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

Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

Towards the beginning of April Jane and I flew to Newcastle, picked up a hire car at the airport, then headed south past the 'Angel of the North' en route to Pickering. There we stayed with an old radio friend of mine and his not-so-old non-radio wife, who now run a B & B just down the road from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

There was plenty to get steamed up about there the following day en route to Whitby (45212 and 825, if you must know), although less so on the way back, seeing as at Grosmont 825 was suddenly taken off and we ended up behind a rather boring old British Rail diesel.

And on the way down we'd stopped off at Goathland, where we'd joined the hordes of other tourists making their way up the hill from the station to the 'Aidensfield [Goathland] Arms'. Yes, 'Heartbeat' country. Mind you, no sign of Greengrass. Although there were plenty of Norwegian visitors propping up the bar. Apparently the series is very popular in LA-land too.

Anyway, eventually it was off to York via the highly memorable Castle Howard ('Brideshead Revisited') and eventually Newcastle airport once more. If we'd made it a week later we'd could have gone along to the RSGB's AGM at the nearby Novotel. Yes, Colin, we must plan these trips better in future!

But, as so often, I digress. In this 60-page *Digest* you'll find a veritable plethora of goodies. Quite apart from the usual regular columns, highlights this time round include Nigel, G3TXF, on his recent gallivant around the Pacific entitled 'South Pacific DX Triple-Play'. All is revealed on page 19.

This is then followed by another fully paid-up member of Globetrotters Anonymous [*He's only envious. Ed.*], Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH. And he Phil's us in, as it were, on his trip to the Indian Ocean and Mayotte. Yes, 'My yacht' as opposed to 'Your yacht'...

Then it's John, G3LZQ, on his anniversary outing to J7-land, the island of Dominica. Somewhere I'd love to go as well. After which it's a seriously jet-lagged Gordon, G3USR, telling us all about... well, how about (in an Across clue): 'Passport trouble returning to California hamvention (7)?' Visalia, yes. And let's hope Gordon won't have anything of the sort if he decides to go back there next year.

Admittedly Equatorial Guinea has never been at the top of my list of 'must see' countries. If you want to genuinely sign 3C-something, though, you really have no alternative but to go there. Which is what EA5BYP did together with some like-minded EA friends back in 2007. And if you're wondering 'Why the delay?' in publishing this one, well, recently we had a bit of a blitz on DXpeditions who gladly accept CDXC funding, but don't immediately cough up part of their side of the deal, an article about it all for the *Digest*.

Finally it's somebody we have no problems whatsoever in extracting articles for publication from. In fact he willingly contributes plenty of food for thought without us even asking. That's Roger, G3SXW. He kicks off this time on page 37. Thanks to you as well, Rog.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

One of amateur radio's longest-standing and emotive issues is that of operating ethics and manners. We hear much talk of the 'ham spirit' and, of course, this is frequently in evidence. We hear many stories of huge contributions made by some for the benefit of others. Nevertheless, there seems to be a prevalent feeling that 'things aren't like they used to be'. There was a time when one could hear, on the frequency of a rare DX station, all kinds of helpful attempts to ensure that the weaker brethren would be able to make that much sought-after QSO.

Nowadays the bulk of the advice on frequency seems more directed towards ensuring that an absolute minimum of people make a QSO. Helpful comments like 'QSY!', 'idiot!' 'What is the DX?', 'Up, up, up!' (excluding the unprintable words) are the norm, to say nothing of the miscellaneous squeaks, whistles and buzz-saw noises which sometimes defy description. Of course if we all really did say nothing, they'd probably all go away, but such is human nature that this isn't going to happen. Incidentally, I always find it hilarious when some people even express their abuse and frustration on CW. 'Dit-dit, dah-dit-dit, dit-dit, dah-dah-dah, dah' just doesn't have the same intimidating ring to it somehow. Perhaps it's the lack of the implied exclamation marks.

For many years suggestions have been made about how to combat the increasing curse of bad operating and bad manners on the air. These range from 'Why don't THEY do something about it?' to chopping down the aerials of the offenders. Sadly, nothing seems to be effective. Recently, two prominent amateurs, ON4UN and ON4WW, have taken a more considered approach by writing a comprehensive manual on good operating technique. This is much more than an exhortation to behave properly on-air and

contains a huge amount of advice on how to improve one's operating habits. It's very unlikely that this will be read - and even less - adopted by the majority of the pests, but there is much in it for all of us, even those who consider themselves to be 'good' operators already.

CDXC has obtained the permission of the authors to make this document available to members and a key section will be distributed with the May *Digest*. The full text will be downloadable from our website and I recommend it to everyone.

Turning to other matters, it still doesn't seem to me that our local star is getting very excited yet. There have been a number of interesting DXpeditions in the last few months and most have been pretty successful. However, it would be good to be able to say that the frequencies above 20 MHz were coming back, but it just doesn't seem to be the case, at least, not in East Herts. I'll just have to emigrate to EA7 permanently - only joking!

Looking ahead, I assume you have all noted the date of our 2009 Summer Social and AGM, once again to be hosted by our President, G3NUG. If you don't come to sunny Herefordshire on Saturday, 18 July, you will miss the chance to win a Yaesu FT-450 - over 600 quid's worth of radio - generously donated by Yaesu UK. Why not make a weekend of it and look around for a nice DX-magnet holiday home in Wales on the Sunday?

Finally, I'd be interested to hear members' views on a subject which has been the subject of a recent Committee debate. We've been asked to give a donation to a forthcoming expedition to Rockall, one of the most difficult DX locations to activate. Some Committee members believe that the

risks involved are so great that we shouldn't encourage anyone to attempt it. Others feel that, provided the project seems to be well-conceived and 'serious', that it's OK to offer help to the expeditioners, who would probably go anyway. I would be interested to hear what the wider membership thinks. Obviously, there are other DX locations where similar considerations apply, whether the dangers be connected with landing, mountaineering, pirates (the sea-going kind)

or encounters with polar bears. Opinions sent directly to a Committee member, or maybe aired on the CDXC Reflector, would be welcome.

That's all for now folks, CU at the Summer Social.

73

John, G3LAS

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

Trish and I look forward to welcoming many members here at Lower Withers Barns on Saturday. 18 July, the day of the CDXC AGM and Summer Social. There's plenty of room for everyone and lots of space for parking, so do come if you can. We can guarantee good food and good company. Our local butcher is making the bangers and burgers from Herefordshire meat, which is about as good as you can get. The weather should be good too, but there's plenty of room in the house if it rains.

I won't repeat my 'commercial' about staying in this area for the weekend. The local countryside is really beautiful and there is lots to see: just have a look at the Herefordshire website at

www.visitherefordshire.co.uk/

Yaesu UK have yet again donated the major raffle prize. This time it's an FT-450AT transceiver. This is an excellent unit and we are most grateful to Yaesu for their support. See a photo of this rig and a brief spec on the following page. And kindly donated by Martin Lynch & Son: a MyDEL CG SB-2000 radio interface, which is a very clever radio to PC box of tricks that not only allows you to use PSK/RTTY, but also controls your rig using Ham Radio Deluxe.

Keep a watch on the website for further prizes. Raffle tickets will only be available at the Summer Social, but members attending may of course buy tickets on behalf of their friends.

Members will note that we have circulated part III of the IARU Ethics and Operating Procedures with this *Digest*. Part III is for Advanced Operators and I believe that even us aged G3s can learn a thing or two. The entire guide can be downloaded from our website. John, ON4UN, and Mark, ON4WW, were the authors of this guide and did a really good job. They have given us permission to publish it. Proof reading was by CDXC member Bob, G3PJT.

I was really delighted to learn that I have been elected to the CQ DX Hall of Fame. and thank the CDXC members who supported the application. I see that Roger, G3SXW, and Nigel, G3TXF, are the only other UK CDXC members and were elected in May 2007. Geoff Watts of IOTA fame was elected in June 1977. I am pleased to be the fourth G. Of course every credit must go not only to CDXC for their support, but also to all those members of FSDXA DXpeditioning team who have given me tremendous help during our past four DXpeditions.

The rig here is working well, although the antenna is still not up at its full height. When the weather is fine and the farmer has removed his cows (and the huge bull!) I'll fix some guys and crank it up. I just need Swains Island to complete my DXCC – this became a DXCC entity whilst I was off the air although I did work it some time ago as an IOTA. But there are still lots of band-slots for me to go for.

I've been collecting new IOTAs at around one per week, so the IOTA 1,000 Islands Trophy is within reach and I hope to get there in the next year or so. I note that the quality of the IOTA DXpeditioners still varies widely. Some work away at two to three contacts a minute, but others really struggle to achieve a decent rate. This leads to much unfortunate comment on their operating frequency and on the cluster. Perhaps the IOTA Committee should send IOTA DXpeditioners a copy of the IARU operating procedures when they become aware of an operation from a rare one.

We have just started our planning for the next FSDXA DXpedition to the Pacific in late 2011. We are currently evaluating several locations and already have a large list of operators who are interested in joining us. We will be seeking younger team members who can be away from work for three weeks. We'd like to receive expressions of interest from any CDXC member. Just e-mail me at the address on page 1 of this *Digest*. We can guarantee an excellent DXpedition and lots of hard work!

