting.com for the full rules.

Recent QSL info: WP3C via W3HNC, HK1AR via YL2KL, EK8WA via SP9ERV

Top 5 QSL Managers

John, K1XN, from the GoList, has announced the 'Top 5 QSL Managers'. John states, "These are the managers you, the DX community, have indicated to be your favorite managers by a wide margin for 2005.

Just a note, there were very few people who sent in nominations that did not list W3HNC. Joe was listed on more than 100 messages more than the next nominee. Joe also has been selected by you each and every year that the survey has been active and has been the most votes' getter each year...".

The Top 5 are: W3HNC, IZ8CCW, **G3SWH**, **G3TXF** and **G3SXW**.

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

AFS & 80m CC 2006

It was disappointing not to be able to gather together a team for the 80m AFS contests this year. Thanks to Jim, G3RTE, for volunteering, and let's hope there are a few more free bodies next year. Perhaps I'm looking at this the wrong way - and previous CDXC entrants now were part of a full team they'd created with their local radio club or contest group. I look forward to seeing the results.

As all of the entrants will have noted, the sideband event suffered particularly in the last hour, with intra-UK propagation all but disappearing. I actually took a short break to start preparing dinner, which was a first for AFS, where I'm normally glued to the chair for four hours! However, I was able to work a few Continental stations at the end. I guess the trick for those final minutes was finding a spot on 80m which was not occupied by someone else, inaudible to me, who would also be calling CQ. Was a lack of contacts at the end caused by just a sheer lack of callers, or the fact that in Germany my callsign was one of many all heard at the same time on the same frequency? I was often told that if a frequency just doesn't feel right, then I should simply move. That would be difficult at the start of the contest, but not so at the end.

The propagation that could be experienced on 80m in the evenings in January hopefully explained the decision to delay the start of the 80m Club Championships until February this year. Even so, the first SSB event was a struggle (or perhaps I should say 'challenge'), with local signals weak and watery. It was a chance for our GM friends to dominate,

working the bulk of the stations in the Midlands and the Home Counties more easily than we could ourselves. Some relatively local stations did appear to be inconsistently loud; perhaps some of them had forgotten that this event is strictly 100W maximum, unlike the AFS contests which had just taken place.

Most recently, the RTTY event was a lot easier. It seems the activity continues to increase. In previous years I had to work very hard to achieve a certain QSO number, but this last week I achieved the same, despite leaving the house for 10 minutes. It would be nice if more entrants would feel confident to try some of the non-RSGB events. I feel that this is, in part, what some domestic contests should be about - giving an opportunity for new modes and skills to be learnt in a 'friendly' environment, before trying some of the larger international events. I'd be happy to hear your own views on the subject. There may have been 80 or so people active in the CC RTTY event, but probably not even that number of casual operators in the worldwide WPX RTTY event just the previous weekend. The number of serious UK entrants could probably be counted on one hand. Is this just because people are time-limited and prefer shorter events they can compete in for the duration, or something else?

Contest Software continued

The following is intended as some pointers for relatively new testers. There won't be very much for the old hands to learn. But if anyone does have any specific experiences they'd like to share, I'd be more than happy to print them. A would-be contest entrant has asked the question, "What logging software should I use?" Well, while some testers still

successfully use pen and paper, the majority of entrants are using some form of computer assistance. The contest adjudicators are most likely using a computer database to cross-check entries anyway, so they also prefer an electronic log to be submitted.

While there are a few solutions for Macintosh and Unix/Linux systems, I'm assuming that the prospective entrant has a Windows PC available. On paper, a lot of the available options would appear to be very similar. This is to be expected, as a lot of the core functions will be exactly the same – logging, dupe checking, multiplier tracking, keying etc. But it's the slight differences in the implementation of the main features, rather than some seldom used 'bells and whistles', that in my opinion are more likely to sway a person's preference for one application over another.

This is where aesthetics come in. The screen layout, or set-up options, may be welcomed by one person but shunned by another. What I find as a positive feature, someone else may see as a negative. This makes recommendations difficult, apart from certain general niches where some software is noticeably better than others eg easiest for beginners, data support, RSGB contest support or multi-station networking. Fortunately in a lot of cases it's possible to 'try before you buy', by which I mean that there are demonstration copies of the software available to download. Even better – a good proportion of fully functional contest software is offered completely free of charge.

