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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

Another bumper *Digest*, 60 pages in all. In fact at one stage I thought we might not be able to fit everything in in the usual Times New Roman 12-point font (this one...) and was seriously considering the option of the much smaller 8-point (this one...) instead. As you can see, though, that would have probably meant enclosing a free magnifying glass with each copy of the *Digest*, something we were reluctant to do for more reasons than one. And yes, I know: that's two 'ins' in a row in line 3. Disgraceful, innit!

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, we have a bumper number of new members this time round. A very warm welcome, all 43 of you, to CDXC! Indeed in this month's photo section we were planning on featuring an exclusive picture of our esteemed President's famous knuckledusters, but each time we were told that unfortunately these were still in very active use at yet another likely new member location.

Anyway, basically I'm the geezer wot does his level best to coordinate all this *Digest* stuff. And what have we got to tempt you with this time round? Well, amongst other things, a report on the FT5XO Kerguelen Island DXpedition by Mark Haynes, MØDXR.

This is followed by Roger Western, G3SXW, talking about working Kerguelen on QRP. Mark's ears feature prominently in this. Not that they're particularly prominent features as such (like those of Prince Charles...). They're simply exceedingly good ears (a bit like Mr Kipling's...). Otherwise there's no way Mark would have been able to pick *my* very average

signal out of the pile-ups down on Kerguelen on both 40 and 30m CW.

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH, then treats us to another one of his fascinating travelogues, this time about his trip to Mauritania and 5TØCW. Tim Beaumont, M3SDE / ZK1SDE, fills us in on his recent cyclone-swept expedition to the Cook Islands – and Andrea, IK1PMR, reports on Somalia and 6OØCW. Again, inveterate globetrotters, one and all.

At the *Digest* we're also very fortunate to have some excellent regular columnists. Don, G3XTT, for one ('DX an' all that'). He certainly knows his onions. In fact the other day Don turned up again here in Bristol on his heavily laden bicycle, wearing a typically French beret, rang our doorbell and asked us whether we wanted to buy any.

There again, Phil, GUØSUP, does an equally grand job taking care of our regular RTTY column – as does Lee, GØMTN, who keeps us up to date on the 'Contest' front. So what more can you want?

And if, after all the DXpedition reports and IOTA reference numbers, you fancy a bit of light relief, then why not turn to page 52 for 'Not the GB2RS News'. Not to mention the by now legendary *Digest* Prize Crossword, this month on page 53. Light relief? Yes, I did wonder about that bit myself...

73 Martyn, G3RFX

www.btinternet.com/~g3rfx

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

Back in January I drew attention to the threats to our hobby implied by political debates on PLT (broadband over power lines) and de-regulation. It seems that at the moment these may have receded to some degree. Electricity companies appear less inclined to rush into the broadband distribution business and Ofcom have stated that they have no intention of 'deregulating' amateur radio, thanks to fierce opposition from various quarters.

Nevertheless, we should remember that, although a couple of battles may have been won, the war may continue. There are still those in the corridors of power who would seek to re-open these issues.

Sadly, in these days of deceit and suspicion, we need to remain vigilant. The RSGB and other bodies are, of course, acting on our behalf in these matters, but there are others, many with much stronger voices than we can summon, who may yet turn the political tide to our disadvantage. I urge members to keep an eye on the media and, in particular, the Ofcom website, in case new and perhaps more subtle attempts are made to resurrect these issues. If you hear of anything, let us all know.

A relatively new suggestion has been made which may seem at first to be fairly innocuous. This is the question of 'licences for life', a concept which seems to be in favour at Ofcom. Obviously it would save them money in administrative costs and some operators may be inclined to welcome it as a release from the cost and 'hassle' of annual renewal. However, it would probably bring with it a fair degree of aggravation. Callbooks would quickly become largely meaningless and changes in callsigns due to licence upgrades, changes in QTH etc. might well add to the

confusion. Perhaps a compromise such as five-year licences might be an acceptable solution, but we should not forget that such a step might become the first move towards de-regulation at a later date. Politicians and civil servants do not easily give up on their pet ideas and ambitions. They usually wait for the main opposition to go away.

Turning to more 'domestic' matters...

Thirty-seven members very much enjoyed the CDXC Annual Dinner at Pendley. The meal was good, the surroundings congenial and the entertainment - by Peter, G3SJX, and Mark, MØDXR - excellent.

It is regrettable that only a small number of our 673 members were able to attend. Leaving aside the obviously genuine regrets which were expressed, arising from unavoidable prior engagements etc., it seems clear that, for many members, attending such a function does not have a very high priority in their social calendar.

As you know, the Committee had to work very hard for a second year to achieve a level of attendance which made the event viable. We will have to think very carefully before deciding on what to do next year. Strangely, prior to 2004, the Annual Dinner went from strength to strength, attracting well over 50 attendees, such that we had to find a larger venue. What has happened since then?

One highlight of this year's Dinner was the presentation of the Kenwood Trophy to G3XTT. After eleven months of close competition on the HF bands, Don won the TS-480 transceiver kindly donated by Kenwood UK.

I am delighted to announce that CDXC has been offered another very welcome initiative, this time by Martin Lynch, G4HKS, of ML & S, the well-known equipment retailers. Martin, who is, of course, a CDXC member, has negotiated a deal with Kenwood, Yaesu and Icom which means that anyone who buys one of their HF rigs from him in a given month as advertised in RadCom, will be offered a free year's membership of CDXC, assuming that they are not already members.

This should give our membership numbers a significant boost and it will be up to us to see that those who join in this way are sufficiently satisfied with the experience to stay with us thereafter. Many thanks, Martin – and, of course, Kenwood, Yaesu and Icom.

Jim, G3RTE, and I were at the Kempton Radio Rally on 24 April and were pleased to meet a good number of CDXCers. These events are a good opportunity for a chat, a moan or a laugh. The next one will be the large outdoor event of the year at Elvaston Park, Derby on 12 June. See you there - it's always a good day out!

We very much hope to see you at this year's AGM and Summer Social on Saturday, 23 July. This is not only your opportunity to let the Committee know what you think of their efforts, but it is also a fun afternoon out with like-minded adults – and families. This year we are grateful to our Hon. Sec., Peter Hart, G3SJX, who is hosting the occasion at his house near Alton. Come along and see the QTH where he has worked all the current DXCC countries and where he worked the recent FT5XO Kerguelen Island expedition on no less than eight bands, including 160m!

As you know, we hold a monster raffle at the Summer Social and we are already accumulating some attractive prizes. If anyone has something appropriate which is surplus to

requirements but can be donated as a raffle prize, I would be very happy to hear from you.

Finally, it is a pleasure to report yet another presentation which took place at our Annual Dinner. This was the awarding of the RSGB ROTAB Trophy to our President, Neville Cheadle, G3NUG. This prestigious award is for outstanding and consistent contributions to DX operating, so there is no doubt that it is richly deserved. Neville would prefer not to remember that the acronym refers to TransAtlantic Brasspounders, but he says he will be dusting off his Morse key. We didn't know he had one!

So that's all for this month – quite enough, I hear you say?

73 es gud DX John, G3LAS



**RSGB HF & IOTA Convention
2005**

Friday 7th – Sunday 9th October

at the

Gatwick Worth Hotel

Crabbet Park, Turners Hill Road,
Crawley, West Sussex RH10 4ST

See www.rsgb-hfc.org.uk

Enquiries to hfc@rsgb.org.uk

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

Our recent marketing drive is already producing results. At the time of writing we have recruited 31 new members so far. Welcome to everyone – and we hope you enjoy CDXC, the *Digest*, the social events etc. Again, currently the membership is 673 and this is nearly 2% up on last year.

We have just completed a further mini-mailshot to around 180 potential members, so let's hope that this also bears fruit. We have now mailed about half of the UK stations who contacted the 3B9C operation – and prioritised the list by working down the number of band-slots worked. We also mailed a further 46 UK stations who worked 5TØCW, but who were not on our marketing database and who did not work 3B9C. Thanks to Phil, G3SWH, and Jim, G3RTE, for providing details from their log.

One statistic that emerged was that the 3B9C team worked 86% of the UK transmitting membership of CDXC. This figure was calculated by Treasurer Nigel, having deleted the more obvious busted calls. I was quite surprised and very pleased with this figure.

The Annual Dinner went well and the Pendley Manor did us proud. I'm not a great lover of chicken, but I really did enjoy the dinner. Mark, MØDXR, gave us an excellent and well illustrated talk on the Kerguelen DXpedition, from which he had returned only two days before. The following day he then went on to complete the London Marathon. Well done, Mark. Some energy!

Peter, G3SJX, followed Mark's talk. This was also a very interesting and well received talk in which Peter described his experiences of reviewing radios and how they had developed

into the wonderful masterpieces available today.

Don, G3XTT, won the Kenwood Challenge and was presented with a TS-480 transceiver by David, G5HY, of Kenwood. Thanks for your support, David... and well done Don!

I was delighted to receive the ROTAB cup, which was presented to me by John, G3WKL, on behalf of the RSGB. I was delighted to note that all the winners since 1979 (when it was won by a certain R. Balister) were members of CDXC and most still are today. The cup is inscribed as follows: 'ROTAB Challenge Cup by Gerald Marcuse (2NM) for best DX of the year to be competed for annually by members of the T & R section RSGB'.

I noted that the second winner, in 1925/6, was Cecil Goyder, 2SZ. That brought back memories, seeing as Cecil used to operate from my old school, Mill Hill, and made the first QSO between New Zealand and the UK from the school. His radio set-up used to be in the physics lab – let's hope it still is. It was at Mill Hill that I first became interested in amateur radio.

Thanks to everyone who responded to my request for views on the Annual Dinner. I was a little concerned when I wrote my last PP, as we had had very few responses. Eventually, the dinner worked out satisfactorily with 37 members and guests. Secretary Peter was also able to do a deal so that we only paid for the meals consumed.

The Committee still has to discuss future plans, but the feedback can be summarised as follows:

1. The event clashed with the Visalia DX Convention, which is a popular event with many of the UK's leading DXers.
2. Many regular attendees were on holiday. My personal view is that we need to return to an earlier date, but we must avoid a clash with Easter.
3. The Pendley Manor is a little too expensive, particularly when the cost of accommodation is taken into account.

We need to move further away from the M25. We should reconsider the Wellington at Crowthorne, Berks; they have looked after us well in the past.

Thanks to everyone for the feedback. It is much appreciated.

Two dates for your diaries:

1. The AGM and Summer Social is on Saturday, 23 July, at Peter G3SJX's QTH near Alton, Hants. I understand that Peter and Marjorie have a wonderful garden, so this should be an additional attraction.
2. The HF and IOTA Convention will be held over the weekend of 7-9 October. Keep an eye on the RSGB website as the programme develops.

Please return the enclosed booking form to Peter as soon as possible so that we can begin to plan the catering arrangements for the Summer Social.



73 Neville, G3NUG

The CDXC LF Challenge

The results will be published in the July 2005 issue of the *Digest*.

Jim, G3RTE



CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

The West of England Radio Rally

organised by the Severnside TV Group

Sunday, 26 June 2005

Frome, Somerset

(close to Longleat)

For full details of both the rally
and the venue please visit

www.westrally.org.uk

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
2EØMIG	Paul Cattermole	Woodbridge
2EØMJD	Martin Juhe	Knebworth
2EØTMW	Merv Wylie	Lowestoft
2MØMGY	Jim Boag	Dundee
GØGLH	Terry Mitchell	Bedlington
GØRQL	Don Roomes	Holsworthy
GØVDZ	Nigel Newby	Shepperton
GØVXE	Dave Herbert-Moment	Scarborough
GØYLM	Linda Maude	Morecambe
G1EFL	Martyn Medcalf	Chelmsford
G1VGM	Simon Ball	Ryde
G3BFC	Bill Wheeler	New Milton
G3DCZ	Ron McDonald	Morden
G3EUE	Ted Jones	Bramber
G3KIW	Geof Jenner	Reading
G3NVO	Norm Vincent	Thatcham
G3RWF	Nick Henwood	Canterbury
G3RXQ	Stewart Baker	Woburn Sands
G3VYF	Mike Lee	Basildon
G3XOV	Ron Johnson	Stourbridge
G3YMC	Dave Sergeant	Bracknell
G4AMT	Terry George	Penzance
G4FAL	Nick Totterdell	Sheffield
G4FTC	David Sparvell	Camberley
G4HUN	Neil Whiteside	Cambridge
G4JZF	Graham Taylor	Willenhall
G4RHR	Ken Backhouse	Ipswich
G4RRA	Paul Pasquet	Crediton
G4SGI	Simon Collings	Cheltenham
G4XUM	Martin Platt	Shavington
G6PZ	Paul Beecham	Lympsham
G7TMU	Victor Swanwick	Storrington

New Members (continued)

G8HEZ	Bob Barrett	Truro
G8WPL	Don Hughes	Stockport
GIØHWO	John Crawford-Baker	Islandmagee
GM7NVA	John Edwards	Tweeddale
GW3SSK	Jim Williams	Bridgend
MØEVI	Tony Butler	New Milton
MØPCB	Iain Kelly	Crock
MØREX	Rex Duffy	Winchester
M1SOM	Pete Weymouth	Taunton
M3DFW	Darren Ferrow	Blyth
MMØGBK	Simon Nash	Chapelhall

Life Membership subscription option

In response to a member's suggestion, the Committee has considered offering a Life Membership option. The main reason behind the option is to allow people to pay a one-off subscription while at the peak of their earning period - to cover future years when disposable income is likely to drop. A final proposal may be put forward at the next AGM. The draft proposal is that there will be two options:

- a) Anyone of 55 years of age or over for a one-off subscription of £225**
- b) Anyone between 45 and 54 years of age for a one-off subscription of £375**

We would appreciate feedback on two aspects of this proposal:

- 1) Comments regarding the proposal itself, which the Committee will consider prior to deciding on any final proposal
- 2) An indication from anyone who would seriously consider taking up the option so that we can assess the degree of interest.

Please send any feedback to Dave Gould, G3UEG, contact details on Page 2 of the *Digest*.

CDXC AGM and Summer Social 2005

The Annual General Meeting of CDXC will be held on Saturday, 23 July, at 1200 at the QTH of Peter Hart, G3SJX, The Willows, Paice Lane, Medstead, Alton, Hants GU34 5PR.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the 2004 AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Election of new Committee
7. Election of Auditor
8. Any Other Business

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

Our Summer Social follows the AGM in the garden, and all members and families are most welcome to what is always a very enjoyable occasion. As usual, we will be providing food and a barbeque. Soft drinks will be included, but please bring your own wine and beer. Please also bring a folding chair as only a limited number of seats are available.

A charge of £7.50 per adult will be made to cover the cost of the food. There will be no charge for children under 16 and, of course, there is no charge for members who will only be attending the AGM. Please let our Secretary, Peter, G3SJX, know as soon as possible if you will be attending, so that we can plan the catering requirements.

Directions to The Willows

Note: ample car parking space has been arranged in a neighbouring field. Grid reference for the house is SU656360. Medstead is located about 1 mile north-west of Four Marks on the A31.

If approaching from South London/M25/A3 to Guildford, take the A31 west past Alton to Four Marks. From the M25/M3 take junction 4 on the M3 (A331) to join the A31 east of Farnham. On reaching Four Marks, pass the parade of shops and the Total garage on the left and 300 yds further on turn right at the bottom of the dip into Lymington Bottom Road signposted Medstead, Wield, Bentworth and Mansfield Business Park.

If approaching from the west including the A303/A34 and the M27/M3, take the A31 east from Winchester to Four Marks. After reaching the 40 mph signs, continue for about half a mile to where the A31 dips and turn left into Lymington Bottom Road signposted Medstead, Wield, Bentworth and Mansfield Business Park.

From Lymington Bottom Road pass through the narrow bridge under the Watercress Railway Line and after $\frac{3}{4}$ mile pass over a crossroads. A $\frac{1}{4}$ mile further on, where the road bends sharply right as indicated by chevrons, turn left into Paice Lane. After a double bend the houses start and ours is the fifth on the left. Car parking is available 100 yds further on through the field entrance on the right.

If approaching via Basingstoke, take the A339 signposted to Alton. Herriard is reached after 4 miles, and after a further $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles a long left bend with a radar-operated bend warning sign. One mile beyond this bend turn right at the crossroads signposted Medstead and Bentworth. The sign is rather small, but the junction has a radar-operated crossroads warning sign. Bear left at the mini-roundabout in Bentworth by The Star Inn and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles further on a T junction is reached in Medstead Village with Medstead Hardware facing. Turn left and then first right after 200 yds signposted Soldridge and Ropley. Paice Lane is the second turning on the right after $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on a blind bend (take care). After a double bend the houses start and ours is the fifth on the left. Car parking is available 100 yds further on through the field entrance on the right.

Peter G3SJX

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

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

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

The bands haven't been too hot recently, but FT5XO and several other DXpeditions provided some light relief, although it's disappointing that the Glorioso trip has been postponed. Anyway, hopefully that will come up in the autumn, along with a big effort from KH7. It was great to hear the FT5 story by way of Mark/MØDXR's presentation at the CDXC Dinner.

