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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

This time I've had to reduce the size of the *Digest* because the printer's new lean, mean binding machine developed slight indigestion when faced with January's 68-page issue. Not to mention all those photo pages, some of which obviously didn't fit in too well with this machine's 'staple' diet.

Talking of which, if you're planning on sending in any photos for the *Digest*, could I once again ask you to please, please send them direct to our Picture Editor Mark, G4AXX, and not to me. If you do that, all I can then do is get in the car and drive the 179 miles from here to drop them off at Mark's place in Saffron Walden. Now I'm sure you wouldn't want me to have to do that, would you? Exactly.

And I'm sure you'll be delighted to hear that recently the Mini-skirted Maidens and I took delivery of a brand-new PC with acres of hard disk space and oodles of RAM. Not that our previous 5-year-old machine was suffering from what the Rev. Spooner might have called 'rack of lamb'. No, the main problem was a sudden inability to find the hard disk, although this was clearly visible inside. I tried pointing this out to the bloomin' thing, but it didn't want to know. Very strange.

Anyway, as always a veritable plethora of unmissable articles await you in this edition of the *Digest*. For starters our very own CDXC 'badge man' Gordon, G3USR, off in an MOD Boeing 767 from Brize Norton for the 10-hour flight to Ascension Island and ZD8UW. You wouldn't get me on one of those things, seeing as it's also 10 whole hours on lemon squash. As Gordon himself says, "Our sacrifice in the cause of amateur radio knows no bounds!"

Oh, and talking of those CDXC badges: I'm sure that Gordon (known affectionately on the CDXC Committee as 'Badger') would be only too delighted to help you place an order for one of these. As opposed to ordering a plaice, something I'd be most unlikely to do, seeing as I don't like fish. This is because of the spikey hard bits which I'd be guaranteed to find inside. Yes, 'Make no bones about it' is my motto.

In this *Digest* we also home in on teeny-weeny Willis Island, named after the American film star Bruce Willis, him of 'Die Hard' fame. No, not really. Either way, VK9DWX was there. After which Rob, GM3YTS, homes in for a while on Guinea and 3X5A - while Nick, G3RWF, tells us all about Sierra Leone next door and 9LØW.

Who have I failed to include so far in this month's brief DXpedition article line-up? Well, our very own Nigel, G3TXF. This time we have him jetting off to Barbados, as one does, for the connecting flight to Union Island in the Grenadines. Am I envious? In this case no, not really, seeing as I've been to both myself.

Finally, the RSGB's Convention, coming up at the excellent Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre (just) in Bedfordshire from the 9th to the 11th of October. I gather that last year one of the offerings on the menu for the traditional DX Dinner on the Saturday evening turned out to be a rather tough proposition. In this *Digest* you'll find a preview of the very special and slightly different menu they've decided to go for this year. Turn to page 48 for that.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

The past few weeks have been sad ones for CDXC with the passing of two of our stalwarts: George, G3LNS/5B4AGC, and Jim, VK9NS. Their obituaries appear elsewhere in this *Digest*.

I got to know George well as a member of our 2001 D68C Comoros team. A great team man and an excellent operator, he was really good fun on the island. George certainly played his part in breaking just about all the DXpedition world records at D68C. Nearly all these records stood for over eight years. George was also a great supporter of CDXC and was at our home with Barbara for last year's Summer Social. Our condolences go to Barbara and their family.

I knew Jim, VK9NS, less well than George, but I followed many of Jim's exploits, particularly to Bhutan and Heard Island, with great interest. He was also a great IOTA enthusiast and gave me a good deal of help when some of the weak IOTAs were activated in the Pacific at the start of this decade. Jim was an Honorary Member of CDXC – our condolences go to Kirsti.

I am finally back on the air and am pleased to report that the kit is working well. I have just one antenna at the moment, a Force 12 C31XR. It works like a dream. It's only at 40 ft and is unguyed, but I plan to guy it at 66 ft when the weather improves. The take-off from here is really excellent to all areas except to the east. The land rises in that direction and there is a thick forest. Raising the antenna should help. As a tri-bander I've been very surprised how well the C31XR works on 17m and 12m off the back. I have no antennas for LF yet, but hope to put up a four-square on 40m for starters. The background noise here is very low compared with my previous QTH in Felden, Herts. So far I have worked K5D/Desecheo

on 20, 17 and 15m. They were really weak, about 52- on 15m, but perfectly workable. Now for 12 and 10m – a real challenge with no sunspots!

I've been off the air for about five years and I don't think operators are any worse... or any better! Stations continue to call regardless of what the DXpedition operator says. If the operator calls for the station ending in 'X' then there is no point in those stations whose call does not end in 'X' continuing to call. I noticed several CDXC members (even G3s, believe it or not) breaking the rules when trying to work K5D. Come on, guys – let's set an example. Remember the CDXC aim 'To promote HF operating, to encourage excellence' etc.

The new RSGB QSL bureau is working well, with bureau cards for 3B7C and 3B9C arriving regularly. Thanks to Richard, G3UGF, and Lynn for their hard work. Richard recently joined CDXC. If any CDXC member still needs cards from either of the 3B7C or 3B9C DXpeditions please e-mail me the QSO details and I will send the cards to the bureau.

It amazes me how many cards could go astray because an incorrect routing is shown. Recent bureau cards for 3B7C showed G3SWH, G3SXW and G3TXF as QSL manager, but the bureau fortunately ignored these routings and sent them to me. G4NUG regularly receives direct cards for 3B7C and kindly forwards them. Personally, I find QRZ.com to be the most reliable source of QSLing data.

The CDXC social scene will soon be with us, starting with the Annual Dinner on Saturday, 21 March, at Wyboston. It looks as though we will have another good turnout. Have you booked yet? We are hopeful that Nigel, G3TXF, will be giving some

demonstrations of LoTW in the afternoon before the dinner.

See you at the Annual Dinner.

Trish and I are going to host the AGM and Summer Social here at Lower Withers on Saturday, 18 July (Trish, typing this, says "This is news to me!") and we look forward to seeing many of our friends. Prospects are good for a really warm summer, so do put this date in your diaries.

73



CDXC AGM and Summer Social

Saturday, 18 July 2009

G3NUG QTH (nr Leominster – same venue as last year)

Full details will appear in the May Digest and on the CDXC website, and the event will be the usual short AGM followed by the BBQ and 'that' raffle!

Make a note in your diary now!

73 Chris, G3SVL sec@cdxc.org.uk

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

| <i>Call</i> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Location</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 9M6XRO | John Plenderleith | Kota Kinabalu |
| G3HQT | Peter Ball | Southampton |
| G3TVW | Henry Davison | Scarborough |
| G4UWK | Ian Birkenshaw | Ripley |
| HSØZEE | Don Street | Chiang Mai |
| MØTJH | Tom Heritage | Chelmsford |
| MMØXAU | Hans Stöteknuel | Shetland |
| MWØCBC | Denis Jackson | Chepstow |

In Committee:

Due to bad weather, the Committee meeting in February was postponed and will now be held in early March. So there is nothing to report until the next *Digest*.

Chris, G3SVL

CDXC Annual Dinner

21 March 2009, Wyboston Lakes

Q & A and demos of LoTW by Nigel, G3TXF (from 3pm)

Dinner is 1900 for 1930

After-Dinner Speaker: Bob, MDØCCE

Full details appeared in the January *Digest* and are on the website. The response has been fantastic and at the time of writing there are only a few places left. So if you want to come and haven't yet booked, contact me **urgently!**

All those who have already booked should have received an e-mail of confirmation from me when I have received your cheque or the electronic transfer has been confirmed. If you have not heard from me, again: contact me urgently.

Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

73 Chris, G3SVL sec@cdxc.org.uk (01424) 845384

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

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

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT *don@g3xtt.com*

Still no sign of that upturn in the number of sunspots but, yet again, some interesting DX on the bands. As I write this, K5D is in full swing and appears to have given many CDXC members a new one or, at the very least, some new band slots. I realised that I still need this one on RTTY, so do actually need to chase it before they finally close down.

There have been some other handy ones too, such as TS7C and ZD8UW, both involving CDXC members, so I daresay the Editor will be organising write-ups on those in due course. And the low bands have continued to be very productive due, I suspect, to the combined effects of low absorption and plenty of activity because there's nowhere else to go!

Some of the scores put in over the CQ WW 160 CW weekend are quite amazing. GM3POI looks to have set a new European benchmark, but there were some other remarkable scores from the UK too. I didn't get on for a serious effort, but just appearing at dawn was a revelation, with VE7, W6 and W7 pounding in like a good day on 20m!

Silent Keys

They will no doubt be mentioned elsewhere, but I want to add my own mention of the passing of Jim Smith, VK9NS, and George Beasley, 5B4AGC (G3LNS). Jim was recognised by CDXC many years ago for his 20m DX net (when he was P29JS) and his various DX activities, and went on to activate many more. He certainly gave me plenty of new band slots over the years. I last saw him at his birthday bash at the Reading home of his son Stuart, the week after the RSGB HF Convention, and he was in good form, albeit a little forgetful at times (aren't we all?). Roger, G3KMA, and Ken,

G3NBC, were also there along with many members of Jim's family.

George was well-known to many of us, too, as a regular at events in the UK and a huge signal on the bands during his time in Cyprus. I never had the pleasure of visiting his QTH there, but have seen the photos and it's easy to understand why he got out so well.

A Little Cluster History

The passing of G3LNS reminded me that we held the inaugural meeting of what became the UK Packet Cluster Working Group at George's Midlands QTH, sometime in the late 80s, as I recall. A year or so earlier I had attended the RSGB Datacomms Convention at Harrow School, and one of the talks was about this new software from the USA which had been developed as a real-time messaging system based on the newly-arrived packet radio (AX25) technology.

I no longer have the paperwork from the Convention, so am having to rely on web resources, but it appears that Dick Newell, AK1A, of Pavillion Software initially developed PacketCluster for the Yankee Clipper Contest Club (though my recollection is that the earliest versions were aimed at general messaging, but DXers and contesters were quick to spot the potential).

Other contest and DX clubs quickly saw the benefits it offered compared with the VHF alerting nets which had existed up to that time (very similar to the early days of CDXC, which was all about alerting fellow members to DX by way of a 2m FM net). Ian, G4LJF, a CDXC member, keen DXer and contesteer, and 747 captain with BA, made investigations during some of his

many trips to the USA and was the first to bring a copy of the software to the UK. Ian and I worked on the licensing side (at that time I was on the RSGB HF Committee and their representative on the RSGB Datacomms Committee, which was on a learning curve where PacketCluster was concerned) and eventually Ian got the first Cluster NoV in the UK, establishing GB7DXI at his Wokingham QTH.

Cluster changed the whole face of DXing, some would say not for the better (!), and nodes were quickly rolled out across the UK, independently at first but networking quickly followed as it was obviously a case of 'the more the merrier' in terms of having access to DX spots. Hence the need for a UK working group, to coordinate the locations and networking of Cluster nodes. There was also quite a lot of controversy when it was first suggested that links be established across the Channel and the North Sea (and also to the US via a convenient landline circuit). The fear was that the rather slow VHF packet network (some users were having to digipeat through intermediate nodes to reach their nearest Cluster) would seize up and, anyway, what use were spots originating from outside the UK?

All this seems rather quaint nowadays, when we all have broadband access such that the level of traffic is irrelevant. And our modern logging software allows us to filter spots by a range of criteria, whereas in the early days very few logging programs could handle the Cluster (G3WGV's Turbolog was one of the first), so many of us were faced with using a basic terminal emulation program and trying to keep an eye out for wanted spots as they scrolled past on the screen.

I am not clear how many radio-based Cluster nodes remain nowadays. GB7DXI moved to G3WGV's Wokingham QTH when Ian, G4LJF, retired from BA and sailed away into the sunset (literally), and closed down completely when John moved

permanently to Cumbria. By that time, a few years ago now, most users were accessing Cluster via the Internet, albeit often via dial-up (while waiting impatiently for broadband to reach their neck of the woods).

As I said earlier, the Cluster has transformed DXing, and there is no going back after something like 20 years. But, like many such technological developments, it is to some extent a victim of its own success, attracting abuse, misuse etc. So thank goodness for recent developments such as 'closed' Clusters like the one run by Michael, G7VJR, for CDXC. It remains to be seen whether such developments will become a trend and history will be reversed, with DXers only sharing information with their own club or interest group as in the early days. Or maybe the arrival of Skimmer will make the system redundant because your own Software Defined Radio will monitor the bands for you 24/7 and give you your own personal spots (and I fully expect an SSB version of Skimmer to arrive before too long – while full voice recognition may still be a tough nut to crack, limiting the vocabulary largely to the phonetic alphabet should make life somewhat easier).

Forthcoming DX

Take a look at the Calendar to see what's coming up. There are some nice ones. Lord Howe, for example, which hasn't seen a serious effort for some time. Mozambique, not so rare, but a nice catch on the low bands. A Mellish Reef effort that also promises an LF focus. A big effort from Western Sahara. And Aves Island. To name but a few. And if you've been following the various bulletins you will have seen that YT1AD has already pre-announced big efforts from Tokelau and Canton Island for 2010 and Conway Reef for 2011. Nothing like planning ahead!

Enough for now.

73 Don G3XTT

Borneo Bulletin

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX

teleniuslowe@gmail.com

I am pleased to report that there are now two CDXC members in Borneo, the other being John, 9M6XRO (GM3OOK), who was talked into parting with his membership fee by Neville at the SEANET Convention back in November! John's callsign will be familiar to many CDXC members as he has been extremely active for the last three or four years, mainly on CW but also on RTTY and SSB.

In the January 'Borneo Bulletin' I reported on the operation that John and I did, together with three visiting hams, to Labuan island, OC-133, in November. For the first time from here, John tried some 160m operation and we put up an inverted-L antenna close to the ocean that worked very well, after some experimentation to get the right length.

Our original choice, a 3/8-wave antenna, did not work at all as expected (although it was great as a 3/4-wave on 80m!), so we eventually settled for a standard quarter-wave inverted-L on Top Band. We learned a lot about vertical and semi-vertical wire antennas close to the ocean and I have written up the tests we did as an article which I hope will be published in *RadCom* at some time in the future.

However, we only had a couple of nights on the air on the low bands and, despite the Top Band activity by Bob, MDØCCE, from Sabah as 9M6/N2BB, also in November, it was clear that the greatest demand for East Malaysia was still on 160 and 80 metres.

John and I therefore decided to put on a low-band operation in early February. We went to the Seaside Traveller's Inn, a simple but comfortable local hotel with rooms right on the beach and only about 10km from each of our homes.

Verticals by the water

Tests in Labuan last year had shown us that a Butternut HF6 vertical was as good as a quarter-wave inverted-L on 80m, and therefore it can be assumed it would be within a few dB of a full-size quarter-wave vertical. Furthermore, tests at 3B7C in 2007 showed that in terms of low-angle gain a quarter-wave vertical, *when mounted very close to the ocean*, was as good as a 3-element or 4-element monoband Yagi, in the direction of the ocean front. This was certainly the case on 20m, where we used a 3-element monoband Yagi, and on 15m, where we used a 4-element Yagi. On 30m a quarter-wave vertical by the ocean mostly outperformed a 2-element Yagi, although admittedly the latter was less than a half-wave above ground.

The conclusion to all this, remarkable or even ridiculous as it may sound, is that a Butternut HF6 vertical, *when mounted very close to the ocean*, would only be a few dB – probably less than 1 S-unit – down on a full-size 3- or 4-element monoband Yagi on 80m! The emphasis on the location close to the sea is deliberate: you do not get the low-angle gain unless the vertical is very close to the ocean, and that gain is in the direction of the ocean, not over the land behind the antenna. Fortunately the location at the Seaside Traveller's Inn has a clear take-off across the ocean from just south of west all the way round to north-east, via north, so it is perfect for Europe and North America.

Our choice of 80m antenna therefore was simple: my Butternut HF6 vertical, which of course we could also use on the higher bands. It was ground-mounted in the sand on the beach just inside the hotel's wooden fence.

For 160m we decided to try a quarter-wave inverted-L, as this had worked so well on Labuan. The operating room was on the first floor and had a balcony about 10 or 12ft directly above the beach. A 14m (42ft) fibre-glass fishing rod with the top section removed was used as the vertical support and mounted on the rail of the balcony. The feedpoint was on the fence on the beach, below the balcony, giving us an extra 10ft of vertical length. The far end of the wire was supported by the bottom 20ft of another fishing rod mounted on a wooden water tank tower, approximately 40ft up. We used one full-length quarter-wave elevated radial, which ran along the full length of the property's fence (fortuitously around 130ft long) parallel with the sea, with several more random length radials on the beach and beside the hotel building.