The contest fraternity has seen a slower transition from the DOS era to Windows compared with other hobbyists or professionals. Our requirements for software stability, quick restarts, and time-critical communication with other devices (ie our radios) meant that a lot of the earlier Windows-based software was not favoured by the community. There are still issues, of

course, but with the improvements in software and brilliant inventions like WinKey, the necessity for DOS PCs is almost completely gone.

Most logging program suites have a dedicated fan base – and this usually means that there are websites or e-mailing lists that can be joined. Most problems you might face have usually been seen, and solved, by someone else already, so you might not need to even ask the question. Just try an Internet search engine like Google, Yahoo or Ask, and type in a few words to summarise what you're looking for, eg 'Writelog parallel port keying / N1MM SO2R networking / SD Winkey'.

Coincidentally, a thread has just started on the UK-Contest reflector about some software issues – namely support for our domestic events. Unless you're very serious, and need to be aware of your points / QSO, or multipliers / QSO ratio with the correct scoring of local and DX contacts, which may also vary across bands, as long as the software will accept the exchanges received it should be sufficient. For example, the WPX contests are very popular and commonly supported, and so could meet the needs of several contests where a numerical serial number is given. The software needn't support the contest directly – especially with a claimed score not being a requirement of the Cabrillo specification and most contest rules. Contest developers' time is limited so we, as a user community, should be careful what we ask for.

To move onto some specifics, I'd much rather hear other people's opinions, and present a variety of those to get a balanced view, than simply state my own. But please note that I have still only received one response so far, so many thanks to Ron, GØMRH for, taking the time to write. Here's Ron's story:

"My introduction to contesting was with the Stratford-upon-Avon & DRS in the time of

logging with paper and pen. Small slips of paper were filled up by the operator, one for each contact, passed to the logger who wrote up the log sheets, RSGB pattern. Another member worked on a wide dupe-checking sheet. Automation came in with Super Duper, when the operator could do it all himself, but we played safe for a while by having a logger creating a paper log. As another interim we let SD create a QSO-by-QSO printout in addition to the floppy disk copy. I followed a similar procedure with my own contest operating, but relied on dumping to a floppy disk for backup.

Two or three years ago I spent quite some time looking at programs other than SD. These had been mentioned on the Contest Reflector and in various magazines by other contest workers. I tried most of those freely available - or available after a trial period at a cost. The majority turned out to be leftovers from the DOS-dominated era.

I still usually have available the latest version of SD. I like SD for its simplicity, but have had more than enough disappointments with bits of SD and SDCHECK not working properly. These parts have worked previously, but for some reason, often following an update, do not work again as expected. For CW I use WinKey with SD: it's essential. SD is still the old DOS version in a Windows dress and fixed in its form of presentation, even though it is called a Windows version.

I am now making much more use of N1MM after using it occasionally for about two years. I find N1MM is fine for SSB and CW, but I would like to use it for CW with a WinKey because of the easy speed changing available with the knob control and because it works in parallel with the PC/Laptop. Sending Morse by WinKey is an advantage, but I will have to install another COM port with my 'newer' laptop before I can. I like the look and handling of N1MM, also the flexibility and ease of using it as a true Windows program. The different windows that can be opened,

closed and sized to suit me, is great. To see and be able to work directly on the database as you operate is also great; the fact that it uses perhaps the world's most popular database also helps. One can use a mouse alongside the CW Key. It has networking and other features that I have yet to explore.

I feel that the program writers have an impossible task to satisfy every person's requests for features. I appreciate what they do. The KISS principle should apply as far as is possible. Cabrillo must have helped in this direction. I think that the contest organisers should do the calculating, as they do in any case, and we should not expect the logging programs to do this. The writing and updating work is too much for one person. I understand that N1MM is worked on by very experienced program writers (probably professional writers?), in different parts of the world and that their combined effort makes it all the better for this. I think this is the way to go.