We are seeking operators who meet the following criteria, but they need not have DXpeditioned before. Competent contesters are particularly welcome. They must:

- Be team players
- Be able to work a major pile-up at a rate of 2-3 QSOs per minute, hour after hour and computer log accurately.
- Be physically fit and willing to work various shifts during the day and night.
- Be prepared to camp, as this may be necessary.
- Have multi-mode operating skills.
- Be willing to help before and after the DXpedition on matters such as antenna testing, inventory checking, QSLing etc.

Finally, a very warm welcome to Array Solutions and to Icom as new advertisers. We really appreciate your support and, of course, the support of our existing advertisers. As I have said before, when members are in the market place, let's support those who support the club. That's it for now. I look forward to welcoming many members at the Summer Social.

73



The FT-450AT is a compact yet superb HF/50MHz radio with state-of-the-art IF DSP technology configured to provide world-class performance in an easy-to-operate package. Suitable for all applications - beginners, casual operators, enthusiasts, portable / field users and emergency service providers.

The rugged die-cast chassis makes it perfect for mobile usage and it's packed with easy-to-use features. For the full specification please see the Yaesu UK website at www.yaesu.co.uk.

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
2EØTAW	Terry Williamson	Chard
G4KPZ	Vernon Cracknell	Huntingdon
G7NOT	George Highton	Wigan
MØGJH	Andrew Vine	Cranleigh
MMØNDX	Col McGowan	Larbert

CDXC AGM and Summer Social 2009

The Annual General Meeting of CDXC will be held on **Saturday, 18 July, 2009 at 1200** at the QTH of Neville Cheadle, G3NUG, Lower Withers Barns, Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0HY. Thank you to Neville and Trish for offering to host us again this year.

AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the 2008 AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Election of New Committee
7. Election of Auditor
8. Any Other Business

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

Our popular Summer Social follows the AGM in Neville's garden and all members and families are most welcome. Come and meet your fellow members - there should be something of interest for everyone. As usual there will be food and a BBQ for which a charge of £8 per adult, payable on the day, will be made. There will be no charge for children under 16 and of course there is no charge for members who only attend the AGM. Soft drinks will be included, but bring your own wine and beer.

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

We will be holding our famous raffle during the Summer Social with a first prize of a Yaesu FT-450ATU kindly donated by Yaesu. Donations of prizes from members are always welcome. Raffle tickets are only available on the day, but members attending the Summer Social may buy tickets on behalf of members who are unable to attend, provided they agree to carry home any prizes for that member.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending so that we can plan the catering requirements. Please e-mail me with your information [sec@CDXC.org.uk] or use the return slip enclosed with this Digest. I would much prefer e-mails as I can give acknowledgement and avoid anything getting lost in the post.

Chris, G3SVL, Secretary CDXC

Directions to G3NUG QTH - Lower Withers Barns

Note for Sat Nav users: the postcode will lead you to a field! Please use old-fashioned directions for the last mile!

From the Ludlow area (north):

Take the A49 south, bypassing Ludlow in the Leominster direction. After about 5 miles pass through Ashton village and immediately turn left - signposted Middleton on the Hill and The Hundreds. (This turning is on a sharp right-hand bend just after Ashton.) Keep going (one mile) through the first hamlet, down the hill to crossroads. Turn left - signposted Middleton. Keep going another mile through the next hamlet and down the hill past new barriers on the right-hand side of a sharp left-hand bend. We are next on the right - signed **Lower Withers Barns**. Take the entrance at the corner and follow the red drive to the rear of our barns.

From the Leominster area (south):

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

If in difficulty telephone Neville on (01568) 750560.

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Membership | Full details are available from the Secretary. |
| Subscription | £18.00 for UK members, £24.00 for overseas members (US\$48 or 40 Euros). New members joining between 1 January and 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer. |
| Digest | Published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Editor by the published deadline. Please note that views expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee. |
| Website | http://www.cdxc.org.uk/ |

Treasury Notes and Subscription Reminder

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

The CDXC subscription year runs from 1 July to 30 June. This Digest is the last issue for the current subscription year.

You will find a Subscription Reminder notice enclosed with this May 2009 Digest unless (a) you usually pay your subscription by Standing Order or (b) you have already paid your 2009-10 subscription in advance.

Subscription Rates

For UK Members the 2009-10 subscription is £18.

For Overseas Members the Sterling subscription is £24.

[The current approx equivalents are US\$40 and €35.]

Standing Orders

Last year was a major changeover year as the UK subscription was increased to £18 after five years at £15. Special thanks to all the Members who arranged for their Standing Orders to be increased accordingly.

The few laggards who still have their Standing Orders running at the old rate will soon be receiving a personalised reminder from CDXC's Treasurer!

Standing Orders make life easier for Members and they also help CDXC. Members don't have to think about making a subscription payment each year. Standing Orders help your Club by reducing the administrative hassle of handling cheques

and the cost of chasing subscription renewals.

Electronic Online Transfers

Subscription renewals can also be paid by online electronic transfer.

For electronic transfers you only need three pieces of information: CDXC's account number: 44532385; CDXC's sort code: 60-60-02 and your callsign for use as the 'reference'.

Overseas subscriptions

Overseas members (who do not have a UK bank account) can make their CDXC subscription payment by PayPal to **nigel@G3TXF.com**, by credit card or by sending cash.

As always we are grateful to Martin Lynch at ML & S for his assistance in processing the CC payments.

CDXC also actively collects subscriptions (particularly from overseas members) at various DX conventions around the world. 'Ham Radio' in Friedrichshafen at the end of June is always a good venue for collecting cash subscriptions from several of CDXC's European members.

Hopefully several CDXC Committee members will be out in the field at Friedrichshafen actively collecting subscriptions from both old and new CDXC Members.

73 de Nigel G3TXF

CDXC Treasurer

Report on the CDXC Annual Dinner 2009

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

Following the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the 2008 Annual Dinner, it was an easy decision to return to Wyboston Lakes, with a few lessons learned, for 2009. This proved to be a great success and for the first time in recent years it was a sell-out. It was a real shame to have to turn people away, but the room capacity is firmly capped at 60 (those Health and Safety procedures, I guess).

As a bonus, in the afternoon Nigel, G3TXF, set up live demonstrations of Log Book of the World (LoTW). This was hugely popular and Nigel was there from 3pm and still going strong at 6:30pm! It was a real pleasure to have so many members around in the afternoon and there was plenty of good old rag-chewing going on - and I hear that a number of DXpedition plans were also hatched! The weather was so kind that many members were to be found sitting out in the sunshine by the lake. We will certainly look to repeat the afternoon session next year.

Wyboston catering did us proud for the Dinner and an improved seating arrangement and table layouts were lessons learned from last year. But a real treat was to come after the Dinner when Bob, MDØCCE, gave an enthralling talk about his life in amateur radio. I was fascinated to know that New York, where Bob grew up, had emporia that seemed to closely resemble those of London's Lisle Street. The journey from New York to the Isle of Man was mesmerising, covering exotic DX locations, mini and maxi DXpeditions and a fascinating array of rigs.

As Bob is known to be a collector of everything from stamps to fine wine and cars, it was only appropriate that our President should present Bob with the ultimate collectable – a CDXC coffee mug!

The after-Dinner socialising carried on well into the small hours, and restarted at breakfast in the morning before we 'overnighters' made our way home.

Once again I have had very positive feedback on the event and I thank members for taking the time to do that. We seem to have hit on a very successful formula and our challenge for 2010 is to find a bigger room, as the popularity grows.

Whether you made it to the Annual Dinner or not, our AGM and Summer Social is coming up fast and will be another great opportunity for members to get together. Details are elsewhere in this edition of the *Digest*.

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

As I write this, I have just learned the identity of one of the 2009 inductees into the CQ DX Hall of Fame. This item of news will no doubt be covered elsewhere, but let me add to my own congratulations to our beloved leader, G3NUG. I've known Neville for quite a few years now, certainly from well before our first FSDXA trip back in 1998. What comes across is that he never goes about anything half-heartedly, whether it's chasing islands from home or planning a DX trip. And the results, of course, speak for themselves. He has changed the paradigm as far as large-scale DXpeditions are concerned, such that expeditions now use the FSDXA achievements as their benchmark. VP6DX had a firework display from the ship when they exceeded the D68C QSO total. That's a homage to G3NUG – after all, D68C was the first DXpedition to exceed 100,000 QSOs and did so in style, putting about 70% on the previous record.

But at the same time it's never been a chase after numbers *per se*. One reflectee, for instance, during the recent VK9GMW trip, opined that some big expeditions pay little attention to 160m because it lowers their QSO rate. FSDXA, under Neville's benign dictatorship, has never done that. Instead the team has planned to have enough gear, operators and antennas to chase the rate bands while, at the same time, being there for the marginal openings on the edge bands. Those who have seen Eric/K3NA's presentations on our Top Band achievements will be aware of how successful that strategy has been.