We were in Sharm-el-Sheikh a couple of months ago and I was able to meet Alan, SU9BN, for a coffee and a chat. What I hadn't realised is that this is the same guy who, quite some years ago now, was T3AT (later T3ØAT) and one of the first recipients of the CDXC Award of Merit for his efforts to work G stations from there. It's a small world! Alan has been in SU for four years, working with the multi-national team that monitors the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel. It took him almost a year to get his SU licence; he only persevered because he knew he would be in the country long enough for it to be worthwhile.

Hopefully licensing will become easier in future. Several of the UK budget airlines are planning to open up flights to Sharm, and many Brits and others are buying property there, so there will undoubtedly be pressure on the authorities to make licences more easily available.

This set me thinking about licensing matters. The story really does vary dramatically from one country (entity) to another. Some quite rare countries (rare, generally, because they are well off the beaten track) issue amateur licences to visitors within days if not hours; other authorities seem to take much longer, usually because of worries about security. The

good news, which has been covered extensively in the Digest in the last year or so (by G3SXW and G4JVG), is that there are many entities nowadays which are covered by the CEPT licence arrangements or by simple reciprocal licensing.

Beware that in many cases these reciprocal arrangements only apply to the Full UK licence, not to Foundation or Intermediate licensees (I have heard of recent instances where overseas administrations have become very upset at such licensees operating and claiming to do so under the CEPT arrangements). Let's hope Ofcom's restructuring of the UK licensing regime doesn't leave us in the situation where overseas administrations no longer consider any class of UK licence to qualify for reciprocity.

Mind you, I have seen this argument work against us in other instances. After one trip to Ghana I looked into why there was no reciprocal licensing between the UK and Ghana. The answer appeared to be that the UK authorities had no evidence that the Ghanaian licensing regime was on a par with the UK one. This, potentially, would leave open the door for someone with a Ghanaian licence to operate from the UK, having possibly taken a less rigorous test than a UK amateur. In practice this is nonsense, both because the Ghanaian system (as in many Commonwealth countries) is based on the UK system and because, in practice, there are so few Ghanaian amateurs that the chances of any of them wanting to operate from the UK are minimal. In the meantime it is the UK amateurs who travel to Ghana who suffer, as getting a licence can be quite a protracted process rather than automatic. That said, I currently have a 9G licence application in

hand, with the intention of operating from there in CQ WPX CW at the end of May, but this is possible only because of a kind offer of help from a European amateur currently resident in Accra. I hope to work many CDXC members during the contest, hopefully as 9G5DF.

Feedback

This is from Tom, GM4FDM (T33C, etc.):

I guess I'm one of the fortunate few who have experienced DX and the pile-up from both ends, and I can assure GØPHY it's just as frustrating at both ends, but for different reasons.

Many excellent articles have been written about how to work DX; unfortunately, I fear they are preaching to the converted. It astonishes me that in this day and age there are still people calling on the DX station frequency asking "Who is the DX?", just seconds after the DX station has given his call, his QSL information - and told the world he is listening up 5.

Having said that, I am reminded about an Italian waiter who said that "a person who speaks many languages is poly-lingual, a person who speaks two languages is bilingual, a person who speaks only one language is British!". Sometimes I wonder if it's not the case that many hams out there can only use 'radio English'- a bit like my 'radio Spanish', which covers a multitude of sins from Spanish to Colombian, to Argentinean and all points between.

So perhaps there is a language problem larger than we might think. This was brought home to me during my recent expedition to Banaba, T33C, where for long periods during the day we could hear many QSOs from Japan. These were the guys who operate with 100W and a G5RV. Many will probably never work DX

and most probably don't speak English. Thing is, you never hear them here in the UK. We only hear the loudest stations, the DXers who can all speak 'radio English'.

I am looking forward to Kerguelen and Kure later in the year; those are two of my last four Countries. I also need Yemen and Scarborough Reef. The last time Scarborough Reef was on I listened for a couple of hours and the pile-up was horrendous, and so I waited 'till tomorrow' when I thought the pile-up might be a little smaller. You know what? Tomorrow never came - as the DXpedition was ordered off the island... frustrating? You bet!

Like Roger, G3SXW, when on the DXpedition end I hate being asked to QSY to fill a band slot or to be asked to QSY to 12m, when I have just moved from 12 after having been there for three-quarters of an hour. I dislike many of the comments that appear on the Cluster, like, 'poor operation', 'bad operation' or something like that. It makes my blood boil.

Some of the message senders should try going on an expedition themselves and seeing how easy it is (or not, as the case may be). Often the operator will be inexperienced; we all have to learn somehow. Sometimes you are wrestling with local noise, QRM, lightning, ambient noise, poor generators, hunger and thirst, just to try to give out a few more Qs.

But it's easy for the armchair DXers...they don't even have to listen - just double click on the Cluster spot and you're there. Never mind if it's the correct call or not, just switch on the linear and call, and call, and call. One of my Elmers told me that is why we have two ears and one mouth - so that we can listen twice as much as we can talk.

See you in the pile-up for Kerguelen and Kure!

Well, Tom, I agree 100%. After being involved in organising three DXpeditions, and having talked to others who have mounted DXpeditions, it is interesting that DX chasers tend to make lousy DXpedition operators. They have no experience at all of pulling calls out of a howling pile-up.

As you comment, many can't even copy the callsign of one DX station, but have to rely on the Cluster. The best DXpedition operators tend to be contesters, who are used to pile-up management, or those who have prior experience of operating from a rare location. But it's those armchair DX operators who tend to whinge the most!

Changing Status

It appears that the ITU has allocated the callsign block E5A-E5Z to New Zealand for use in the Cook Islands. However, at the time of writing Cook Islands stations are still using the ZK1 prefix. A quirk of the decision, from a DXCC point of view, is that Palmerston Island will move from the DXCC entity of South Cooks to North Cooks. This led to a statement from ARRL Membership Services Manager Wayne Mills, N7NG, as follows:

"It has come to our attention that the International Telecommunication Union Table of International Callsign Series now contains an entry for the Cook Islands," he said. "New Zealand has been issued the E5A-E5Z callsign prefix block for the exclusive use of the Cook Islands. As a result, the Cooks become a political entity for DXCC purposes." Mills says the impact on the DXCC List will be minimal, however. "In reviewing the distances, it appears that the first 'separation' from the South Cooks will most likely be Palmerston Island, which is just over 350 km northwest of Raratonga," he explained. "The remainder of what has been known as the North Cooks is not sufficiently distant from Palmerston to become an additional DXCC

entity." N7NG says the main effect of the change will be for Palmerston to count for the North Cooks instead of South Cooks. The change may also clarify a situation with the North Cooks. "Since the addition of the Manihiki Islands (North Cooks) in January 1959 was not based on a specific distance, Palmerston has counted as South Cooks," he said. "DXCC Rule 5a comes into play now, keeping both North and South Cooks on the list, but moving Palmerston to the North Cooks because it is more than 350 km from the South islands and becomes the first separation." Under the circumstances, N7NG added, it might now be appropriate to rename the entity 'Palmerston and the North Cooks'. For more updates and details, please read the ARRL announcement at www.arrl.org (thanks to the Daily DX).

On a similar note: the following, again from the Daily DX:

'On Friday April 8 the people of Curaçao (PJ2) voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to become an autonomous state (Status Aparte) within the Netherlands. Meanwhile the people of Sint Eustatius decided to continue as part of the Dutch Antilles. The Dutch Antilles consists of five islands, which are divided into two groups. They are the 'Lesser Antilles', which is the 'Netherlands Antilles' on the DXCC list, and the 'Leeward Islands', which are Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba. The Netherlands Antilles are Curaçao and Bonaire (PJ4). Curaçao and Sint Eustatius were the last of the five islands to vote on the referendum. The people of Sint Maarten voted for 'Status Aparte' in May of 2000. Late last year both Bonaire and Saba chose to 'become part of the Netherlands'. So two islands want Status Aparte, two wish to join the homeland and one wants status quo.

In July of this year authorities from the Netherlands are expected to 'review its relationship with the islands of the Dutch

Antilles'. Afterwards the parliaments of the Netherlands and the Dutch Antilles are expected to 'come up with a plan'.

Depending on what the Dutch authorities decide, we could see several changes in the DXCC status of these two island groups. We will be watching the Dutch press and choosing a bathing suit as this story continues to develop.

While doing some research on the Dutch Antilles story I also ran across an interesting blog on the status of Kosovo. The Monday issue of the "KOSOVAREPORT" indicates there are four stages to Kosovo becoming independent. The report indicates that Kosovo could gain its status as an independent entity in 2005 or 2006. Obviously we will also be keeping a close eye on this one as it develops.

Perhaps related to the above two items, I wonder if any CDXC members saw the recent BBC2 program in the 'countries that don't exist' series, about Somaliland. Most interesting, especially in light of the recent DXCC decision to accept Somaliland operations for DXCC credit, and the excellent 600CW effort which followed. Somaliland appears to be functioning well, given the very limited resources it has available, whereas the rest of Somalia remains in a state of anarchy, with no central government, but divided between rival warlords.

DXpedition Logging Accuracy

Recently there was an exchange about eQSLing on the Contest Reflector in which a correspondent said something along the lines of, "How do I deal with a situation on eQSL where my callsign has been broken by the other station?". The same thing could, of course, happen on LoTW. Quick as a flash, someone came back with the response that if the callsign was broken, no QSO took place. Is this realistic?

There is a huge amount of evidence from contest and DXpedition logs to suggest that, even with the best operators in the world, copying errors do occur. Sometimes it's due to poor sending on CW (perhaps running characters together) or difficult-to-copy phonetics on SSB (this is a particular risk with certain nationalities whose own language is very different to English - the Japanese, for example).

Sometimes it's due to QRM. Sometimes it's simply that the operator has mistyped the callsign, out of carelessness or tiredness. Should a caller who genuinely believes he is in the DXpedition log be penalised for an error by the DXpedition operator? This is not a trivial issue. A good operator might be expected to break 2% of calls, a bad operator maybe twice this number (and some operators are very much worse still!).

Let's take the 2% figure. A typical big DXpedition nowadays might make 80,000 QSOs, so 1,600 calls could be broken, quite a substantial number. What should the DXpedition do when the QSLs start to arrive for these contacts?

In practice most QSL managers take a pragmatic approach. If there is an obvious error (maybe a missing dot on CW or a classic phonetic error on SSB, or maybe the callsign is broken to the extent of an adjacent key on the keyboard), then most managers will issue a QSL card. If the situation is worse (say two letters broken) or the callsign doesn't appear at all, then no card is issued. In the electronic world exactly the same thing can happen. Both eQSL and LoTW take the view that it is a matter for the two stations concerned to resolve their differences, and then the relevant QSOs can be reloaded, in corrected form, to the database.

While the purists might argue that, as there is no specific requirement in DXCC for the

exchange of signal reports, the callsign is therefore the only required exchange and must be right, most DXers and DXpedition operators take a more relaxed view. As always, reader feedback would be more than welcome.

Roger, G3SXW, has this to say:

Re DXpedition logging accuracy - Einstein's theory of relativity - how accurate is accurate? A good head for detail is essential to copy and then to log the callsign accurately. If in doubt, ask for a repeat. How much doubt? How many repeats? At some point our brain says that it is satisfied that it knows surely enough.

Perhaps the last few shreds of doubt could be determined by the QSLing policy - if QSLing 100% then cards will be sent to the wrong people for wrongly logged callsigns, so we need to be extra-careful. At least with 'reply-only' QSLing we can check our own accuracy in the logs, so we can be just a tiny fraction less worried about accuracy: I receive a QSL-request from G3XTT, but my log shows G3KTT on that band at that time. This is clearly my copying error, so I issue a card to G3XTT. In this way the logging accuracy of

DXpeditions is perhaps less vital than a contest entry where errors are penalised.

Sign-off

Finally, it appears that the format of the DX Calendar has been causing confusion for some members, apparently because it's not always obvious which year is being referred to. I can't imagine too many people are confused, as we've been running it in this format for some years now.

Anyway, to clarify, it always runs forward. So if it's the March issue and says 'till November', that would be November of this year (typically someone who is temporarily resident in a DX location). 'Till ??' means that the station is active, but there is no information of how long this will be the case. Generally the Calendar doesn't run beyond the end of the current year - and I usually exclude one-off operations that are three months or more ahead on the basis that there is plenty of time to include them in the next Digest. I hope this helps.

73 Don, G3XTT

Asia Pacific DX Convention

Dear Fellow DXers and Contesters,

You are cordially invited to the Asia Pacific DX Convention, which will take place on 18-20 November 2005 as the first Asian international DX event. In addition to the presentations of recent DXpeditions, technical sessions, displays, etc. that you find at most large DX conventions, this convention offers something special, such as a tour of the Icom factory, a technical session led by the Icom IC-7800 design team, a tour of the electronics district, and more. For the non-hams accompanying you, activities to enjoy Japanese culture, such as a tea ceremony and flower arranging, are being prepared. See our website for more details at <http://www.ja3.net/apdxc>. We look forward to welcoming you at the APDXC in Osaka, Japan. APDXC Committee / JA3USA.

Out and About

FT5XO - Kerguelen 2005 DXpedition

Mark Haynes, MØDXR *Mark.Haynes@raytheon.co.uk*

It was a bitterly cold snowy day in late November. Around an inch had fallen over night, quite rare for England. The schools were closed, with road accidents - and the perfect excuse to be late for work was blamed on the weather. It was a normal day, up to the point when I received a phone message from my good friend Wes, W3WL.

Wes and I have been good friends since the days of the D68C DXpedition, of which we were both members. It didn't take long for this phone message to have my full undivided attention, especially so when I heard the word 'DXpedition!'. Wes explained the intentions of the Microlite Penguins DXpedition Team as a 2005 trip to an extremely rare DXCC entity, Kerguelen FT/X. I'm pretty sure I said "Wow!" out loud the moment I heard this, but it got better.

He explained that an American amateur had had to pull out of the trip due to unforeseen circumstances, but would still be willing to pay his way to give a young DXer the chance to take his place on the trip of a lifetime. I couldn't quite believe what I was hearing, so I immediately called Wes back and it was pretty much agreed there and then that I was a team member. I agreed to pay my airfares, but other than that all was seen to. I felt honoured that I had been selected for this fantastic opportunity, and so I was immediately on the case to arrange for the time off work.

I approached my boss for a five-minute chat, and with me I had an atlas. I began by showing him where Kerguelen appears on the world map and said "Wouldn't it be fantastic

to get the opportunity to go to a place like that?"; knowing full well that I'd need to ask for almost six weeks of leave. He agreed, and so the deal was done.

I was eager to get up to speed with this exciting project, and so I was added to the group e-mail and got to know the team. The DXpedition leader was James, 9V1YC, and there were some very familiar callsigns to me, including VE3EJ, GIØNWG, W7EW and HB9ASZ. Each team member appeared to have a completely unique character - and yet all shared the common interest of DXpeditioning. I learnt that this particular group of DXers were named the 'Microlite Penguins DXpedition Team', traditionally operating with 100W to verticals, which at the time I thought would be a problem, having seen how far south Kerguelen actually is. I was put in charge of compiling the master list of equipment to go.

On the lead-up to the DXpedition I was busy at work getting lots of jobs done and delegating all of my responsibilities to others. Work colleagues were very supportive and excited about the project. In particular Iain, G4SNL (who sits a few seats away), produced a map to track my progress and which would be pinned on many walls. This generated great interest, which is exactly what I needed. I would also highly recommend this approach to fellow DXers: let people know what you are doing!

On 8 March I remember leaving for Heathrow. My father, Keith, G3WRO, dropped me off at the airport (double checking

sked times at the same time!). I met Andrew, G1ØNWG, checked in and we made our way to the gate for boarding. Bearing in mind that, like our *Digest* Editor, I am a very keen aviator with an ambition to fly jet airliners, this was an awesome time for me. There is not one moment, even halfway through an 11-hour flight, that boredom takes over – its fantastic! [*Yes, I know exactly what you mean, Mark. Ed.!*]

And so, almost half a day later, we touched down in Johannesburg, connected to Durban and met James, 9V1YC, Mike, N6MZ, and Edwin, ZS5BBO (our South African ‘fix-it’ man). Mike’s luggage had not turned up after his flight – which was particularly bad, and even more so as one case contained the brand new IC-756ProIII. After several trips to the airport from the dock, the luggage was found.

Our boat, the ‘Braveheart’, was moored about a 25-minute car journey away. This is an ex-Japanese fishing vessel and - at 177 tons - sleeps 18. It was perfect for the DXpedition. All the team arrived on time, and after clearing customs at Durban the ‘Braveheart’ pulled away for the 11-day journey down to Kerguelen.