The newer programs do, of course, need compatible PCs/laptops to work them, but not everyone is prepared to spend money in this way. I am second user to my equipment, which helps! Also, not every contest program user is all that PC-proficient and under-spec machines add to their problems.“

Thanks again Ron. I think your experiences are common to many. Hopefully we will have more input and feedback next time too.

Live Contest audio

One of the more recent developments of contest software is the ability to record the received audio to computer. Many people have recorded contests for posterity, and some good examples have been placed on the Internet. For the Internet users it's preferably to be able to break the audio up into manageable-sized chunks for download, and the most sought after option is the ability to

type in your own callsign and to hear your own QSO.

The next step has been taken by Randy, K5ZD, and Dave, KM3T, who are using a system originally developed for aircraft enthusiasts to listen to air traffic control from around the world over the Internet. Now you can listen to the two audio streams of SO2R live on the Internet. The team at HG6N in Hungary have also made something very similar available. There have been some questions asked if other 'single operator' entrants could in some way profit from this. I would think this unlikely, and that the benefits to contesting outweigh the risks. The ability for contesters and non-contesters alike to listen in this manner was very popular, as reported after the first outing after CQ WW, and now repeated for the ARRL DX contests.

WRTC 2006 Update

Since the last Digest the closing date for applications for contesters and referees for WRTC 2006 has been and gone. There was a flurry of activity regarding applications in those final few days – I suspect some people were waiting to see what other scores were posted already on the WRTC website. Competition for the team positions was, as expected, very high.

The application process involved submitting a points score, based on your finishing positions in several of the main DX contests from the last three or four years. Several weighting factors for multi-operator, single band etc. are then added, plus bonuses for record scores. Our scores in the UK were compared with some other European countries. Europe was divided into 3 sections, and the UK scores were compared with others from Southern and Western Europe. Several leading UK stations submitted scores, but unfortunately were not high enough to earn a place this time. Whilst I have been part of a few successful multi-operator contests at home and abroad that

formed some of the WRTC qualifying events, my domestic scores left me in a very lowly position in the tables. Now, if only results quantity was a factor in the application as well as quality!

Additional to the regular two-person teams that the competition has come to be known by, the multi-single teams will add a new element, as well as a number of young teams, and most recently a specially invited YL-only team.

Whilst there is no UK team going to operate in Brazil, I'm pleased to see that a number of UK contesters who volunteered to be referees for the event have been selected: John, G3LZQ; Don, G3XTT; Fred, G4BWP; Lionel, G5LP, and Stewart, GM4AFF, will all be traveling to Florianopolis in July, under the guidance of Roger, G3SXW, of the judging committee. Congratulations to all.

I was lucky enough to be selected for this role in Finland in 2002. Whilst the integrity of the competitors should not really be in question, the presence of a referee adds to the efforts undergone to ensure a fair and level playing field – and that WRTC is a true test of operator skill. Whilst the referee might seem at first instance to have a passive role during the contest itself, you're always listening to mark down potential busted calls, watch for accidental rule infringements, and also trying to learn something from the guys in the hot seat. Normally during a contest you're busy operating, so being able to sit back and watch other people plan a strategy was an interesting experience. That was 'just' the contest itself – the whole week of WRTC events and activities was very enjoyable. Each host country adds their own style to the event, and I'm sure our officials and any spectators making the trip to South America will have a great time. I look forward to a lengthy report!

Now that the teams have been selected, station design and strategy are at the front of the competitors' minds. Propagation on 80m is

another concern – especially when most entrants normally enjoy the luxury of operating in, or near to, the high population areas of Europe, North America or Japan. The next steps will be the arrangements for getting themselves, and probably a large amount of luggage, to their final destination in PY.

That's about all for this time. Probably the low sunspot numbers have an impact on how many people will be planning serious contest entries, but if you are active, or have even just bought yourself a new contest-related 'toy', let us know about it.