Recent DX

Well, conditions may continue to be iffy, but there has been plenty to chase of late. Unfortunately it hasn't always been easy. I needed VK9LA, YJØ and Mellish Reef on

30, 80 and 160m (same three bands for each of them), so was hopeful of a few new ticks (160m looked like a no-no for all of them, but 80 and/or 30m should have been easy enough). In the event I never heard VK9LA or the YJ boys (TXF and MXJ) on either 30 or 80m at a workable strength (ie not loud enough to be sure if they had come back to me in the pile-up). 30m surprised me in particular, but it may well have been propagation because, after starting to think VK9GMW would slip through my fingers the same way, I found them on 30m one afternoon with a real S9+ signal and, once I had found where they were listening, was able to work them first call. So it looked as though 30m propagation improved dramatically, but after VK9LA and YJ had closed down. To put icing on the cake, I worked VK9GMW on 160m later that evening. So obviously that was a good day for LF propagation (and, as the other part of the mix, low noise conditions at their end, so they were hearing OK). Mind you, I never did catch VK9GMW on 80m, which was somewhat frustrating.

Apropos of which, I was taken aback to see that the VK9GMW boys had been criticised by several amateurs for not spending enough time on the higher bands. And I have just seen a spot for them saying 'Never SSB, bad operation'. Hold on a moment. This was a two-man, low profile operation and, from the start, they had made clear that they would focus their efforts on the low bands which, for maximum results, would mean primarily CW. What right do armchair DXers have to criticise them? Sometimes I wonder why anyone can be bothered to mount an expedition, particularly one as expensive, arduous and time-consuming as their Mellish Reef operation clearly was, when they are then going to come in for this sort of cheap criticism. It's notable that the

most critical comments tend to come from those who have never been at the sharp end and the most sympathetic comments are generally posted by those who have been there and know what it's like.

Which neatly leads into this piece:

"It is unfortunate but true that in the last 20 years or so there has been a steady decline in general standards of behaviour and what can be called "the attitude of the individual". In the end, it becomes the done thing to "work a quick one if you can get away with it". This leads to a deterioration of standards generally, as evidenced (to quote one example) by the coarse vulgarity of much of what is shown on TV, and the witless ignorance of many people whose opinions are publicised merely because they happen to be notorious. And what, you may properly ask at this point, the heck has all this moralising to do with Amateur Radio – supposed (and believed by many of its keenest adherents) to be at least a straight game, played for its own sake.

The truth is that there is strong evidence of a good deal of dirty work going on in Amateur Radio, too. We refer not to the use of power beyond the licensed limit – we have always held this to be a matter between the individual and the Post Office, though this does not mean it can be condoned – but to sly trickery to get round the rules in contests and the gaining of awards. Nowadays, there is a tendency, in some quarters at least, to look at the rules first to see in what way they offer loopholes through which some advantage may be gained. Conscience is stilled by the reflection that "other people will be doing it, too". And yet, in Amateur Radio there is no need for this sort of thing. It is still a game that can be played for its own sake and in the spirit of the rules – and is far pleasanter, much easier and more interesting that way! But as soon as winning becomes a status symbol ... then the means

and the schemes to win become the paramount consideration".

You have probably twigged, from the reference to 'Post Office' that the above isn't contemporary, but everything in it could be equally applicable right now and, indeed, there are many reflector threads on the very topics that are raised in the item above. So where does it hail from? A March 1967 editorial by the late, great Austin Forsyth G6FO in Short Wave Magazine. As the French say, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!* (or, perhaps more simply, in English, "Nothing changes, particularly where human behaviour is concerned!")

I do enjoy reading through old amateur radio magazines, and these SWMs from the 60's were classics. G6FO had plenty more wisdom to impart, but perhaps what struck me most was how many of the contributors to the DX column are still around today and members of CDXC. I wonder if the same will be true of today's up-and-coming DXers in another 40 or 50 years' time?

Proper attire

It's actually great fun going through these old magazines (this particular selection cost me all of about £1 at a recent Reading club junk sale). For example, I turned up a great photo of Henry, G3GIQ, in his shack, properly attired in jacket and tie. I have, as a result, suggested to him that he might wish to run two 'countries worked' tables in RadCom, one for all-comers and one for those who work their DX the old-fashioned way – wearing the correct dress. Henry tells me there is even a photo somewhere of him wearing a tie while erecting a new antenna. I do feel the hobby has lost something over the years!

Correspondence

Ian, G3KZR, writes, "*Hearing you work VK9GMW on 160 a few evenings ago (grrr - they were a good signal) reminded me of*

your comments some time back about antennas as the critical factor in DXing.

This passing winter I set out to improve my 40m all-time score as it was languishing at 270, whereas 30m was at 306C. Thus I have been keenly following the outcomes of the various doings in the central Pacific - quite clearly my weakest area on 40m.

I have been surprised that ZL/VK have been stunning true S9 signals on 40m at times, but nearly all the activations up towards the equator have been quite the reverse! There is a major difference in propagation between the two areas.

Mostly my problem has been actually copying the incoming signals and struggling to be sure that I have actually been logged; their noise level often being lower than mine. This resulted in a loss of opportunity for a second go at stations which I thought might have already got my call - specifically T2OU and FW5RE. I have a very effective GP, but in both cases the extra gain of a 2-ele up at a decent height would have made all the difference in copy. For the record the countries I was chasing were 3D2, E5, FK, FW, H4Ø, H44, KHØ, VK9L, VK9M, T2 and YJ. My success rate was 6 out of 11, of which the biggest plus was H4ØMS on SSB and the biggest negative surprise was not once hearing our two YJ heroes (on 40m that is).

No, I will not be buying a 2-ele and tower, but I certainly found I was pushing the boundaries of the possible with the GP”.

It's certainly true that much of the action of late has been on the lower bands, for obvious reasons, which has meant that you need to be pretty competitive to make the grade. The good news is that from the UK we often get a clear shot at places like the Caribbean or long-path to the Pacific when the rest of Europe has lost propagation. The bad news is that the evening openings can be dire. One of the few evenings I did hear VK9GMW on 80m, for example, they were

barely copyable - while a spot from Austria said they were pounding in. You win some, you lose some, I guess, though it's not always easy to be philosophical about it, especially if it's a rare one that might not be on again for many years.

160m WAS

Clive, GM3POI, has been quite modest in response to comments about his Worked All States achievement in the January CQ 160m contest, something which I believe he managed once before in a Stew Perry event. So I was interested to read in the September 1967 issue of Short Wave Magazine of the very first 160m WAS award, achieved by WØGDH. The caption comments on what a tough achievement this would have been, even though WØGDH was in Kansas and therefore pretty much at the focal point of the USA. To have told the SWM columnist (G3KFE) that 160m WAS would eventually be achieved from the UK, would no doubt have brought forth a healthy degree of scepticism. To have suggested that it might be achieved from the UK in a weekend would have probably reduced him to hysterics. Of course, back then there were far fewer operators on 160m (many HF rigs did not even have the band) and UK operators were still limited to 10W. But we really have come a long way on the band since then.

ZS8T QRT

As I was putting this to bed, the bulletins carried the news that ZS8T is now QRT as Petrus is at the end of his assignment and on his way back to South Africa. This effort has been very disappointing; no doubt more will be revealed in due course. But the nub seems to be that Petrus is not an out-and-out DXer but, while on his last assignment, was encouraged to have a go with the result that a number of individuals and groups got carried away this time round, 'bigging up' his operation, as the vernacular would have it. But I rather suspect Petrus himself was somewhat less committed. In other words,

rather than a keen ham seeking sponsorship for an operation, as it often the case, here we have representatives of the DX community trying to cajole a rather more casual ham into meeting their needs for a new one. Maybe there are some lessons to be learned in retrospect. I'm just glad that I have ZS8 on all bands and modes, largely thanks to the superlative efforts of Chris de Beer when he was there as ZS8IR in 1996/97.

Concept of Deleted Entities reinstated (NC1L, Bill Moore)

(Although many of you will have seen this on the Internet, I make no apology for reproducing it here, as it is fundamental to the DXCC program which underlies most of our DX chasing)

In 2000, DXCC program rules were modified substantially in an effort to create simplified and stronger rules that would help make DXCC work well in the 21st century while tightening the DXCC List Criteria. At the same time the DXCC Challenge Award/competition was created as part of the modernization effort. The Challenge is intended to allow for an energetic new pursuit in DXing that focuses on statistics based upon only current entities on the List. The Challenge has been highly successful.

Another change resulting from this rules modernization was a subtle change from "deleting entities" to "removing entities." The intent of this change was to no longer allow the addition of deleted entities to the Deleted Entity List. In the subsequent years since DXCC 2000 there have been few issues with this concept and resultant little attention given to the realities of the ideological change. Recently, however, since the rollout of Logbook of the World (LoTW) and various political changes internationally, it has become evident that the program should return the concept of deleting entities for mostly administrative reasons. "Removing" an

entity from the DXCC system is non-trivial if not impossible. Also, the success of the DXCC Challenge and the DXCC Honor Roll have made a great game better by providing a playing field that isn't heavily biased by age.