I knew this would be an unforgettable experience, as I had read up about this area of sea commonly referred to as ‘The Roaring Forties’ – and it certainly lived up to its name. Literally 15 minutes out of Durban the sea was rough, and most of the team found themselves tucked up in their bunks within an hour of leaving ZS.

I can remember starting to feel ill a couple of hours out of Durban, and this was a real shock. Some of the guys were seasick on the first night, and this lasted for about three days. I did not leave my bunk for three whole days: no eating, no drinking - just doing nothing at all. Now either the seas calmed at about 40° S 40° E or I had just got used to it, but I found myself up and about eating - and trying to

adjust to the horizon (to improve balance and awareness). I was able to start sending e-mails back home, reporting our position and progress. The boat trip really did seem to go on forever. Each 24 hours barely makes a difference to where you appear on the progress map, which was quite frustrating. After five days at sea we were all trying to comfort each other with comments such as “Don’t worry, only only another week to go.” Only another week, I thought? This is taking ages!

Without going on too much about the events on board the ‘Braveheart’, we arrived in Port Aux Français on 19 May, cleared customs, and set sail for the 4-hour journey to our operating site at Port Jeanne d’Arc. We had finally arrived! It was a glorious day: around 8° C and a clear blue sky. Unfortunately we arrived too late to start off-loading our equipment and getting set up, so we agreed to be up well before sunrise to begin the following morning. Our zodiac boat began its 20 or more trips from ship to shore, ferrying not only people - but all of our equipment which had been stored in the hold.

Everyone was divided into groups - and antenna assembly and station layout began and went very smoothly. The vertical antennas were positioned to reduce interference between the stations. We had two monoband verticals for the main HF bands (10/15/20m) to give us the option of running two stations if propagation allowed. These antennas were placed furthest apart at the edge of the assembly, working in to the 30, 40, 12, and 17m antennas. We had two LF Battlecreek verticals for 80 and 160m and these were erected next to the sea with a longer coax run.

All stations were wired and ready for action. We had three TS-50s, one FT-1000MP, one IC-756ProIII, and one FT-897 used on 6m for EME. And so eventually FT5XO hit the bands at around 0900 UTC on 20 May. Needless to say, the pile-ups were huge. I started on 12m

CW and JA/EU stations were huge S9+ signals. I did not expect these verticals to perform quite the way they did. Located next to the sea is the way to go for verticals and, if you get the chance to operate on the coast, I would highly recommend this approach. It makes life easy for the DXpeditioner, as it takes literally 20 minutes to set up each one - and especially so as time is a constraining factor.

Anyway, QSO rates were very high indeed. It was a pleasure for me to operate with some of the top DXers - and I learnt a lot from these people.

And so the huge, huge pile-ups continued. There was such demand for Kerguelen everywhere and it was a fantastic experience to plough through vast numbers of eager people. The conditions were amazing. I remember that on several days I could run a big pile-up to JA/USA on 40m at around 1400, right in the middle of the afternoon local time. 30m was very impressive and was open for about 22 hours of the day. The quiet time was generally between the hours of 0900 and 1300 UTC, but even in between these times it was possible to keep at least three stations running with good rates.

Lew, W7EW, is a 6m specialist and he had arranged some EME skeds. It took a few days, but we actually made a total of six JT65 QSOs, one of which is an all time record for the furthest QSO ever on 6m moonbounce (we contacted a station in Oregon, USA right over the other side of the planet). Lew nearly jumped off his seat!

On Day 5 the weather took a turn for the worst, with heavy snow showers wiping out RX on all transceivers. S9+40 of noise was experienced every time it snowed, and this continued for about three days. After this spell of bad weather it cleared again - and at the time of dismantling the stations, the sun had his hat on and it was warm (warmer). We

managed a total of 67,954 QSOs in 11 days, most of which were on CW. I do not have the final breakdown as of yet, but from memory the most productive bands were 30 and 40m. The dreaded breakdown of the stations began and the process of ferrying all the equipment back to the 'Braveheart' started. At this stage I think we were all eager to get home. Being away from civilisation for so long really puts things into perspective. I missed my family, friends, my car - even work!

We all breathed a sigh of relief once we were back on the ship, having packed all equipment safely down below. The engine was started again, the GPS turned on and the journey to Fremantle, Australia, began. For a couple of days on the return leg the weather was noticeably rough, with head-on waves producing a forward to back movement of the 'Braveheart'. This wasn't quite as bad as the side-to-side motion we experienced on the way down, as one is able to see the horizon and remain horizontal.

James, 9V1YC, saw this rough sea as the perfect opportunity to do some filming up on deck so, unbeknown to him, the skipper notched up the speed a few knots and the leader had a nice shower that day!

After another 11 days at sea, one bright beautiful morning, land was spotted again. We had finally reached VK6. It looked better than I had ever imagined. Once clear of customs, the team went straight into town and had a big meal and a beer (actually, a very much needed few beers!). It was very nice to see people with different faces - no offence intended, XO crew!

However, suddenly we discovered that our Polish team member Robert, SP5XVY, had misplaced his passport. We searched high and low, walked about five miles through the town, but nothing. I flew back the next day, having stayed with Mirek, VK6DXI (an ex-Polish citizen and a good friend of Robert's) -

and he helped Robert to sort out the passport problem. In the end Robert spent an extra week in Oz and is now safely back home. My journey home took me over the Indian Ocean, covering the distance I had just travelled by boat for three weeks in about 11 hours to Johannesburg. A three-hour wait here and I boarded the Boeing 747 for London, another 11 hours in the air (Oh yeah!). Arrival at LHR was 0630 on Thursday, 14 April, then straight into work in Harlow for about three hours to catch up.

Everyone was so interested in the DXpedition, and it was wonderful telling the stories of our journey across the Southern Ocean. Two days later I gave a presentation at the CDXC Annual Dinner, which was fairly brief - but hopefully set the scene sufficiently, given the 30-minute slot. As for the next day, Sunday, it was London Marathon time – and this I completed too. Phew!

I would again like to thank my sponsor for this fantastic opportunity – and also the Northern California DX Foundation for their kind sponsorship. And of course thanks to James, Wes and all of the FT5XO team for a wonderful time. Kerguelen is a fantastic place and has found a place in my heart. Anyone fancy doing Crozet?

Mark Haynes, MØDXR



MMØBQI/P Treshnish Islands, EU-108, IOSA NH-17

An IOTA expedition to the uninhabited Treshnish Islands off the west coast of Scotland is scheduled for the 2-5 June 2005.

EU-108 is currently #32 in the list of most wanted European IOTAs. The operation will take place from the island of Lunga, the largest in the Treshnish group.

Activity will be on all bands 80-6m, SSB, CW, RTTY, including a fun entry in CW Field Day. QSL via the bureau or direct to Jim Martin, MMØBQI, 3 Lismore Avenue, Edinburgh, EH8 7DW.

All surplus money from direct QSLs will be donated to the Hebridean Trust, who own and work to preserve the islands and whose permission to land and operate is gratefully acknowledged.

For up-to-date information please e-mail me, Jim Martin: MM0BQI@blueyonder.co.uk.

Working Kerguelen QRP

Roger Western, G3SXW

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For several reasons, my New Year's Resolution this year was to transmit (from home) with a maximum of 10W output throughout 2005. This would be a new challenge, would move the goalposts and might finally mean that I could relax and enjoy the hobby, instead of worrying the whole time about the next RFI complaint. My first big test of resolve came with the FT5XO expedition. Since starting to count in 1985, I have worked all countries (CW only) bar a half dozen, one of which was Kerguelen.

How on earth would I break the massive pile-ups that were bound to occur? I decided that the odds were very long indeed, that big efforts to keep calling for hour after hour would be a waste of time - and that the pile-ups wouldn't ease off even after a week or two of their operation. Even calling at 100W would surely take ages, so that wasn't a happy solution.

One week into their operation Nigel, G3TXF, reported that he had worked them on eight bands and that the pile-ups were thinning out a bit. With this encouragement I began to pay a little more attention. It seemed that 30m in the evenings might be a good shot. My rotary dipole at 40' is also surprisingly directional and competitive on that band.

Sure enough, the next evening at 1900 UTC they were a big signal, 579 or so, on 30m. There seems to be a threshold point somewhere around S6; if a station is that loud, then my QRP signal can reach him. The pile-up was large, but had been far bigger earlier in the operation. Callers were spread over 3 - 4 kHz. The FT5XO operator was zipping along at a good QSO rate, picking up calls quite easily. This always adds to encouragement

and fun, so it would be a pleasure to join in for a while, even if there was no chance of getting through. I started checking his receive frequency. It was not moving much, centred about 3 kHz up. The pile-up was big, but you could hear tiny gaps as well. I dropped in my call two or three times, thinking that if they were barefoot with a S7 signal, then my 10W would theoretically be audible, on a clear frequency. Some hope of that!

Gottim!

Then one of those magical moments occurred: for some reason the pile-up did not start calling instantly at the end of a contact. There was a gap of about one second. My TX frequency was exactly on the frequency of the previous QSO, so I dropped in my call once, at about 34 wpm. Nothing.

By the time I started sending it the second time the pile-up was howling, but he came back with a 'G4?' and the right timing. I imagine he had heard just the beginning of my call sign during that tiny gap. Hmm, do I press on or leave the frequency clear for a real G4 caller?

I decided that my puny signal was unlikely to QRM anyone, so I would keep calling - although that would be a bit naughty. Three more times I sent my call just once; each time he came right back with perfect timing with 'G4?'. By this time I was excited. I believed that it was me he was trying to work. Please persist. Pl-e-a-se persist, old man!

He did persist. The fourth time he came back 'G3SXW 5NN'. I did my '5NN TU'. He closed with 'TNX ROGER HR MARK

MØDXR'. What a star! The 'old man' was actually a 'young man'!

This was with a genuine 10W. Well, that's what the TS-570D read-out said anyway. What good fortune. It only took a few minutes of listening. And why did the pile-up so generously leave me that one blank second? Probably there had been QRM on his frequency, so they couldn't hear precisely when he had finished the previous QSO. And what great ears! Thank you, Mark.

I will check this with him the next time that we meet, but I imagine the G-syndrome helped. This is when you hear a callsign in the pile-up starting with the letter 'G' and you cotton on to it – some sort of inbuilt favouritism that just clicks inside your head when on the end of a pile-up.

Move to 40

The next evening I was idly tuning around the bottom end of 40m at around 2230. The band was fairly busy, with various Europeans working North Americans. The Cluster showed nothing for FT5XO. They must all be asleep, the lazy blighters!

Then I heard 'CQ FT5XO UP' at about 34 wpm. The signal was 449, slightly under QRM. I go into panic mode. Maybe this was the first call of a session – so that means no pile-up! This also means move like lightning and you might get a clear shot, but the pile-up will develop in seconds.

I quickly stab A=B, then Split, press TF-Set and quickly slide the VFO up 1 kHz. No callers. Some QRM, but only weak signals. By this time the second CQ was finishing. I then made a split-second decision – to wind up the power to 100W. There was just enough

time to hit the PWR button, check that it was set to '10' as always, but then his CQ ended. Don't miss the chance of calling. What to do? Hesitate for another 1-2 seconds while turning the PWR dial and maybe miss the only chance EVER IN MY LIFE of a clear shot at Kerguelen on 40m - or just send my call at QRP.

I compromised. I grabbed at the PWR dial, started swinging it and hit the keyer at the same moment. As my callsign was sent, it started at 10W and... well, I don't know how much power was going out by the time the 'W' of my callsign appeared. Probably about 50W, a half-turn of the knob. (In the heat of the moment I then forgot to check the reading) I sent my call once. He came right back: 'G3SXW 5NN'. Exactly as before he finished with 'TNX HR MØDXR'.

Cor! Again, you really do have extremely sharp ears, Mark. It was hard to believe that my puny signal would reach that distance on 40m, but you heard it. And this was with a simple 40m inverted-Vee dipole, apex at 30'.

Satisfaction

Triumphs such as this put a smile on the face. Memorable experiences. Congratulations to the Kerguelen team for a fine operation, and especially to Mark for hearing me on two bands. My signal must have been little more than a whisper.

Where do you go next? This is the only question worth asking if you have worked them. Otherwise it's "What went wrong? You didn't hear me". The answer for this group must be Crozet, of course. It's a natural. And, by the by, that's also one of those last few Neededats at G3SXW. Remember that callsign, Mark!

5TØCW - Mauritania 2005

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

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Whilst on the plane home from our DXpedition to Brunei in March 2004, Jim, G3RTE, and I discussed possible destinations for another trip in 2005. We agreed to investigate the possibilities of each of our several proposals and to keep in touch.

I had often thought that an operation from Mauritania, 5T, was an attractive option as it is fairly rare - and close enough to Europe and North America not to suffer too much from the downturn in solar activity. The OH2MCN web page is not very encouraging, simply stating 'The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has not entered into a reciprocal operating agreement or a third-party traffic agreement with the United States. Enquiries should be sent to: Office des Postes et Telecommunications, Nouakchott', which is very vague.

Fortunately I remembered that there had been an operation by a Belgian group from the European Union Amateur Radio Club in March 2004 and set about making contact with them. After a few false starts I eventually contacted Jean, ON8RA, who regularly travels to Nouakchott, speaks fluent English as well as his native French, and has some useful contacts within various government departments. Not only was he willing to assist us in getting a licence, but wanted to join us on our expedition. Jean is primarily a CW operator, was originally licensed as F3JL in 1961, and has operated as 9Q5LJ, 9X5AB and T42EU amongst others. With a pedigree like that, we welcomed him with wide-open arms! Jean also proposed that Adriano, ON5GA, join us. Adriano is a professional diplomat, the immediate past-President of the ECARC, a member of the 5TØEU expedition and another competent CW operator.

In May 2004 copies of passports and UK licences together with a covering letter were duly sent to Jean, who was coincidentally making one of his visits to Nouakchott and who filed the 5TØCW licence application with the *Autorité de Régulation* in early June.

The *Republique Islamique de Mauritanie*, often called the R.I.M. for short, covers a million square kilometres, more than four times the size of the United Kingdom and nearly as big as California and Texas combined. With around 2.8 million people, the country has one of the lowest population densities in the world. Until independence from France in 1960, its population of Moors lived as desert nomads, but successive droughts forced many (along with the country's West African blacks) to migrate to the towns, to the south and abroad. The eastern third of the country is designated as a *zone vide* or empty quarter.

Mauritania's foreign debt is currently some £800 million, the price of two Stealth bomber aircraft - more than its annual GDP, but a relatively minor figure in global terms. The government has been led by President Maawiya Ould Taya and his *Parti Republicain Democratique et Social* (PRDS) since 1984. Slavery was formally abolished in 1980. As a strict Muslim country, Mauritania is officially dry - except in some specially licensed establishments.

In August 2004 the largest swarms of locusts seen in the region for decades hit the whole of the semi-arid Sahel zone of West Africa. Millions of insects descended on Nouakchott and proceeded to devour the greenery of the city's trees, lawns and gardens. The locusts, which can eat their own weight in food in a

day, even munched their way through the turf of the national football stadium before departing as swiftly as they had come. I'm pleased to say that much of the greenery had re-established itself by the time of our visit.

In the meantime, planning continued. Dates for the DXpedition were fixed for February-March 2005. Jean negotiated prices and made reservations for us at the Hotel Sabah, on the beach to the north of the city and from where the 5TØEU expedition had operated. Flights were something of a problem, as it was obviously necessary for the group to arrive in Nouakchott at the same time. There are no direct flights from either Brussels or London, although Air France, Air Mauritanie, SN Brussels, Tunis Air, Royal Air Maroc and Air Algérie all service Nouakchott, but the delays between connections were horrendous. After a lot of research and with Jean's help, we negotiated special fares from London to Casablanca and from Brussels to Casablanca with Royal Air Maroc. We would all meet in Casablanca and then fly together to Nouakchott.

In October, there was an announcement that a French group would be activating Mauritania as 5T5DY in December 2004-January 2005, including an operation from Banc d'Arguin (IOTA AF-050), primarily on SSB, but with CW on request. As ours was primarily a CW-only operation, we decided to continue with our plans, but to wait for the outcome of their operation before booking flights etc. I never did find out what went wrong, but there were only a handful of spots on the DX Cluster over the New Year period – all on SSB and none from AF-050.

In January 2005 Adriano announced that due to business commitments he would be unable to join us after all. At this stage, and in view of the apparent failure of the 5T5DY operation, we decided that we would operate SSB as well as CW. Consequently, Jean proposed that Harry, ON4HVO, join us. Harry

was one of the operators of 5TØEU, but uses SSB only. Jean also suggested that Nicolas, 5T5SN, join us. One of only four resident amateurs in Mauritania and currently the only one active in any way, Nicolas is French, has been licensed since 1991 and is equally happy on CW and SSB. He was happy to take a few days holiday from his job at the French Embassy and was obviously in a very good position to help with transport and logistics once we had arrived. He was also able to liaise closely with the authorities and to pay for the licence on its issue. As there were five operators, we each received a 5TØCW licence and were each charged 120 Euros for the privilege. I think that makes it the most expensive licence on record!