73, Lee GØMTN

Letters and E-mails to the Editor

from 9M6DXX

Steve, 9M6DXX (ex-G4JVG), now living in East Malaysia, will be active as 9M6DXX/P from Pulau Gaya (OC-133) on 18-19 March (approx. 0500 UTC on 18 March until 0600 UTC on 19 March) using 400W and a Butternut HF6V vertical located right above the ocean and with the radials literally in the salt water. Colour photo QSLs have already been printed and Steve promises an immediate response to QSLs sent to him at WDT 527, 88905 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. (There is no functioning QSL bureau in East Malaysia so it is necessary to QSL direct.)

Steve says, "I realise that this is the same weekend as the CDXC Annual Dinner, but please take a look for me on the Saturday before setting off for Crowthorne, otherwise there'll be no-one around for me to work in the UK! Best propagation to Europe tends to be on 20m (look around 14.260 MHz) between 1200 and 1600UTC."

Steve will also be active as 9M6DXX back on the Sabah mainland, OC-088, during the CQ WPX SSB contest on 25-26 March.

73 Steve, 9M6DXX

(now also XU7DXX)

from 5B4AGC

Missing the point in Cyprus. Or should I say DOT?

There seems to be a virus about in this area lately. I don't know how we all caught it, but it's shown up on a couple of occasions recently with me at least. What's the effect? Well, we all seem to be missing the first dot of our call signs on CW.

The 3YØX expedition has at least ten instances of us being logged as HB4 instead of 5B4. The calls I know about are HB4FL, HB4AFB, HB4AGC, HB4AGN and HB8AD and there are others. Could it have been the HB9 operator there, I wonder?!

My second instance was in the CQ WW CW contest in November, working single band on 20m. I suddenly had an enormous pile-up of stations calling me, all of whom I already had in the log. Very strange, I thought... When the contest was over and I was musing over all those dupes, I suddenly had an idea: check the DX Cluster. Sure enough, there it was: a kindly PAØ station had logged my contest call, H2G, as 'S2G' and spotted me in Bangladesh! If you now hear me sending six dots, you'll know why.

George, 5B4AGC

Not the GB2RS News

This week's headlines:

- UK amateur radio drinking ban
- Rave reviews for new-look RadCom
- Hungarian station wins Radio 4 award

Main News:

Following the announcement by the UK communications regulator, Ofcom, that as of 1 March 2006, Ash Wednesday, it will be an offence to smoke while operating an amateur radio station, the UK government has signalled its intention to also ban drinking on the air. This is in line with its overall aim of banning the drinking of alcohol in all public houses, bars and restaurants - indeed any form of personal enjoyment which might be left to us these days - with a view to making us all feel a lot 'happier' at the end of the day. As a Times columnist commented recently, "I have lived under a Latin American military dictatorship where daily life was freer than in Britain today". The only thing it was not advisable to do in such countries, he added, was to "go out into the street and shout 'Down with Señor Presidente!'".

The new-look RadCom, the RSGB's monthly magazine for members, continues to attract rave reviews, with its subtle pastel shades and highly attractive front covers. Indeed the February front cover, with its perfect example of oral hygiene, has since led the California Association of Medical Practitioners to nominate RadCom as their 2006 'Magazine of the Year'.

Special event station news:

HA145GULYAS is on the air throughout 2006 to celebrate the 145th Goulash Eating Championships taking place in Hungary on 15-16 April. Operation will be on all bands

and modes, indigestion permitting. This station has already won BBC Radio 4's prestigious 'Just a Minute' award for the most repetitions of a special event station item in a radio news broadcast ever: 13 weeks in a row to date - and still counting.

HF DX News:

HA145GULYAS is on the air throughout 2006 to celebrate the 145th Goulash Eating Championships taking place in Hungary on 15-16 April. Operation will be on all bands and modes, indigestion permitting.

Leo, W5LEO, will be in Leominster between 22 July and 22 August and operating under the callsign M/W5LEO. The 'mane thing', he says, is that on the air he does a roaring trade.