We had not taken into account the massive tidal range at this location and after dark we were amazed to find the sea was washing under the balcony and the Butternut HF6 was actually standing in the water! The 160m inverted-L feedpoint was several inches above the sea. The next morning at low tide we found the HF6 had not suffered any major damage, but we moved it anyway on to the balcony.

Our results were varied. On 80m, in particular, there was a constant S9 local electrical noise which meant that I was being heard much better than I was hearing stations. Clearly I was getting out very well as I could hear that I had a large pile-up, but it was almost impossible to copy any callsigns other than those of the really 'big guns'. My rate was embarrassingly slow as I had to ask for repeat after repeat to pull out callsigns, sometimes just one character at a time.

John had greater success on 160m and at his first sitting he put around 300 calls in the log on Top Band. The next night a similar number of stations made it into the log. I stayed only for the weekend as I had other appointments on the Monday, but John

stayed for four nights and made around 1,500 QSOs in total, mainly on 160m but with some on 80, 30 and even 17m, using the Butternut HF6 through an ATU. I made just over 500 QSOs, with the majority on 80 and 20m, and a few on 40 and also 17m.

We discovered that the 160m inverted-L was a much quieter receive antenna on 80m than the Butternut, but only after two nights of struggling against the local electrical noise. This might also explain why, contrary to our expectations, the local noise was apparently less of a problem on 160m than on 80m.

Our QSL manager, Tim, MØURX, has already uploaded the logs to LoTW, and has put some photos and a write-up by John and me on his blog at www.m0urx.com. I can recommend Tim's blog as being a good read. Take a look!

Recent DXpeditions

While the HF bands are still down in the doldrums, a few recent DXpeditions have enlivened things quite a bit. The path to the Falklands is a very difficult one from here and until the January YL-only operation I had not even heard a VP8, let alone put one in the 9M6DXX log. I thought this operation would also pass by unheard because, even when they were being spotted by JAs or VKs, I could not hear a trace of any of the YLs. Then, one morning, in my in-box was an e-mail from Victoria, VP8YLG / SV2KBS, saying that she was trying for WAZ from VP8 and still needed zone 28 (the fact that no YBs had worked her just shows what a difficult path it is, as there are some very big stations in Indonesia these days). We tried a sked but I could not hear Victoria at all. I received another e-mail from her to say that she had heard me OK and could we try again the next day?

I have written before about my local noise problem – it is usually S9 on 20m and the FT-2000's noise blankers reduce it only a small amount, to perhaps S8. If Victoria

was, say, S4 or S5 she would be still three or four S units below my noise. For the sked on the second day I tried my FT-857 instead. Although this is a much cheaper transceiver and with less impressive receiver performance figures, it does at least have an effective noise blanker. On this occasion John, 9M6XRO, who had also never worked a VP8, joined me on frequency. When Victoria came on, I could just detect she was there and about the only thing I copied was "51". I gave her a 33 report and a VK7 who was copying both sides well confirmed this was a good contact. It was, however, about the most marginal QSO I have ever made and it certainly would not have taken place if I had to break through a pile-up. John later also exchanged 51 and 33 reports.

Then a couple of weeks later when I was operating from the coastal site using the Butternut vertical I was called on 20m by Mike, VP8NO, with a good signal and a few minutes later by Bob, VP8LP. Once again this shows the effectiveness of a vertical by the water. I suspect these contacts were long path.

More recently there has been a flurry of activity from Wallis and Futuna, FW. Not a difficult path from here, but an entity with only sporadic activity and I had previously only worked it once, on 20m. First, FW8DX, a Japanese operator, came on with an enormous signal on 40m. I would like to know what he was running as I have never heard such strong signals from the central Pacific on 40m before. Shortly after a Hungarian team was active as FW5RE and although they were nowhere near as strong as FW8DX, I also worked them on 40m plus 20 and 17m.

Now, of course, K5D is active from Desecheo but – so far at least – this has proved very disappointing here and has been completely inaudible on any band. I'm hoping for a peak in propagation before the end of the operation, as happened with E44M from Palestine: after one week of

total inaudibility, conditions picked up and they were in the log on three bands in just over two hours.

Visitors to Sabah

February has been a busy month for visitors. First Roger, G3SXW, came through Kota Kinabalu on his way back to the UK after a visit to Hong Kong. He took the opportunity of making a side-trip to Brunei to add two new points to his DXFC total. I met Roger at the airport and we went to a restaurant on the coast for dinner and a few beers. The following day, after Roger's flying visit to Brunei, John, 9M6XRO, and I met him again and we went to the Langkah Syabas Beach Resort (home of the Japanese-owned guest station) for another dinner and some more beers. I have now known Roger for over 30 years: we first met in Tehran in 1978 where he was licensed as EP2IA and I was EP2SL. Despite the fact that he is a 100% CW operator and I am 100% SSB, we remain on friendly terms (!) and actually have a lot in common.

Arriving within 30 minutes of Roger in Brunei was Sam, G4OHX, and his wife Grace, who were in Brunei to see the sights and for Sam to operate as V8FHX. While in Borneo, though, they also wanted to see the orang utans, so that meant a side-trip to Sabah. I met them at the airport here and took them to the Shangri La Rasa Ria hotel, about an hour up the coast, which is not only a 5-star resort hotel, but it also has an orang utan rehabilitation centre for young orphaned animals within its grounds. It was good to meet Sam and Grace for the first time and if they enjoyed their visit here I hope they will return and see more of Sabah.

Finally, Brian, G4ODV / 5B4AIZ, is making a return trip to Sabah and is arriving tomorrow (as I write this), so no doubt we'll be meeting up somewhere for a beer or two.

If any other CDXC members are travelling to this part of the world, please let me know

beforehand and I would be pleased to meet up.

9M8Z

In March last year I entered the CQ WPX SSB contest as 9M8Z from neighbouring Sarawak. I see from the results write-up on the web that I have won the Phillip Frazier,

K6ZM, Memorial Trophy for the top single-operator all-band entry from Oceania, although the trophy or plaque is yet to arrive here in darkest Borneo. Although not yet fully confirmed, I am hoping to be active as 9M8Z once again in the WPX SSB contest on 28 / 29 March this year – please do call me if you hear me on!

E-mail to the Editor

From G3LDI

I realise that writing an item such as this in the *CDXC Digest* is like preaching to the converted. However, there is a reason for writing to the crème de la crème. I have my RSGB GB2CW coordinator's hat on!

We obviously have lots of DXpeditioners, testers, DX chasers and so on in the membership. As most of the Morse users of the UK fraternity are of the G3/4/Ø vintage, young men of good character of course, we need to increase the ranks. Unfortunately my birth certificate tells me that time is passing too quickly!

We need to teach and promote the use of CW to lots of the M3/ M6 brigade who are coming on the air in order to keep the flag flying when us G3s will be discussing our ailments in a nursing home (perish the thought!).

To this end I am trying to get as many volunteers for the GB2CW scheme as I can. It takes but one hour per week, and I would suggest that if lots of UK Clubs could find a

couple of volunteers to take this on it would help enormously. Here in Norfolk we have three on a weekly basis, all on 2m and we have had a lot of success. The scheme is published in the RSGB Yearbook, and there is a Morse Proficiency Certificate available too should the student wish to have one.

We need to keep the pile-ups going and also the contests, and without the Morse test as we knew it we might have a future problem. So I am asking for some volunteers. It is easy to do, a couple of PC programs, and one hour per week, not much to ask for a great deal of satisfaction in producing some good CW ops. If you wish to take part, just e-mail me at roger@g3ldi.co.uk and I will issue a letter of authorisation and orf you jolly well go!

So, come on lads, we get a lot FROM the hobby, how about putting something back?

73 de Roger, G3LDI

Ascension - a different kind of Heaven: the ZD8UW DXpedition

Gordon, G3USR, recounts what was possibly the very first DXpedition of 2009

‘Would you like to come to Ascension Island as a guest operator?’ The e-mail note invitation was like unexpected DX coming out of thin air on an otherwise empty band - exciting, somewhat ethereal and you are not quite sure what it is that you may have heard! A few milliseconds later a decision was made: yes, please.

Seven months later, on Hogmanay evening 2008, along with five members of the Cambridge University Wireless Society, I boarded a Ministry of Defence chartered Boeing 767-300 at RAF Brize Norton for the 10-hour flight to Ascension. The original schedule allowed us to spend New Year’s Day at home, however, MOD operational considerations necessitated short notice rescheduling to the last day of 2008. As MOD service flights are ‘dry’, Happy New Year was limited to flight attendants in festive party hats and a glass of lemon squash. Our sacrifice in the cause of amateur radio knows no bounds!

Ascension Island

Ascension is located just south of the equator in the South Atlantic Ocean. It is a British Overseas Territory which, together with St Helena and Tristan da Cunha, forms a single territorial grouping under the sovereignty of the British Crown. The group of islands is presided over by a Governor who is resident on St Helena. He is represented on Ascension by an Administrator. The island is some 750 miles NW of Saint Helena and covers an area of 34 square miles, whilst the nearest point of Africa is Liberia which is nearly 1,000 miles to the north east.

The weather is warm all the year round, rising to a maximum of 30° C during the months of January, February and March. The breeze of

the South East Trade Winds moderates these temperatures and rainfall is variable and hard to predict. The island is volcanic, with its lower slopes and western side made up of volcanic ash with little vegetation. Green Mountain, which rises to a height of 2,817 ft at the centre of the island, is lush and green and was our target QTH. On a previous visit to the island in 2005 Martin, G3ZAY, had inspected a potentially suitable location (used by a previous UK group) with accommodation available to rent. Arrangements had since been made to take over ‘Garden Cottage’, which is located high up on the side of Green Mountain. This promised a clear take-off to the NW through NE, corresponding broadly to North America, the UK and Europe plus Asiatic Russia and Japan.

The island provides an operational home to numerous well-known names in worldwide radio and technology, including the BBC World Service, Cable and Wireless and the European Space Agency, which operates an Ariane rocket tracking station. The US-owned Ascension Wideawake airfield is a significant transit base to the Falklands and provides an emergency NASA Shuttle landing place. There is also a USAF base providing a tracking and communications facility. Ascension is clearly important strategically and there is a requirement for all visitors to obtain an Ascension Island entry permit in advance which is the equivalent of a travel visa.

Besides radio and despite its small size, there is a lot to do on the island. There are numerous walks, the opportunity to go scuba diving and play a wide variety of sports. These include football, tennis, squash and golf, albeit on officially one of the worst golf courses in the world! Sea fishing is also very

popular. (See reference 1 for more information)

A Much Needed Entity?

From a radio point of view, although not in the top 100 most wanted entities, we believed that ZD8 would be quite popular on the bands, particularly 160 and 80m. There are four local radio amateurs on Ascension, although they are not terribly active as they are there to work! There have been numerous DX-peditions to the island in recent years by visitors, however, a high level of demand undoubtedly still remains. Probably the most active station is Ian, ZD8I, who reports frequent difficulties in making 'normal QSOs' due to enthusiastic breakers and he requests 'no cluster spots' for him! (See reference 2).

The CDXC Clublog system suggested that SSB was wanted more than CW and that demand was likely to be highest on the LF bands. From an IOTA point of view, the IOTA database reports AF-003 as required by just 13% of those on the database. In this case, however, our experience proved this to be an unreliable indicator, a vast underestimate.

In the event the pile-ups were huge, particularly on SSB where they exceeded most operators' previous experience. The most enthusiastic QSOs and those generating most comment were on 160 and 80m as predicted. There was no perceptible difference between modes.

Let's Get Set Up!

We took almost all of our equipment with us, including fibreglass poles for our main antennas which were wire verticals. On arrival at the mountain QTH we first set up an 'inverted L' on an 18-metre pole for 160 and 80m. This was complemented by many radials of assorted lengths laid out in a star shape directly on the ground. In addition we had two shorter poles of 10 metres in length which were utilised for 40 through 10m with either a one-quarter or a three-quarters wavelength vertical wire. Thus the vertical element varied

between about 10 and 32ft. Again, a mat of individual wire radials was used with each of these shorter poles.

Our verticals were omni-directional, which although they contributed lower gain than a yagi, avoided any need for rotation whatever the propagation and provided low-angle radiation. During the week we also fabricated an 80m wire dipole which was cut for the 75m SSB DX part of the band. This was strung up on a further fibreglass pole and provided some flexibility in operation during night times on 80. With its centre at 25ft and the ends almost on the ground it was, in one sense, rather low, but as it was on the edge of a 1,000 ft drop its take-off was superb. In addition we made up a 20m halfwave dipole for the 'CQZL/CQVK' portable challenge attempted during the week - see below.

Equipment

We had four transceivers in all. An Elecraft K3, a Yaesu FT-897D and a Yaesu FT-450 were used to run three concurrent stations. We also had a Yaesu FT-890 available as a spare. In addition we used Heil headsets and Heil footswitches for SSB operation. Power came from switched mode mains supplies including two excellent, quiet and light Watson Power-Mites.

With concurrent band operations it was important to minimise the possibility of inter-station interference as well as to reject any overloading signals from the BBC relay station antennas which were clearly visible from our site. This was addressed by single-band Dunestar bandpass filters and they proved very effective. The key here was to remember to swap filters when bands were changed. This was a little more complicated when operating split. RF on the 'wrong' band would quickly destroy the 'right' filter! Fortunately there was only one casualty and Dunestar have supplied replacement parts free of charge.

Interestingly, on the LF bands we found that the antenna analyser could not function due to

strong signals from the local broadcasters. With just a small signal of its own, the analyser was swamped by high voltages on the antennas. However, with the insertion of an ICE 402X filter we were able to restore the balance on these bands. Many thanks to Chris, G3SVL, for the loan of the ICE filter.

How was it for you?

Propagation was initially only fair as we began operation on Thursday, New Year's Day. However, by the Saturday it appeared that conditions were improving and by Monday we were flying! On HF Michael, G7VJR, spent a number of late nights on 160m and notched up over 1,450 CW QSOs. Over the weekend we rapidly came to understand the local timing of propagation openings on HF and this assisted our operator scheduling, not only to ensure that we took full advantage of the conditions but also to give each operator a 'fair share' of the action.

We operated for almost exactly eight whole days, shutting down at 1345 on Friday, 9 January. The main QSO statistics for all contacts were as follows:

ZD8UW on Ascension Island - QSO Analysis

| Band | CW | SSB | Total | % | DXCC |
|-------|------|------|-------|-----|------|
| 160 | 1452 | 0 | 1452 | 8 | 70 |
| 80 | 1181 | 521 | 1702 | 10 | 58 |
| 40 | 1133 | 1825 | 2958 | 17 | 80 |
| 30 | 1661 | 0 | 1661 | 9 | 61 |
| 20 | 1170 | 3139 | 4309 | 24 | 100 |
| 17 | 1051 | 2286 | 3337 | 19 | 87 |
| 15 | 765 | 1240 | 2005 | 11 | 80 |
| 12 | 193 | 297 | 490 | 3 | 27 |
| Total | 8606 | 9308 | 17914 | 100 | 125 |

There are some interesting features hidden in these statistics:

- We made over 17, 900 contacts in total, 17,100 after removing duplicates, giving a duplicate rate of 4.5%. About par for an efficient DXpedition.

- Overall 48% of all contacts were on CW, 52% on SSB. We did not work any other modes.
- We had 566 QSOs with 279 unique UK calls, giving an average of 2.0 band slots per UK callsign.

This is consistent with the general feeling we had that the path to UK from ZD8 is not that easy. UK QSOs comprised just 3.2% of our overall total. Of the 566, 274 (48.4%) were SSB and 292 (51.6%) were CW. There were few UK stations with BIG signals. However, they were very tenacious with just one M3, Barry, M3EOL, making a contact. This was on 20m SSB. Five intermediate licensees made contacts on 20 and 17m SSB and intrepid CDXC member Dominic, MØBLF, made a 17m QSO with 40W to a mobile whip and filmed the whole thing for YouTube!

And how was it for us?

Based on pragmatic observation, our typical DX day resolved itself into a succession of regularly available band slots. These complemented local propagation to the nearest countries in South America and Africa, both of which were just over 1,000 miles away. Both of these continents, however, have relatively low populations of active amateurs and hence the proportion of our contacts with them was only 4% of all contacts.