We agreed on a DXpedition target of 12,000 QSOs, that Jim and I would operate 80 to 12m from the Hotel Sabah, Harry and Jean would operate 80 to 15m from the Hotel El Amane in the city itself - and Nicolas would concentrate on 160 and 10m from his own station a few hundred metres away, where he had the benefit of a 7-element yagi.

We hoped to be able to keep at least one station on the air on a 24 hours a day basis. The difficulty would be to ensure that we did not have more than one station on a band on the same mode. To a greater extent we achieved this without the use of 2m handhelds, but some confusing situations did arise.

On our departure date Jim and I met at Heathrow for our flight to Casablanca, which was uneventful. Jean and Harry arrived a little later than us on a flight from Brussels and we easily spotted Harry in the departure lounge as he was brandishing a large '5TØCW' sign. The flight to Nouakchott left at 2340 and arrived in Nouakchott at 0235 the next day. The aircraft was absolutely full and we were amazed at the size and shape of some of the hand luggage that the other passengers were bringing aboard.

On arrival, we were met 'airside' by two of Jean's friends and ushered through the immigration and customs formalities without difficulty. Retrieving our luggage was an interesting experience, as the locals clambered all over the moving conveyor belt in a most alarming manner. Dropping Harry and Jean at the Hotel El Amane and picking up a puncture along the way, Nicolas then drove Jim and me to the Hotel Sabah, where we checked into two very comfortable chalets, deposited our passports against the value of the bill and collapsed into bed for a few hours' much needed sleep.

We were up in time for a late breakfast and started to look at antenna possibilities. Our two chalets were about 50m apart on a north/south axis and as close to the beach as possible, although the ocean itself was about 200m away. We started to look at antenna possibilities and shortly afterwards, Nicolas, Jean and Harry arrived with some steel tubing and we were able to erect two 10m high masts and to rig our wire antennas as inverted vees. Jim's was guyed in three directions in the conventional manner, but mine was self-supporting, being lashed to an apparently substantial steel post set into the ground.

This trip I had persuaded Jim to try a 100' top doublet fed with 400Ω ribbon feeder rather than his preferred individual dipoles for each band, mainly because band changing becomes so much easier. I have used a 50' top version of this antenna for several years with great success, but it lacks an 80m capability and we were anxious to make some QSOs on that band. Jim remains unconvinced.

Harry had brought an R-6000 vertical that he erected on the roof of the Hotel El Amane - and it transpired that Jean has a permanently installed Windom antenna there, although inter-station interference prevented both stations being on the air at the same time. Only later did we find out why the two Belgians decided to stay at this particular

hotel: the Rough Guide describes it as 'probably the best downtown mid-range hotel in Nouakchott, with a pretty courtyard, charming staff and a good French restaurant serving alcohol'. We were the only two people staying at the Hotel Sabah and there were only soft drinks available, but it was a great place to play radio from.

We had brought an impressive range of equipment with us: Jim had a brand new Kenwood TS-570 and his old Icom IC-706, Harry had another TS-570 and a Kenwood TS-50, Jean had a Yaesu FT-840 and I had my IC-706. The authorities will allow amplifiers, but insist on a special permit in addition to a normal licence.

Nicolas actually made the first QSO with SP5MFH on 40m CW at 0745 UTC on 25 February, but it was a bit later that the DXpedition got under way properly when I made the second QSO with OK1AJR on 17m CW at 1519 UTC the same day. Nicolas put his station on the air at 1547 UTC on 10m CW, making his second QSO with KI4IPI. Jim started on 30m CW at 1653 UTC with a QSO with OK2KJU. Jean and Harry were slightly delayed, no doubt distracted by the attractions of the Hotel El Amane. The pile-ups developed very quickly, were very challenging and great fun. QSO rates in excess of 200 per hour were common.

One morning I awoke to find that my antenna mast had come down in the wind during the night, having uprooted the steel post, which turned out not to have been very well rooted at all. In the process, the upper section had bent and whilst we were able to re-erect it easily, it looked distinctly drunk for the rest of the operation.

That afternoon two officials from the licensing authorities arrived with Jean and Harry to inspect our stations. They made copious notes and recorded the model and serial numbers of all the equipment. Harry made a

demonstration QSO on SSB with some friends in Brussels. They seemed suitably impressed and departed apparently satisfied.

It was not all radio, however, and one morning whilst the bands were quiet, Jim and I took a walk along the beach to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of the local fishing village. We also took a tour of the town with Nicolas and drove out to the edge of the desert proper, where there were a few stunted trees planted to try to reduce the sand encroachment of the town. There were still a few dead locusts under the trees. Photography was difficult as the locals generally do not like to be photographed, even when asked their permission, but we managed a few good ones. The tour ended with a visit to the Hotel El Amane and a few very welcome beers with Harry and Jean.

There are no ATMs and credit cards are not accepted, except in some of the airline offices in town - and certainly not by the Hotel Sabah, who wanted to be paid in cash in the local currency, the *ouguiya*. On Jean's advice, we took Euros with us and arranged for Nicolas to exchange them for us.

Jim and I did the bulk of the operating and vied with each other to make the most QSOs. By the end of the operation, Jim had beaten me by a handsome 500 or so QSOs, but I am firmly convinced that is only because he operated SSB as well as CW. The table below details some of the statistics. Jean made the last QSO with 5V7BR on 14 MHz SSB at 1758 UTC on 3 March 2005.

On our last evening, after we had dismantled the stations, we all met at Nicolas' house for a Mauritanian take-away dinner – couscous with chicken and lamb – and some excellent French wine. Our flight to Casablanca left at 0335 and we travelled to the airport straight from Nicolas' house. Again, we were met by the same two friends of Jean and ushered through the formalities without difficulty. Once in

Casablanca we had a six-hour wait for the connecting flight to London, but we managed to sleep for most of it and the journey passed off without incident. I arrived home at about 2030 on Friday, 4 March, just in time to re-pack my suitcase for an early Saturday morning departure to Kuala Lumpur and a ten-day, non-radio visit to Borneo with my son. But that is another story altogether.

Copies of the licence and supporting documentation have been submitted to – and accepted by - the DXCC Desk at ARRL. Logs will be uploaded to LoTW after I have weeded out as many of the inevitable busted calls as practicable.

Special QSL cards have been printed and are available either direct from my QRZ.com address, via e-mail for a reply via the bureau - or via the bureau itself. If you choose either of the latter two routes, please remember that there may be a considerable delay in receiving your cards, as the bureau process is very slow and, due to the large volume of bureau cards that I handle, I only tend to send outgoing cards to the RSGB once per year. Judging by the spots and comments on the DX Cluster and the number of direct requests received so far, we seem to have made a lot of the Deserving happy.

Our particular thanks go to our YLs and XYLs, Cheryl, Jan, Odette and Sophie for allowing us to undertake this DXpedition; to Jean, ON8RA, for his help in arranging the licence; to Nicolas, 5T5SN, for his help with the transport and the logistics; to the management and staff of the Hotel Sabah and the Hotel El Amane; to John, G3LZQ, for the loan of equipment and to our sponsors: RSGB, Chiltern DX Club, GM DX Group, NCDXF, EUDXF, GDXF, Clipperton DX Club, Danish DX Group and Nanchatte DX Aikoukai without whose help and understanding this operation would not have been possible.

[See following page for 5TØCW statistics]

5TØCW statistics

	1.8	3.5	7.0	10.1	14.0	18.1	21.0	24.9	28.0	All
CW QSOs	95	174	887	2,150	1,022	2,528	2,679	1,638	645	11,818
CW DXCC	21	23	51	63	55	78	73	65	40	108
SSB QSOs	3	0	0	0	200	929	706	219	0	2,057
SSB DXCC	3	0	0	0	37	55	54	30	0	84
Total QSOs	98	174	887	2,150	1,222	3,457	3,385	1,857	645	13,875
Total DXCC	21	23	51	63	55	78	73	65	40	108

ZK1 Cook Islands, 30 January – 3 March 2005

Tim Beaumont, M3SDE / ZK1SDE

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As you will have read in the January Digest, I recently made my third trip to the South Cook Islands, also with the hope of activating ZK1 North. On this trip I was joined by Jed, ZK1SDZ, Magnus, ZK1WET (SM6WET), and Tomas, ZK1XMY (SM6XMY).

Being a superstitious person, I was very concerned that I had had so much luck with the organisation of this trip. Everything had just fallen into place and everyone had done their bit to make it a success, but had I had my luck just too soon? I was soon to find out. For the daily diary of our expedition you can go to my webpage at <http://www.zk1sde.co.uk>. Cutting out the boring bits, I will now try to tell you the story of our experience in paradise!

The long flight went quite well, but those guys at US Customs at Los Angeles really gave me a lot of stress. All 13 cases had to be opened and sniffer dogs were used to check for explosives, despite the papers I had showed them giving an exact list of all our radio

equipment and serial numbers. Every case emptied, every case re-packed without care and without letting us re-pack them. Then each case was tossed upside down and thrown with force onto a conveyer belt. They knew how fragile the equipment was and they did not give a damn when I said “That was just not necessary”. They just looked at me as though I was a terrorist. I was so stressed at this point that I could not think straight, but what can you do? Back on the plane the journey continued uneventfully.

Our arrival in the Cook Islands was sunny and hot with a temperature of 34° C. A short inter-island flight took us to our first destination, Aitutaki Island, where we were met by Queen Tutai Manarangi, the traditional leader of the island. We were staying at her lodges for the duration of our stay. Day 2 & 3 was taken up either sleeping off jet-lag or trying to put up antennas and masts in the burning heat of the day - not easy when you have flown 10,000 miles. We were now ready to start our ZK1 IOTA of OC-083. We knew it was going to be

hard working Europe - and especially hard to work the UK, probably the most difficult path on the globe at this time of the cycle. We hired locals to climb the 25m coconut trees and erect the wire verticals and delta loop for 30, 40, and 80m. These guys are experts and are happy to receive \$50 for the dangerous work.

I was also badly bitten by mosquitoes by this time and my left foot was becoming very swollen with an infection. Also Magnus had a swollen foot, so we decided it was best to go to the hospital and get some medical assistance. We met three beautiful female Australian doctors in their early 20s working on a placement at the hospital (suddenly the pain didn't seem to matter...). They told us that they were staying at the same lodges as us, and throughout this trip we all became good friends.

On Day 6 we received some news that was really quite frightening. Cyclone Meena was heading our way and we would have to keep track of its path. We discussed things with the owner of the lodge and he was satisfied that the construction of the lodges was strong enough and would withstand such a storm. The bands were holding up well with our first contacts to Europe - and my first DX on 80m was hard work, but it worked out well.

Day 7 was a day for stocking up with food, water and the supplies required if we were to be hit by this hurricane. The yagi beams had to be taken down for safety and I was busy tracking the storm thanks to the Pacific Cyclone Watch. Paul, A35RK, in Tonga kept me updated as to its path - as did many other concerned hams in the Pacific. That night was a long and frightening one. Shortly after 2300 the wind became hurricane force and we had damaging winds of 150 mph, with gusts of 180 mph. Come 0300 and Meena had reached her peak 16 miles to our west. All around we could hear the crack of trees breaking and crashing through other trees - and huge thuds as they fell to the ground. The lodges were

tested to the extreme. Each gust lifted the lodge and shook it - and I flew to the bathroom, the safest place to take cover. The power failed at this time and we were left in darkness.

By first light the winds had dropped enough for us to safely go outside. The devastation was all around. My first concern was the safety - not only of our team, but everyone in the four lodges. Thank God everyone was fine, with no damage to any of the lodges. It took a couple of hours using chainsaws to make our way to the road, thanks to Des and Tutai and their staff. I drove the doctors up to the hospital in the 4 x 4 I had hired to see if there was anything we could do there, but we were pleased to see that no injuries had been reported on the island. Everyone was safe.

Day 9. Now it was safe to put up the antennas again and restart our IOTA of Aitutaki Island. There were good openings for us on 40 and 80m, but 20m was still hard going. The K index was high, causing several days of radio blackouts at our latitude. The climbing guys had to be hired again, as all the verticals and the delta loop were in pieces after the storm.

By day 14 Magnus was active in the RTTY contest over the weekend. Many DXers queried his prefix, not sure if they had heard correctly. ZK1 on RTTY? This created much interest and Magnus, ZK1WET, was soon into pile-up mode. But then more bad news. Cyclone Nancy was now heading our way. Our spirits dropped again as we realised what was ahead.

Thankfully Nancy passed by 100 miles off the coast - and although the wind was still hurricane force, not too much damage was done. Another day of putting up antennas was becoming very hard work. The humidity after the heavy rain brought its own problems. The rain just evaporated in the 34° C heat and became humidity like I had never experienced it before. The laptop computers had to be kept

switched on 24/7 to prevent the water popping the circuits. Already Des's computer in the lodge had shut down – and our logbooks and diary would have to be sent using the internet café in the village nearby. Internet here is what it was in the UK about 10 years ago: slow and very expensive. I spent £100 here just sending e-mails home to our web manager. Most of the telephone lines were not working to the outside world. Only inter-island phones were working, so e-mail was the lifeline to let our families know that we were safe after the hurricanes.

Valentines Day brought some romance to the team. Magnus, ZK1WET, and his girlfriend, Anki, disappeared for some time together and came back to the team as an engaged couple. They had exchanged rings and it was time to celebrate.

The good news was to be short-lived as we browsed over the weather charts for the Pacific. Just two days before we were due to fly up to the North Cook Islands we had a team meeting and decided that it was just too dangerous to go to Manihiki Atoll. The depression causing the cyclones was huge and was threatening to bring more dangerous weather to the area. The depression of cold air from Antarctica had moved up to 10° south of the equator where the sea temperature was 30° C - the perfect recipe for cyclone formation. Our spirits dropped again as I was forced to send a press release to the DX bulletins.

Sure enough we were hit again by the third storm, Cyclone Olaf, which hit us hard - and again antennas were taken down to prevent them from being damaged or blown around like missiles. Our decision to cancel ZK1 North was the right one. Air Rarotonga had grounded all their planes and were sheltering from the storm away from the cyclone area. Just how unlucky could we be! Three hurricanes had hit us in 14 days. Up to then only two hurricanes had hit the island in the last 40 years!

Despite all these setbacks the bands were opening up well from time to time, with short pile-ups lasting one or two hours at sunrise and sunset. At these times the path to the USA, Japan and Europe was at its best and we were kept busy on 20, 40 and 80m.

Day 19. The 20m yagi had suffered some damage in the winds before the cyclone hit, so repair work was done and the antenna put back up. The rest of the team were due to fly back to Europe and I bade them farewell as they headed for Rarotonga. They were to be stuck there for two days as their flights home were cancelled as Cyclone Olaf raged over Rarotonga.

I had one night of excellent conditions to Europe from 2300 to 0500 local time. The pile-ups carried on hour after hour. In all 800 contacts were added to my log in 16 hours. Time for a well deserved beer to celebrate! The following ten days gave us mixed conditions and the path to Europe was tough. Mike, G3SED, must be thanked for keeping my spirits up - as he reported daily that he was hearing my signal and posting info on the cluster in an attempt to start a pile-up, but quite often it seemed that he was the only person in Europe hearing me. During the day, when the band was pretty much closed, gave me time to spend on the beach or in the bar socialising with the doctors!

The cyclones also meant that the supply ships had not visited the island for a month and there was no petrol on the island. Diesel was low, threatening the electricity supply, and food was also in short supply. Isn't it strange that beer is the only thing that doesn't run dry?

Day 29. More bad news, this time from Uwe, ZK3HC, a German operator, was island-hopping and was in the direct path of Cyclone Percy, which devastated the Tokelau Islands that night. By the tone of his voice I could sense his fear - and his emotion told me exactly what he had witnessed as it exploded

into a Category 5 hurricane. It was heading my way and there was no chance of evacuation. Again, all the aircraft had been grounded for safety reasons. Tokelau had been hit by 161 mph winds and gusts of up to 196 mph. Thankfully Percy passed by 300 miles to the west, causing us only gale-force winds and heavy overnight rain - but no damage.

Thanks to the operators in the UK who were very patient with me on 80m. My small signal was being heard by you guys - and we made it in the end.

Swains Island, which was due to be active in the coming days, was also hit directly by the eye of the storm and I wondered how safe the Swains Island team would be on the island.

My time on Aitutaki Island was now at an end. I bade farewell to all the friends I had made on the island and promised to return one day for another adventure. Getting off the island was another ordeal. Two flights cancelled - and the third successful attempt gave me a scary landing at Rarotonga, where Percy was still blowing a 50 mph gale. One wheel down - and oh, just how long did it take to get the other wheels on the runway! That was close!

Waiting for me was our friend Victor, ZK1CG, to give me the news that Air New Zealand had just cancelled my flight back to Europe. I can't thank Victor enough for what he did for me in the coming days. After another cancelled flight two days later caused by another storm, Cyclone Rea. Victor put me up for five days until I was able to fly out to New Zealand, then back to Los Angeles and finally London five days later than scheduled.