It seems that the concept of a "deleted" entity - one that is marked as deleted and not applicable to Honor Roll or Challenge but that still exists in the records - is an elegant solution to the problem of changes in entity status. Distinguishing entities that are no longer extant makes sense as a means of leveling the playing field for younger participants in DXCC, but to wipe out someone's past accomplishments altogether just seems too drastic. At its last meeting the ARRL Programs and Services Committee decided that administratively the concept of deleted entities should be returned to the DXCC program. Necessary changes to Section II, DXCC List Criteria have been made to the rules and part 5 is renamed Deletion Criteria. The concepts for deleting an entity do not change. If an entity is deleted it will be added to the Deleted Entities List and the statistical records for DXCC participants will be adjusted accordingly, just as they had been in the years prior to 2000. The numbers shown in the individual DXCC records lists have always included the Deleted Entities. No DXCC participant needs to take any action at all.

Forthcoming DX

I guess one of the most interesting items is that Midway (KH4) will be on in October with a large team, albeit with a number of restrictions on where and how they can operate; shades of Desecheo. But it's definitely one to earmark in your diaries and, in the meantime, to get the Palos Verdes Sundancers busy trying to get the sunspots going (and if that reference is lost on you, you are obviously too young to remember Cass, WA6AUD, and his wonderful writings in the West Coast DX Bulletin - and maybe the CDXC Editor's

Mini-skirted Maidens can also do the necessary dance to bring the sunspots!). The Midway website has all the gen, at www.midway2009.com.

Also slated for October is another P29 island expedition featuring G3KHZ among others. These guys do a good job from a very remote part of the world.

In the meantime the calendar is looking somewhat empty. The northern summer is not a popular period for DXpeditions for obvious (propagation) reasons. But there should still be plenty of fun to be had chasing short-haul DX on the high bands via Sporadic E, maybe working the CQ WPX CW contest, one of my favourites, or, looking ahead to July, the IARU and IOTA contests which keep the bands buzzing with unusual calls, island expeditions and the like.

Finally, following on from my little quiz a few issues back, here are a few more to pass the time while you are waiting for some propagation. They all refer back to the 1948 World-Wide DX Contest, the first to be run post-war. All can be researched easily on the web, but do you know the answers off the top of your head?

1. We all know where MDØCCE is, but where was MD2AF?
2. PK4DA operated from which (now deleted) DXCC entity?
3. There are plenty of stations QRV with the prefix OQ5, but where would OQ5DA have been operating from in 1948?
4. AR8AB made a good showing in the contest. From which DXCC entity was he operating?
5. How about this one – FA3JY?
6. IIRC was active, but his DXCC entity was not Italy. What was it?

7. And what about EK1AO?
8. 9S4AX is another one active from what is now a deleted entity. What was it?
9. The Stateside highest-scoring multi-op was W6AM, operated by W6AM and W6KPC. What was W6AM's name?
10. ZC4SP should be obvious, but what was the DXCC entity?
11. FB8BB was active in the CW leg of the contest – what is the current prefix for this entity?
12. VK9WZ was obviously Willis Island, except it wasn't. So which DXCC entity was it?

Answers on p. 54

73 Don, G3XTT

Please note that with immediate effect I have been appointed the QSL manager for GI5K and MIØLLL. I will shortly be adding a log search page for each callsign to my website at www.g3swh.org.uk. I am also arranging for any unanswered direct QSL requests to be forwarded to me by Chris and for the RSGB QSL Bureau sub-manager to forward cards directly to me.

73 Phil Whitchurch
G3SWH and AD5YS

Borneo Bulletin

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX

teleniuslowe@gmail.com

Last time I wrote that I was planning to visit Sarawak and activate 9M8Z again in the CQ WPX SSB contest at the end of March. As things transpired I was active as 9M8Z for the week before the contest as well.

On the road again

On the Thursday a week before the contest I received a call from Johnny, 9M8DB, who had been asked to give a presentation on various aspects of amateur radio at an 'Amateur Radio Roadshow' organised by MCMC, the Malaysian regulatory and licensing authority. Johnny asked me if I would come along for some moral support and also to give a short presentation on the more 'fun' side of amateur radio, ie DXing and DXpeditioning. The audience was to be members of the Sarawak Red Crescent (the sister organisation of the Red Cross).

There had recently been a spate of severe flooding in remote parts of the state and the Red Crescent found they were out of range of cellphone coverage and were unable to communicate back to their bases using VHF PMR equipment. Someone in charge had clearly heard about amateur radio being used for disaster relief communications and they had asked MCMC for more information about using amateur radio. MCMC's response was to organise the Roadshow, which they also threw open to members of the public. They explained licensing and the examination structure, and asked Johnny to give a presentation to explain the various aspects of amateur radio. He was the ideal person to do this as he had attended the GAREC emergency communications conference at Friedrichshafen last year, so was able to give his presentation the correct 'spin'.

The problem for me was that the Amateur Radio Roadshow was to be held only a day

and a half later and the venue was a flight (or a very long drive) away. Fortunately I had already booked a flight for the WPX contest and in the event it proved possible simply to change the date of the outgoing flight at a reasonable cost.

I spent much of the next day putting together a presentation with a few slides showing a QSL card, a DXCC certificate and so on, and then showed a very brief extract of the 3B7C video on DVD. I suspect the majority of the audience found this of little interest as they seemed to be interested in amateur radio only as a means to an end, and not in radio itself. There was one Chinese Malaysian student in the audience, though, who was heard to exclaim "wah!" (the local equivalent of "wow") when he saw the antennas going up on St Brandon, and later he was asking Johnny some sensible questions about the hobby.

The Roadshow was attended by the Sarawak State Minister of Communications and by the local media and the next morning I found to my surprise that a photo of me with the Minister and Johnny was in the Sarawak English and Chinese language newspapers. While I doubt that many members of the Sarawak Red Crescent will start studying for the RAE, the Roadshow did provide some good publicity for the hobby and perhaps sparked an interest in at least one individual.

9M8Z on the air

My unexpectedly early arrival in Sarawak meant I had several evenings on the air as 9M8Z before the contest. I am lucky to have occasional access to a very well-equipped station in Sarawak, with an Optibeam OB17-4 17-element Yagi up at 72ft. It has 6 elements on 10m, 4 elements on both 15m and 20m, and 3 elements on 40m. This

monster weighs 96kg, but it really gets out well!

The bands were pretty much dead during daylight hours, other than a 59+ each way contact with VK9LA on Lord Howe Island, so I spent the days finishing work on a new edition of the RSGB *IOTA Directory*, which I had been co-editing with Roger, G3KMA. Fortunately I had Internet access, so it was possible to send the files to the RSGB by FTP the same as if I had been at home. The new *IOTA Directory*, by the way, should already be out by the time this *Digest* is published.

During the late evening conditions towards Europe were good and, on one evening in particular, there was a remarkable opening to the UK, with G stations (and PAØs, ONs etc.) at S9+, while those Europeans further east and south were much weaker. Needless to say, this is the opposite of what I have come to expect from this part of the world! It was good to work a number of CDXC members including our President, Neville, G3NUG, who had a very fine signal from his newly-active station; Committee member Gordon, G3USR; and my own QSL Manager, Tim, MØURX.

The most amazing contact, though, was with Dave, 2WØDAA/M, who was a genuine S9+10dB and came straight through the pile-up. I commented that because of the strength of the signal I could hardly believe he was mobile, to which he replied by saying he was using about 50W to a home-made vertical on his car, parked right by the sea on Holy Island (EU-124) – yet another indication of the efficacy of verticals by the water.

Later I went on 40m and once again signals were S9+ from many European stations. Don, G3BJ, sent me a .wav file of my signal in Shropshire, which sounded like a local station! It was good to be able to give several members East Malaysia on 40m for the CDXC LF Challenge.

CDXC LF Challenge

Having access to a decent 40m antenna for once (my normal 40m antenna at 9M6DXX is just an inverted-V dipole at 40ft) gave me the opportunity of putting in a reasonable entry to this year's LF Challenge. I operated from 1 - 16 March as 9M6DXX from Sabah and from 21 - 29 March as 9M8Z from Sarawak. Even though they are part of the same country (and are the same DXCC entity), licensing is carried out separately in Sabah and Sarawak, so I have the two callsigns.

My best DX from 9M6 would have to be PP5EG, as that is the antipodes of Sabah, although the most difficult path is into the Caribbean, which is like working into the central or northern Pacific from the UK. On the other hand, what would be regarded as good DX from Europe was worked easily from here: not least H4ØMS on both 80 and 40m, but also WH2X, V88NBD25 (special event call from Brunei celebrating their 25th anniversary of independence), V6C, JD1BMM (Minami Torishima), V7XX, T88CD, WHØAC, E51COF (South Cooks), XV1X and VK9LA, all worked on 40m.

Other good DX (from this part of the world) included HR2D, LP1H (Argentina) and TG9NX, plus in the Europe / Middle East area MDØCCE, GI4FUM, OHØJFP, A71CT and 5B4AGN.

Gotaways included the ZL7 DXpedition (who were simply too weak to work here, although they apparently had a good signal in the UK), a PJ4 (almost unbelievably S9+ but in the ARRL DX contest, so only working North Americans), and KH9/WA2YUN, who called a KH2 on 40m but then disappeared. I worked him later on 20m, but never heard him again on 40m during March. There were also a few European stations that I called on 40m during the CQ WPX SSB contest who could not hear me, but there were probably only four or five countries that were heard and not worked.