- From early morning around 0630, as the MUF rose and the greyline moved across Ascension, the sun rose and 20m opened to Europe and Japan. Sometimes 17 also opened by 0900 or occasionally earlier.
- By mid-morning 20m was fading out as the equatorial morning sun affected the earth's atmosphere and HF absorption set in. However, as the morning progressed, 20 was replaced by 15m as the absorption did not reach 21 MHz.
- 17 and 15m openings often continued throughout the day.

- By late afternoon 20m became available again, opening first to Europe and later to North America. This sometimes continued until well into the evening, fading out at around 2100.
- On 30m, CW was available most of the day, closing briefly in the middle of the night.
- As night fell and the HF bands progressively closed, 40, 80 and later 160m came into their own. European stations on 160 could sometimes be heard from shortly before sunset. Also, on 160 and 80m static crashes measuring up to 40dB over S9 were sometimes problematic. We wanted to try diversity reception using the 80m dipole and the 160m vertical on the Elecraft K3, but this was impractical due to a lack of a second Elecraft receiver card. Had we had the space, a Beverage would have been truly welcome on both of these bands.
- 40m tended to dip around 0200 until after 0400 when propagation resumed - or perhaps it was just an indication of who was awake in accessible countries.
- 0400 to 0700 on 40m was often very lively, with firstly Europe and then North America and Japan becoming available.
- We listened on 12m each day. Propagation was available from around 1730 until about 1900, when the band closed. Although Southern Europe was worked, no propagation to the UK was encountered.
- Although we listened and called on 10m each day, no propagation was detected. We had no permission or antennas for 6m.

So what else did we do?

As we were self-catering, most days required us to leave Green Mountain and visit the Solomons Supermarket in the capital, Georgetown. However, these trips were often

extended for other things that must be done whilst on Ascension. We visited Fort Hayes and the Ascension Island Heritage Society Museum and Gallery - the latter, given the island's historical commercial occupiers, included many interesting electronic items.

We went swimming in the Two Boats Village Community Pool and also on another day we swam in the heavy surf at 'English Bay' and tarried at the poignant 19th century sailors' Bonetta Cemetery at Comfortless Cove.

We visited the BBC's Atlantic Relay Station, which operates the BBC World Service to Africa, where we marvelled at both the legacy Marconi manually tuned PAs and the extraordinary new generation technology with automatically and continuously tuned 250KW finals. No wonder the complete station input power requirements are some 2 megawatts! We learned later that they sell 250KW transmission time to third parties for under £200 per hour. If a suitable TX/RX changeover relay could be found the next expedition might be REALLY loud!

We toured the island's oil-fired power station, which is adjacent to the BBC relay site. This power station also provides its waste heat to several adjacent desalination plants. These use a mix of distillation and osmosis methods and ensure that the whole island has a reliable, ongoing and pure source of fresh water besides its natural springs.

On another day the European Space Agency allowed us to visit their Ariane rocket tracking station and we also visited the disused site of a NASA tracking station originally set up in the 60s to support the United States moon landing projects.

One evening after our evening meal we went to Long Beach just outside of Georgetown to try to see the island's renowned turtles. These come ashore from January to May to lay their eggs in holes dug in the sand. We were in luck, seeing a number of turtles come ashore and witnessing others departing to start their

1,000 mile journey back to their normal habitat off the E coast of Brazil. Amazing!

The island has lots of flora and fauna much of which we encountered. Besides turtles, Ascension's other wildlife includes land crabs, feral sheep from the days of 'come ashore and catch your own fresh meat'(!), feral donkeys from the days when they were used to carry water plus rabbits, mice and rats. These latter are regarded as a menace and there are numerous rat bait boxes and rabbit traps beside the paths and trails of Green Mountain.

And finally, we went walking. There are a large number of what are called 'Letterbox' walks on Ascension, several of which traverse Green Mountain. These mountain walks give access to historical features from the 18th and 19th Century and earlier, such as water catchments, secluded officers' cottages and barracks. From each path on the Mountain the views were sensational!

The 'CQ ZL/CQ VK' portable challenge

Prior to leaving the UK and as a result of prior DXpedition publicity Michael, G7VJR, had been in contact with a number of New Zealand stations who were keen for QSOs with Ascension. The radio short path from ZD8 to ZL is broadly in a direction which was not readily accessible at the cottage on Green Mountain. By the Thursday of our stay we had worked just three ZLs, all on SSB with two on 40 and one on 20m. These were almost certainly long path contacts, around 15,000 miles. However, ever up for a challenge we arranged to take a portable rig to the highest car accessible point on the mountain with a clear take off to the ZL/VK short path. At 0630 one misty morning!

Web-based publicity during our DXpedition ensured that ZL operators were listening for us and we made six further contacts on 20m with 100W to a wire dipole in a 30-minute greyline opening. This was six more than we had feared and was an interesting diversion. Thank you, Europe and Japan, for standing by

whilst we called. Unfortunately and surprisingly no VK stations were worked or heard during our whole visit.

DXpedition Lessons Learnt

Every DXpedition has its own special characteristics which provide unique experience and ZD8UW was no exception. The three most significant were -

1. **Non-radio activities are useful** Making use of gaps in useable propagation to take time to do other things on the island was time well spent. This contributed a lot to the overall enjoyment of the DXpedition as well as allowing time for relaxation and team building.

2. **Adopting a different approach often pays dividends** The use of vertical antennas in the mountain-side situation on Ascension provided a straightforward way of optimising time on the air by being omni-directional and reducing antenna complexity and set-up time.

3. **Non familiar hardware provides opportunities** The range of equipment we used allowed those without previous experience of other's rigs to learn about their features. The Yaesu FT-450 in particular was the only transceiver with a voice memory. The meagre 10-second memory duration and awkward set-up routines were eventually mastered, allowing us to use the recording features for repeated CQ calls without undue effort. This facilitated early contacts when band opening times were uncertain.

What a team!

Five members of the DXpedition were already CDXC members. The sixth joined immediately on returning home!

Conclusion

How was the ascension into heaven? Fantastic! I hope that we gave you some fun and perhaps a new one too on the air. Thanks to all of those we worked and to those who

spread the word on the cluster network. I hope that you have enjoyed hearing about our DXpedition and allowing us to give you an insight into some of the background and behind the scenes activities.

We should also like to express our appreciation to CDXC for the Club's donation

towards the DXpedition costs. From all at ZD8UW, now QRT, thank you!

References

www.ascension-island.gov.ac/
www.zd8i.net/

VK9DWX: DXpedition to Willis Island

Dieter Schuster DL8OH

Translated into English by Joerg Puchstein, DL8WPX, and Bernd Laenger, VK2IA

From 9 – 25 October 2008 an international team activated Willis Island, a rare DXCC entity NE of Australia. More than 95,000 contacts were made in an effort that brought dead bands to live. A total of 23,128 hams could put either a new DXCC country or new band points into their logs.

Everything had been planned in detail: A group consisting of two retirees (DJ5IW and DL8OH) and a seasoned DXpeditioner (DL8WPX) were supposed to receive all the gear that had been shipped by sea freight to Cairns, buy additional equipment as required and get everything in time on board MV Floreat, our vessel waiting for us at Cairns port. Messieurs Operators would fly in just in time, find their way to the boat and then set sail to Willis! Fortunately we were greatly supported by Dale, VK4DMC, and Robert, SP5XVY, who joined us a few days later.

Where is our Equipment?

Of course it all came completely different. Our shipment from Germany did not arrive in Brisbane, where all customs documents were filed. Instead it went to Sydney, where it was stored in a dark spot in the dock area,

anonymous and without any documents for customs clearance. How should Alla, the poor lady from our freight forwarder in Brisbane, possibly find the pallets in Sydney? We had to make it very clear to her that finding the missing freight was crucial to all our efforts and the whole venture. That the DXpedition would be going nowhere and people from Germany, Poland, the USA and South Africa would arrive in Australia for nothing!

After numerous phone calls, subtle pressure and massaging her ego had been gently applied in the right proportions she took it on as a personal challenge and put her best efforts into solving the problem. She updated us twice a day with the latest news, which allowed us to get the full picture on what had happened: the shipment was found in the darkest corner of the Port of Sydney, obviously loaded onto a truck the very same day and hauled to Brisbane. But something strange happened then: The truck and all our gear disappeared! No message from the driver – he even switched off his mobile phone. Alla almost despaired, but excelled herself and eventually mastered Customs and Quarantine in Brisbane in record time.

All our crates arrive in time at the wharf to be loaded on board the MV Floreat.

A short time later more good news arrived: The rest of the team (DJ7EO, DJ9RR, DL1MGB, DL3DXX, DL5LYM and W4WJF) had just cleared immigration at Cairns airport and were on their way to the port. After a brief welcome, all of us inspected our vessel, the MV Floreat, and met the crew consisting of Marcus, our skipper, Gordon, his father and Susie, our cook.

Then we got down to business. All the gear had to be stored on board, many of the items were secured on the upper deck. The fuel drums, although already on the vessel, would be filled just before setting sail.

The Voyage to Willis

It was around 9pm on a pitch-black tropical night, when anchors were pulled and the MV Floreat set course towards Willis Island. The first part of the voyage was calm, as long as we were steaming through waters protected by the Great Barrier Reef. It became more difficult on the other side of the Reef when the boat was fighting against swells and wind with waves pondering from the front while we were making our way to the East. While slowly progressing on our journey, it was the one or the other DXpeditioner, filled with enthusiasm just a little while ago, who quietly disappeared in the cabin and has never been seen since. The hard-core travellers were telling yarns from their former seafaring lives, trying to kill time by topping each other with their colourful stories. An Elecraft K3 was connected to a 17m antenna – giving us the chance to show the world that we were en route to Willis.

The following day did not bring anything spectacular apart from the odd atoll on the horizon, a few flying fish accompanying us and once in a while a seabird watching out for prey. Nowhere another ship, just us in the vast Coral Sea. Early the next morning

we reached South Islet. We anchored in a sheltered bay enjoying the quiet of the ocean and Susie's delicious brekkie.

After breakfast a group of us consisting of skipper Marcus and five men (DJ5IW, DL1MGB, DL8OH, SP5XVY and W4WJF) took the dinghy and went ashore for a courtesy visit of the Mets crew on the island. Since the early 1900s the Australian Bureau of Meteorology operates a weather station on South Islet. The station is currently manned by three men and a woman, a crucial part of Australia's cyclone early warning and monitoring system.

During our pre-planning phase, we had also briefly considered operating from this location as most DXpeditions did in the past. We were concerned, however, that our radios would interfere with the sensitive meteorological equipment and hence selected North Cay as our destination, from where VK9WWI had been active a year earlier. Our skipper did not like the idea as North Cay was not easy to navigate to. We had met Tomy, HA7RY, at Friedrichshafen's Ham Radio fair and took the opportunity to ask him many detailed questions. He also warned us to stay away! Our vessel would have needed to be anchored further away from the shore with the transfer of material to the Cay becoming a significant risk factor.

Marcus suggested we have a closer look at Mid Islet with more secluded spots for anchorage and a distance to shore of only a few hundred metres. When he added that he had been there 10 years ago with another DXpedition we were convinced. We left the Met station at around noon and after everybody was back on board anchors were pulled and the MV Floreat steered to Mid Islet about five nautical miles away.

After a short while we could see the island, a small cay covered with shrubs and grass, rising only about three to four metres above sea level at high tide. Thousands of birds call it their home, several kinds of boobies

and frigate birds – the same ones that can be found anywhere in the South Pacific and Southern Ocean. The island was also inhabited by a huge number of little crabs as well as hundreds of little chook-like birds no bigger than quails. A fascinating phenomenon were the turtles visiting the islet at night to lay their eggs.

Landing and Setting up

We split up the team: three of us first went ashore to find the best locations for our tents, generators, station and antennas. Three stayed on board to help with unloading. Then four more went to the island to receive all our gear and take it to an elevated spot. Landing was a bit rough, but without any incidents. The feeling of standing on solid ground was something everybody had been looking forward to since we left Cairns! Each time, when landing and unloading, extreme care had to be taken as the dinghy was pushed constantly onto the sand by the action of the waves – and whoever got too close to it could have been injured badly. Fortunately, nothing happened.

Huge flocks of birds gave us a noisy welcome flying around us at close distance. They obviously had never encountered a human and were now just too curious to see who these strange creatures were, invading their territory. About 80% of the island is vegetated. All birds live in this part, have built their nests there and feed their chicks – making it impossible for us to use except for a few small spots. Therefore our main focus became the narrow sandy beach about 15 to 100m wide that stretched around the island. We also had to take into account a constant easterly wind which was blowing most of the time.

The big question was where to find shelter on an island at just three metres above sea level. We eventually found a few suitable spots for the station and operator tents along the sand strip near the vegetated area. Antennas had to be erected in closer

proximity to each other than what had been planned originally, which fortunately turned out not to cause any interference between the stations.

It took us almost two days to set up everything; the Beverages were functional only on the third day. DL1MGB made the first QSO on 17m on Thursday, 9 October 2008 at 0954 UTC. After that we were on the air with four complete stations at the same time. Another station followed two days later.

Stations and Antennas

We operated with five stations in two camps – each equipped with a K3, an ACOM-1000 linear amplifier and a microHAM MKII interface. Each station also had a notebook with separate mouse and keyboard. All stations used Wintest as logging software and were connected with each other via WLAN. In addition we established an Internet connection via satellite through a separate notebook. It was mainly used for regular updates of our VK9DWX web site [1] and to keep track of what was happening on the DX cluster. Unfortunately the satellite link was a bit unstable, which meant that we could not update our log as often as we wanted. On the other hand all our radio gear performed flawlessly, with a few minor exceptions that could all be fixed instantly.

As for antennas, we had decided in favour of a 100% vertical concept which turned out to be a great choice. Our four squares for 80, 40 and 30m showed superb directivity and surprisingly a really good front-to-back ratio. When working JA or W/VE, VK stations could not work us off the back, seeing as we simply did not hear them. When switching the antenna towards VK, we could hear them loud and clear.

On 160m we used a well-proven V160 antenna from Titanex for which DJ9RR had built a new tailor-made matching network. For the high bands we erected so-called

vertical dipole arrays (VDA). DL1MGB and DL8WPX took the vertical dipoles used by the Ducie DXpedition as a basis for a new development of dipole arrays that could now be switched between four directions instead of two.

Experiences from Ducie (VP6DX), from our activity on Norfolk (VK9DNX) and now from Willis, clearly demonstrate the advantages and superior performance of vertical antennas over three-element Yagis at 10m above ground when erected near salt water.

Finally On the Air

The pile-ups were simply terrific. The needle of the S-meter went up to S9+10 and stayed there. We instantly faced a single wall of undistinguishable noise, more than 10 kHz wide and only occasionally topped by some voice fragments or CW tone bursts. From time to time some Big Guns went through, at least enabling us to copy some call fragments. In the first few days, running big rates was challenging, at least in CW and almost impossible in Phone. The worldwide need for Willis Island was just tremendous.

Of course each of us had his/her own experiences sitting at the home station and trying to work rare countries in huge pile-ups. In this respect we certainly could very well understand the emotions of DXers all over the world, when frustration slowly develops if, after hours of calling, you still don't get through or if the cheeky and unfair interference on our frequencies wrecks your nerves.

But what about this extraordinary feeling of joy and happiness, once you have done it. Even this small thievish joy when your tail-ending was only a tiny, but decisive moment faster than other DXers, or if you were picked out of the mud after leaving the main body of the pile-up and grabbing a frequency at the edge of the listening range instead. Yes, some of these cries of

jubilation we heard too, reflecting happiness and motivation back to us.

As time went on some routine was established: Focus shifted to the low bands during the local night and to the high bands in the morning and afternoon. Hottest prime time was the greyline period during dusk and dawn. Noon always went very slow, some 'local' Asian and Oceanic traffic only. Sometimes it looked like nothing at all, but still one or the other nice QSO went into the log, at this time of the day often in a very relaxed fashion.

On the other hand it was fascinating to hear European signals coming in on 10m and 12m at local dusk, with minimum signal level and barely readable. Or what about the signals from America and Europe on 160m, buried somewhere deep in the mud of tropical QRN? QSOs were still possible, but only in CW, of course. There are voices that claim we concentrated too much on CW and didn't work enough SSB. Apart from the fact that you just can't be everybody's darling, this is a completely subjective statement: Whenever SSB wasn't possible any more because of QRM or QRN or simply a lack of signal strength, continuing with CW was still an opportunity, perhaps not with the best rates, but certainly better than nothing. And it looks as if it was also a good strategy to change modes from time to time again quickly after yet another interferer blocked our TX frequency.