I had a thoroughly good time in ZK1 and the experience here has once again enriched me with memories which I will never forget. I do not know of any ham expedition in history

that has been hit by five hurricanes. I was so sad to cancel the ZK1 North trip, but team safety came first. I also need to thank Anthony, MWØJZE, who worked daily to update my website and keep my family informed of my well-being. The people of the Cook Islands are wonderful - with so much friendship to give. I thank them very much. Thanks also to my travelling companions for their company. Yes, just maybe I did have all my luck before I left home. I will be back - very soon.

This has been a DXpedition story, the likes of which you have probably never read about before, but I thought you just might like to share the experience with me.

Statistics ZK1 2005:

ZK1SDE 5,944 QSOs into 125 DXCC entities. A further 2,000 QSOs were also logged by the ZK1 Team.

Most unusual propagation experienced: working Clive, GM3POI, at 1315 UTC on 40m over five hours after his sunrise!

Most interesting place worked: Scott Base, South Pole, Antarctica, ZL5/ZL2PD

Rarest DXCC worked: Jarvis / Palmyra Island, KH5/AH6NF

QSL cards sponsored by ON5UR QSL Printing

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6OØCW – Somalia DXpedition

Andrea Panati, IK1PMR

In October 2004, I (Andrea, IK1PMR) did a presentation on the T33C expedition at the annual SPDXC meeting in Poland, but I was still unable to answer the question, “Where do you go next?”, until I received an e-mail from my friend Silvano, I2YSB, asking if I could join the 6OØCW DXpedition.

Adriano, IK2GNW, was also involved, but at the last minute he was unable to join the expedition. The team was completed by Beppe, IK2WXV, Marcello, IK2DIA, and Riccardo IZ5BRW; all of whom had taken part in 5U 2002 expeditions.

The planning continued until our departure on 1 February 2005, when we checked in our unusual wooden/aluminium boxes containing our precious antennas at Milan airport. We landed in Dubai, where the UAE security didn't like our baggage and decided to lock a few of our boxes until the check-in for our next flight. We spent 20 hours in Dubai, a very dynamic and interesting city. People from all continents meet here and it was no problem to find the last few items we needed, including robust tape to re-seal our boxes which had been opened for inspection!

At 0100 we were ready with our baggage to recollect the large boxes from the security office and then check in at 0400 with Daallo Airlines. The flight to Djibouti was no problem. Then we boarded an old ex-USSR Antonov An-24 to Somalia; the small plane was really full of passengers and baggage everywhere! After two hours we reached our destination, Galkayo (6.47° N, 47.25° E), in the Puntland region of Somalia. A quick look out of the window revealed the city structure: a large array of square buildings, almost all the same size, same colour and with the same

plain roofs. The streets were simply a mix of dust, stones and holes of different sizes.

I was the first team member to set foot in Somalia. It was a great pleasure to see Adan, 6OØN, come up to me and shake my hand, followed by Professor Hussein and others. Our identity was obvious from the colour of our skin and from the ‘6OØCW’ hat (an essential item in the sun at those latitudes). I quickly managed to take a picture of the other team members getting off the plane, but was immediately blocked by several people saying ‘no camera’. So you'll understand why our video of the expedition is not quite so good.

Adan and Hussein accompanied us to a guesthouse in Galkayo, which was to be our main base and the place where we were going to set up our first station. We immediately unpacked our baggage. Personal clothing was limited to an absolute minimum (3 kg per person). Then the team started assembling the first antenna, a vertical for 30/40/80m.

I was in charge of making the video and taking the pictures during the set-up phase, plus some public relations activities that led me to a good lunch. To my surprise, after a Somali soup, I found myself eating good pasta with Hussein, who spoke to me in perfect Italian! The owner of the restaurant spoke Italian too; he had spent five years in Turin. Of course I was prepared to speak English or other languages and to eat rice or camel for this PR lunch too, but eating pasta with Italian-speaking people made me feel great and made things easier! Some common cultural background was evident.

In the afternoon, despite being tired, we had to hurry to find suitable pipes to erect our

antennas - and a generator to overcome the frequent power problems. Hussein was a smart and invaluable helper on the logistics side. Our first visit to a Somali house to pick up the generator was a surprise: no floor, a lot of mosquitos - but satellite TV and an Internet connection were available! A scenario that is difficult to describe.

By sunset, the station was ready with an FT-847, 500W amplifier and a 30/40/80m vertical. Our new friends invited us to go out for dinner and we could not refuse their kind offer. On the other hand DXers worldwide and our ham friends at home were waiting for us to show up on the bands, and some of them would worry if we did not.

I was the only team member who had real food for lunch, all the more relaxed for it, and one of the CW operators who was to start on 30m - the best place to start, given our initial limited set-up. So I started operations at 1500 UTC on 3 February 2005 signing 6OØCW on 10.118 MHz, the lowest frequency that sounded quiet on 30m. It was no surprise that we immediately generated a huge pile-up. Very soon several familiar call signs were logged and I was happy to have the opportunity to send 'ALL OPS OK, VY FB, PSE PHONE HOME' to a few good friends. Within the first 3 hours many of our best I1 and I2 friends were already in the log, including I2UUA, IK2GNW, I2KMG, I2KAJ, IK2DFZ, I2TAO, I1POR and I2AOX.

When the others came back from dinner, they told me about the checkpoints on the road manned by armed groups. All went smoothly because they were accompanied by our Somali friends. Soon we had a power fault at around midnight local (as we were to have every day). Each night IK2DIA was tirelessly checking, refilling and restarting the generator as many times as needed. Security at the guest house was guaranteed by an armed guard sitting just a few metres away from our antennas.

The next day we decided to set up our second station at Radio Daljir, an FM broadcasting station located in Galkayo, about 3 km from our guesthouse. The place had few facilities and a 3 km trip in the sun of Somalia is a long, long way. However, the choice was motivated by the presence of a 50m tower which we could use for our 160m inverted-V dipole. Somalia is pretty rare on 160m, and at this time of minimum solar activity we believed that the low bands deserved even greater consideration. It was easy to find a young 'volunteer' to climb the tower and install our dipole 45m above the ground for a few US Dollars. He did the job quickly and he was happy. We were happy too!

So as to be able to make a serious effort on the low bands too, we brought a Beverage with us. Unfortunately we were located in a large town, so there was no space for our Beverage, except to run it along the rooftops and across several streets 3.5m above the ground. It was hard work under the sun, with some 50 children around. A vertical for 40/80m was also erected. The station was an IC-756Pro-III, an ACOM-1000 power amplifier and a laptop running WriteLog.

Each night from 4 to 16 February, two of our mainly CW ops (I2YSB, IK1PMR and IK2WXV) worked in shifts to operate CW on the low bands. To be able to move around after sunset and come back at sunrise, we had to hire a driver. Beside being dangerous, moving around alone is difficult (there are no signs or street lights). We were locked inside the radio station, with armed guards outside to guarantee security for us and the broadcasting equipment. Compared to Mogadishu, Galkayo is reasonably safe. However, many people own weapons and shots were heard almost every night.

Top Band offered us great satisfaction on several nights between 2000 and 0300 UTC. We were able to work 603 stations on 160m, more than 50 US stations - with EU at the

same time. The JAs had good signals early in the evening and VK6HD was incredibly loud. We transported a bed with a mosquito net into the radio room. Sleeping was impossible due to the heat, the lights and the noise, but at least we had a mosquito-free place to relax.

Our typical day included a light breakfast with tea and biscuits, rice or pasta with camel meat for lunch, then a quick dinner, with shifts to keep our stations running 24 hours a day, except when we had to attend social events.

During the day operations took place on the higher HF bands, always with a lot of EU stations, some JAs during our morning and NA in the afternoon. The US East Coast and Mid-West were no problem and we were able to log 3,380 NA contacts on all bands. A few times we had skeds with our friends Gian, IIPOR, and Claudia, I1/K2LEO, for quick updates. One of the ops went down with a fever for a couple of days. Dr Abdul, an Italian doctor who lives in Galkayo, was kind enough to visit us and gave him medical advice. This fever, together with other logistics problems, prevented us from seriously participating in the RTTY WPX as we had planned. We worked the digital modes mainly on 15m, managing to log 1,062 QSOs on RTTY.

The most difficult challenge by far was hearing the W6s and W7s. We were looking for them before our sunset on CW (the most efficient mode). Propagation is what it is at the bottom of the solar cycle, but what made us lose precious contacts was the behaviour of few EU ops who seemed unable to understand 'NW PSE USA USA' and 'PSE EU QRX' when we were trying to copy weak signals long path from the US West Coast. During those precious short openings to W6/W7 we even had someone insisting on 'PSE EU'. This is not true ham spirit or DX expertise, since we worked EU for at least 22 hours a day on 160 through to 10m.

Many W6s are also our good sponsors and friends, and we can't see why we shouldn't try to work them for few minutes a day on such a difficult path. In our opinion, people who can't understand and accept this simple fact are not true DXers or true gentlemen. We had the best 20m openings to W6/W7 on 13 and 16 February, always long path at our sunset. 30/40m were more stable, with a few openings at our sunrise too, but the S/N ratio wasn't better. We also had limitations on 20m due to RFI to the broadcasting systems.

Public relations were also essential in 6O. We were guests in a foreign country where a visitor can't really do much alone, without help from local people. The Somali were very helpful and friendly towards us. They helped us with logistics, food, Internet access, licenses and much more.

After a disastrous civil war Somalia looks forward to development and peace. Amateur radio has been reintroduced to Somalia by Sam Voron, VK2BVS / 6OØA. On 14 February we had the pleasure of meeting the President of SARFEN (Somalia Amateur Radio Friendship and Emergency Network), Mr Mohamed Yasin, 6OØMY, who presented us with our 6O licenses. Silvano was issued with the original 6OØCW licence – and all the other team members were happy to get a lifetime 6OØ licence with the last two letters of their Italian callsign.

The next day Sahra (Secretary General of SARFEN) visited us at the guesthouse and it was my great honour to show her how to operate the equipment that we would be leaving with the 6O amateurs on our departure. I made two contacts as 6OØMR for training purposes (not a pirate, guys!), then I gave the microphone to Sahra for the next few QSOs. Training a YL amateur radio student in a developing country is an interesting and rewarding experience for an elmer. She had no time to do more radio, but the satisfaction was evident on her face.

It's not easy for a Somali woman to gain access to an HF station. The women there have to dress and behave in specific ways, as in most of Africa. We, as guests, have to respect their traditions and rules, because it's their country. Our mission was to mount a DXpedition and to help Somali hams (or future hams) with basic training and donations of equipment.

Even if our Beverage antenna had been cut by someone several days before, we were still able to make excellent QSOs on Top Band. DX activity continued until 0300 UTC on 17 February, the day of our departure from Somalia, with a total of 24,187 QSOs. K7XB was our last contact.

We left our beam antenna with rotor and 160m antenna to Somali hams, together with a complete HF station, laptop and several accessories. Before our departure Joe, VA6JWT (who has been active as 6OØJT since October 2004), visited us. Then it was time to run to the airport, really a room in the desert! Our small plane arrived and was quickly full up. We had a stop in Burao (Somalia), then Djibouti, Dubai and finally Milan, where we landed on 18 February at 1215 local time.

Our new Somali friends had already invited us to return, and it's possible that this will happen in the future, to give out more new ones. Our sincere thanks go to the Somali people, also our many sponsors:

NCDXF, INDEXA, DANISH DXG, GDXF, MDXC, EUDXF, CDXC, GMDX, ECO ANTENNA, D.A.E., ELETTRPRIMA, Printing Shop IK1PML, KEYER by I2RTF, RIZZIERI ELET., CAVEL, CEP, FUNK, CUBICOM, IRAE2, EDILFOND, ARI CASALE Monf., ARI SCANDICCI, ARI BRONI-STRADELLA, VK2BVS, W5BXX, I1HJT, I1UJX, IK1AZK, IK1IZB, IZ1ESM, I2CBM, I2KMG, I2EPT, I2WOQ, IK2BLA, IK2CIO, IK2DFZ, IK2UTT, IK2UWR,

IK2VIL, I4EAT, DL9RCF, K7ER, K8YC, W3AWU and W6OAT.

Andrea Panati, IK1PMR
Silvano Borsa, I2YSB

(for the 6OØCW team)

QSL direct via I2YSB

QSL bureau via M5AAV

E-mail: i2ysb@i2ysb.com

<http://www.i2ysb.com>

6OØCW Statistics

Band	SSB	CW	RTTY	QSOs
160	0	603		603
80	39	763		802
40	1508	2468		3976
30	0	2856	71	2927
20	2310	490	4	2804
17	1533	1120		2653
15	2812	1398	987	5197
12	1727	1634		3361
10	1106	758		1864
Total	11035	12090	1062	24187

QSOs by Continent	
EU	17680
NA	3380
AS	2434
AF	277
SA	253
OC	163

QSOs by country	
Italy	3188
USA	3133
Germany	2866
Russia	1787

Japan	1470
Poland	1220
Ukraine	1091

60ØCW statistics for UK stations (DXCC entities: G, GD, GI, GJ, GM, GU, GW)

Band (MHz)	QSOs	UK QSOs	% UK
1.8	603	20	3.31
3.5	802	13	1.62
7	3976	71	1.78
10	2927	55	1.87
14	2804	39	1.39
18	2653	63	2.37
21	5197	105	2.02
24	3361	54	1.60
28	1864	35	1.87
Total	24187	455	1.88

Mode	QSOs	UK QSOs	% UK
CW	12090	210	1.73
SSB	11035	223	2.02
RTTY	1062	22	2.07
Total	24187	455	1.88

WRTC 2006

The next WRTC will be held in Brazil in July 2006. Besides the teams, judges, referees etc, there is much to enjoy for spectators. Many from UK went to Finland last time and had a ball. WRTC is an extremely expensive undertaking. To help with fund-raising they are running a raffle. There are two prizes, one drawn in May 2005 and one in May 2006. Each is an all-expenses paid trip to Florianopolis, Brazil, to attend the Games - including flights with Varig, accommodation and free entrance to all events. This is valued at over £1,000 each. See below for ways to buy your raffle tickets. I hope that UK contesters will support this worthy cause by buying raffle-tickets and/or by making donations. 73 de Roger, G3SXW.

Tickets: GBP £5 (five pounds) each. Send to Roger Western, G3SXW, 7 Field Close, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2QD, England. Only multiples of £5. Include your callsign.
PayPal: cash transfer to k1zm@aol.com. Indicate your callsign and mark 'Raffle'. These should be in multiples of USD \$10.
Donations: if you wish to make a cash donation towards the WRTC fund-raising effort please pay by the same routes, but mark your message 'Donation'.

Operating CW under some of the rarer prefixes in the Azores

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

The Azores (CU) consist of nine main islands, and conveniently for DXers, each island has a separate prefix starting with CU1, Santa Maria, in the east and finishing with CU9, Corvo, in the west. The Azores are split into three separate IOTA island groups: EU-003, EU-089 and EU-175. The central group (EU-175) consists of five islands: CU3, Terceira; CU4, Graciosa; CU5, San Jorge; CU6, Pico and CU7, Faial.

Some years ago the Azores had the single prefix CT2 (with CT1 being Portugal and CT3 being Madeira) covering all nine islands. The vast majority of Azores stations are on the largest island of San Miguel (CU2). Resident activity is quite low from the smaller islands, particularly on CW. Two islands that G3TXF has never worked from home on CW are Graciosa, CU4, and San Jorge, CU5. G3TXF's own QSL filing cabinets also only contain just one CU7 card, whereas there are several cards for most of the other smaller CU islands.

In February of last year a small CW-only operation was made to Graciosa as CU4/G3TXF. Of the nine Azores islands, Graciosa is the only one to have the main town situated on the north side of the island. The main town on each of the other Azores island capitals is generally on the southern side of the island. As the islands are all volcanic, with one or several high mountains in the centre, being on the 'right side of the island' is all-important for the visiting radio amateur.

The trip to CU4, Graciosa, was in early 2004. Hopefully that short operation resulted in several CW ops working the CU4 prefix for the first time. This year we decided to operate

from Faial, CU7, which is also in the central group, EU-175. As there have been a couple of CW operations in recent years from CU7, it was not quite as rare on CW as CU4. Faial, CU7, also has a large marina in the capital, Horta. Many transatlantic sailors stop off at the marina in Horta.

The CU7/G3TXF operation lasted just under four days. The operation would have been for five days had the 'baggage mis-handling' service at Gatwick not swung into action with the ski-box containing the antenna, and failed to load it on the outbound plane!

The first two days' operation was made from a pleasant sea-side location (but radio-wise a hopeless QTH!) on the south side of Faial, CU7. The take-off to the south was excellent, with numerous loud PYs worked - but Europe was badly screened by a 1,000m-high mountain directly behind the QTH.

There is not much accommodation to choose from on Faial, CU7, and there was no obvious place to stay on the north side of the island. In fact at first glance there was no guest accommodation at all on the north side of the island. The main village on the north side is Cedros.