My LF Challenge claimed score was 0 on 160, 1 on 80m (Temotu) and 72 on 40m, with overall 72 different DXCC entities (Temotu was also worked on 40m). All QSOs were on SSB.

CQ WPX SSB contest

The CQ WPX SSB contest is one of my favourite contests, and one I try to do reasonably seriously every year. In 2008 I had operated as 9M8Z and made 3,100 QSOs for a claimed score of over 8.4 million points, one of my best single-operator contest entries ever. Conditions seemed to be much better than I had expected on 15m, and I made well over 1,000 QSOs on that band. My score was enough to win the top place plaque for Oceania, although I won this fully realising that there had not been a serious entry from Hawaii in the same single-operator unassisted category.

This year I set out to try to beat my 2008 score, but propagation was well down on 2008. Interestingly, I made an almost equal number of QSOs on both 40m and 20m as in 2008, but 15m never really opened up properly and I made well under half the number of QSOs on 15m this year. 10m fared even worse, with only 11 QSOs compared with 220 last year.

The result was that my claimed score was only 6.4 million points, 2 million down on 2008. The contest was still fun, but it is going to be an awful lot better when we start getting some solar activity again!

An overdue reunion

In April, Eva and I travelled to Western Australia for a 10-day break. We had visited Perth in 1988 en route to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, but only had a few days in Perth, so it was good to get to know this

beautiful city a little bit better, and to visit the vineyards of the Swan and Margaret Rivers for the first time. This was a purely sightseeing trip with no radio, although I did take the opportunity of meeting up with an old friend from the UK: Steve, VK6VZ (ex-G3ZZD).

I had first met Steve on the first day of a BBC engineering training course at Evesham way back in 1973 and we came to the conclusion that we had not met in person since the end of that course in early 1974, although we have kept in touch from time to time on the air and by occasional e-mail.

Steve emigrated to Australia in 1989 and is well known now especially as a 160m DXer and a regular and reliable participant in the RSGB Commonwealth Contest. Steve and his Aussie wife Deb invited Eva and me to their home in Glen Forrest, in the hills east of Perth, and we had a very pleasant afternoon and evening reminiscing about the past. It is amazing what a small world amateur radio is and we discovered that many friends and acquaintances made over the years were known to both of us.

FK/G4JVG

At the end of May I plan to use my G4JVG callsign for the first time in four years – although not from England. Eva and I will be celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary in Queensland and New Caledonia, and I'm hoping to operate as FK/G4JVG from Noumea. This will not be a DXpedition, but just some holiday-style operating during the evening hours using 100W to a vertical – so I'm not expecting to be a big signal in the UK. I may also operate as G4JVG/VK4, although this is less likely. I'd be grateful for any calls from CDXC members – if you should hear me please do call, whether or not you need New Caledonia.

South Pacific DX Triple-Play

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

In late March 2009 Dennis, F5VHY (G3MXJ), and Nigel, G3TXF, undertook a hectic two-week DX trip covering three South Pacific locations: New Caledonia (FK), Vanuatu (YJ) and Norfolk Island (VK9N). The primary purpose was to operate from Vanuatu (YJ), which is relatively rare. There is virtually no local YJ activity. The last major European focused DXpedition to Vanuatu had been the German YJØADX operation in 2006.

Getting to Vanuatu (formerly the Franco-British condominium of New Hebrides) is not straightforward. The nearest large country is the French territory of New Caledonia (FK). The trip out to Vanuatu was therefore planned to include a two-day stopover in Nouméa, the capital of New Caledonia. Although it entailed a significant detour, a short visit to Norfolk Island (VK9N) was included in the itinerary.

Outward journey

The journey to New Caledonia was to be in one long stretch. Firstly it was London to Sydney, via Bangkok, on BA, followed by a ten-hour wait at Sydney airport before catching an Air Calin flight to Nouméa. After some 40 hours of travel, including 27 hours of flying, we finally arrived in Nouméa late in the evening to be greeted by a major downpour from tropical storm Jasper. Arriving at Nouméa was only the first of several occasions on this trip when we were both to get completely drenched by tropical rain storms.

For our first night's stay in Nouméa we had booked ourselves into a hotel which was about halfway between the airport and the capital, Nouméa. It was not to be until the morning after our arrival (and after catching up on some travel fatigue) that we transferred to the location which was to be

used for the FK/G3MXJ and FK/G3TXF operation.

There was no let-up in the tropical storm as we drove the 25km from the airport to the hotel. By now it was late in the evening. Visibility through the driving tropical rainstorm was terrible. It was hard to see where we were going in the hire car. Even when we got close to the town where the hotel was located we couldn't see enough to find our way. So we just stopped, and called the hotel for instructions on how to find them. Just as we were doing this, a van load of gendarmes came by. They said they'd show us the way. So we followed the gendarmes through the tropical storm for about 7km to our hotel. Merci Messieurs! The same hotel was also used as a billet for visiting gendarmes. So I guess that's why they knew the way so well.

Kuendu: the world's rudest hotel?

Our pre-trip researches had shown that a resort called Kuendu Beach would be good for our short operation. Because of the general orientation of New Caledonia and in particular of the area around Nouméa, there were only a few locations with a clear sea-water northerly take-off towards Europe. The Kuendu Beach was one of them.

However, comments on the web had suggested that the Kuendu Beach was extremely badly run and that the reception was one of the most unfriendly and rudest in the entire global travel industry. This turned out to be no exaggeration. The reception was downright rude. But we were in no state to argue or to go elsewhere, because the location (with bungalows on stilts right over the salt water with a clear take-off to Europe) was what was needed for the two-day operation from FK.

Hitting the airwaves from FK

After checking in at the Kuendu Beach, where we were to occupy two of the otherwise totally empty beach bungalows on stilts, we drove back into town to do some shopping for our two-day operation. Setting up the vertical antennas at the bungalows was a great pleasure because they were situated right over the sea water. Without further ado FK/G3MXJ and FK/G3TXF hit the airwaves at about 0500z on Wednesday some 60 hours after we had left London on the Sunday evening immediately following the CDXC Dinner.

The radio location in FK was nothing short of fantastic. For someone who is a fan of verticals at the water's edge, having the antennas located right over the sea water is nothing short of a dream location! Dennis, FK/G3MXJ, was using a five-band version of the Butternut HF9-V and FK/G3TXF had installed his well-travelled 30m vertical as well as a separate trap vertical for 17m/12m.

After two nights of operations we had 3,200 CW QSOs in the logs from FK. It was time to move on to Vanuatu, the main purpose of the trip. On checking out of the Kuendu Beach we just threw the room keys at the receptionist who had been so rude throughout, and departed for Nouméa airport.

Vanuatu - delayed arrival

The first of our 'airline problems' occurred on the sector between Nouméa (FK) and Port Vila (YJ). This was originally booked as a one-hour flight on Air Vanuatu. Unfortunately Air Vanuatu cancelled the flight because their aircraft was still away being serviced. We therefore had to take an Air Calin flight later the same day, but it meant that we missed our onward flight connection within Vanuatu. We therefore spent an unscheduled night at a hotel in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu. Air Vanuatu did a good job looking after us. They arranged the overnight stay and ground

transport well. However, by now we were already running late with the travel schedule, and more 'airline problems' were soon to arise.

Meanwhile the highlight of our arriving in Port Vila (YJ) was being met at the airport by Rod, YJ8RN, who had kindly collected our new YJØMXJ and YJØTXF licences. Rod is one of just two resident licensed amateurs in Vanuatu. Neither is regularly active. Rod is a colourful character. He's an Australian who has lived in Vanuatu for some 30 years. He runs a one-man-band service agency which undertakes everything from fixing tractors to installing VHF radios, to fixing the electrics on ships. We are most grateful to Rod, YJ8RN, for his help in getting us the two YJ licences.

Getting to Aore Island

The location of our YJ operation was to be a small resort on Aore Island. This was chosen because (a) it had a salt water take-off to the north and (b) it had been used by other visiting amateurs in the past. However, in order to get to Aore Island we had to fly from Port Vila up to Luganville on Espiritu Santo island. The original plan had been to arrive from Nouméa mid-morning and to connect directly with a flight to Luganville later the same day. This didn't happen because of the delayed Nouméa to Port Vila flight. Air Vanuatu rebooked us on a flight to Luganville on the Saturday morning, one day later than planned.

We had been told by Rod, YJ8RN, that Air Vanuatu fly a number of small Chinese-made aircraft on their internal, inter-island network. It was thus that we got on board a Chinese-made Harbin Y12 twin-prop plane to take us on the flight to Luganville. Unfortunately the hold in the aircraft was too small to take the ski-bag with the antennas. But we were assured that the ski-bag would follow on another flight later in the day.

The transfer from Luganville airport to the island resort was straightforward. We were met at the airport and taken on a short van ride through Luganville (the second town in Vanuatu) to a point on the coast. We were left to wait there, and some 30 minutes later a small boat came to take us for the short ride across to Aore Island. Aore is located 3km from the main island, Espiritu Santo. We had arrived at our YJ destination, but still without the all-important ski-bag with the antennas.