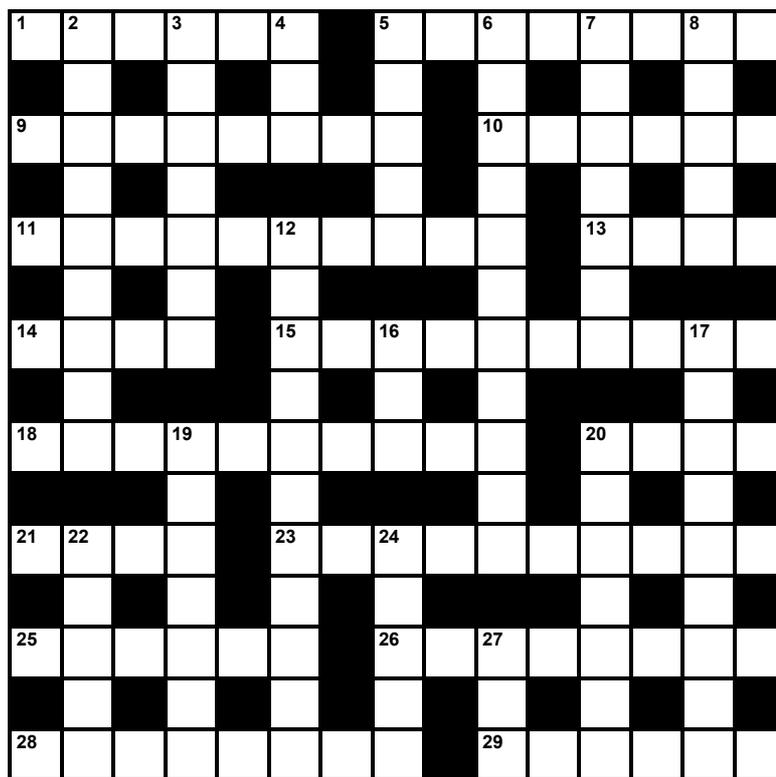
[I thought this was supposed to be the DX News? And surely that last one's more 'Cat X-ray' than 'Dog X-ray'? Ed.]

Solution to Digest Prize Crossword 14

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

Digest Prize Crossword 15 *by RFX*

A bit of white space for a change:



The winner of Prize Crossword 14, January 2006, and that brand-new £10 note: Robert Taylor, G4KTI, Stanway, Colchester, Essex.

Deadline for entries: 20 April >

ACROSS

- 1 Polish and French meal (6)
- 5 Islands, or igloos at sea (8)
- 9 The boxer least likely to win? (8)
- 10 Popular team serving behind bars (6)
- 11 No progress made in men-only race (10)
- 13 Cycle popular in the outskirts of Reading (4)
- 14 Supporter first to thrash the unruly child (4)
- 15 Going to London and not finding a seat, honest! (10)
- 18 Beautiful people show some sparkle in the early afternoon (10)
- 20 Walk with difficulty, swapping piano for a capital city (4)
- 21 Photograph showing unknown fish (1-3)
- 23 Siegfried's killer goes after policeman in French city (10)
- 25 Popular fish, a feature of Wellington (6)
- 26 Keep an eye on Labrador for the Guardian? (8)
- 28 If you get trapped by these, does it surf you right? (8)
- 29 Old Spanish town welcomes vote for enemy of Greece (6)

DOWN

- 2 Not normal, but clearly destined to become a peacekeeper? (9)
- 3 Cargo giving those affected, they say, a nasty scare (7)
- 4 Delinquent youth arrested in waste dump (3)
- 5 Italian tenor giving his 51st performance? (5)
- 6 Direction given by East Indian, say (11)
- 7 Covered in rare spots - urologist at first brought in (7)
- 8 Country listed north of Egypt? No, it's south! (5)
- 12 Mark the Americans sometimes say us Brits have in English? (5,6)
- 16 Starts to suffer prolonged agony in healthy retreat (3)
- 17 Oneself, at the top of the hit parade? (6,3)
- 19 Initially timid lads from the Faroe Islands older women like to play with? (3,4)
- 20 There's a lot wrong with that woman hater (7)
- 22 Go wandering in the mountains (5)
- 24 County in which prisoners ultimately qualify inside (5)
- 27 Demand a place in Texas (3)