So the only thing to do was to drive to Cedros and ask in the local bar if anyone knew of any available accommodation in or around the village. This is what we did and it turned up trumps. The bar-keeper in Cedros said she knew of a German who had a house to rent up the hill. Since Cedros faced directly north, this sounded ideal. Someone else from the same bar said they knew where this remote house was and would lead us there. We duly followed up the hill.

The new location was at about 250m above sea level with a clear take-off to the north. Amateur radio is a small world. It turns out that some DLs had already operated from this location only last year. There was no problem with putting up antennas. In fact the owner of the cottage accommodation was keen to help put up the antenna too.

Thus two days into the CU7/G3TXF operation, the station was dismantled and moved from one side of Faial island to the other. This made a huge difference to the signal into the US and Europe, both of which had been virtually unworkable from the south side of the island.

Operation was limited to CW on the WARC bands, and as 12m seemed to be closed the

entire time, in practice this meant that operation was just on 30m (1,900 Qs) and 17m (700 Qs).

The antenna at the first location was a tri-band vertical, but which had developed an intermittent fault. This fault was probably not unconnected with the fact that the last time that this trap vertical was used it was standing knee-deep in sea water at P29XF! However, at the hill-side location on the north side of Faial island, simple centre-fed dipoles were slung out across some trees at about 3m above ground level. Not ideal, but they worked OK.

In total the CU7/G3TXF holiday operation from Faial netted 2,600 CW QSOs across just two bands: 30m and 17m. Hopefully several will have worked a new prefix on CW: CU7.

Catching up on a 300,000 QSO backlog for LoTW

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

The ARRL's Logbook of the World (LoTW) has gained much momentum during the past year or so. There were 71 million QSOs in the LoTW database at the beginning of May 2005. Several DXers have already reported in the CDXC Digest that once you get to grips with it, uploading logs onto LoTW is really easy. And so it is.

However, like most software applications LoTW is best first seen demonstrated by someone who already has the system working (and particularly for LoTW, who has a substantial set of logs already uploaded).

In my case it was Fred, G4BWP, who first showed me LoTW in operation. Seeing Fred's

logs online at LoTW encouraged me to get on and sort out my own logs.

During the past few weeks G3TXF has uploaded over 300,000 QSOs onto LoTW. The first batch to be uploaded was G3TXF's home station log from 1991 onwards. These logs were uploaded easily enough using the ADIF export routine from TurboLog 3. The G3TXF logs were uploaded in batches of 'one year' at a time.

After uploading each year's log, the QSO total was carefully checked on LoTW, and the number of QSL records was seen to increase as each part of the G3TXF log was entered.

LoTW is primarily a service for the ARRL's DXCC Awards program. By linking your LoTW records to your DXCC records (which is done online) you have access to an excellent set of tabulations showing your own DXCC Award status in great detail. Importantly LoTW also shows new DXCC Challenge points which may already be available for you through LoTW, but which you have not already claimed or for which you may not even yet have a QSL. An excellent system indeed.

Uploading G3TXF's DX trip logs, however, proved more challenging than doing the TurboLog based 'home' logs. After each overseas operation, G3TXF's DX trip QSOs are exported from the original CT log into a home-made Access database. The Access database is used to generate QSLs and to keep statistical tabs on all DX trip logs. The same database is also used to drive the G3TXF website 'QSO search' facility.

The main challenge was to find a way to export the DX trip logs from the Access database into Cabrillo format. A cry-for-help message sent to the UK Contest Reflector provided several useful suggestions - including Andy, G4PIQ, providing me with a copy of his routine for converting log data in Excel columns into Cabrillo. G3TXF's DX trip logs were exported easily enough from

Access into Excel, and by using Andy's routine each log could be converted into Cabrillo. All that then needed doing was to add the individual Cabrillo header and footer to complete the Cabrillo file ready to upload to LoTW. For some odd reason LoTW seems to require a 'Contest' (any word will do!) in the Cabrillo file header.

The DX trip logs which were then uploaded onto LoTW included 3DA/G3TXF, 8Q7XF, CU4/G3TXF, FH/G3TXF, FJ/G3TXF, FM/G3TXF, FS/G3TXF/P, FW/G3TXF, H44XF, KH2/G3TXF, P29XF, S79TXF, TJ3G, V63TXF, V63TXF/P, V85XF, VK9CXF, VP2EN, VP2V/G3TXF, VP9/G3TXF, XX9TXF, ZC4TXF and ZL7/G3TXF

A number of Three A's Contest Group (GØAAA) related logs were also uploaded onto LoTW including GXØAAA, MW5A, MZ5A as well as several years' worth of Field Day logs: GØAAA/P, GDØAAA/P, GIØAAA/P, GJØAAA/P, GMØAAA/P, GUØAAA/P and GWØAAA/P.

Now that G3TXF's 300,000 QSO backlog has been uploaded (which has generated over 27,000 QSL records on LoTW), it is intended that logs for any future DX trips will be uploaded onto LoTW immediately after the operation.

Silent Keys

We regret to record the passing of the following CDXC members:

G2BFO	Mr D. Silvester	07/01/05
G6RJ	Mr A. Robinson CBE	22/01/05
GWØMAW	Mr N. Davies	10/04

What goes up must come down...

Some thoughts on tower and beam maintenance

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

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‘What goes up must come down...’ certainly applies to antennas. Sometimes they come down because you want them to, and sometimes because *they* want to...

Having just changed my antennas from three monobanders to a 4-element SteppIr (partly because the January gales left me with a 3½-element yagi for 15m), and done some maintenance work on the tower, a number of things seem worth sharing. Bear in mind that a tower, rotator and beam can be as big an investment, if not bigger, than the rest of the station put together, and so should be looked after. Another point is the validity of the insurance if it isn’t – and you are insured in case it falls down, aren’t you? On the other hand, a well installed tower and antenna can easily last 20 or 30 years, long after the contemporary rice box has become unrepairable...

Materials and Corrosion

We must all have read about electrolytic corrosion between dissimilar metals. The various handbooks have tables of what materials to use, and more importantly, what not to use. Commercial antennas (especially from the US) tend to use a lot of stainless fittings – probably representing the fact that stainless fittings are much easier to get over there. Even so, stainless steel and aluminium do lead to corrosion – the aluminium tends to form a nice white powder. In something like the Yaesu top bearings, you have a choice. Stick with the steel (20 years ago, plated with cadmium, now with zinc) screws, and have them rust solid - or fit stainless steel and have the aluminium corrosion lock them solid. If

the latter, there’s a good chance that carefully filling the threads in the aluminium with grease will at least slow the problem. The late E.S. Cox, who did time as an apprentice in the Horwich locomotive works, commented that some grease on a stud in locomotive smokebox would allow it to come out some years later – and for grit, corrosive gases and soot, there’s little worse than that environment! I found out about the steel screws – it’s vaguely possible that a spark eroder could get out the old bolts, but the thing would still need re-tapping to 9mm, as well as new balls. So it’s in the scrap metal pile...

Galvanised parts don’t tend to last too well, but a heavy coating of cold galvanising spray (Rocol, available from Farnell) can help enormously. One thing to avoid is a copper wire connecting to a galvanised part, especially in an industrial area.

Telescoping aluminium tubes soon tend not to, unless you use some grease between the parts. Here, the use of one of the loaded greases sold especially for the job in the US appears to be one of the better approaches. The copper loaded stuff from Mosley isn’t cheap, but a small \$5 tub (as it was) lasts for a long time – in my case, over 10 years.

Stainless steel fittings have problems, too. If you do them up too tight, you can get ‘galling’ where there is a degree of cold welding. I found this to be a problem when doing up the clamps on the Hy Gain 205BA. Note also that metric threads, even the ISO metric coarse, are really too fine to tap into a soft material such as aluminium, and the Unified Coarse – UNC

- (ie US threads) are much better in this respect. However, as the majority of HF beams seem to come from the US, this probably isn't much of a problem.

The 205BA at G3RZP has been up for 19 years, and the boom will need a number of people and perhaps a winch to pull the sections apart. It didn't have any grease between sections... so the corrosion really exists. The way the tower is situated, bringing the antenna down meant removing all the elements on one side, so the problems of galling of stainless screws and 'non-telescoping' elements have been met several times. When the worst comes to the worst, Mole grips and a blow torch can be pretty effective at freeing seized telescoping tubing!

Rotators

My main experience has been with CDE/Hy Gain/Telex rotators. For some reason I cannot fathom, after some 5 to 10 years they are so filthy inside as to make car maintenance appear a comparatively clean occupation! Additionally, the bottom ball races will almost certainly have rusty balls and the bit of grease left hardened. The balls are 3/8-inch diameter, and replacing all of them in a T2X will set you back under £10. When taking the Hy Gain rotators apart, follow the instructions in the book, but spread out newspaper, and do it somewhere the dirt doesn't matter – the lounge carpet is not recommended! I find it best to wash the inside out thoroughly with WD40, including the ball races, and then use new grease. The book recommends a thimble full for a complete rotator – I find it would need to be a biggish thimble.

Re-assembly should be done according to the book, or you have a good chance of getting it wrong!

If the rotator has been up for a few years, the terminal board on the older Hy Gain rotators is almost certainly a mass of corrosion. My

approach here has been to remove it, and fit an aluminium blanking plate, sealing the edges of it with Coax Seal™, and then fitting a cable gland (again, from Farnell) and a 'tail' of rotator cable. This leaves the problem of making a waterproof joint in the cable. My approach is to use a length of plastic water pipe and the various end caps available, together with a couple more cable glands. Then some silica gel – you can often scrounge bags of it from photographic shops and so on, but bake it for a couple of hours at 125° C in the oven – is placed in the waterproof container, and the cable joined with 'chocolate block'. This gives a connection that is still clean and corrosion free several years later. If the tower is used on the LF bands as a vertical, and has appreciable top loading from the beams, I have found problems with the RF current flowing through the rotator positioning potentiometer and burning it out. I fitted 0.1µFd capacitors from each side of the potentiometer to the rotator case to stop that. At one time, I also made the mistake of bypassing all the rotator leads in the rotator with 0.1µFd 50 volt disk ceramic capacitors. Big mistake – they didn't like the 30 volts or so of AC! Another point here is to provide an RF path from the head unit to the stub mast, using braid or better yet, flexible phosphor bronze strip.

My T2X, although fitted to the head unit with the usual single coil washers, showed a remarkable propensity to shed its holding bolts. Said bolts go into an aluminium casting, so there can be a problem there. G4BUO suggested the use of a plate of thin aluminium fitted tightly up against the holding bolts, and that seems the best answer – it's certainly worked for a good many years. I tried Loctite on the bolts holding the two halves of rotator bell together: not only did it require some hard work with spanners, hammer and pin punches to get the bolts out ten years later for maintenance, but the dreaded white powder was there. This time, the stainless bolts have gone back with grease on them. Incidentally,

it's worth reusing the bolts after cleaning, as they will be 'pre-stretched'.

The Crank-up Tower

After 19 years the original galvanised ropes on the Versatower had developed some surface rust. So with the tower being taken down for antenna changing, it seemed sensible to change the ropes. One point to note is to get the run of the ropes right, which I didn't. If you get them wrong on a Versatower, it may well be that the first you know is that it seems awfully hard (ie more than usual!) to wind the tower up. Some suggest that attaching the new rope to the old enables it to be pulled through, although I found it caught. Others suggest a long bit of string tied onto the old rope is the answer. I did find that the new ropes seem shorter, and I suspect that some stretching has happened. If it's necessary to move the individual sections while re-stringing, it's a lot easier to do without the rotator, stub mast and beam being in place.

In the RSGB book 'HF Antenna Collection', there are a couple of useful articles, one on ropes and rigging and the other on tower maintenance. In this the author, the late G8LT, advocated greasing the ropes and placing them in a plastic sack in the sun. These days I believe there's a lot to be said for Rocol rope dressing spray instead, as well as it being much less messy. Of course, if the ropes are rusty, damaged or with any strands poking out, replace them – it will prove a lot cheaper! Similar advice applies if steel guys are used. I prefer pre-stretched polyester guys, with thimbles spliced in place – although expensive, they will last for many years. Avoid at all costs the cheap blue polypropylene rope, which will suffer from ultra violet degradation very rapidly.

The head unit bearing needs to be aligned with rotator and the stub mast. If the bearing became loose for any reason, there may well be a bend in the stub mast which will prevent

precise alignment. This needs fixing, and it should be possible to align the bearing unit and rotator so that there is no out-of-true strain placed on the rotator. A good way to check this from the shack is to measure the current drawn by the rotator as it goes round: it should be constant when checked with just the stub mast in place.

There will be places on the tower where the galvanising has rubbed, and the cold galvanising spray is useful here. The use of a leader rope with the coaxes and control cables attached to it so that they don't take the strain of their full weight is a good idea: the amount of movement that can occur between inner and outer is amazing, especially if there's a type N socket with the weight hanging on it.

Waterproofing coax connections is often a problem. I have a 'belt and braces' approach. Start with a layer of PTFE plumbers tape. Follow this with a layer of Coax Seal™. Cover this with a piece of heat shrink tube shrunk into place – a paint-stripping hot air gun is really useful here – and make sure the Coax Seal™ runs far enough along the cable itself that the heatshrink can really get a good grip on it. Then cover the whole joint with self-amalgamating tape, followed up with black PVC tape. The PTFE tape means that when you take it apart years later, the plug is nice and clean. This is probably overkill, but it works!

Incidentally, the hot-air gun is really useful when it comes to fitting PL 259 plugs – it heats up the body really well to allow the solder to run. Experience teaches that cheap PL 259s are a snare and delusion – spring the extra cash and get the silver-plated Teflon™ insulated ones. It's well worth it, especially outside.

While the tower is down, it is worth checking the coax. The easy way is to disconnect the coax and measure the SWR, or more easily from a calculation viewpoint, the forward and

reverse powers. The difference between them in decibels is twice the loss of the cable, and that can be checked against specification. It is worth noting the numbers so that any degradation can be seen. Ideally, the measurement should be done with the coax both open and short circuited, but note that on 10 metres, the short needs to be a real short circuit, and a 6-inch long clip lead will not do. The loss should be the same in both cases.

Of course, if there are cuts in the outer casing, wet braid at the bottom (or indeed at the top) or discolouration of the braid, the coax needs replacing. Again, cheap or second-hand coax is a waste of time, with the exception of coax such as Heliac, although that generally has a few flexibility problems which need to be looked at carefully on a crank-up tower.

Fixed towers

Fixed towers are somewhat easier, although they need inspecting for corrosion, and will need to be climbed for that purpose. Personally, I always prefer to keep my feet on the ground, or as near to it as possible.

Safety

Especially where climbing is concerned, safety is important. You'll probably only fall once! A hard hat and industrial shoes or boots are very useful, although I find that I never hit my head while wearing a hard hat. If you are running cables out to use power tools (including soldering irons), make sure that the cables and the tools are in good condition, and use a 30mA RCD protected socket to power them.

The cold galvanising spray and the wire rope dressing are best not breathed, and a cheap disposable mask can be useful here. If the weather is fine and sunny, especially with a cooling breeze, stop for a drink fairly frequently – it's surprising how easy it is to

become dehydrated under such circumstances. Of course, avoid alcohol while there's any climbing to be done, even though professional riggers have been known to have 3 or 4 pints at lunch time! They have also been known when building big fixed towers to do up the nuts and bolts finger-tight to speed, getting up to 60' where the danger money started! Sometimes they have even been known to remember to go back and tighten them all up afterwards.

If it's particularly sunny, a sun hat and sun block can be desirable, even in the UK. Of course antennas put up in anything other than cold, wet weather cannot be guaranteed to work well, if at all...

Finally, plan ahead. In QST some years back there was a letter from Ned, W1RAN, describing how he had problems because a tree had grown and prevented him taking the tower down after many years. Make sure that doesn't happen to you - the G3RZP approach is that gardens are provided for growing one sort of plant. It has a vertical steel stem with an aluminium flower on top, and is fed with coax. Anything getting in the way of antennas is to be removed – trees, shrubs, what have you! I recognise that there are differing opinions here, though, but it is advisable to ensure that garden developments don't compromise antenna maintenance.

In conclusion, there's an old saying that if the antenna didn't come down in the winter storms, it was not big enough or high enough. Antennas that do come down aren't much good for working DX, and some regular maintenance will keep them up. As mentioned earlier, there could be a problem with insurance if they aren't maintained, and to do that, they need to come down occasionally – safely, and in one piece.