Rookies and Visitors

Already during early planning it became clear that the M/V Floreat would not be able to carry a sufficient amount of fuel for our generators. Thus we decided to charter a second vessel for a replenishment trip halfway through our expedition, and with the M/V Rum Runner we even found a suitable motor sailing yacht.

This constellation opened the door for some completely new ideas. Now we were able to give interested parties the unique

opportunity to visit an ongoing operation in such a remote place on earth. Finally, after one of our planned team members had to drop out at short notice, DJ7EO came up with the great idea of offering two young DXers the rare opportunity to participate in such a DXpedition free of charge, excluding their return flight to Cairns. Within two weeks after the initial announcement via Internet we got applications from more than 20 candidates and from all continents. After lively internal debate we selected and named the two Rookies joining the team: Josh, W4WJF, and Rhy, ZS6DXB.

In the end this idea paid off big time, for our Rookies as well as for us. Not only have they by far exceeded our expectations in terms of performance and endurance, bravely diving even into the deepest SSB pile-ups and participating with their full share in our own daily routine at this remote spot. They are some wonderful guys and were excellent company. We really enjoyed having them around on our trip.

Josh joined us for the first half of the trip. At half time the Rum Runner arrived as scheduled, providing fresh food and fuel. They also safely carried our visitors Bernd, DK2JW, and our mate Dale, VK4DMC, who helped in excellent manner during the preparation of our trip. Finally Rhy arrived too, replacing Josh as our Rookie during the second part of this trip.

Daily Life

On many days at noon the tropical sun burned almost vertically from the sky. Fortunately a strong wind blew continuously from the SE, making the heat somehow bearable. Except during some rainy days it was dry and not tropically humid or sticky, with top outside temperatures ranging from 30° to 35°C (85° to 95°F). Well, take away the wind and add some heat from the equipment in our tents and quickly we were happy, having brought and carried some big cooling fans. Our lowband team faced the biggest problem:

trying to get some sleep in the calm shelter of the tents during the hot days.

Besides our daily portion of pile-ups, there was not much distraction on the island. As it turned out, our central community tent quickly became the place to be 'outside office hours'. Most discussions were focusing on the optimisation of our operations and the various aspects of station fine-tuning. Everybody participated with the experience gained during his own shift.

Susie prepared all the excellent meals aboard the M/V Floreat, and once per day we got our delivery of fresh food and also drinking water from the ships own desalination plant. Unfortunately the origin of the fresh water produced could not be denied - it tasted strange. Fortunately we brought enough beer, and since beer in Bavaria is recognised as full-value food, one can say that we always had food in every respect.

For sure we did take a closer look at our surroundings. A slow beach walk around the island just took us 20 minutes. Protecting the large bird colonies living here, we tried to avoid touching the interior of the island. Anyhow, even on the beach screaming flocks of birds always surrounded us. And the screaming continued throughout the day, getting even stronger at night. Soon we were accustomed to it, but we still heard this noise days later, now back home again, only interrupted from time to time by some imaginary call fragments in Phone or CW. Another aspect of bird life is their smell, especially after some rainfall. Since our camp had been placed on the leeward side of the island to take shelter from the strong winds, we were always surrounded by this fine 'fragrance'. Indeed, considering our own living standards and hygienic limitations, after a week or two you couldn't really distinguish the source of the smell anymore.

The difference between high and low tide was usually about 2 meters (6 to 7 ft).

Sometimes during bad weather the water rose even higher and flooded parts of the beach, including several of our 4-Square antennas. While we were happy about the perfect ground conductivity, we finally had to move several antennas to higher ground, otherwise they would have been washed away. Once or twice the water came close to our tents, but no real harm was done. The constantly heavy wind proved to be far more dangerous than the rising waters.

While the dangers of wind and weather demanded a lot of our attention, we were compensated by Mother Nature with some wonderful tropical sunsets. Over and over again everybody not on duty went out at dusk and was stunned by this fantastic and colourful spectacle.

Fauna on Mid Islet

As mentioned earlier, boobies and frigate birds are species typically found in large quantities on Pacific islands, and the Willis Island group is no exception. There are several species of boobies, with the masked booby, comparable to our northerly gannet, occupying the beachfront. These are quite funny birds. They waddle clumsily on their feet and their reedy whistling greeting call sounds like a mix of duck and crow. They might look clumsy on the ground, but as soon as they get some air under their wings you find them to be some of the most elegant flying creatures. Gently climbing in the wind, sailing long distances without a flap of their wings, and at the next moment jolting down, stopping their dive just inches above the sea, their wingtips touching the water. Masked boobies are spectacular divers too, plunging diagonally into the ocean at high speed. The beach is their breeding ground and you can find two eggs lying in the bare sand, alternately protected by both male and female partners. Looking deep into our eyes they melted our hearts, despite them being quite lively, argumentative and very persistent, if not stubborn. We soon became friends and were

talking to them, some of them even got their own names.

The interior of the island was completely occupied by a large colony of sooty terns, being the main source of the constant tremendous noise. In addition to birds we got company from several species of crabs, mainly the omnipresent red-coloured hermit crabs and ghost crabs. Hidden in jetsam, the roots of bushes and under stones during daytime, at night they all came out in numbers looking for food.

Frequently some huge and heavy sea turtles, called green turtles, visited us. They came at night, slowly crossing the beach leaving their famous tractor trail in the sand. As soon as they found a comfortable place further away and protected from the sea, they started to dig deep holes. Over a period of several hours they then laid their eggs, before they slowly went back into the sea at dawn, totally exhausted. Sometimes one of them tried to enter our property or was caught in cables or radials, but our nightly 'turtle watch' helped and guided them safely without incident.

Going Home

According to our plan, taking part in the CW WW DX SSB Contest should have been the final highlight. On the Monday after local dawn we wanted to dismantle everything and leave at dusk. But already on Friday our skipper informed us about some bad weather approaching the area. Getting all the equipment and the team safely back on board was certainly his main concern. Thus, we briefly discussed the situation and decided not to take any risks and to leave a day earlier. That gave us only about 20 hours of contest operating time, but still enough to hand out this very rare multiplier. Saturday at noon the contest started and our 'Phonies' once again had a wonderful time.

On Sunday morning at dawn we finally closed down and started immediately to dismantle and pack everything. It is always

amazing how quickly one can shut down a camp of this size. In the afternoon all 10 operators and more than two tons of equipment were safely back aboard, and nothing reminded of our stay on the island. Taking a first hot shower after such a long time was a blessing indeed and the first beer afterwards tasted better than ever. We left Mid Islet and returned to South Islet for a brief stop, sending our farewell to the weather station. Susie prepared another delicious dinner and we were all in a mood to wind down, enjoying yet another nice tropical sunset.

The next morning we weighted anchor for the last time at Willis Island and were finally on our trip back to Cairns. Compared to the outward journey, the trip was pleasant because wind and waves came from astern, pushing the ship gently forward. We made another brief stop leeward of the Herald Cays, enjoying a swim in the aquamarine water - and a freshly caught Job fish, which Susie served for lunch. The only shark we came across didn't show up until the remains of our lunch had gone overboard. Entering the Great Barrier Reef we were greeted by a school of dolphins and soon we were back in Cairns.

Here we met Dale again, already waiting for us. Next we had to unload all the radio equipment and to bring it back to our warehouse in Cairns, finally preparing it for the sea cargo trip back to Germany. Everything purchased locally was handed over to Dale and he started the sell-off. Last but not least, after we left the Floreat, moving back into the hotel, we all came together once again for a delicious dinner in a restaurant close to the marina, finally saying farewell to the crew of M/V Floreat and to Dale, VK4DMC.

Postscript

We think that we've been successful on our mission to bring a new country or some new band points to as many of the Deserving as possible. We thank all the stations on the

other side of the pile-ups for their cooperation and understanding. We would also like to thank all the many persons, companies and DX organisations for their financial assistance and hardware support, without which this DXpedition certainly would not have taken place, eg the Northern California DX Foundation, Lake Wettern DX Group, EUDXF, GDXF, CDXC, INDEXA, DDXG, SDXF, CDXC, GMDXG, VERON, LSDXA, MHDXA, CVCC, TCDXA and MDXA as well as Spiderbeam, microHAM, Titanex and appello.

VK9DWC QSO Statistics

QSOs (Band/Mode)

| | CW | SSB | RTTY | Band |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 160m | 2521 | 37 | 0 | 2558 |
| 80m | 5763 | 2648 | 0 | 8411 |
| 40m | 8860 | 3323 | 189 | 12372 |
| 30m | 7393 | 0 | 2300 | 9693 |
| 20m | 7298 | 10000 | 1953 | 19251 |
| 17m | 7583 | 6108 | 1643 | 15334 |
| 15m | 7886 | 7075 | 1505 | 16466 |
| 12m | 3958 | 1912 | 580 | 6450 |
| 10m | 2470 | 1759 | 413 | 4642 |
| 6m | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Mode | 53733 | 32862 | 8583 | 95178 |

Multiple Band QSOs

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 10-Band QSOs | 0 |
| 9-Band QSOs | 621 |
| 8-Band QSOs | 863 |
| 7-Band QSOs | 1189 |
| 6-Band QSOs | 1259 |
| 5-Band QSOs | 1531 |
| 4-Band QSOs | 1720 |
| 3-Band QSOs | 2553 |
| 2-Band QSOs | 3791 |
| 1-Band QSOs | 9384 |
| Unique Callsigns | 22911 |

3X5A Second Year

Rob Ferguson, GM3YTS

gm3yts@btinternet.com

This is the story of our second year in Guinea for CQ WW CW as 3X5A - as seen from my perspective. I agreed rather early on to be part of the team which won last year's Multi Multi category simply because I enjoyed the trip so much last time.

The team had changed, as some of last year's operators were unable to be with us in 2008 . So the team this year comprised Roger, G3SXW; Don, G3XTT; Fred, G4BWP; John, G4IRN; Rob, GM3YTS; Ned, AA7A; Vince, K5VT, and Dick, N6AA.

Journey

Thankfully my trip this year was made easier for me by Air France changing their flight schedule from Edinburgh. In the past the timings of the connecting flights had meant I had to fly via London to Paris and onwards. However, this year I was able to go direct to Paris, saving both time and money.

However, before we go on these trips we have to remember to pack all the necessary stuff to allow for some home comforts in the rather basic hotel that we were operating from. In fact we were not 100% certain that the Hotel Camayenne, which we used last year would be open as last year we were told it could be closed for refurbishment.

There was the real possibility we would have to look for another hotel on our arrival in Conakry. Anyway, with this in mind I packed towels, toilet rolls, kettle, coffee, tea and some of my favourite biscuits just to have some home comforts.

All packed and ready to go, I got up early on the Sunday morning, switched on the rig and heard a new one on 160m: 5KØT. I called for a while and worked them as a

little present to myself before my long journey. I then opened the front door to a snow-covered drive!

After a moment of real panic I got the snow shovel out to clear the drive. This slopes upwards quite steeply and my front-wheel-drive car would never get up it unless it was well cleared. It took about 30 minutes to clear enough snow to get out - after several failed attempts to slither up the drive. At one stage I thought 'Never mind Conakry. Will I make it to Edinburgh?' It was a good job I had left plenty of time to get to the airport.

We made the airport and I arrived in Paris in good time, meeting up firstly with Ned, AA7A, who had already been waiting for a couple of hours after his long flight from Phoenix. We were joined a bit later by G3SXW, G4BWP and G4IRN. Vince, K5VT, was already en route via Dakar, G3XTT and N6AA would be arriving the following day.

After an uneventful six-hour flight or so we arrived at Conakry Airport. Of course after snowy Scotland the heat hits you as soon as you reach the aircraft door and the sweating starts immediately.

It never ceases to amaze me the number of people who throng around African airports both inside and outside the terminal. All milling about, asking to help with your luggage or transport to your hotel. Luckily we were being met by Mr Camara, Head of Telecom Licensing in Guinea, who ensured our trip through customs was painless. We then had to run the gauntlet of people in the car park all trying to sell you stuff that you really don't need: lighters, cigarettes, lottery cards.

Installation

So after we had shaken them off we set off for the hotel, which was 30 minutes drive away. On arrival we were allocated our rooms. However, my room turned out to be in a complete mess - it looked as if it had been trashed by the previous occupant. Doors were hanging off the wardrobes, the safe was missing - as was the TV etc. Anyway, after a wait I was allocated another room, which was on the same floor as I had been on in 2007 and that room was perfectly satisfactory.

The next day after breakfast it was down to STI-Guinea, Karel Waerzegger/3XY2A's place, where we had stored our gear last year, and arranging for that to be loaded and transported back to our hotel which was about a mile away. Somehow this year it seemed to be hotter and much more humid than last year - or maybe it's because I am older and fatter! This physical work was quite exhausting. We did have help, but nevertheless we still had a lot of lifting and carrying to do. It was important to ensure we had plenty of water to rehydrate ourselves regularly.

Once we had the gear back at the hotel, the next task was to get it hauled up onto the roof. This was easy for the towers and antennas which were pulled up on ropes, but all the other gear had to go up via the one working lift, the rotators to the roof and the other gear to the shack on the fifth floor.

I should mention at this stage that the rooms we used for our shack last year and which had excellent air conditioning (which we had paid for) had been let out despite our reserving them well in advance. We were given alternative rooms, but they were not well air-conditioned and this did give us problems.

We employed four helpers to do a lot of the manual work, but of course we had to put the antennas together and ensure the rotators and all the wiring was correct. We certainly

missed our antenna guru Mike, KC7V, this year and it took a bit longer than usual to get the antennas in the air. However, by the Wednesday we had all the antennas up and working.. We had monobanders for 40m, 20m, 15m and 10m plus a C3 Tribander for the mult station. For LF we had the Titanex Vertical for 160m and a sloper for 80m. In addition to this Ned, AA7A, made and erected two flag RXing antennas for 160m.

In the meantime, while the antennas were being built, Ned, AA7A, was putting the stations together and John, G4IRN, was responsible for the computer network and the Internet connection. Roger, G3SXW, was doing his excellent stuff sorting out supplies, dealing with the hotel management over numerous problems which needed fixing and of course liasing with the Guinean PTT.

It was no easy task for Ned, AA7A, putting the stations together. We had six Elecraft K2s and a K3 for the spotting station plus Alpha amplifiers for each station. However, if you can imagine messing around with American plugs, British plugs and French plugs, it was a bit of a nightmare which eventually got sorted out, but not before Ned on one occasion turned the air blue with exasperation.

Our antenna erecting chief Fred, G4BWP, did a sterling job keeping our helpers in order as well as us Voodudes with a few well chosen 'words' at the right moment. We left him to put the Titanex together and he put all the guy ropes in place and with his expertise it went up easily using a gin pole.

So we were ready to go on the Wednesday three days after our arrival. However, it became obvious that we could not sustain our operation in the rooms we had been allotted for the shacks - as the heat and humidity were so intense that it was impossible to operate for any length of time without sweating profusely and becoming physically drained. Consequently Ned and Roger had to spend some hours trudging the

streets of Conakry looking for fans. Eventually they came up with several of them in 'fan street', which helped the situation, but operating this year was never as comfortable as the previous year when we enjoyed decent air-conditioning.

We also found we had a problem with one of the Alphas and there was no way it could be fixed locally, so that was taken out of line and it was decided to take it back to the US for repair. This meant we had to share the 10m and 160m positions, which turned out to be OK given the time the bands opened and closed.

The day before the contest we had an official visit from Mr Sow, the Government Minister responsible for Telecommunications, and his Deputy, Mr Camara. Roger was able to present them with a trap dipole, Morse key, headphones etc. (very kindly donated by Martin Lynch & Sons) and several amateur radio publications including booklets in French on amateur licensing produced by the Belgian national radio society (UBA). They already have a pristine TS-930 at their HQ in Conakry, so all these peripherals will enable them to put a working station together.

The Contest

We were then ready for the contest, but we did have one nagging doubt! Every day we had regular short power cuts which lasted a few seconds before the hotel's generator kicked in the power, then went off again a few minutes later to allow a connection back onto the grid. This happened like clockwork every six hours and it was to prove to be an irritant during the contest.

Roger had, as usual, drawn up a roster for the contest, giving each operator a fair share of high-rate and low-rate periods together with some time on the multiplier station.

Once again we used WinTest as our contest logging program and it performed

flawlessly throughout. Our wireless network was first class thanks to John, G4IRN.