As promised by Air Vanuatu, the ski-bag with the antennas did arrive on a later flight and we received them at the resort just as it was getting dark on Saturday evening. We therefore set about installing the antennas on the beach in the dark with plenty of bugs to keep us company. Working on an unknown tropical beach with surrounding undergrowth in the pitch dark is not to be recommended, but if YJØMXJ and YJØTXF were to be on the air that night, there was no choice but to go out into the dark and get on with the antennas, bugs or no bugs!

YJØMXJ – YJØTXF QRV

Three verticals were again used at the YJ Aore Island location. We each had a separate bungalow. They were over 200ft apart and there were no problems of inter-station QRM (as indeed had also been the case at FK where the two bungalows used were some 300ft apart).

The Aore Island Resort had its own generator, and despite dire warnings that the power would be turned off daily for a change-over of the generators, we only lost power once during our stay.

Four nights solid were spent working as much as we could in Europe, with the ears ever open for UK stations. Unfortunately the path to the UK was much more Polar than it was for the rest of Europe. Nevertheless we ended up making 174

QSOs with UK stations: 40m: 9, 30m: 32, 20m: 87 and 17m: 46.

Stand-off on the tarmac

Having completed packing up the two stations early in the morning after operating most of the final night in YJ, we set off on the leg of the journey that was due to take us from Aore Island via Port Vila to Brisbane. At Luganville airport we were again charged excess baggage (we were getting used to this by now!), this time for the short flight on the small Chinese twin-prop back to Port Vila. As we had experienced a delay with the all-important ski-bag on the flight up from Port Vila, we sought assurance that the ski-bag would indeed be travelling with us back to Port Vila for the connecting flight to Brisbane. Yes, they said. It would.

It was therefore with interest that we sat in the departure lounge at the tiny Luganville airport and watched as a trolley load of luggage was wheeled out across the tarmac to the waiting aircraft. Good news. Our ski-bag was right on top of the pile of luggage to be loaded. This looks good, we thought.

There are several luggage compartments on the Harbin Y12 aircraft. Our four big suitcases and other stuff were put into one compartment, and then the trolley (with the ski-bag still on it) was wheeled round to another compartment. More baggage went on board, but not our ski-bag. By now our ski-bag was the only item left lying on the trolley. Even worse the ski-bag was being wheeled away from the aircraft back to the terminal as the ten passengers were being invited to board the plane.

All the passengers (with the exception of G3TXF!) then boarded the plane. The engines were starting up. The ski-bag had still not been loaded. This was crunch time. Without that ski-bag going on board the plans for the remainder of the trip would be scuppered, and the chances were that we'd never see the antennas again.

By now it was bucketing down with another tropical storm. The ground staff were refusing to load the ski-bag. A drenched G3TXF was refusing to board the plane. Both engines were running up to speed. It was stalemate. Something had to give. Finally one of the baggage handlers brought the ski-bag to the passenger door of the plane and pushed the ski-bag in right over the heads of the people sitting in the rear row of the aircraft. The ski-bag was jammed in between the two supposed 'emergency exits' on either side of the plane. Fortunately there was no emergency and the exits were not needed. The ski-bag with the precious antennas thus made it back with us to Port Vila after its two flights on Air Vanuatu's tiny Chinese Harbin twin-prop planes.

Travelling with a 6ft ski-bag full of antennas is never usually a problem on larger planes, but only on tiddly ones, such as the Air Vanuatu inter-island flights!

Day off in Brisbane

Our 36-hour transit in Brisbane gave us a perfect opportunity to make the two-hour drive out to Toowoomba to visit CDXC member and well-known DXer John, VK4OQ (G3HCT). John was a leading light in UK DXing and the RSGB over many years before QSYing to retire in VK4 about five years ago. Dennis, G3MXJ, and John, VK4OQ, were able to catch up on a lot of news during the enjoyable visit, while Nigel, G3TXF, made some CW QSOs from John's station as VK4/G3TXF! John, VK4OQ, has a Stepp-IR vertical installed at an impressive hill-top location.

Norfolk Island

The final port of call on the South Pacific DX Triple Play trip was Norfolk Island. We flew to Norfolk Island from Brisbane. The choice of accommodation was a no-brainer. We booked the same Pacific Palms location as had been used by the German VK9DNX operation a couple of years ago. Unlike the

major VK9DNX operation, ours was only to be a short one-night operation. Upon arrival in Norfolk we were met by Wayne, the owner of the accommodation, who gave us a quick tour of the tiny island. It's a very pretty place, especially with the numerous Norfolk pines all around the island!

We asked if Wayne could drive us past Jim Smith/VK9NS's QTH, which he duly did. The antennas (beam, 40m 4-square etc.) were still standing at the impressive hilltop VK9NS QTH. We are only sorry that our visit to Norfolk was too late to drop in on Jim himself, who had become an SK just some weeks earlier.

Once at the Pacific Palms accommodation we set up two vertical antennas in the spacious grounds with excellent views of the Pacific towards the north. Our VK9N operation was frenetic. It lasted just over ten hours and VK9N/G3MXJ and VK9N/G3TXF finished up with 2,300 QSOs in the log. We had no sleep at all that night.

We were due to be back at the airport by about 6.30am for our 8am flight to Sydney. We therefore stopped operating some time before dawn. We dismantled the antennas in the dark, packed up the gear and arrived back at Norfolk Island airport at 6.30am expecting to catch our plane to Sydney. There was no-one to be seen at the airport when we arrived. This looked odd. There was also no waiting aircraft on the tarmac. This looked even odder. The one person that we eventually did find at the airport told us that the Sydney flight had been delayed because the expected incoming flight had not arrived the evening before. Apparently all the other passengers on the delayed flight had been informed about it. We hadn't. Otherwise we would not have had to dismantle the antennas in the dark!

After several supposed 'departure times' came and went, our flight from Norfolk to Sydney finally left exactly 12 hours late. By the time we arrived in Sydney our

connecting BA flight to London had long departed. Air Norfolk put us up for the night at a Sydney airport hotel.

The following day at Sydney airport BA started out by being particularly bloody minded, insisting that we purchase new full-fare tickets because we had missed the connection. However, after the kind intervention of Qantas staff (who had handled the delayed Air Norfolk flight), the BA station manager finally, begrudgingly, relented and let us travel one day late on our 'non-refundable, non-transferable' BA tickets. Bravo Qantas! A big raspberry for BA.

Triple Play round-up

After nine scheduled flights, including one cancelled flight, one hugely delayed flight, 22 take-offs/landings and a stand-off on the tarmac at Luganville airport, we arrived back at Heathrow just one day late. We had visited three very different South Pacific DX locations (New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Norfolk Island) from where we had made just over 15,000 CW QSOs.

QSO Summary table (all CW)

Callsign	80m	40m	30m	20m	17m	15m	12m	10m	Total
FK/G3MXJ	68	636	-	770	-	38	-	-	1,512
FK/G3TXF	-	-	912	-	788	-	-	-	1,700
YJØMXJ	49	775	-	2,089	-	1,080	-	508	4,501
YJØTXF	-	-	1,830	-	2,400	-	770	-	5,000
VK9N/G3MXJ	163	469	-	530	-	2	-	-	1,164
VK9N/G3TXF	-	-	1,150	-	-	-	-	-	1,150
Totals	280	1,880	3,892	3,389	3,188	1,120	770	508	15,027

8Q7CQ

I am off to the Maldives and Kuredu island, AS-013, from 1 - 15 June 2009. I will be QRV on HF SSB and also 6m. The locator for Kuredu is MJ65RM. My station will be an FT-897 with 100W, a beam for 6m and dipoles and maybe a vertical for HF. My QSL manager is once again Owen Cross, G4DFI, direct or via the Bureau. More info at www.g0vjg.piczo.com.

This operation will be on the small side as this holiday is my honeymoon. Many thanks to my wife-to-be, Maxine, for putting up with me and the black box. We met on CB in 1983. I don't like to rush things! I hope to work lots of CDXC members.

Nobby Styles GØVJG, 8Q7CQ

A DXpedition to Mayotte

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

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Over each of the past few years Jim, G3RTE, and I have made at least one CW only DXpedition together - and when we left Guyana after the 8R1PW operation we planned that 2009 would be no exception. It was a fairly quick decision that our next destination would be the French island of Mayotte at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel, about midway between Madagascar and Mozambique.

The early seafaring Arabs called these islands *Djazair al Qamar* (Islands of the Moon), which has been corrupted over the centuries into Les Comores in French and The Comoros in English. Until the 18th century the islands were ruled by a series of often warring tribal leaders, but in 1782 Sultan Abdallah took control and sought aid and protection from the British, but little stability resulted until the mid-19th century when, in 1843, the group was ceded to France and the islands became a haven for French planters and slaveholders who established sugar cane estates. Mayotte was the only island in the archipelago that voted in referenda in 1974 and 1976 to retain its link with France and forgo independence. The Comoros continue to claim the island, and a draft 1976 United Nations Security Council resolution would have recognised Comororian sovereignty over Mayotte, but France vetoed it. Since 1995 the subject of Mayotte has not been discussed by the General Assembly.