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

Period	Call
till 31/03	FT5XP (Kerguelen) and FT5WL (Crozet) by TU5KG
till 31/03	II1TPG: special event station
till March	VKØSEE: Davis Station (VK-03, AN-016) by VK4SEE
till 05/04	J37LR: Grenada by VE3EBN
till May	7Q7HB: Malawi
till May	TR8FC: Gabon by F4BQO
till June	6W/EA4ATI and 6W1EA: Senegal
till June	JW4GHA: Bear Island (EU-027) by LA4GHA
till June	TT8LN: Chad by F5TLN
till 31/12	8S3ØJC: special call (Sweden)
till 31/12	9A15DX: special call
till 31/12	9A15ØNT: special event station
till 31/12	9A65ØC: special event station
till 31/12	GB6ØSWL: special call
till 31/12	GB6SWL: special call
till 31/12	JV8ØØ: special prefix (Mongolia)
till 31/12	LZ13ARDF: special event station
till 31/12	LZ5ØKSB: special call
till 31/12	ON4ØDST: special call
till December	VKØJLX: Davis Station (VK-03, AN-016) by VK2JLX
till ??	VP8CMH/MM by GMØHCQ
08/03-15/03	MJ/K8PT, MJ/K3PLV, MJ/W8JWN, MJ/N1NK: Jersey (EU-013)
09/03-23/03	CT3/DL3KWR and CT3/DL3KWF: Madeira (AF-014)
15/03-30/03	TY2LEO, TY4TW: Benin by K2LEO and GM4FDM
15/03-30/03	TY5WP, TY1MR: Benin by PA3EWP and IK1PMR
17/03-13/05	3B8/ON4LAC: Mauritius Island (AF-049)
17/03-20/03	P29K: Kranket Island (OC-258) by P2s
18/03-19/03	9M6DXX/P: Pulau Gaya (OC-133)
18/03-26/03	VE2CRAQ: special call
24/03-31/03	JW/F8DVD: Spitsbergen (EU-026)
06/04	SA2ØØ6EM: special event call by SK6AG and SK6AW
12/04-16/04	YE6P: Simeulue Island (OC-NEW) by YBs
18/04-17/05	VU4: Andaman Islands by DL7DF and others
18/04-20/05	VU4: Andaman Islands by K3LP
19/04-08/05	JT1Y & JTØY: Mongolia by IØSNY, I2FUG, IK2AQZ, IK2JYT

20/04-27/04	Nias Island (OC-161) by YC6JKV and others
21/04-25/04	HR4T and HQ4T: Tigre Island (NA-060) by CT1BWW & HRs
21/04-23/04	57th International DX Convention (Visalia)
April	SPØTPAX: special event station
06/05	SA2ØØ6EM: special event call by SK6AG and SK6AW
May-July	TT8PK: Chad by F4EGS
06/06	SA2ØØ6EM: special event call by SK6AG and SK6AW
23/06-25/06	Ham Radio 2006 (Friedrichshafen)
01/07-13/08	7S6EM & 8S6EM: special event calls by SK6AG & SK6AW
07/07-10/07/06	World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC)
15/09-17/09	28th Clipperton DX Club DX Convention

Revive Radio St Helena Day

ZD7 is an old friend for amateur radio operators, but St Helena is near the top of the 'Most Wanted' list for many shortwave listeners. Radio St Helena has a medium wave transmitter and, during the 1990s, 'borrowed' a shortwave transmitter one day per year for the now famous 'Radio St Helena Day' broadcasts. These were probably the world's first international, multi-media (telephone, fax, e-mail), listener interactive (in real time) shortwave programmes. The RSH QSL card is now a treasured item in the collections of many SWLs around the world. In late 1999 all this came to a halt, and the transmitter and antenna were scrapped.

Our new project is to try to put Radio St Helena – and also the country of St. Helena - back on the air on shortwaves. The Board of Directors and all those connected with RSH are behind this idea, but the entire project has to be funded privately by sponsors and through donations.

The revival of these programmes would spread the word about this wonderful, historic island and lead to increased commerce, trade and tourism for St Helena. It may also be possible to actively support amateur radio in the St Helena schools and possibly set up an amateur radio club station. This may be the first time ever that radio friends have actually helped to build 'their own' shortwave radio station. To give St Helena and the 'Saints' their international voice back, we will need a considerable amount of international help. We have set up bank accounts in Germany, the USA and the UK for donations, and we thank you one and all, in advance, for your contributions. For donations in UK Pounds please use:

Account: M. Phillips (Re Radio St Helena). Account number: 60613487, Barclays Bank, Bristol Branch, 20–13–34. If donating by cheque, please send directly to Martyn Phillips, G3RFX, 17 Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1BA.