I started on 160m all night on the first night, just as I had the previous year. Conditions were good, but there seemed to be a lot more QSB this year and consequently it was more difficult to copy those weak ones. As soon as I called CQ one of the strongest signals coming through was N7UA in Washington State. The West Coast continued to come through very strongly all night. I wish we could hear them as strong on 160m in the UK.

Conditions were fine on LF, but 15m and 10m were disappointing, with results well down on 2007. Unfortunately the numerous power cuts throughout the weekend did cause the Internet to go down from the Saturday evening and we were not able to get it running during the contest again - and in fact the Internet connection for the hotel did not come back until the Tuesday after the contest. This loss of the Internet certainly hindered our multiplier totals and these were significantly down on 2007.

Our final QSO tally was just over 13,000 - down 1,800 QSOs on last year - and our multiplier total was 173 zones, down 7, and 627 countries, down 80. Consequently our total points of just over 32 million showed a reduction of 8 million on 2007.

I won't go through the whole 48-hour contest scenario as you will no doubt have read about this many times, suffice to say it followed the usual pattern of shift operating for the 48 hours and each operator avidly grabbing his rest times as these were desperately needed after a long tiring shift in the heat and humidity.

It's remarkable how quickly the end of contest comes along and that's when the team sits for an hour with drink in hand, going over what went well and what didn't. It is a great unwind session before you retire for the night.

Post-Contest

Monday morning was teardown time, with all hands on deck dropping the antennas, dismantling the whole station and packing everything up in a secure way ready for another 12 months storage. It is always amazing how quickly we can do this. I think it took about four hours to be all packed up and ready to go. We note at this stage what needs replacing and what hardware we need to bring next year.

That evening we all had our final dinner together at the local Indian restaurant and once again analysed our efforts. Just after dinner Don, G3XTT, left to catch his plane and the rest of us retired for the night as some of team were going to be up at 6am to start the reconnaissance trip to Sierra Leone with a view to going there in 2009.

So while Roger, Fred and Vince set off for Sierra Leone, those of us who remained had a day free to do some sightseeing and

relaxing. We went to a local beauty spot about one hour's drive away where there was an impressive series of waterfalls. It was unusual to see these, given the arid climate in the surrounding area.

It was soon time to return to our homes and on the Wednesday we once again had to face the crowds at Conakry airport before catching our Air France flight to Paris and onwards.

Suffice to say it was still snowing in Scotland and it was a bit of a rude awakening coming home to that after the heat of West Africa. We had to leave the car on the road, as once again the driveway was snow-covered. My first job was to get the snow shovel out again (déjà vu).

So another successful trip by the Voodoo Contest Group, lots of hard work and lots of fun. 9L next year? Who knows. Watch this space!

73 Rob, GM3YTS

3B7C Presentation

The Dudley & District ARS have organised a presentation by Don Beattie, G3BJ, on the 3B7C DXpedition. This will be on

Wednesday, 29 April 2009

at

Trysull Village Hall, Feishall Lane, Trysull,
Wolverhampton, West Midlands

Doors open at 1900 for a 1945 start. The presentation should last 1 hr 45 mins. Talk-in on 145.450 or 145.550 MHz. Refreshments will be available, tea and coffee - and a small donation for this would be appreciated.

E-mail: m0vky@hotmail.com

<http://www.kadars.org.uk/>

73 Simon, MØVKY

J88XF on Mayreau Island

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

Yes, February is indeed an odd month. In amateur radio we fix annual contest dates in our calendar by reference to the first, second, third, fourth or, possibly, the last 'full weekend' of a particular month. A 'full weekend' is both the Saturday and the Sunday. This all works fine until you come to the occasional February which starts on a Sunday, as happened this year. February 2009 only had three 'full weekends'. Usually there are four.

This caused havoc with the contest calendar in February 2009 because there were not enough full weekends to pack in four weekends' worth of contests. The dates of some contests were moved to avoid clashes. One of these was the FOC Marathon, which is normally held on the first full weekend in February. However this year in order to avoid clashing with other events, it was moved back by one weekend.

Some months ago when a short trip to St Vincent (J8) was being planned, it seemed like a good idea to time the operation to coincide with the FOC's annual CW club contest (the Marathon). The trip was duly booked for the first weekend in February. In the event, because of the quirks of the February 2009 calendar, the FOC contest took place one week earlier. No matter, there were still plenty of QSOs to be had during a short CW operation as J88XF!

Getting the licence and finding a QTH

Dave, G3TBK, has been working as a telecoms consultant in the Caribbean for many years. He is currently operating as J88DR and lives close to the airport on St Vincent. Dave was most helpful in getting a licence organised for my short trip.

Although St Vincent (NA-109) is the main island of J8, there are several other islands

in the St Vincent and the Grenadines group (NA-025). The largest of these is Bequia. Probably the most famous is the small island of Mustique, the well-known stomping ground of UK royalty. The other larger islands are Canouan and Union. These four islands all have small airports, whereas none of the half dozen or so smaller islands in St Vincent and the Grenadines do.

When planning trips, Google Earth is a really powerful tool for finding good locations. As is often the case in the Caribbean, many of the resorts in St Vincent and the Grenadines face west towards the Caribbean (and hence the US). Ideally a good DXpedition location in the Caribbean has a clear sea take-off from the NW (USA/Japan) through N to NE (Europe). This is where Google Earth can be most helpful in identifying potentially good locations. A thorough search of each of St Vincent and the Grenadines with Google Earth showed there was only a limited choice of locations with a north-facing sea take-off. One of these was at a small resort on the northern end of the island of Mayreau.

Salt Whistle Bay on Mayreau

Mayreau is one of the smaller islands in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Access is by a half-hour boat ride from the neighbouring island of Union. The Salt Whistle Bay resort at the north end of Mayreau has both a large natural harbour area on the Caribbean side (a favourite of visiting yachties) and, on the other side of a thin isthmus, a beach on the Atlantic side. The resort itself is small with just five two-studio cottages. During our five-day visit we were the only people staying at the resort, although there was no shortage of visiting yachties.

Although the QTH itself at Salt Whistle Bay was facing in the right direction (ie to the North) there was a problem which had been carelessly overlooked in the planning. The accommodation itself was some distance from the all-important salt water's edge at the beach. Although it had been planned to take extra-long lengths of coax for both the antenna as well as the control cable for the Big-IR (the Stepp-IR 40m – 10m vertical), because of a delayed delivery and the general confusion and chaos caused by the snow and wintery conditions in the UK in early February, this never happened. The antenna could only be installed at about 80ft from the beach. This might not sound much. But if across that short distance to the beach and the salt water, the antenna is surrounded by trees, this is really bad news for your signal strength. And so it was to be at J88XF. Although the take-off to the US/Japan was only a short distance from the beach, the take-off to Europe was badly screened by trees. And this showed in J88XF's signal strength in EU. Unfortunately there was nothing that could be done about improving the positioning of the antenna. Another 50m of coax and control cable would have made a big difference!

Logging the QSOs

Despite the relatively poor signal into Europe, 4,620 CW QSOs were made during the four days and a bit that J88XF was operating from Mayreau. The majority of the QSOs were on 40m (2,150) and 30m (1,150). The openings to Europe on 17m were quite thin. Only a couple of European stations were worked on 15m. Nothing was worked on 12m, despite making several QSYs with W4s to that band.

Japan is a particularly difficult path from the Caribbean, with relatively short openings. So it was pleasing to be able to work a handful of JAs on both 40m and 30m. Keeping awake for the European dawn was also an important objective, although it meant staying up operating until about 0430

local. This was achieved on all but one of the days.

Snow at Gatwick

The journey out to Mayreau was via Barbados. Thanks to the knock-on effects of the snowy weather in the UK, our flight arrived two hours late, which meant that the connecting flight to Union island had been missed and our operating time as J88XF had been reduced by one day. We finally arrived on Mayreau some 36 hours after we had left Gatwick.

Dave, G3TBK, had kindly arranged for my licence to be collected at Union. That's exactly what happened. My wife and I were the only two passengers to disembark from the flight that brought us from Barbados to Union island. As we walked into the customs hall on Union Island, the one customs officer present handed me a large envelope, saying "this must be for you!" It was my licence. Ten minutes after landing at Union we were already on the small boat that would take us over to Mayreau.

New K3 on its first trip

Although I have taken a Kenwood TS-570 on numerous trips over the years, this trip was the first with a brand-new Elecraft K3. The first thing that strikes you about the K3 is just how light it is when you consider that it's a really top-class radio. I could hardly believe how (relatively!) light my radio suitcase was, when packed with the K3 and the usual station accessories. The pile-ups on this trip were never massive. J8 is not that rare, and my signal was pretty puny. Hence I have not yet had a chance to hear how the K3 copes with jumbo CW pile-ups. However, for the gentle pace of CW operating from J88XF the K3 was most comfortable.

Keep it short!

Much has been written in the CDXC *Digest* and elsewhere about the do's and don'ts in

CW pile-ups, both from DX end and from the DX chaser's side. The problems of continuous calling are often discussed. However, while relaxing working the pile-up from Mayreau, a thought that often occurred was "Why does the station being worked send so much time-wasting verbiage?" In a pile-up once the DX station has come back to you with your callsign, all the DX station wants to hear is the briefest of exchanges. Just '5NN TU' or '5NN di-dit'.

So many stations repeat their callsign, even though the DX station already has it correct. Others send their 5NN with long drawn-out dashes. They then repeat the report several times. The 'report' itself is meaningless. It's just a punctuation mark in the DX pile-up QSO. Use it as such, and don't add anything

else. Only give your call when the DX station comes back to you in a pile-up if there is genuine doubt that the DX station has your call correct. Otherwise just send the briefest of exchange and nothing else. This allows the pile-up to move on and to work the next station. Excessive verbiage just holds up the pile-up for everyone else. Keep it short and get out of the way as quickly as possible!

Visiting J8 and operating from Mayreau island made a most welcome escape from the wintery weather and associated chaos in the UK in February. The pile-ups from J88XF were great. They were a gentle trickle rather than a humungous mass. Thanks again to Dave, G3TBK/J88DR, for his help with organising and arranging for the delivery of the licence.

G4BWP and Yee Li

On 8 February 2009 our own Fred, G4BWP, married Yee Li in Hong Kong. They made a very happy couple and the ceremony was heart-warming.

As radio hams we all appreciate the significance of the bride's initials and we all wish them the very best of everything for the future. Of course, Fred is strictly under starter's orders for February (ref. CQ WW CW: work it out!).

The hospitality was outstanding, the company just marvellous. Congratulations to Fred. Such a good guy.

Roger, G3SXW

9LØW DXpedition to Sierra Leone - Autumn 2008

Nick Henwood, G3RWF *nick@henwood.demon.co.uk*

Sierra Leone, former British colony and protectorate (there was a bit of each), sits on the West African coast between Guinea and Liberia. Despite valuable natural resources such as diamonds and bauxite, it is extremely poor. It suffered severely from the atrocities of the long civil war which ended about six years ago. With some notable exceptions (such the 9L1AB trip in 2004), amateur radio activity has been relatively slight in recent years.

In June 2008 Karl, DK2WV, visited Freetown, the capital, and with great persistence managed to obtain a licence as 9LØW. While operating from the house of his sister-in-law Maria, who lives and works there, he explored the possibility of mounting an expedition later in the year. Many locations were considered in order to find a site with electricity, water, acceptable accommodation and, of course, room for antennas with a reasonable take-off to major amateur radio activity areas. It was also hoped to activate the rare (for IOTA) Banana Islands (AF-037) which are close to the mainland about 25 km south of Freetown.

The quaintly-named Number Two River was chosen (the colonial British liked to number things). It has one of the most beautiful beaches in Africa and is very close to the Banana Islands, clearly visible from the shore.

Karl recruited a team of amateurs with a great deal of Africa experience – both as residents and as licensed amateurs. /DK2WV, Hans/DL1YFF and Nick G3RWF met for the first time at Amsterdam Airport for the flight to Freetown via Dakar, taking all equipment within the flight allowance. We were joined a week later by Rod, DJ4LK. The flight via Dakar was uneventful with much to talk about. The

arrival at Lungi Airport brought those immediate West African experiences – air which is so humid you could bottle it and huge numbers of new friends – “Good friend, I carry very cheap”. In a word, chaos. We fought our way past (or donated) green stamps to a host of outstretched hands, some of them official. “What is this?”(Customs) – “It’s an MFJ multi-band tuner”. “Ah yes. And what is this?”

We were met by Maria and John. John is a Sierra Leonean and was critically helpful in getting us to Freetown – the airport being across a very wide deep-water estuary from the capital. Crossing can be either by helicopter (quick, expensive and some recent fatalities), hovercraft (ex-Isle of Wight, medium speed, only one recent partial sinking) and the ferry (ex-Greek islands, slow, relatively cheap, but with very strong safety warnings by the UK Foreign Office). Cheap seemed as good as any, but it took five hours to cross the estuary, entertained by an amazing on-board disco/cabaret act for the few passengers who had squeezed into the small ‘first class’ lounge, with the ham gear remaining under our eagle eyes.

After threading through a very surprising Freetown traffic jam (at 10 pm!) the team bounced down the rough coast road to Number Two River, arriving in the early hours. Nick had lived in Sierra Leone as a 19-year-old VSO volunteer in 1963 (9L1NH) and recalled being able to ride his scooter to No 2 River along smooth tarred roads. We met more surprises such as “ We didn’t think you were coming today”. However, there was (generator) electricity and we each had a much-needed bed. Dawn broke to show that our guest house was well on the way to being finished – with quite a few people living on the unfinished first floor. There was a fantastic view of white

sands, the coastal islands, including Banana Island, and the peninsular mountains (unhelpfully to the North). We had a very warm welcome from our host, Patrick, who put his house and compound at our disposal.

Number Two River

We set about getting antennas up – a Spiderbeam ground plane for low bands, an HF9 vertical, a windom, Beverages pointing to Europe/US and Japan and an inverted-V dipole. Rigs were two K3s, a TS-480 and two linears. The unfinished first floor and roof proved to be very useful for antennas and there were many helping hands. Power was provided by two quite new generators - not under our direct control, although the financing of very expensive fuel most certainly was. Only one of the two seemed entirely happy taking the full load with linears in use.

We had arrived on the coat tails of the Italian 9L1X expedition which we had thought was planned for early 2009. Nevertheless business was still brisk. We were soon on the air. Band conditions, however, were not wonderful, and 15, 12 and 10m seemed to have largely lost the will to live. We were easily able to operate from the same room without significant mutual interference using bandpass filters. It was always hot and humid – even in the middle of the night. We had no air-conditioning – only the fragrant smoke from Hans’ pipe. Fortunately breezes from the sea served to keep mosquitoes at bay, which was an unexpected bonus. From late morning until mid-afternoon the bands were usually poor and that gave us an opportunity to go for a swim. The beach looks stunning and has some of the attributes of a tourist beach (eg access to cold Star beer) but, except for weekends, virtually no tourists.

We settled into a routine. Food is important on such trips and we had wonderful breakfasts of fresh orange juice and fruit followed by interesting variations on a theme of cooked eggs and lots of toast. We

tried to delay it until after the early morning JA rush on 30 and 40m. We had only one other meal each day – “lunch” at about 6 pm- with additional grazing on bananas, coconuts and biscuits. Joseph the cook had been brought from Freetown especially to feed us and he was excellent. Every day he helped us to choose the evening meal, often straight from the sea in front of us – barracuda, spiny lobster and huge crabs. The owner of the guest house, Patrick, had been the British High Commissioner’s driver before retirement. He used his very loud voice to conduct business across the whole compound, staffed (it appeared) entirely by relatives. One evening the compound resounded to national anthems as Patrick sang “God save the Queen” and Nick remembered the Sierra Leone National Anthem “High we exalt thee land of the free”. They shared a school song in Krio. Palm wine was drunk.

During our time at Number Two River, Hans, with pipe permanently clamped between his teeth concentrated on data modes and was in great demand. Nick, running a barefoot K3 on CW, tended to work overnight, sometimes struggling with sleep! Karl worked hard to breathe life into the low bands but conditions seemed stubbornly poor. In between, he built up good local knowledge and commissioned coconuts to be cut from 15 metres up adjoining trees. Rod, on his arrival, settled in immediately and applied his skills to both CW and SSB. We were able to keep in touch with the wider world via Winlink.