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory – 40th Anniversary Edition

New IOTA reference numbers issued

AF-097/Pr 7X Mediterranean Sea
Coast Centre group (Algeria)
OC-268 YB7 Laut Kecil Islands
(Indonesia)
SA-094 CE8 Ultima Esperanza
Province South group (Chile)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AS-059 UEØISL Nedorazumeniya
Island (July 2004)
NA-224 XF2ZEX Sacrificios Island
(March/April 2005)
OC-217 YE3K Kangean Island,
Kangean Islands (March 2005)
OC-223 VI2MI Montague Island
(August 2004)
OC-268 YB7M Moreses Island,
Laut Kecil Islands (March 2005)
SA-020 TO7C Royale Island,
Salut Islands (March 2005)
SA-061 CE6TBN/P Mocha Island
(February 2005)
SA-061 CE6/HA1AG Mocha Island
(February 2005)
SA-094 CE8A Rennell Island
(February 2005)

Note: This list includes operations where validation material was volunteered, ie not specifically required for credit to be given. In all cases, cards now submitted will be accepted by Checkpoints if they meet normal

standards. This means that the island name should be printed on the card.

Operations from which validation material is awaited as at 1 May 2005

AF-097/Pr 7V2SI Sandja Island
(May 2005)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

1 May 2005

Email: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk

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

Visit the website for the latest IOTA information.



The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

The RSGB 80m Club Championships do seem to have generated quite a bit of interest in getting started on RTTY - and also on PSK31. It would also appear that some of you have decided to have a go at some of the HF RTTY contests too.

If, like me, you are a regular contest entrant, then you will have noticed just how different the exchanges are! In all the major RTTY contests the overs are very slick, with a minimum of fuss and no added garbage.

However, in the 80m CC most exchanges are full of redundant text and it seems to take twice as long to complete a contact. This isn't a criticism of the entrants of the RSGB contests, but a lack of understanding of how an RTTY contact can be made easier.

Many of you will operate CW with a very minimal exchange, but in RTTY there seems to be the need to exchange full calls at the beginning and end - and also make use of AR, KN and SK unnecessarily.

On a reflector recently I briefly saw someone stating that a line of RYRYRYRY was needed before each exchange to enable the computers to 'synchronise'. I must have deleted the message, so now I can't find it again. A pity really, seeing as I ought to have responded to that and put the record straight.

The RY sequence used to have a place in RTTY QSOs when it was two teletype machines handling the contact, but with even a basic PC and soundcard set-up the RY is totally redundant. If you wish to start a CQ call on an empty band with a line of RYs, then fine, as the tones are quite distinct and it may well help someone pick up your transmission.

It's not really necessary, but I wouldn't hammer someone for doing it outside a contest. However, to use RY in a contest is an absolute waste of everyone's time, and it won't win you any friends!

I wonder if any of you have any comments or thoughts on the use of RY in a contest? Please let me know.

In contests, you are either CQing or you are S & P. For those who CQ, make sure your call ends with CQ and not PSE K, as if I tune past your call and only catch your call and PSE K, then I will have to wait and see if you are calling CQ, or responding to a call.

Also, end your TU QRZ? buffer with a CQ. This just avoids confusion and will keep the pile running.

If you are S & P, then wait until the carrier drops and simply send your own call. There really is NO need to send the callsign of the person you want to work, and even less need to send it twice or three times!

If they don't respond to you immediately, don't just start to call again. It may be that they are typing in your call manually and can't type fast. You may hear other calls ending at the same time as yours, so it may be useful to have a buffer with your callsign in it just ONCE, with no preceding DE. Send that quickly before anyone else gets a chance!

I was once asked how you handle a situation where you get three or four callers who all call at the same time and you can't decipher any one call out of the mess. That is difficult, especially in these RSGB contests. In an HF RTTY contest it all comes down to callsign

recognition. I can guess at most calls, with probably about a 90% accuracy. In the 80m CC legs it is much harder, and this is where the slick caller will win out.

For example, if I am calling CQ and I get garbage from too many calls, I may well wait a few seconds. If you then send GUØSUP GUØSUP DE MYCALL MYCALL MYCALL, then someone else is surely going to send their call at the same time, resulting in more garbage.

If, however, you send your own call just once, quickly, then your call is likely to beat the others and I will work you easily.

If you really do want to improve your RTTY, have a go in one of the HF RTTY contests!

Try the ANARTS (Australian) contest over the weekend of 11-12 June, or maybe the DL-DX contest over the weekend of 9-10 July.

ANARTS is a very popular contest, with single ops running 30 hours out of the 48. Points are based on distance, with bonus points for working VK stations. Check out the full rules at

<http://www.users.bigpond.com/ctdavies/index.html>

and click on the link for the rules (which are still showing 2004 at the time of writing!).

The DL-DX contest is fairly new - and the rules can be found at <http://www.drcg.de/>. This is a very good contest for those new to RTTY, as you can choose from a number of categories. If you only have wire dipoles, and only want to work for 6 hours, then there are sections for you too. This has proved very popular with folk who don't have the time to spend the whole weekend at the keyboard. You can then compete with similar stations.

Time seems to be flying past very quickly this year, and it is odd to think that Friedrichshafen isn't far away! I am very much looking forward to this again, but this year I will be better prepared! I already have a 'shopping list' of needs and wants - and a search of the Friedrichshafen website has given me a good list of stands to visit, together with who sells what.

I learnt my lesson last year that one whole day at the exhibition is just not enough, so this time I will arrive on Thursday, which will give me two whole days to find what I want. Friday evening is the RTTY dinner, and I am sure this will be well attended again. I'm not too sure which dinner I will attend on the Saturday evening, or whether I may just enjoy one of the waterside restaurants at Lake Constance.

If you are going, then please do try and come along to the RTTY dinner. Check out www.qsl.net/dk3vn, as this will have information on the venue etc. Waldemar is one of the organisers of the dinner and will keep his website updated with details.

That's it for now, so good DX, and see you in the pile-ups!

Good DX and 73

Phil GUØSUP

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Welcome to the May Contest column. This time there is some news about the GB5HQ headquarters station for the IARU HF Championship, some discussion about Cabrillo - and a write-up on this spring's Russian DX Contest from Colin, MUØFAL.

GB5HQ in the IARU HF Championship

In previous years my July CDXC Digest has dropped through the letterbox on the same day as the IARU contest, so to be 'better safe than sorry' I thought I'd better pass on some details in May instead so there's no chance of being too late.

Preparations are well under way for the 2005 IARU HF Championship, to be held this year on 9 and 10 July. First, though, here are the top six results in the Headquarters category for the 2004 contest:

Call	QSOs	Mults	Score
DAØHQ	23093	441	20,264,391
SNØHQ	18387	437	18,621,007
R7HQ	13332	435	17,882,415
TMØHQ	15792	401	17,592,271
GB5HQ	14856	415	17,543,295
9AØHQ	14138	421	15,473,855

While the drop from the 2nd place in 2003 to 5th in 2004 was disappointing for the RSGB HQ team, it seems that many countries really improved their relative performance and strategies last year. The 2003 highest score was 16 million, and GB5HQ scored 2 million points more in 2004 compared with the year before, but it just wasn't enough to get us into first place. Whilst our guys were working 'everyone they could', last year we somehow

still needed to squeeze in an extra 8,000 QSOs in the 24 hours to catch up with DAØHQ's QSO totals.

So onwards to 2005. As well as ensuring that each band/mode slot has an effective station and operators, one of the keys to success is how the stations communicate with each other for passing multipliers, normal QSOs and other information during the event. Having used Writelog successfully for the last two years, the team are currently evaluating John/G3WGV's StarLog suite to see if this can offer us additional benefits and hopefully simplify the task of managing and operating a multi-multi station spread across the UK. Whilst it may be difficult to catch up on QSO numbers with some other HQ stations - particularly if there is strong 'home country' support - we hope that GB5HQ can in future match the leader for multipliers. This is where accurate passing and spotting are vital.

Nigel, G3TXF, is taking over the duties of webmaster, so please check

<http://www.gb5hq.com>

regularly on the run up to 9 July for further news and updates. Nigel also reported that 5,600 GB5HQ QSL cards have been despatched over the last 18 months or so following the 2003 and 2004 events, which is about 20% of the total QSOs. Over 1,000 direct QSLs have now been sent.

Even if you're not a regular contester, please remember to support the event and make some QSOs. Hopefully some of them will be with GB5HQ, which will be available on all 12 band/mode combinations from 160m to 10m.

Cabrillo

I was one of a number of people who had a problem submitting a log earlier this year after operating in the French REF contest. After the contest was over, as usual I produced a Cabrillo log from a logging package that supported the contest and e-mailed it to the organisers. I was surprised to receive a message back from the contest robot saying it did not like my CATEGORY line. I was puzzled, as it looked fine to me according to the instructions. Then the penny finally dropped that

CATEGORY: SINGLE-OP 40M LOW

was not acceptable, but

CATEGORY: SINGLE-OP 40M LOW

was! The extra spaces were the reason the log was not being accepted. Most logging packages introduce extra spaces here so that the user-entered information lines up against a single column and is easier to read.

Incidentally, the Cabrillo specification does only use a single space in its examples, but it's not clear if it's a definite requirement or not. So we don't know whether the REF robot is right to be fussy or if multiple spaces should be allowed, which most of the other log robots around the world seem to be able to cope with.

There have been some interesting discussions made on various Internet e-mail reflectors regarding the logging software to be used at WRTC 2006 in Brazil. The official rules state that only Writelog, CT or TR be used, which has understandably caused some upset to those hoping to participate who prefer one of the many other logging packages available. Looking through the relatively small number of logs received for the RSGB 21/28 MHz CW contest last year, 13 different logging programs were identified.

A reason suggested for the restriction is to guarantee that the Cabrillo output produced by the software can be relied upon. At WRTC 2002 in Finland there were a few anomalies in the log files because of the different software used. When aiming to adjudicate the whole contest in under 24 hours, it's understandable to want to minimise any potential problems you may have!

There's no single real culprit to blame for these sorts of problems. Sometimes contest organisers do not specify the template they wish to be used for their contest. Sometimes a particular template isn't available, so contesters will use a best-fit approach from their software. The QSO data may all be there, but not in the same columns as requested. Dave, G4BUO, reminded me that Tree, N6TR, had said that the actual column positions are not that important – but that the data field itself is. There is the complication that the adjudication / analysis software in use by the organisers may be relying on all of the data being in exactly the right columns and isn't able - or expected to - parse the data.

I think we will return to this subject again some time soon!

Radio Arkala

I mentioned this station in the last Digest, as it was a presentation topic at the CCF meeting in Finland. Now a website has been created with some great photos of the site, including the now famous 105m tower. In the last Digest I see I credited it as being 130m, for which I can only blame the Finnish beer. It certainly works too, still making QSOs to the USA West Coast on 20m early in the morning during a major DX contest, when just about everyone else in Europe had thrown in the towel.

The URL is: <http://www.radioarkala.com>

It may be an interesting one to show your other half: "You see dear, what I've got in the garden isn't so bad after all." Another possibility might be to use the photos as evidence when trying to gain permission to put up a new tower. "I'd like a 40m tower just like the one in the photo – just look how small it looks." It's probably the only time when a 40m tower will actually look 'small' at an amateur installation!

Software updates

Tom, N1MM, has recently released Version 5 of his contest software. There are a lot of new features, including better multi-operator support, better bandmap and QSO entry handling - and overall improved performance.

Paul, EI5DI, is now supporting voice keying in the latest version of SD. There have also been some useful new features made recently in automatically displaying if a caller is a needed multiplier on another band without needing to press any more keys. This is very useful considering the very few seconds you have available in mid-QSO to work out if you should be passing your caller to another band. I remember using an old version of SD in the ARRL DX contest years ago, furiously pressing buttons to ensure I didn't let any needed States slip away.

EU Sprint website

The EU Sprint website has been completely rewritten by young contesters Royce, MØRHI, and Pete, M3PHP. The site is now more interactive, and one of the new features is an option that allows you to type in your callsign and have all of your previous results displayed. I took part in the Spring SSB event, which was its usual challenging self. There was plenty of UK support this time, which made 40m - and especially the closing moments on 80m - easier for a change. Unfortunately the CW contest clashed with the CDXC Dinner, and also Visalia, so none

of those events had as many participants as they otherwise would have done. See <http://www.eusprint.com/>.

BERU 2005

People either love the Commonwealth Contest or they hate it. Whatever your particular feelings about it, no-one can deny the operating style and strategy required to do well is unique. With so much emphasis on searching, especially for countries in the far corners of the globe, it's a real chance to learn about propagation and hopefully find and then capitalise on those often fleeting openings. As is befalling all of the all-band contests, 10m proved to be a real struggle – although at least folks managed to make some QSOs. In some events more recently I've found 10m has been a complete write-off and 15m only marginally better. Despite this, entrants in the UK and further afield were generally pleased with the activity and conditions. I also heard from a few people who are not keen contesters, but do like to join in because they see BERU as their big chance to work some DX without the competition from the rest of Europe. It was great to hear some stories of first time BERU entrants on the UK Contest reflector too.

Colin, MUØFAL, sent in a report of his activity in the recent Russian DX Contest:

RDXC 2005 19-20 March 1200z till 1200z

'A couple of years ago I sent in a check log for the Russian DX contest after working 100 or so contacts in the contest. Last year I received a very impressive high-quality Results booklet in the post from the organisers - including detailed results and analysis of the contest in English and Russian. So this year I decided to make a little more effort and put in an entry. This contest has several sections and I decided to do the low power all-band CW section. The multipliers consist of DXCC Countries and Russian 'Oblasts', which

consist of two letters like in the states of the USA. Now, when we work USA states the average contester can visualise the state map and knows which prefix is where, but paying attention to Russian call areas and corresponding Oblasts is not the first thing to come to mind when working Russians on a daily basis!

It was time to start the contest. I'm not sure of who I need to work and try to think of band openings to the East instead of the West. Starting on 15m, a CQ gets a slow trickle of Russians and good old SD logging software is marking up Oblasts thick and fast. 15m is not in great shape, but the points start to build up and a pattern develops, with several Oblasts in the 3 area and things are making sense. There are a lot of operators in the MA Oblast. It seems I have come across that from another 'MA' a lot further to the West!

As the afternoon wears on, 15m becomes poorer and I drop down to 20m, expecting to work plenty in the European part of Russia - but this is not to be! Silly me, I forgot to consider that I'm doing backwards propagation. It is night in European Russia but morning in UAØ. Anyway, plenty of UA9s and a few UAØs make the Oblast totals go up, with nice contacts into the more eastern former Russian states that count as Country multipliers.

I take a break during the evening so as to preserve the stability of the household, but by 2200z I am busy on 40m. I just love this band when conditions are below par because I can tuck in nicely and run a reasonable pile-up with my peashooter station. This session carries on late into the night - and then EYØR replies to my CQ, which brings me in to fits of giggles. A combination of tiredness and my odd sense of humour are reading it as 'Eeyore'. A native Guernseyman such as myself is called a Guernsey Donkey and this callsign has set me off in amusement. About 30 minutes later I decide to go to bed, but still

have this callsign keeping me awake. The next morning I make up for lost ground on 20m with the closer Russian mults and tot up a reasonable score.

QSOs: 295
Mults: 127 including DXCCs
Claimed score: 74,930

This contest is growing in popularity. It certainly is interesting to be hunting Oblasts and the Russian guys are very enthusiastic. The RDXC website at www.rdx.org carries detailed information not only on the contest results and Country records, but also details as to how to claim the worked Oblast awards etc. Oblasts cross-checked in contest logs are valid to claim the relevant certificate. Next year, why not give this one a go?

73 Colin, MUØFAL

Many thanks for your report, Colin, and I completely agree with your comments about the event. I was also active in this one and, despite the lack of 28 MHz propagation, activity remained high. The SRR have done a fine job of promoting the contest, with an excellent detailed website and results booklet. An on-line scoring system was also available this year, although not too many stations submitted scores during the event, and it was interesting to see how the scores compared when the finish was still many hours away.

OK, that's all for this time. Spring has finally arrived, which means that the summer portable season is almost upon us - lots of field days and IOTA operations. Who ever said that amateur radio stops us from getting any fresh air or exercise? Reports and news items for publication will always be welcomed. Alternatively, if there is a topic you'd like me to cover, or a question you'd like answered, send them along. My contact details are given at the front of the *Digest*.

73 Lee, GØMTN

Notice Board

from G4JVG

I have decided to take early retirement, and Eva and I are planning a new life out in Malaysia. We have sold our house in Stevenage and plan to move out to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (north Borneo) in July of this year. We will be renting out there initially and plan to buy a house as soon as possible. Needless to say, a place with the possibility of reasonable antennas will be one of the criteria!

I will initially receive the callsign 9M6/G4JVG, but hope to change that to a 9M6 two- or three-letter callsign after the residency visa has been issued.

Having now worked at RSGB HQ for just over 10 years, I feel it is time to move on, and we're really looking forward to getting back to the tropics (Eva and I lived in Papua New Guinea 1991 - 1994, when I was P29DX, and we have been out to Sabah a couple of times, most recently at Christmas / New Year, so we have a fair idea of what to expect!).

For those who may be wondering, we are not buying Phil/9M6CT's flat. We saw it at Christmas and Phil was kind enough to give

us first refusal. Tempting though it was with an FT-1000MP, Quadra amplifier and 2-element cubical quad on the roof at 70' AGL, we felt the place was perhaps a little too small for us as we are used to living in a detached house with a reasonable-size garden. I understand Phil has now sold the apartment to John, G3OOK.