We are also hoping for the donation of two transceivers such as the Yaesu FT-757GXII. For equipment donations, please contact me by email.

Robert Kipp, DJØPU, Special Assistant to the Station Manager of Radio St Helena, e-mail RDC-Roberts-Data@t-online.de. For further info on the project see www.sthelena.se/radio.

W1FH

The legendary W1FH, Charles Mellen, of West Roxbury, Massachusetts, became a Silent Key in the early morning of Saturday, 21 January 2006. He was 92 years old. "He was a well-known DXer starting in the pre-World War II days and continued for 76 years as W1FH", reports K1AJ, Bruce Marshall. Charlie was a polite and courteous operator and spent 99% of his time listening for DX, with few Stateside contacts. He seldom called CQ and was almost always the first to find those weak signals, often carrying on a 'cordial chat with the rarest of DX stations' before the pile-up began.

Charlie was first licensed on 9 February 1930. He became interested in 'shortwave' like many other amateur radio operators of his time after reading 'Popular Mechanix'. Charlie started out building a receiver and first listening to KDKA and WLW. It wasn't long before he was SWLing 80m AM ops and then eventually learning Morse code by listening to shipboard operators. After obtaining his ticket he was DXing on 20 and 80m.

After WW II and the beginning of post-war DXCC, W1FH was the first to obtain DXCC on both Mixed and Phone. It was 2 April 1947 when he was issued with his Mixed certificate and just over a month later for Phone. In the July 1947 issue of QST the first DXCC listing had nine DXers and at the top of the mixed list was W1FH with an amazing 137 countries. His closest competitor (W1CH) had 114 entities.

During the 1940s, 50s and 60s Charlie was one of the best known DXers in the US. He and W6AM, Don Wallace, were constantly battling for the top of the Honor Roll list. Don had his Press Wireless site, which had 36 Rhombics, and Charlie with a modest 600W

and a yagi at 60'. Charlie stopped submitting cards to the DXCC Desk in the mid-1960s, with an incredible 339/293 (deletes/current) countries mixed. He was at the top of the Honor Roll for both CW and SSB.

Among Charlie's QSL collection was one from W6ODD/CR8: Damao, Diu Island, the rarest DXCC Entity ever. Charlie was CQing on the morning of 3 August 1948 when the station from Damao answered. This was a Portuguese enclave on Diu Island, some 75 miles west of Bombay, India. Less than 100 QSOs were made by W6ODD, who is believed to be the only one to put on an operation from this rare one!

Most people didn't know that Charlie maintained schedules with AC4YN, Reginald Fox, a British agent who was in Tibet in the late 1940s. This was at a time when communist China invaded and annexed Tibet. Nightly reports were given to Lowell Thomas, a CBS radio commentator, over WRUL in Boston, where W1UQ, Mort Bardfield, was the studio engineer. These live news reports included the reporting of the safe escape of the young deposed Dalai Llama.

In April 1994 Charlie was finally inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame. Rest in peace, "Mr DX".

[With thanks to the Daily DX]

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

Dennis Booty G3KKQ 12/02/06

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

Bank: **NatWest Bank**
Branch: **Kingston-upon-Thames**
Sort Code: **60-60-02**
Account: **44532385**
Account name: **CDXC**

Reference: (Please write your **callsign** here)

The amount of £15.00 (fifteen pounds) / £20.00 (twenty pounds)
(Delete as appropriate)

1. starting with an **initial payment TODAY**
2. followed by an **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter,
starting with 1 July 2006 and until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

THIS REPLACES ANY EXISTING STANDING ORDER PAYABLE TO
'CDXC' or 'Chiltern DX Club' (Delete if this is a new Standing Order request)

Name(s) :

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :

.....

Postcode :

**After completion of this Standing Order Request Form,
please send the signed form to the bank branch looking after your account.**