Power is usually a problem in Africa. Generators running out of fuel are down to poor management but after a few days, other things started to go seriously wrong. One of the linears died. At about the same time a switch mode power supply stopped working and then a laptop supply. We had very limited resources for repair. We had not been monitoring the supply voltage permanently and we now found it was 295 volts – problem identified if not solved. Amazingly Patrick, our host, immediately

produced a sturdy voltage stabiliser and we lived with 215V thereafter! Sadly it meant we now had only one linear – a particularly critical loss for the RTTY station which really needed more than 60W to be heard reliably. We had to share the remaining linear between RTTY, low band work and some SSB.

The decision was taken to move to the Banana Islands for the last week of the expedition – after the return to Europe of Hans and Nick (who were only available for two weeks). They left for Freetown where Nick visited the school he taught at 45 years previously (still there and little changed). The \$110 a night hotel in Freetown was decidedly unimpressive and they were told it was due to close for refurbishment – presumably starting with provision of regular water and electricity. In the past it has been a great radio location for Dxpeditions, but needs to be checked out for the future! The airport return was via hovercraft – not without incident as they waited for fuel to be pumped aboard by hand from a van and after a truly terrible argument about exchange rates (after tickets had been bought!). However, the trip across the estuary went fine, mislaid luggage was recovered and then once again they ran the gauntlet of outstretched hands. The plane was late but, after yet another luggage examination by hopeful officials, literally en route to the plane, they were away.

Banana Island

Meanwhile we (Karl and Rod) moved down the coast to the village of Kent, where we hired a boat with an outboard motor to take us the 7 km to the Banana Islands (named after their shape, not the fruits which grow there). The two main islands are Dublin and Ricketts, about 5 miles end to end and linked together by a tidal causeway and a stone bridge. The islands were visited by the Portuguese in 1460 and there are still surprising European remains such as street lamps and a quite large church. There are no roads, cars or motorcycles. The 900

inhabitants are virtually all descendants of former slaves returned there after the abolition of slavery (as are the original inhabitants of Freetown). Despite its appealing simplicity there are many cellphones – now universal throughout Africa. We could not understand how it was possible to pay the call charges on an island with no apparent means of earning money.

As ever the economy of Africa remains a mystery. At one level prices can be sky-high for tourists (far in excess of what might be thought a reasonable supplement for those from the affluent West). Often they can be reduced substantially by bartering, but it is important to ensure you have something to barter with (ie an alternative!). In contrast, local village prices were so tiny it was hard to believe there was any point in having a shop. Even in Freetown taxis in Freetown charge rates which barely cover fuel costs. There are no cash machines in Sierra Leone with international connections and foreign exchange is often (illegally) obtained in the street. The most useful currency (in November 2008) was the Dollar. While we were happy to bring a substantial input to the local economy, we struggled when there was an assumption that we were millionaires - anyway, enough of world politics and economics.

We stayed in a simple but clean hut in the island's small guest camp, which has the only generator on the island. We had to remind ourselves from time to time that we had volunteered – the constant battle with insects and the overwhelming humidity added new dimensions to ham radio. However, the new location did mean that the Spiderbeam low band vertical could be erected right next to the sea. It was also immediately apparent that AF-037 was greatly in demand and the Winlink connection forwarded many requests for low band activity. The IARU beacons were still inaudible, but gradually conditions began to improve and at last some stations were heard on Top Band.

On the first night when 160m seemed feasible, Karl was reconnecting the vertical when the generator stopped. The refuelling arrangements had failed and the key to the fuel storage was in the pocket of someone who had gone to the mainland for the night. Ouch! Despite this poor start, conditions did improve and a substantial number of 160m QSOs were logged – many ‘new ones’.

With just two operators there was little rest and we did our best to match closed bands with times for sleep. During the final weekend we found it virtually impossible to be heard alongside the contest – and so moved to the WARC bands. Often it is said that there are few African stations active during a contest, but it is equally likely that some just can’t break through huge European signals with quite mundane calls who only want to run.

Was it worth it? Well we certainly enjoyed ourselves and hope that new band points or a new IOTA made it interesting for others around the world. We are especially grateful to the sponsors of the expedition: CDXC, the Danish DX Group, GDXF, Kabel-Kusch, LSDXA, NDXA-Nippon, the Passau DX-Club and Spiderbeam.

What did we learn? Our equipment worked well (apart from the over-voltage problem). Beams would have been helpful, but this was a ‘baggage allowance’ expedition. Gaining maximum control of your power source is essential in Africa – try to avoid generator refuelling by a third party, no matter how many smiles are exchanged – and constantly monitor voltages. Try to avoid being ‘boxed in’ on critical issues such as transport, fuel and money – solutions will be expensive. Finally, for next time: bring more dollars!

Sierra Leone is a beautiful country which still faces huge challenges. We shall not forget the huge smiles and the daily greeting, “How de body?” (Answer: “De body fine”). Africa always shocks and surprises and the contrast between rich and poor is especially clear in Sierra Leone. To come and enjoy our hobby amid so many daily challenges made us feel almost guilty, but everyone seemed to enjoy having us around.

Operators: Rod, DJ4LK; Karl, DK2WV; Hans, DL1YFF, and Nick, G3RWF.

PS ...and very best wishes to the Voodoo Group in Sierra Leone next November.

A service of the future – the example of servicing SDR5000K

Stan Rudcenko, GØKBL *Rudcenko@aol.com*

SDR-type radios can already be updated over the Internet, with an incremental and often substantial improvement in performance. It seems that that it will also be possible to do your own repairs with long-distance diagnostics and replacement boards sent by post. All within days, rather than weeks, and at a substantially reduced cost. Daydreaming? Not really.

I have two SDR5000 transceivers and they both went deaf during the recent heavy

snowstorm, evidently due to a static discharge. I should have taken precautions, even if I never had that problem with any other radio in such circumstances. But that is not the point here. When this happened I immediately fired a memo on the Flex radio reflector. A day later I received an e-mail from the EU centre of Flex radio, with instructions on various tests to find out where the problem was. Having done that, I received the replacement boards, put them in and got the radios to work again. The

faulty boards are being sent back. In effect, a couple of components costing pennies have been replaced at minimal cost.

Any other radio would have to be sent for repairs costing a lot more than posting the two boards back to Germany, and it would take more. This seems to be another potential advantage of the SDR – the

diagnostics can be done long distance, a replacement board sent and the old one sent back to be fixed for further use, if possible. Like the K3, there is no soldiering involved in the process, and just about the only ‘specialised’ tool needed is a Torxx screwdriver. I know I am biased towards the SDR, after all I already have two of them, but I find this rather impressive.

CDXC Reflector Guidelines

This Reflector is intended for the exchange of information on DX-related topics, QSL information, award schemes, DXpeditions and other news between CDXC Members.

Our aim is to keep the information content high and noise low. Please keep to DX-related topics, within reason.

Feel free to ask questions. The Reflector is a place where we can obtain advice and develop our DXing skills. There is plenty of opportunity for the more experienced of our members to help the less experienced ones.

The Reflector is a place where we can express opinions to the Committee, but attacks or criticism of individuals, the CDXC Committee, the RSGB, or any other groups, is not acceptable.

Do not post messages to individuals. Keep personal replies off-Reflector. There are many of us who probably don't find such posts relevant.

Time-sensitive propagation reports are of no use to members off-line. Please use the CDXC Cluster for real-time exchanges.

Be considerate of members who get the Daily Digest format of postings, please trim your quotes.

This is a Club with enormous resources and skill. We are all very privileged to be members. Treat each other with respect, and behave with good manners.

CADXA

Roger Western, G3SXW g3sxw@btinternet.com

CDXC is a DX club. Apart from GMDX I am hard pressed to think of another club in UK whose prime interest is DX. But of course in USA they have many. One of these is the Central Arizona DX Club. In January I was invited to speak at their annual banquet. At that time of year the temperatures are a sensible 60-70°F, so it makes sense to hold it in their 'winter'.

I flew BA non-stop from Heathrow to Phoenix and stayed two nights with my pal Vince, K5VT. His house is an Aladdin's Cave with some thousands of Morse keys on display, but that is another story. John, K7WP, invited several DXers to a lunch at his place - he's a great cook by the way - and we then visited the station of Ned, AA7A. Ned is a VooDude, but I had not visited his QTH before. He 'only' has a one-acre plot, but it is filled with antennas including an array of six 16-ele beams for 2m EME. He now has 102 countries on that mode and has DXCC on ten bands. Yikes!

Dinner

About 80 folks sat down to the CADXA dinner that evening including many XYLs. All very pleasant. I then tried to entertain them for 40 minutes or so and was much complimented on my British sense of humour. (NB: not 'humor')

There were a few presentations and the new Committee were sworn in, all very slick, no time to get bored. We then repaired to the bar, but just one drink: Americans are not into heavy boozing like us Brits! Good on them.

The next day we were invited to a German lunch by W7/DL1UF, Reinhart, and his XYL Ingrid, W7ISG. Fantastic hospitality!

The Phoenix area is flat and buildings are all one-storey. But the 200-300-year-old cactus plants are fascinating. They have space in USA, lots of it. Compared to UK we see big antenna farms, but their local zoning (planning permission) restricts them to 75 ft. My heart bleeds!

CA and XE

Then it was a one-hour flight to San Diego, southern California, and two nights with Glenn, K6NA. Glenn has three towers, but only one of them is at 140 ft, the others are merely 100 ft. Pah! He has some ten yagis, not to mention the 2-ele 80m wire beam.

We visited Jim, W6YI (yet more towers and massive antennas) and Jim, W6YA, and met several other DXers at a lunch, then it was a quick trip down the freeway to Mexico. We parked and walked into Tijuana and straight back into USA again, spending some fifteen minutes in XE-land. The US immigration lady said I should have stayed longer and had some tacos! I refrained from explaining DXFC to her!

It's always fascinating to swap notes with kindred spirits and to see how others live. Many thanks to my hosts, especially CADXA for funding my air ticket, to K5VT and K6NA for accommodation and to K7WP, DL1UF and others for lunch entertainment. It was also grand to escape the UK winter for a few days! It is indeed a different world. They have much more space in which to erect antennas, but there again W6 and W7 is an awful long way from anywhere, so DXCC is a much more stringent target for them.

IOTA News

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2007 edition)

New IOTA reference number issued

AS-199 VU Andhra Pradesh State South group (India)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

| | | |
|--------|------------|--|
| AF-027 | TX7LX | Mayotte Island (June 2008) |
| AF-056 | 9L1X | Sherbro Island (October 2008) |
| AS-001 | VU4MY | South Andaman Island, Andaman Islands (Oct/Nov 2008) |
| AS-001 | VU4RG | South Andaman Island, Andaman Islands (Oct/Nov 2008) |
| AS-011 | VU7NRO | Kadmat Island, Lakshadweep (October/November 2008) |
| AS-011 | VU7SJ | Agatti Island, Lakshadweep (October/November 2008) |
| AS-127 | S21DX | St Martin's Island (January 2009) |
| AS-127 | S21RC/P | St Martin's Island (January 2009) |
| AS-199 | AT2RS | Nachugunta Island (December 2008) |
| EU-169 | ZAØ/I0SNY | Sazan Island (October 2008) |
| EU-169 | ZAØ/I8LWL | Sazan Island (October 2008) |
| EU-169 | ZAØ/I8YGZ | Sazan Island (October 2008) |
| EU-169 | ZAØ/IK2AQZ | Sazan Island (October 2008) |
| EU-169 | ZAØ/IK7JWX | Sazan Island (October 2008) |
| EU-182 | UT9IO/P | Zmeiniy Island (July/August 2008) |
| NA-064 | K6UMO/KL7 | Attu Island, Near Islands (September 2008) |
| NA-070 | K6UMO/KL7 | Kiska Island, Rat Islands (September 2008) |
| OC-032 | FK/F5AHO | New Caledonia Island (November/December 2008) |
| OC-033 | FK/F5AHO/P | Lifou Island, Loyalty Islands (December 2008) |
| OC-041 | P29NI | Hermit Islands, Ninigo Group (October/November 2008) |
| OC-149 | H44MY | Kolombangara Is, New Georgia Islands (December 2008) |
| OC-163 | H4ØMY | Vanikolo Islands (September/October 2008) |
| OC-181 | P29NI | Garove Island, Witu Islands (October 2008) |
| OC-192 | H44MY | Ontong Java Atoll (November/December 2008) |
| OC-192 | H44TO | Ontong Java Atoll (November/December 2008) |
| SA-075 | OA4BHY/2 | Corcovado Island (November 2008) |

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 February 2009

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP pcooper@guernsey.net

Having just finished the XQ WPX RTTY Contest maybe I should offer some thoughts on macros, and how to make the most of them. Many RTTY regulars were there, and doing very well, but I did copy a few calls that aren't familiar - and possibly not CDXC Members, but maybe you saw them too and could offer some advice?

I called a few stations who simply came back to me as if I was the one calling CQ. For instance, I saw something like this:

```
CQ DE G1ABC G1ABC G1ABC PSE KN
```

So I send DE GU0SUP GU0SUP GU0SUP, and he comes back with:

```
GU0SUP GU0SUP DE G1ABC G1ABC  
G1ABC
```

Not the best use of a macro, and this throws out the whole timing of running a CQ. So I then send a report, get one back, and in the meantime I end up with someone calling ME, because from what they can see, I am the one calling CQ.

I would also recommend putting CQ, or possibly (at a push) QRZ? at the end of your CQ call. Generally, if you are tuning around and you see CQ or QRZ? at the end, you know the stations is after a call. If you see PSE K, or PSE KN (as I saw numerous times), you then have to sit and wait for him to either call again, or to see if he is working someone already.

With conditions the way they are, think about your report too. I had a few instances where I would respond to a CQ call, only to get QRZ? or AGN AGN? I'd send my call a few more times, and then they come back with GU0SUP 599 001 and leave it at that! If they are having problems hearing my call,

surely they should think that I may well ask for a repeat of the serial number? I know it can be a bit excessive, but I generally send a serial number three times, as this will at least give the other side a fighting chance of getting it without having to ask for repeats. If you send it just twice, it can too easily become corrupted, and then you end up with GU0SUP 599 001 002, and now you have to clarify what it should be.

Most contest programs allow you to edit the macros on the fly, and I do this when conditions dictate. If they are good, and I am CQing, I will try sending the serial number just once, working on the premise that most callers will have seen me send the previous number before, and can work out what will come next. If conditions are bad, and maybe you are on a crowded 40m band, then I will up that to four times. I personally find it better to send more times than less, simply because it reduces the number of repeat requests.

I am also not in favour of the 'ultra brief' exchange, used by a growing number of folk, of the format: TU 599 001 and that's it! On several occasions I have logged a contact, only to find out there is a station on the same frequency that I can't hear, and he has just worked HIM, not ME. If I am in S & P mode, I will usually respond with: G1ABC TU 599 001 001 001 GU0SUP, as he then knows I am sending HIM a report, and he can verify my call at the end. I would then expect to see GU0SUP TU QRZ DE G1ABC or something like that.

When I CQ, I now tend to use something like this after entering his call: G1ABC TU 599 001 001 001 G1ABC DE GU0SUP. This is just in case he missed his call at the start of my over, maybe due to QRM.

All of the above becomes quite clear when you start to watch what is going on. And that seems to be a lesson that many could do with learning. It is important to watch what flows across the screen, as conditions can change quite quickly and mean that you have to rethink your macros.

Just in case you haven't heard, Dave, AA6YQ, of DXLab Suite fame, has been given full access to the source code for MMTTY. Dave intends to update MMTTY over a period of time, although it has to be said that his main priority is the DXLab Suite. He has already written a new profile to make copy better in poor conditions, but he intends to take this further and optimise the decoding even more.

One of the subjects that has come up recently is the rather poor macros that MMTTY has built in as defaults. There is now a growing trend asking for many software writers to limit the default macros, and possibly guide the user in creating his own. For example, one of the default MMTTY macros for calling the other station is a 2 x 3 call. This is a total waste of time and effort, but as it is the default, many newcomers to RTTY get the impression that this is the norm and therefore start to use it all the time. Quite a few seem to use it in contests, but it puzzles me as to why they can't see how redundant most of it is.

I am sure many of you aren't aware, but this year – 2009 – is the Golden Jubilee of BARTG. It appears that BARTG was started sometime during the summer of 1959, possibly late June or early July. We don't seem to have a record of the precise date, but be warned that BARTG will be offering some kind of award to commemorate this anniversary. Check out the BARTG website over the next few months to see what we have come up with.