I will be continuing to work as *RadCom* editor until July, so at present I have three issues to go. George Brown remains as Technical Editor. An advertisement for the post of *RadCom* Editor appears in the May *RadCom* and on the RSGB website for anyone who may be interested!

Of course I will keep up my membership of CDXC, so will keep in touch with members that way and I hope it won't be too long before I will be on the air from 9M6.

73

Steve Telenius-Lowe, G4JVG

[*See also the following 'For Sale' section*]

For Sale

from G4JVG

[*For the continuation of this fairly long list, see page 56. Ed.*]

Kenwood TS-930S incl. auto ATU, recently overhauled, with MC-43S fist mic and

operator's and workshop manuals, GWO, £350.

Henry 2KD Classic desk-top HF (inc WARC bands) linear amplifier, 2 x 3-500Z valves, 2kW input, absolutely loads along at 400W out, with manual, GWO, £700.

Heathkit SA-2040 80-10m roller-coaster ATU, balanced & unbalanced inputs, rated 2kW PEP/1 KW CW, with manual, £100.

Yaesu MD-100 desk mic (for FT-1000MP etc.), brand new in original wrapping, never taken out of box! £80.

Intempo PG-01 portable DAB digital radio, RRP around £100, brand new in original box with manual, £65.

Cue Dee (Swedish-made) 15144A 15-ele 2m yagi, vy good cond, £60.

PacComm Tiny-2 MkII packet TNC from Siskin, as new, with manual, cables, original box, cost new £143, now £50.

Revex P300 30A 13.8V mains PSU, as new, £40.

Lunar Electronics 2M10-80P 12V 2m 'brick' linear amplifier, 10W in, 80W out, GWO, £40.

Kenwood HS-5 headphones, brand new in box, never used, £30.

BC-221 frequency meter with built-in mains PSU, very clean condition, £30.

Carolina Windom 80, 133' long, works on 80-10m. New cost £89.95, only £25.

MyDel double trap dipole, 80/40 and 20/15/10, max length only 66', works well. New cost £99.95, almost new: £25.

CDE CD-44 antenna rotator (OK for HF tribander) £15.

CDE AR-30 lightweight antenna rotator, £15.

Jaybeam UGP/2m base station folded ground plane vertical, unused, still in original box, £15.

Jaybeam 6-ele 2m quad, £15.

Shure 444D desk mic, a true classic, in original box, £15.

Jaybeam 4-ele 2m quad, £10.

Altai headset with boom mic and large footswitch attached, £10.

Homebrew phasing unit / switch box for 2 x 40m verticals, £10.

Massive 5-gang ceramic switch, ideal for linear project, brand new, £10.

Drake TV-3300 low pass filter, 1 KW, >80dB attenuation above 41 MHz, £10.

All ONO, plus carriage. Buyer collects or may be able to deliver at cost.

[List continued on page 56]

Please contact Steve, G4JVG:

g4jvg@ntlworld.com

or tel: (0870) 904 7373, Ext. 35 (daytime).

from G3SWH

As a result of my various QSLing activities, I have a number of surplus, properly stamped, but second-hand IRCs for sale at 55p each. I also have some US \$1 bills available at 55p each. All plus a sturdy SASE.

Should you need some, please make your cheque payable to P. A. Whitchurch and mail it to my home address:

21 Dickensons Grove, Congresbury, Bristol, BS49 5HQ.

Overseas members should contact me by e-mail for prices in other currencies.

73 Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

Not the GB2RS News

The main news headlines:

- New 'Who's Who?' Award Programme
- Club Championship Frequencies Revised
- New Pope a Keen Radio Amateur

A new 'VIP' award programme recently made its début based on the RSGB's latest best-selling publication, 'Who's Who in Amateur Radio?', which lists some 500 well-known amateurs, most of them in the UK.

Scoring is according to a simple points system: 1 VIP point for a QSO with a listed amateur you've never heard of before - and 2 VIP points for a contact with one you have. Extra points can be gained for QSOs with amateurs who are not listed in the new 'Who's Who?', but tell you that they darned well ought to have been – especially those pictured prominently on the front cover, but who are nowhere to be found inside.

The operating frequencies for the SSB section of the highly popular 90-minute RSGB 80m Club Championship have been revised. Not long ago 3.650 to 3.700 MHz was declared out of bounds, largely due to complaints from certain Continentals of massive UK QRM.

However, it's now been accepted, even by the do-gooders, that a fair number of these Continentals themselves probably wouldn't give a toss about them causing massive QRM to us in one of their invariably much longer contests, jawoll!

Following the election of the new Pope, expect a considerable increase in amateur radio activity from the Vatican City, up to now one of the rarer DXCC entities in Europe. Pope Benedict XVI, formerly Archbishop of Munich, is a keen amateur radio enthusiast.

Listen out for him signing HV1A in his spare time. Operation is on all bands and modes, confirming that he is indeed a man of very catholic tastes. QSL via Joseph Ratzinger c/o DARC.

Special event station news:

In Croatia, 9AØQRP will be active right the way through until the end of 2005 to celebrate the first ever 'QRP only' licence to be issued in that country. 9AØQRP is running 10 KW to a variety of stacked HF yagis at 150'.

HF DX News:

An elderly Japanese amateur and Second World War veteran was looking forward to being on the air as VP6JA from Barbados until the end of this month. He recently emerged after many years from his hiding place amongst the sugar cane plantations of Barbados, totally unaware that he was now on Pitcairn Island. [*You what? Ed.*]

Solution to Digest Prize Crossword 9

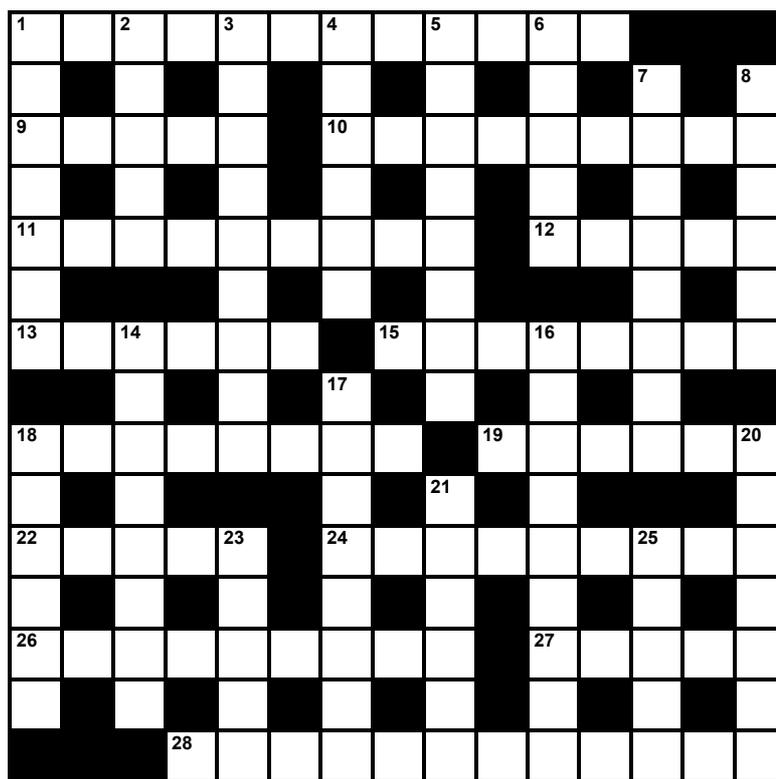
S	C	E	N	T	S		N	E	A	R	M	I	S	S
	Z		O		A		O		R		A		L	
T	E	R	M	I	N	A	T	O	R		L	I	E	D
	C		I		C		T		O		T		E	
S	H	A	N	G	H	A	I		G	R	A	P	P	A
			A		O		N		A				O	
S	P	O	T				G	E	N	E	V	A	N	S
	O		E		D		H		T		I		I	
G	L	A	D	I	O	L	I				R	I	T	E
	A				G		L		E		T			
B	R	A	Z	I	L		L	I	N	G	U	I	S	T
	B		U		A		G		O		O		T	
W	E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

Digest Prize Crossword 10 *by RFX*

A tricky one for some in Crossword 9 was 20 down: ENOSIS, defined by Chambers as 'union, the aim and rallying-cry of the Greek Cypriot movement for union with Greece'. Hence 'SV5B' so close together in the clue! I hasten to add that in any one Crossword I always aim to limit the number of more unusual words to one.

28 across, SESAME, wasn't an unusual word, but how did the CW bit fit in? Well, 'CW and' = ES (!). Yes, I must be getting more devious in my old age. Anyway, have fun with Crossword 10.

The winner of Prize Crossword 9, March 2005, and that brand-new tenner: Les Styles, VK4BUI, Queensland, Australia (via e-mail).



ACROSS

- 1 Other ways to change the locals (12)
- 9 Desserts, perhaps, provided by loose women... (5)
- 10 ... as low as most women on the staff can get? (9)
- 11 One specialising in daily flogging? (9)
- 12 Abominable creatures? (5)
- 13 Notices without suitable changes (6)
- 15 Refurbished BM sued, us included (8)
- 18 Unusually daring UA daily (8)
- 19 Jazz finale an Austrian composer rejected in capital city (6)
- 22 Feel sorry for headless wader (5)
- 24 Plant name involving Sussex town composer (9)
- 26 Caribbean brother? (9)
- 27 Otter found in animal sanctuary in the centre of Ottawa (5)
- 28 High-class airline food? (5,7)

DOWN

- 1 Woman upset following soldier's erection (7)
- 2 Project to confuse fox! (5)
- 3 Began again, producing paintings in relaxed surroundings (9)
- 4 More mischievous sportsman? (6)
- 5 Saint comes from a GI's unit after training (8)
- 6 See about painter turning up in good time (5)
- 7 Antique clock exhibited by a G2, say? (3-5)
- 8 Doctor seconds publicity for Israeli spies (6)
- 14 Sorts of letters written by a male society about new Indian city (8)
- 16 Type of junction found on board (9)
- 17 Rubbish about monastery out east initially compromises the kitty (5,3)
- 18 German leader, tall and thin, with eyes bigger than stomach (6)
- 20 Group taking a long time dressing (7)
- 21 Nocturnal fox found in faraway eastern Namibia, not easily caught at first (6)
- 23 Island kingdom located surprisingly in the middle of Patagonia (5)
- 25 Later colleague of 24, disguised as diver (5)

Deadline for entries: 20 June

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

For a few brief notes on the system used here, see 'DX an' all that'

Period	Call
till 28/06	YL74ØC, YL74ØM, YL74ØT: special calls (Latvia)
till 30/06	II7JP: special call
till June	ST2T: Sudan by S57CQ
till July	YU8/IZØBGS
till August	TT8M and TT8AMO: Chad by PA5M and HB9AMO
till November	HFØPOL: Henryk Arctowski Base (SP-01; AN-010)
till 31/12	4N35CW: special event station
till 31/12	EIØ5CCC: special event call
till 31/12	HA2ØØCVM: special event call
till 31/12	HA8ØIARU: special event station
till 31/12	IU7SCT: special station
till 31/12	LZ8IARU: special event station
till 31/12	OE5Ø: special event prefix (Austria)
till 31/12	OO: special prefix (Belgium)
till 31/12	ZS75PTA: special call
till March	R1ANT: Mirny base (UA-07), Antarctica by RW1AI
till April 06	R1ANN and RU3HD/ANT: Novolazarevskaya (UA-08, AN-016)
till ??	LU1ZA: 'Orcadas del Sur' (LU-14; AN-008)
till ??	LU1ZD: 'General San Martin' (LU-11; AN-016)
till ??	LU1ZG: 'General Manuel Belgrano II' (LU-08; AN-016)
till ??	LU1ZI: 'Teniente Jubany' (LU-15; AN-010)
till ??	LU1ZV: 'Esperanza' (LU-06, AN-016)
till ??	LU4ZS: 'Vicecomodoro Marambio' (LU-03; AN-013)
01/05-31/07	8N5SAIT: special event station (Japan)
01/05-31/05	CF, CG, CH, CIØ, CI1, CI2: special prefixes (Canada)
01/05-28/05	GB6WW: special event station
01/05-31/05	LZØ5KM: special station
04/05-24/05	EA6/DL6KAC: Mallorca (EU-004)
08/05-04/06	GB6VIE: special call
17/05-07/06	LI and LJ: special prefixes (Norway)
17/05-07/06	SE, SF, SJ, SG: special prefixes (Sweden)
20/05-22/05	D9ØHE/2, DS2GOO/P, 6K2CEW/P, DS5BSX/P, 6K2ABX/P: AS-105

21/05-28/05	TMØL: Levant Island (EU-070) by Fs
22/05-29/05	TK/HAØHW and TK/HA4DX: Corsica (EU-014)
22/05	IV European Castles Day
23/05-07/06	A3: Tonga (OC-049 and OC-064) by VE7YL and VK3DYL
27/05-29/05	DLØNBR: special event station
27/05-30/05	EF8CID: special call (Canary Islands)
02/06-05/06	MMØBQI/P: Treshnish Islands (EU-108)
07/06-07/07	CY9SS: St. Paul Island (NA-094)
10/06-13/06	9A/I6GFX: Croatian islands (EU-170)
11/06-12/06	IU1PV: Punta Vagno Lighthouse (WAIL LI-006)
12/06-24/06	VP5/K7LAY and VP5/K7LAZ: Caicos Islands (NA-002)
14/06-21/06	MSØIRC/P: Rockall Island (EU-NEW) by MMØALM & MMØCWJ
18/06-19/06	GB8OSJ: special event station
18/06-30/06	HR: Utila Island (NA-057) by W7AV, K6JEN, KB7TX
18/06-22/06	W9R: special event station
20/06-27/06	GB5AWR: special call
30/07-31/07	TM4Z: Ouessant Island (EU-065)
01/07-28/07	GB4ON: special call

Letters and E-mails to the Editor

from G3XTT

Dear Martyn,

This is to thank CDXC and Kenwood for organising and sponsoring last year's Kenwood Challenge. I found the Challenge was just the incentive I needed to get back into DXing in a way which I haven't for some years now. It is easy to get lethargic and only chase those missing band countries, so it was great to have a reason to get on and work a wide variety of DX on all bands and modes. I thought the inclusion of 6m was a nice touch, although John G3LAS might not agree as that's where I eventually edged ahead of him, the Sporadic E season seeming to favour my location a little more than his. I would probably have had a reasonably serious go at the Challenge whatever form it had taken, but the added incentive of a superb prize certainly

gave an added reason to take the chase seriously! It was good to see so many members taking part and posting their running scores on the CDXC Web pages; this made the whole thing so much more fun.

It's early days yet in getting to know the TS-480SAT which I received as a prize, but I am already impressed with the receive performance and audio quality. Full marks to Kenwood for their generosity and for the design of the 480.

73 Don, G3XTT

from G3HCT / VK4OQ

Could you please mention in the next Digest that I am now back on the air with the call VK4OQ.

It has taken some time to get the shack ready, as the house we bought had to be altered to give a room for me and a studio for Jill to do her painting.

I am running the K2 with a big SteppIr and for the first time have had the room to put down a 'text book' radial system! I am using 80 x 12m radials. The location is 590m above sea level, with a wonderful take-off to Europe.

I am now in the process of catching up with the A25/G3HCT QSLs that have just arrived from the bureau.

My current address is:

PO Box 7665, Toowoomba Mail Centre,
Toowoomba, QLD 4350, Australia.

73 John, G3HCT - now VK4OQ

from G8JM

Having now reached the age of 93 and being registered blind, I have decided to wind down

my amateur radio activities. I find it very difficult to read the dials etc. on my transceiver and to do the maintenance on my beam.

I must therefore say cheerio to CDXC after many years of receiving the excellent magazine etc. and to wish you all lots of future success.

Vy 73 to all Bill Hall, G8JM

Licensed 1 January 1937

from G6QQ

At age 88, I am no longer active as a ham and have given my equipment to the local ham club.

I will not be renewing my sub, when it expires in July.

73 David Dutton, G6QQ

For Sale [*G4JVG, continued from page 51*]

JRC NRD-505 communications receiver, with manual, faulty audio, for repair, hence £10.

Precision micrometer in wooden case, £5.

Welz SP-200 power / SWR meter 1.8-160MHz, 1kW, power reads low but SWR OK, £5.

Heil BM-10 headset with HC-4 mic insert, wired for Yaesu rigs, tatty but mic insert FB, £5.

RCA 8122 ceramic tetrode, believed to be OK, £5.

Yaesu YH-77ST stereo headphones, £5.

Cushcraft Ringo Ranger 6dBi gain vertical, rather rusty, hence £5.

Bantex 2m 5/8-wave mobile whip on mag mount with coax, £5.

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

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

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

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

1. starting with an **initial payment TODAY**
2. followed by an **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter,
starting with 1 July 2005 and until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

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

Name(s) :

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :

.....

Postcode :

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