Geologically the archipelago is of volcanic origin and Mayotte is the oldest of the group, at around 15 million years. The only one with an encircling coral reef, Mayotte is now characterised by relatively low, rounded hills, the highest of which is Mount Benara, reaching a modest 660m.

As with most tropical places, Mayotte experiences only two seasons. The hot, wet

and extremely humid period falls between November and April and the rest of the year may be described as 'cool'. The average year-round coastal temperature is 25° and it rarely varies by more than 4°C.

Mayotte itself actually consists of a main island, Grande-Terre (or Mahoré), of around 356 square kms and a smaller island, Petite-Terre (or Pamanzi) of around 18 square kms, and several minor islets around these two.

Unlike Réunion, which is an Overseas Department, or French Polynesia, which is Overseas Territory, Mayotte is an Overseas Collectivity and enjoys the same status as a part of metropolitan France as St Pierre et Miquelon off the Newfoundland coast. An election on becoming an Overseas Department of France is scheduled for later in 2009. The subtle differences between the three definitions are beyond me, but the important thing from the amateur radio point of view is that Mayotte falls within the definition of CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, so licensing is not an issue provided that operators hold Full Licences. We discussed and rejected the possibility of obtaining one of those strange, special French calls, as they give no indication of the correct DXCC entity and therefore cause much confusion.

There have been several recent DXpeditions to Mayotte, including two by Nigel, G3TXF, in 2000 and 2006 (in conjunction with Roger, G3SXW, in 2000), one by John, G4IRN, in 2003 and two in 2008 by Alan, F6BFH, and Georg, DK7LX, as TX7LX, all of which operated a fair amount of CW, so Mayotte is not very high on the various Most Wanted lists. Of course it was extremely helpful to have the local knowledge of these other operators to draw upon and we had very little difficulty in

deciding upon where to stay: the Hotel Trevani on the north coast of Grande-Terre. We even had recommendations as to which were the best rooms to take!

Getting there was a little more difficult. The options were to fly via Paris to Réunion with Air France and then to Mayotte with Air Austral, which really is the scenic (and very expensive) route. I was given to understand that there was a connection from the Seychelles, but couldn't find any information, and finally tracked down reasonably priced flights from London via Nairobi with Kenya Airways.

It was in early August 2008 that Jim, G3RTE, dropped his bombshell and informed me that he would be unable to join me on the trip for personal reasons. Naturally, after so many successful DX-peditions together, I was extremely disappointed, but at the same time grateful that he had given me plenty of notice. Consequently I set about trying to find a companion from amongst the hard core of the UK's travelling CW operators and who was preferably also an FOC member. After several false starts and almost on the point of giving up, I bumped into Richard, G3RWL, at the RSGB HF Convention, who expressed great interest and was able to confirm within a few days that he would be able to join me. The original plan was for my non-amateur friend, Bill Vincent, who had been with Jim and me to Wasini Island (5Z4WI) and to Montserrat (VP2MTE), to travel with us. Quite apart from being extremely good company, Bill would have a virtually empty suitcase and speaks better than passable French. With Richard's decision to join us, I booked the flights with Kenya Airways for the three of us for dates leaving the UK on 25th February and returning on 6th March 2009 and confirmed them with the Hotel Trevani by e-mail, clearly stating that we wanted rooms 101 and 107 facing directly on to the beach. Amazingly, they did not require a deposit!

Unfortunately early in 2008 Bill had developed a medical problem and although this was responding to treatment, his specialist advised him not to make any long-haul travel arrangements. Consequently in late November he was forced to withdraw and to forfeit his deposit for the flights. Even with the 2 x 23 kg per person baggage allowance of Kenya Airways, this meant that Richard and I would need to be very careful with what equipment we took.

The subject of antennas promoted much debate. The hotel is located right on the beach and has a wonderful take off to the north over the sea for almost 180°. Looking at the great circle map this gave good coverage from the southern USA through Europe and Asia to Japan. G3SXW, G3TXF, G4IRN and DK7LX had all operated from the Hotel Trevani and used verticals mounted on the beach near the high-tide line, with great success. I must confess to being somewhat prejudiced against verticals, not because they don't work as well as horizontal wires, but primarily because they tend to be 'over gauge' as far as aircraft hold baggage is concerned - and I've had two previous operations severely restricted as a result of the airline losing the ski bag containing verticals on the outgoing flight. After much discussion, Jim, G3RTE eventually persuaded Richard to borrow two 10m-long telescopic fishing poles. Richard took his usual quarter-size, half-size and a full-size G5RVs and lots of coax. I took my tried and tested doublet with a 30m top, which fits very nicely into a suitcase.

In early December I issued a short press release officially announcing our DX-pedition to the various DX bulletins under the single callsign of FH/G3SWH. The announcement contained the fateful words 'there may be some 160m CW activity'. Mayotte is quite rare on the low bands and we were inundated with requests for skeds from all over the world. Although we tried to explain that any such activity would be entirely subject to QRN, antenna space and

local site conditions, the 160m gang was quite insistent and Richard was quite keen to satisfy as many of them as possible. I'm afraid that, having previously tried to operate on the low bands from that part of the world as 5H1/G3SWH and 5Z4WI, I remained sceptical.

The official language is French, but a version of Swahili is widely spoken, together with numerous local dialects. English is quite rare and both Richard and I spent some time before travelling polishing up our very rusty French.

Richard and I met at Heathrow's Terminal 4 and literally bumped into Ted, 5Z4NU, at the check-in desk. Ted is an old friend from the 5Z4LI and 5Z4WI operations and had been in the UK for medical reasons. The overnight, outgoing flight was uneventful and after a short stop over in Nairobi, we boarded the flight to Mayotte, arriving there in the late morning, local time. The temperature was 31°C, quite a shock after a cold February day in London! The baggage all arrived, but we were given a bit of a hard time by the local customs officers, who seemed to think that we were carrying some sort of goods for sale. My limited French wasn't up to the task, but they eventually let us go without demanding any duty or confiscating anything. The airport is actually on Petite-Terre and it is necessary to take the ferry across to Mamoudzou on Grande-Terre, which runs at half-hourly intervals. I was expecting to be met by a driver from the hotel, but nobody was there, so we grabbed a taxi to the *Gare Maritime* at Dzaoudzi and boarded the ferry, taking another taxi for the 11km journey to the hotel. Whilst we got ripped off by the two taxi drivers, nobody asked us for a fare for the ferry.

Despite the clear request in my booking e-mail, the hotel had put us in adjacent rooms, 106 and 107. Fortunately, the manager spoke reasonable English and, together with my limited French, we explained that we wanted to be as far away from each other as

possible. He couldn't do anything immediately, but the next day Richard moved about 100m away to room 102. The rooms were very comfortable, with en-suite facilities and air conditioning, which is most important in that climate.

After a quick lunch we set about viewing the antenna possibilities. There is a screen of palm trees overhanging the beach between the high-tide line and the beachfront rooms, but they are very close together. There is a track owned by the hotel immediately behind the beachfront rooms and another row of rooms behind that. The land rises steeply behind this second row of rooms and is populated by some much taller palm and baobab trees. Unfortunately this hill effectively blocks all signals to the south of the site. My catapulting skills were severely tried attempting to get lines over these trees, but eventually I managed to get my doublet running E-W between two of the tallest at a height of around 15m to the centre. In anticipation of his move the next day, Richard used one of the fishing rods and rigged his half-sized G5RV. We quickly set up the stations and Richard made the first QSO with ZS5LB on 30m at 1603 UTC on 26th February. I started off on 40m, but after calling CQ for quite a while I had only managed to work VU2TS. Despite both of us using Dunestar filters we suffered a high degree of mutual interference, because the antennas were so close together, so I left Richard to a nice run on 30m, unpacked and had a much needed early night.

I was up early the next morning and had a nice run of mainly Far East stations on 20m. After breakfast we moved Richard to his new room and, once again using my fabled catapulting skills, rigged his full-sized G5RV parallel to the beach and between two convenient trees, almost end to end with my doublet. We also rigged his quarter-sized G5RV at a different angle. Both antennas were at about 15m to the centre. It was then that we were able to settle down and to run the pile-ups, which were quite ferocious at times and much more intense

than Richard had previously experienced on any of his previous DX operations. We worked many old friends who greeted us by name: Richard was often called Phil, I was often called Dick and we were both often called Roger (whoever he might be). Thankfully the move had obviated the mutual interference problems, although we both continued to use the Dunestar filters. The QSO total racked up steadily and we saw little of each other except at meal times, when we discussed performance and strategy whilst watching the nightly display of lightning flashes.

I was aware from my correspondence with the hotel that telecommunications were not very good, but we had been hoping for good Internet access from the hotel. Whilst the manager was happy for us to use his office computer (which had a French keyboard, of course), it was via a very slow and extremely unreliable dial-up connection. Of the three cell phones we had between us, only one connected to a local network but we were at least able to send and receive text messages.