And now some advanced DX news for you. Well, by the time this gets to your door, it

possibly won't be that new, but it IS while I am hammering the keyboard now!

An international team composed of EA1CJ, EA1KY, EA2RY, EA3EXV, EA5RM, EA7AJR, F9IE, IN3ZNR, UT7CR and UY7CW will be on the air from the Western Sahara from 12 - 17 April using the callsign SØ4R. Operation will be on all bands from 10 to 160m in SSB, CW and RTTY. QSL via EA5RM.

Don't forget the BARTG HF Contest over the weekend of 21 - 22 March.

Other contests:

| | |
|---------|-------------|
| EA RTTY | 4-5 April |
| SP RVG | 25-26 April |
| ARI | 2-3 May |
| Volta | 9-10 May |
| ANARTS | 13-14 June |

73 for now, and see you on the bands!

Phil, GUØSUP

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Welcome to this issue's Contest section, this time detailing my attempts at low-cost station upgrades inside the shack and the usual reports on recent major worldwide events and our popular domestic contests.

Station upgrades – software and hardware

A few years ago I added a new video card to the desktop PC I use at my operating position. This has two monitor outputs and was actually done in preparation for a GB5HQ IARU contest using G3WGV's Starlog. The UK-wide HQ station operation always resulted in there being too much required information to fit on a single monitor. This worked great in practice when operating with Fraser, G4BJM, and friends at Milton Keynes. However, at home I never had a spare monitor to use, or enough extra space on my desk, so I continued with the single monitor.

After receiving a copy of Win-Test for Christmas I realised somehow I should fit in a second monitor at home so I could take advantage of some of the extra features and visualisations provided. I then went out in the January sales to find one. As an aside, I'd not realised that the majority of monitors now for sale are large, widescreen and wouldn't look out of place as a normal domestic television. In the shack my SO2R set-up was sadly largely ineffective and unused, so for the time being I've moved my TS-850 out of the way.

I always take the time to study photos of testers' shacks. Ergonomics are important, especially for long events, to minimise tiredness and muscle strain. There's a great emphasis placed on correct seating, keyboard and monitor placement at my workplace, so it makes sense to do the same at home where I might spend the

equivalent of a full working week in front of the radio on a major contest weekend. Ideally I'd like my monitor(s) to be directly ahead of my seating position, and with my eyes parallel, or just above, the centre of the screen. In a contest we need to look at the screen constantly, or at least for every QSO. We do not need to look at the radio as often, so it does not need to be pride of place. For most Search and Pounce activity you can turn the VFO without looking at it. Bandmaps and CAT control will tell you what frequency you're on without needing to look at the front panel. The photos from the K5D Dxpedition are another example of this in practice.

Due to space constraints I've ended up with the new monitor on top of my radio, and the other monitor to the left of it. It's not ideal, but seems to work well. Hopefully this will inspire me to focus more on multipliers now I've no excuse to see what I'm missing at all times. In contests that don't require tracking the greyline, hundreds of multipliers, or the DX Cluster, the extra screen real estate can be put to alternative uses. So whilst I was struggling like most of the entrants in one of the early 80m Club Championship sessions this year, I was able to browse the Internet looking for 'affordable countryside properties' with space for more efficient antenna systems at the same time.

Many testers become ardent fans of particular software or radio manufacturers in the same way there is preference for clothing brands or cars. In the same way I'm largely indifferent to branding (as anyone who's seen my wardrobe can attest to), I am fairly happy to hop between different logging software as needed. After all, the essential functions are pretty similar between them all. But where the latest Elecraft or Icom may have a technical advantage over rivals, the extra functionality

or usability in a contest logging program may give a subtle, but real advantage.

Win-Test has a strong reputation that has been building over the last couple of years. This is evident when looking at who contributes to the Win-Test support reflector and post-contest reports on the 3830 list. Hence I was a little surprised that the initial set-up with my Microham Microkeyer wasn't quite as straightforward as I'd hoped. I think this was mostly to do with a set-up document being missing from a website. There was, however, plenty of documentation for more recent Microham products which I was able to use instead. In hindsight I was also expecting the set-up to be too much like Writelog, which I've been using heavily for a few years. Experience of other programs can help in some ways, but it can also start you off with misleading misconceptions.

Soon, though, I had radio control, CW keying and RTTY working, and DXCluster access too. Routing audio through the PC (to permit on the fly voice recording) was suffering from an annoying buzz as I experienced with Writelog. Despite a valiant battle and near endless tinkering, I'm blaming the sound card for this as it's a common annoyance in both programs. Voice keying is working, but only with audio I've pre-recorded. A little tip is to use software to trim a recorded CQ call, or your callsign, of gaps or clicks. Why not record several versions of your callsign or a CQ call to cater for 'high speed/low QRM' and '40m during CQ WW', ie different environments. Audacity is a good example of a free audio recorder and editor, and it's available for Windows, Linux and Mac platforms.

So far actually using the Win-Test in a contest has been pretty flawless, although I've not given it a serious try in an all-weekend multi-mode event yet. I spent so long tinkering inside the shack, trying to write this column, and then trying to get the

AFS SSB adjudication out of the way that a couple of contests slipped away.

Another long overdue addition to the shack was a pair of noise-cancelling headphones. There is a wide range available today, with some pairs available from less than £20 and others costing over 10 times as much. My budget pair is certainly effective at reducing noise from PC CPU and PSU fans, and amplifier blowers. There's a slightly annoying high-frequency whistle introduced when the noise cancelling is turned on, but overall I'm impressed with them.

So there you have it: the operating experience inside the shack now looks and sounds quite different. I've not broken the bank either, which is good news in these financially challenging times.

Can we learn from the 80m CC?

Whilst it would be easy to be critical of the 80m CC format in that the short, single-band affairs don't offer much for us to learn from, the propagation experienced in the early sessions really got people scratching their heads. Whilst we expect there can be differences in propagation in different areas of the country, it was also noted that stations just a few miles apart were reporting very different experiences. How much of this was down to the antenna system? Some interesting discussions were played out on the UK-Contest reflector, challenging some of the norms about low dipoles, loops etc. for NVIS operation, and what effect if any should be expected with antenna orientation.

Trying to plan for 2009

I've been keeping a tally of which contests I've been entering for a few years. I should make more of an effort to keep track of the results as well, but at least the previous year's QSO tally and score should be a reasonable indicator of what to expect and how much I enjoyed it.

Whilst my overall QSO count took a tumble in 2008 compared with 2007, the number of contests I entered actually went up to a record (for me) 132 events. The double whammy of continued poor high-band propagation (where my antennas are more competitive than my low-band ones) and a variety of social commitments were hitting hard and I was several thousand QSOs down on 2008. There weren't that many events where I was able to operate full-time or put in a competitive score. I remember arriving home after an evening out with less than ten minutes of an 80m Sprint session remaining. There wasn't time to go to the garden to push up the dipole centre. There wasn't even time to turn on the PC and configure a logging program. Instead there was a mad scramble of paper logging and manual keying – good old fashioned fun.

For this year for a bit of variety and to prevent contest fatigue setting in too much, I'm trying to plan ahead more and hoping to enter fewer events, but in a more competitive manner than last year. If you have a particular way of deciding what you'll take part in, please drop me a line.

CDXC in AFS and the 80m Club Championships

Just before the AFS Contests in January I sent a note to the CDXC Reflector asking if there were any members who might like to form a CDXC team for the contest. Since I've been the official CDXC 'Contest person' I've not placed a huge emphasis on putting together AFS teams, with the thinking that AFS (and similarly the 80m Club Championships) are really intended for local radio clubs and contest groups.

A 'feature' of national clubs like CDXC or the GM DX Group is that they don't have a single meeting place. Contest teams may be formed around defined meeting places. It may be considered unfair to cherry pick leading operators from the large CDXC membership who live within a 50 mile radius of a meeting place that could

arguably be 'specified' as needed. Similarly CDXC quite likely has more serious contesters as members than any other group in the UK. If all of them entered an 80m Club Championship with CDXC as a declared club, CDXC may likely win, but probably to the detriment of the contest as a whole.

I can hardly say "don't enter" and have no control over entries or what club affiliation anyone submits. Activity in a contest is always better than inactivity. If I can gently suggest that you support your local clubs and societies whenever possible, and if you have no local club to support, then of course please fly the flag for CDXC.

That all said, I must thank John, G3LAS, Mike, G3WPH, and Nick, G3RWF, for forming an AFS CW team for 2009, and John, G3LZQ, for being 'Team Hull', adhering to the 50-mile radius rule. In the SSB event Tim, M0AFJ, ably represented the club. The results have just been posted as I finish writing this column, with CDXC in a creditable 18th place out of 86 in the CW contest with the three-man team, with John, G3LZQ, achieving 50th place. Our one-man SSB team of Tim, M0AFJ, beat many multi-entrant teams, coming 54th out of 90.

IARU HF Championship Results 2008

It was great to hear from Bob, MD0CCE, who had just seen the results of last year's IARU HF Championships. Bob writes:

"Just received QST and confirmation that MD0C came first (world) in the Low Power Single Operator - Mixed category. This is the category with the largest number of participants (710). I point this out because I was using the CDXC callsign for the contest (with Neville's permission, of course) and I thought at the time that the short call (rather than MD0CCE) was probably good for another hundred QSOs over the contest period.

Philosophically, I normally enter the Low Power category in this contest because I think it provides the most level playing field. In the high-power category the competitors include the contest super-stations being piloted by single ops, so you are competing against guys with multiple towers, stacked yagis, very high towers etc. In the low-power section you are more likely to be competing with normal people with tribanders, single backyard towers etc. The set-up for the contest here was FTDX-9000D, 4-el SteppIR at 80ft and inverted-Vs hanging on the tower for 80m and 160m.”

Well done, Bob. This is probably a good time to remind all members that the Club holds the short contest callsign MØC and is available for use in most of the major international HF contests. Anyone interested in using it should contact Neville, G3NUG.

Also very interested in the IARU results have been the GB7HQ team, who were pleased with 4th place in the HQ competition. Nigel, G3TXF, was the first in the team to spot the results, and got busy number-crunching and comparing our previous scores. Nigel reported, “For the first time ever we beat both DAØHQ and SNØHQ. That's excellent news. Less good is that we were in turn beaten into fourth place by EF8U (in Africa!), EM5HQ and TMØHQ.” The Spanish team played the same strategy followed by the Russian team in recent years, when they placed competitive stations in Asiatic Russia UA9 to maximise the points per QSO ratio. The EF8U QSO total is much lower than the teams next in the listing, but they have the advantage that almost all their QSOs will be with another continent. Maybe one day the RSGB team will be active as ZC4HQ!

| Call | Score | QSOs | Mults |
|-------|------------|--------|-------|
| EF8U | 22,122,928 | 11,217 | 422 |
| EM5HQ | 19,354,832 | 20,300 | 464 |
| TMØHQ | 19,251,112 | 17,156 | 412 |
| GB7HQ | 18,850,545 | 16,816 | 415 |
| DAØHQ | 17,616,885 | 22,154 | 429 |

SNØHQ 16,075,302 16,159 439

CQ WW 160 CW

The most surprising contest since the last *Digest* has been the CQ WW 160m CW in January. Whilst in every *Digest* for at least the last three years I've reported about complaints and disappointment with HF band conditions, the present solar conditions can often provide premier 160m propagation. This year's CQ 160 CW was reported to have had conditions we might experience during a major contest just 'once or twice in a lifetime'.

Among the top contenders was Clive, GM3POI, who notched up over 2,200 QSOs and a claimed European record of 2 million points. Although Worked All States was achieved in under 24 hours, he has actually achieved that feat in an even shorter time during the previous solar minimum.

Justin, G4TSH, operated M6T from the GØKPW site to good effect, claiming over 2000 QSOs, just like the MD4K team from the Isle of Man. There were many other good scores from the UK and CDXC members, making the most of the '160m sounded like 20m' experience.

To redress a comment I made a few *Digests* ago, I was pleased to see that the results from the last couple of years were posted to the CQ 160 website before this year's event. Well done to contest director Andy, N2NT, and team for catching up.

G3LNS / 5B4AGC Silent Key

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of George Beasley, G3LNS / 5B4AGC in mid-February. George was an avid contester and DXer for decades, having first built up a super station at his Midlands home, and later a second time in Cyprus, where he moved with his wife Barbara to enjoy retirement and contesting in warmer climes. George welcomed others to his home to operate his station on many

occasions. In recent years 5B4AGC was omni-present on the bands from a great QTH overlooking Paphos, handing out QSOs to the deserving in AFS, NFD, notching up some good scores in the Commonwealth Contest and taking records in CQ WW.

Earlier George was a supporter of multi-operator efforts at the legendary GW8GT and GØKPW sites, and was a key player in many field days with the Lichfield Group. Only George could bring a Bentley to Field Day! Sadly I was only active myself with the Lichfield Group really after George had moved to Cyprus, but it was always a pleasure to catch up at the HF Convention or another radio event.

Many of George's friends have commented how they will miss his easy-going nature. Contesting has lost another very popular character.

Endpiece

There's been a little bit of spring cleaning going on chez-MTN recently. Sadly some of the things getting recycled have been some of the older *Digests*. Whilst re-reading them one last time, I realised that I have been compiling the Contest column for almost five years. So it may soon be a good time to hand over the reigns to someone else and allow a fresh perspective. If you are interested, please get in touch.

73 Lee, GØMTN

George Beasley G3LNS, 5B4AGC 1935 - 2009

by Pete Miles GW3KDB

I first knew George in the 1950s when we were both rejoining civvy street after a spell in the Forces, George in the Army and me in the RAF. George was working in his father's radio and TV shop doing the repairs.

We both became members of the West Midlands DX Club, whose membership included some of the well-known DXers of the time, including G3FKM, G4MJ, the Bazley Family, G3AAM, G4CP, G2LU, G2LB and G2RO, many of whom were FOC Members.

At the start of the 5BDXCC in 1969, George and I decided to mount a DX expedition to the Isle of Man. The company I was working for lent us an ex-WD Ambulance which was fitted with bunks etc. We thought this would provide accommodation and operating space. We loaded up and set off to catch the ferry at

Liverpool. On arrival the ferry was loading through an opening in the side of the ship. We were dismayed to be told our vehicle was too big – we decided to check and measured our van with one of the quad bamboos we were carrying. Sure enough, too big. So back to the Midlands and Plan B.

By this time George had acquired a liking for large cars, his first being a Jaguar. So we loaded this up and borrowed a tent and off we went. No problems this time and we arrived in GD and started to assemble the station, only to find we only had seven bamboos for our quad - I had left one on the dock at Liverpool! Just prior to our departure we had a letter from a young WB2YQN offering to be our QSL Manager – the start of a friendship that continues.

By this time we were both very active, with the Lichfield ARS operating in all major

contests, and this was the start of very healthy rivalry between the South Coast and Midlands DXers, and this rivalry grew into very close friendships that continue to this day.

George became a member of FOC in November 1974 and was a great supporter of the Annual Dinner and other social functions.

In the early 1970s George started HRS, supplying components to the electronics trade, and by 1973 the company had three employees, including George. During the 1970s and 1980s HRS grew into a multi-million pound business under George's guidance. It employed some 220 people, including 23 representatives covering the whole of the UK. George had a very special relationship with all his staff. His door was always open and he was known as George to all employees.

One night in the late 1970s I was sitting at home and the telephone rang. It was George, asking if I fancied a change of career – so began my career with HRS, which lasted until I retired in 1992. HRS changed hands in 1991 and George started another component supply company which he ran until he moved to Cyprus in 1997.

In the late 1980s HRS acquired KW Electronics and decided to move into amateur radio equipment, and was responsible for introducing the UK to MFJ, Butternut, Cushcraft and others.

I have very fond memories of LNS including the time when George was operating in CQ WW from his location near Stratford-on-Avon, when a storm blew up and his tower blew down across the electricity supply to the village, cutting off a large area. When asked what he did, George said he reported a power cut and went to bed!

On another occasion we were both operating in NFD for Lichfield and we had been asked

to conduct a site inspection at Burton-on-Trent NFD site. I don't know what these operators thought when George, Chris, G3SJJ, and I arrived on site in a very large, very red Bentley!

In the early 1980s George had met Barbara and as things progressed they went on holiday to the Caribbean, and being a true amateur George took along a rig and we had daily skeds. On one such sked he said he had something to tell me and I replied "OK, what?" He then told me he and Barbara had married that day.

I spent a lot of time with George on business trips (usually planned to coincide with FOC functions) and Marg and I spent many very happy holidays to the Caribbean, Bermuda and the USA with George and Barbara, and these times we will never forget.

George was a very special friend and colleague to me and my family. I well remember him driving my daughter and I on the occasion of her wedding to the church in his large Bentley (he refused to wear a peaked cap though!).

It has been a privilege to have had George as a very special friend and our deepest sympathy goes to Barbara and the families on their sad loss.

Thanks mate, and RIP.

[With acknowledgements to FOC]

We have also been advised of the passing, in January, of CDXC member

John A. Crux, G3JAG

Jim Smith VK9NS

(Reprinted by kind permission of the *Daily DX*)

Early today amateur radio lost a 'true blue' DX icon, VK9NS (ex-P29JS), James B. Smith, who passed away peacefully today at 1540 local time on Norfolk Island. We received the sad news from his son Bruce, G3HSR.

Jim, who had been a long time supporter of the *Daily DX*, had been very weak for several weeks. In fact Bruce asked me to take Jim off the mailing list several weeks ago. "Jim's contribution to amateur radio, DXing and IOTA is inestimable", said Bruce.

Jim was first licensed in 1947 as VS1BQ in Singapore. Over the years Jim operated as

CAR (VU4 Nicobar), VS1BQ, DL2TH, HZ1AB, MP4BER, 9V1PR, P29JS, VR4BJ, H44BJ, G3HSR, C21AA, T3KJ, T3AJ, VK9YS, VK9XS, VK9NS, VKØJS/VK9N, 9M8JS, VKØJS, ZLØAAB, ZM7JS, ZL1BUN, T3ØJS, T1JS, T32JS, T33JS, A35MR, A51JS, S21U, WR1Z, WR1Z/KH9, S21ZA, VK9WW, A35MR/P, A51MOC, VU2JBS, NO1Z/KH1, VK9WW, WR1Z/KH8, H4ØAB and A52JS, just to name a few.

In 1980 Jim started the Heard Island DX Association (www.hidxa.nlk.nf).

Three years later he and his wife Kirsti, VK9NL, put the rare VKØ/H on the air as VKØNS and VKØNL. Over the years Jim put on several all-time new countries, as well as many rare ones from the Pacific and Asia. In fact he took part in the regulations for amateur radio in several DXCC Entities.

When not out on Dxpeditions, Jim could usually be found on 14.222 MHz. He was also a serious Dxer, having worked all countries on SSB, Mixed and only missing one on CW. In April 1986 Jim was inducted into the CQ DX Hall of Fame. One of Jim's last big projects was the writing of 'The Old Timer'.

Jim is survived by his wife Kirsti, VK9NL, and his four children Bruce (G3HSR), Stuart, Sheena and Fraser. Condolence may be sent to Kirsti via e-mail to jimkirsti@ni.net.nf.

Today's issue of *The Daily DX* is dedicated to the memory of VK9NS. Rest in peace.

J3 activity

This is just a note to let you know that I will be activating Grenada from the 12 - 26 March. My call is J38CW and I will be QRV SSB/CW. I will also be active as a member of the 'Rest of the World' team in the Commonwealth Contest (BERU) on the 14 -15 March. QSL via G3VCQ.

73 Colin, G3VCQ.

Not the GB2RS News

- DX Dinner menu announced
- Rescue package for hard-up French radio amateurs
- Canada announces more special prefixes
- Mega-station photos to be banned

The menu for the DX Dinner at the RSGB's HF Convention 2009 has been announced, one which should keep everybody happy:

Warmed goat's milk

Hors d'Oeuvres

Grilled lobster served on a bed of cabbage tree with a sprinkling of chopped watercress

Fish dish

Juan Fernández cod grilled over an open fire and garnished with parsley

Meat dish

Braised goat with turnips and parsley dressing served with roast parsnips and boiled cabbage tree

Desert Island Dessert

Fresh fruit

To drink

A choice of goat's milk or spring water

2009 is Robinson Crusoe Anniversary Year, so they thought they'd do things CEØZ-style. Yes, it takes some DXpeditioners four and a half years to get onto an island. This story is about someone who took four and a half years to get off one.

A financial rescue package has been announced to assist hard-up French radio amateurs, many of whom are clearly unable to afford the customary return postage of one IRC or 'green stamp' when requesting a QSL card from a DX station. They send the

DX station their card direct, then firmly expect the DX station to reply direct as well.

Canada has announced yet another series of special event station prefixes. And what are they celebrating this time? Well, the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the 200th left-handed Taiwanese immigrant in down-town Toronto. These special prefixes are in the CF, CG, CH and CI series and they can be used by all Canadian stations right the way through until the end of the year.

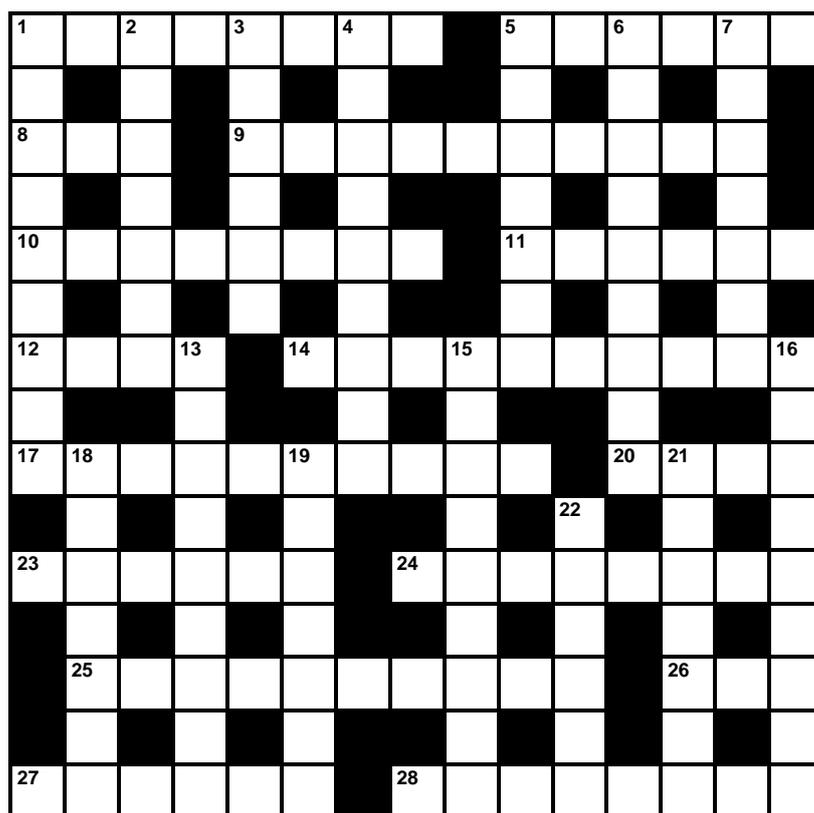
It has been announced that photographs of amateur radio 'mega-stations' on the cover of amateur radio magazines are to be banned, especially those depicting huge antenna farms in the Balkan area. This is because these are clearly not 'amateur' stations any more. Such photographs are also highly depressing for those of us who have to make do with a garden the size of a postage stamp.

[With thanks to Gill B. for sending me the Robinson Crusoe menu, which originally appeared in the Times of 9 October 2004. Ed.]

Solution to Prize Crossword 32

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

Digest Prize Crossword 33 *by RFX*



The winner of Prize Crossword 32, January 2009, and that £10 note: Phil Smith, G4LWB, Croxton Kerrial, Grantham (via e-mail).

ACROSS

- 1 Type of surgery with island constabulary in charge (8)
- 5 The meal to beat? (6)
- 8 Woman's backward-looking toilet (3)
- 9 Do a good job as parent in Scottish town (10)
- 10 What smart men wear making subtle differences (8)
- 11 Urge former partner to get lover at last in very warm surroundings (6)
- 12 Current plan for Internet protocol (4)
- 14 Electrically charged layer? (7,3)
- 17 Judicial investigation about PM's home - that's encouraging (10)
- 20 Biblical character taken in by Moses' aunt (4)
- 23 Resort that has the edge in Italy (6)
- 24 Gin alert? Figure that out! (8)
- 25 Searching for academic in Cambridgeshire town (10)
- 26 Set fire to French bed (3)
- 27 Prevents further development of risky exploits (6)
- 28 Sleeping quarters given glowing reports by the Rev. Spooner? (8)

DOWN

- 1 NHS device repaired in Cambridge laboratory (9)
- 2 Country seen between Guinea-Bissau and Dominica (2,5)
- 3 Hatred shown by college in eastern state (6)
- 4 Mostly at sea (2,3,4)
- 5 Pussy from Myanmar of old (7)
- 6 Astrophysicist embarrassed by explosive gas found in provincial river (4,5)
- 7 Blow up drunken general (7)
- 13 French town in which each farm animal is given bread (9)
- 15 Heavyweight spanner found in Kentish Town (9)
- 16 Surprisingly sun, sea and tea gets up one's nose (9)
- 18 Descriptive term for which doctor hit Pete! (7)
- 19 Extracts legal in Estonia (7)
- 21 Indian dish leading to the toilet for the over-50s? (3,4)
- 22 Ring maker in bet about the third of June (6)

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Deadline for entries: 20 April |
|--------------------------------|

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

| | |
|----------------|---|
| till 31/03 | 6W2SC: Senegal |
| till 31/03 | IY1GM: special callsign |
| till 31/03 | J5UAP: Guinea-Bissau |
| till 31/03 | N2OB/150 and N2OB/LH: special event operation |
| till 01/04 | C6ANM: Nassau (NA-001), Bahamas |
| till 01/04 | J79XBI: Dominica (NA-101) |
| till 28/04 | H44MS: Solomon Islands |
| till April | OD5/IV3YIM: Lebanon |
| till April | VK2LNX and VK2FSNJ: Maatsuyker I (OC-233) |
| till April | VQ9JC: Diego Garcia (AF-006) |
| till April | ZS8T: Marion Island (AF-021) |
| till June | 5X4X: Uganda |
| till June | AP2ASHF: Pakistan |
| till 31/08 | LY1ØØØ: special prefix |
| till 31/08 | VR2/F4BKV: Hong Kong Island (AS-006) |
| till September | LZ8WHST and LZ17ARDF: special event stations |
| till 30/11 | FT5WO: Crozet Islands (AF-008) |
| till November | HFØAPAS: South Shetlands (AN-010) |
| till November | OD5/W5YFN: Lebanon |
| till 31/12 | 9A48IFATCA: special event station |
| till 31/12 | GB25ØRB: special event call (Scotland) |
| till 31/12 | GB4ØWAB: special callsign |
| till 31/12 | HE8 and HB8: special prefixes (Switzerland) |
| till 31/12 | IA3GM: special callsign |
| till 31/12 | II2RAI: special callsign |
| till 31/12 | Z3ØMCWG: special callsign |
| till ?? | R1ANB: 'Mirny' Antarctic station |
| 14/03-16/03 | T8: Palau (OC-009) by JH2BNL and JA2NQG |
| 14/03-27/03 | VK9AA: Cocos (Keeling) (OC-003) |
| 15/03-28/03 | FG/F5TGR: Guadeloupe (NA-102) |
| 15/03-22/03 | VK9N/ON5AX: Norfolk Island (OC-005) |
| 19/03-25/03 | 4KØCW: Azerbaijan |
| 20/03-25/03 | VE9/VA7AQ: Grand Manan Island (NA-014) |
| 21/03-11/04 | FG/F4EBT: Guadeloupe (NA-102) |
| 21/03-22/03 | TC1RLH: Rumeli/Turkeli Lighthouse |
| 22/03-06/04 | VK9GMW: Mellish Reef (OC-072) |
| 23/03-29/03 | SV1GYG/8 and SW1GYN/8: Zakyntos I (EU-052) |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 23/03-29/03 | SV1QN/8 and SV1AIN/8: Zakynthos Island (EU-052) |
| 23/03-03/04 | VK9LA: Lord Howe Island (OC-004) |
| 24/03-02/04 | J6/W5JON: St. Lucia (NA-108) |
| 25/03-05/04 | C9: Mozambique by K5WAF, KG5U, N4AL |
| 25/03-05/04 | C9: Mozambique by W5MJ, W5PF, WF5W |
| | |
| 28/03-04/04 | GT4BRS, GT6BRS, GD8K: Isle of Man (EU-116) |
| 28/03-29/03 | NH7A: Hawaii (OC-019) |
| 28/03-29/03 | ZT2V: South Africa |
| 31/03-11/04 | PJ2/PA4JJ: Curaçao (SA-006) |
| 31/03-03/04 | VE: Fox Islands (NA-186) by VE3LYC |
| | |
| March | YWØA: Aves Island (NA-020) |
| 01/04-08/04 | 3B9/SP2JMR and 3B9/SP2JMB: (AF-017) |
| 04/04-05/04 | TC2FLH: Fenerbahce Lighthouse |
| 09/04-17/04 | 3B8/SP2JMR and 3B8/SP2JMB: (AF-049) |
| 09/04-13/04 | C91FC: Mozambique |
| | |
| 12/04-17/04 | SØ4R: Western Sahara |
| 17/04-20/04 | TI7: San Jose Island (NA-191) |
| 19/04-19/05 | IO9ROTA: special callsign |
| 22/04-24/04 | KH8/N9YU: American Samoa |
| 22/04 | 5W8A and 5WØDW: Samoa (OC-097) |
| | |
| 24/04-27/04 | MMØBQI/P: Lunga Island (EU-108) |
| 25/04 | 3D2AD and 3D2DW: Fiji Islands |
| 27/04-29/04 | T3ØM and T3ØDW: Western Kiribati |
| 29/04-12/05 | JD1BLK, JD1BMH, JD1BLY: Ogasawara (AS-031) |
| 04/05 | 3D2AD and 3D2DW: Fiji Islands |
| | |
| 08/05-16/05 | 9AØCI: Vela Palagruza Island (EU-090) |
| 10/05-11/05 | SX2CM: special callsign (Greece) |
| 16/05-20/06 | ZK2V: Niue (OC-040) |
| 24/05-25/05 | SX2CM: special callsign (Greece) |
| 10/06-15/06 | ZYØF: Fernando de Noronha (SA-003) |
| 19/06-05/07 | 5JØM: San Andres (NA-033) |


CHILTERN DX CLUB
 The UK DX Foundation

CDXC Clothing

We are able to offer a range of high quality CDXC clothing through suppliers Aquarian. All items are available in a choice of colours containing an embroidered CDXC logo and your callsign, also embroidered, with a red 'CDXC' and the remainder of the logo text in gold. Your callsign will be in red.

Please order direct from AQUARIAN. Prices include your callsign (except ties, which do not carry a callsign). Additional lines of text may be added at extra cost. Please note that postage charges listed are to UK addresses. Please contact Aquarian direct for postage charges to other countries.

| ITEM | | SIZE | PRICE |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Sweatshirt | Polycotton raglan sleeve | S, M, L, XL | £21.00 |
| | | XXL, 3XL, 4XL | £22.00 |
| Children's sweatshirts | Polycotton raglan sleeve | 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 years | £16.00 |
| Rugby shirts FR1 | 100% cotton | S, M, L | £25.00 |
| | | XL, XXL | £26.00 |
| | | 3XL | £28.00 |
| Rugby shirts FR2 | Quartered 100% cotton | S, M, L | £29.00 |
| | | XL, XXL | £31.00 |
| Polo shirts | 100% cotton | S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL | £19.00 |
| Polo shirts | Polycotton | S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL | £18.50 |
| Children's polo shirt | | 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 years | £15.00 |
| T-shirts | Heavyweight 100% cotton | S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL, 4XL | £16.00 |
| V-neck pullover | Lambswool | 36" to 50" | £31.00 |
| V-neck pullover | 50% wool / 50% acrylic | 36" to 48" | £28.50 |
| Crew neck pullover | Lambswool | 36" to 50" | £31.00 |
| Fleece jacket | | XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL | £28.00 |
| Children's fleece jacket | | 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 years | £23.00 |
| Tie | | | £14.25 |

Colours available: navy, black, royal, bottle green. Rugby shirts FR2 in navy/sky or navy/grey.

ORDER FORM:

| ITEM(S) | QUANTITY | SIZE | COLOUR | PRICE |
|---|----------|------|--------|--------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Additional text @ £3.00 per line | | | | |
| Sub-Total | | | | |
| P & P: £1.75 for first^t item, £1.50 additional items to a maximum of £10, £1 children's items, £3.00 fleece jackets | | | | |
| Callsign | | | | Total |
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