Given the interest in low-band activity, we tried 80m on the evening of 27th February and called CQ laboriously with only one QSO with ZS1JX, who was obviously having trouble hearing us. The QRN level was very high, not unexpectedly given the lightning, and we made no other QSOs that evening. Richard was anxious to try 160m and, as there was no room to erect a separate antenna for that band, proposed laying out two 40m radials along the high-tide line and to strap together the feeder on the full-sized G5RV. We kept in touch with Bernie, W3UR, of 'Daily DX' fame by text message and arranged a sked for 2nd March. Bernie was requested to publish this information so as to maximise the opportunities for QSOs with the USA and Europe, depending upon the success of which we could arrange further skeds for Far East and Pacific stations. Richard did manage a QSO with W3UR, but only made four other 160m QSOs that evening. It being

2 am, Richard had big trouble keeping his eyes open. We're both getting too old for these late-night sessions!

Previously that same evening Richard had once again tried 80m and managed to make 35 QSOs with European stations in an hour under heavy QRN. Surprisingly, he said that the QRN was less on 160m than on 80m. The next day we agreed that we had tried and could consider our efforts an honourable failure, deciding that our time would be better used giving out QSOs on the higher bands than fighting the QRN - and that there would be no more 80m or 160m operation. With the benefit of hindsight, the timing of our DXpedition could have been better as far as the low bands were concerned, as it fell during the rainy season. When I got home, Georg, DK7LX told me that, at the time of his June 2008 operation, the QRN was quite manageable.

Richard also discovered an interesting point about receiving through heavy QRN. Those people who sent their CW too fast just got chopped up by the QRN. It seemed to be best when the CW speed is about the same as the shot-rate of the static crashes. Those who slowed down (to about 17-18 WPM) got through, but they had to be pretty strong anyway just to beat the noise level. He could hear lots of stations running fast but they didn't beat the noise.

On the afternoon of 3rd March, we were visited by Alain, FH1LE, who is an English teacher in one of the local schools and his English is excellent. Alain and I had been in contact via e-mail prior to leaving the UK and had sorted out some very important details for us when I couldn't get replies from the hotel direct due to the poor Internet access. The weather that afternoon was appalling, with extremely heavy rain and Alain got soaked. I had hoped that he would have been able to join us for a meal, but we did manage a beer or two whilst chatting and counting the time between the lightning flashes and the claps of thunder.

Richard had announced that he wanted to operate some RTTY or PSK31 once the pile-ups had died down, but they never did.

He did try RTTY on both 20 and 15m, but could not generate very much interest, making only 8 QSOs in total.

The table below shows the full QSO breakdown by band and mode

Band	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	TOTAL
CW	5	36	350	1,099	2,102	3,262	2,505	491	38	10,103
RTTY	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	0	8
Total	5	36	350	1,099	2,109	3,262	2,506	491	38	10,111

We were quite delighted that 12m and to a lesser extent 10m opened to Europe during our operation. The trick seemed to be to announce the intention to QSY from a different band once the pile-up had been reduced, rather than just to go on and call CQ on what appeared to be an otherwise dead band.

As always, stations making duplicate QSOs were a problem. In the light of previous conversations with G3SXW, G3RTE and others, Richard and I resolved to log all duplicate QSOs on this trip. I started off doing exactly that, but the numbers were just too high to be the result of missed acknowledgements, so that after the second day I refused to work or log any duplicate QSOs. I firmly believe that the vast majority of such QSOs are as a result of bad operating and should be treated as such. Richard thought it was quicker just to work them rather than argue and ended up with 107 dupes compared to my 35. Dupe policy is obviously a matter of personal preference.

Earlier in the year I challenged a well-known G3 operator as to why he was attempting to make a second 160m CW QSO with ZD8UW, only to be told that he was 'testing the ZD8's receiving set up'. Words failed me, I'm afraid.

All too soon it was time for us to go QRT. By one of those strange coincidences, Richard made the last QSO with Georg, DK7LX, who had operated from the Hotel Trevani as TK7LX in 2008. Georg later told

me that we'd given him four new band slots. The timings of the flights back meant that there would be no activity on the morning of 5th March, as originally planned. We needed to be up at dawn to take down the antennas and pack up before the taxi back to the airport left at 9.15 am. Once again we got ripped off by the taxi drivers, but again somehow managed not to pay for the ferry across to Petite-Terre. The girl at the airport check-in desk wanted to charge us excess baggage, but when we explained that we were travelling on to London she relented. The flight actually landed at Moroni in the Comoros to refuel, and I managed a very sneaky extra DXFC, much to the amusement of the cabin attendant. There was a six-hour wait between flights in Nairobi, which is not the most comfortable of airports, although the flights themselves were uneventful. The temperature in London when we arrived was -1° C and I had to scrape the frost off the windscreen of the car before I could drive home. Quite a shock to the system, believe me! Richard took the London underground from Heathrow to his local station, where Sylvia collected him.

Richard has asked me to add his personal apologies for not sending the callsign often enough early in the trip. In the heat of a pile-up it's easy to forget this and experienced DX operators discipline themselves to do it. New DXpedition operators might want to take note of this.

It was extremely disappointing to download the Cluster spots from DX Summit and to find that we had been the subject of pirate activity, particularly on 80m SSB after we had closed down. I just hope that the pirate didn't disappoint too many people.

The logs have been uploaded to - and are fully searchable - on my website at www.g3swh.org.uk/mayotte.html and Richard, G4ZFE, has kindly modified his Searchlog program to show the operator's callsign against each QSO. Special colour photo QSLs have been printed and are available direct with SAE and adequate return postage (recommended). Bureau cards can be requested from the website and

will be processed as quickly as possible. Cards are also available via the traditional bureau route. Logs will be uploaded to LoTW after I have weeded out as many of the inevitable busted calls as practicable, probably in July or August 2009.

Our particular thanks go to our XYLs, Sylvia and Jan for allowing us to go; to Jim, G3RTE, for the loan of equipment and to all the staff at the Hotel Trevani www.hoteltrevanimayotte.com/ for making this DXpedition possible, as well as to all of our sponsors (RSGB, CDXC, GDXF and Clipperton DXC) for their support and for making this DXpedition possible.

J79WR – A Celebration in the Commonwealth of Dominica

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After spending our last two wedding anniversaries in Cape Town, and operating the RSGB Commonwealth Contest plus a little low-band DX from the Northern Cape, 2009 had to be different. It was, after all, our golden wedding anniversary.

We chose Dominica, J7, a small island with large mountainous areas covered in rich unspoiled tropical vegetation. The capital, Roseau (in the SW), and Portsmouth (in the NW) are the only towns. The rest are small villages. The total population is around 60,000. Choosing the radio location was important. Having studied several via the Internet I chose Sea Cliff Cottages in the far north – isolated, but it had the benefit of ham-friendly owners and it was only 8 miles from the main airport. The location at Calibishie is about one mile outside the village, located on a high ridge with deep ravines on either side. The site has been used in the past by several US multi-op

groups, most notably George Wagner, K5KG. Recent developments have now restricted using large areas previously available for antennas.

The site, high above the ocean, slopes down from the main road to the cliff top, where access to the beach is a steep footpath not for the faint hearted, but provides an excellent take-off to NA and Europe. The accommodation was four self-catering cottages and we were advised that #2 had most garden space for antennas. Our cottage, to be fair was basic, and the oldest on site, not reflecting the overall high standard in the other cottages. We were assured it was in line for a full upgrade this year. The air conditioning was a variable speed fan in each bedroom. Two self-service local shops offer essential food and drinks, and the local baker arrived on site daily at 0645. Most importantly there is a single-pump petrol station, as fuel can be

scarce. A small 4-wheel drive car costs around US\$ 30 per day.

All things radio from end to end

The Royal Mail get us off to a great start; having established the licence criteria (a copy of my UK Licence and an application form from the Internet), we mailed off our US\$ 30 to the Commonwealth of Dominica by registered mail, and the package ended up in the Dominican Republic. Consulting George James in the NRTC Office he suggested a duplicate, as it could be months before the original arrives. George is also licenced, but not active - but a great guy to have around. The J7 licence you can collect at your port of entry, tell them your flight details and it will be there at airport customs.

I decided not to haul heavy baggage, so the spider poles and coax were shipped via TNT to DOM. Collected on Wednesday they should have reached DOM by the following Monday, awaiting our arrival on the Wednesday. TNT lost the boxes in Leeds - a great start. They then travelled via Heathrow to Antigua and by DHL, ending up at Dominica's second airport 10 days later. Spotted by J73LC in customs, he notified me on Saturday afternoon (Day 4), too late to collect, but advised me to go in person as soon as possible. On Monday (Day 6) Up at 0500 for the 2-hour drive to Roseau, we hired a pick-up and driver. On arrival at the DHL offices they directed us back to the airport, where customs demanded up-front payment to release the parcels. Unable to obtain the correct paperwork (the office had closed early due to a family funeral) and rather than return empty handed, I decided to bite the bullet. Once paid and a receipt in hand we quickly loaded the boxes. I also wanted to visit a supermarket and stock up with essentials. Remembering George James had sent me a text to collect my surplus US\$ from the NRTC Office, it was a great chance to meet, and thank him his efforts. My driver dropped me off and drove around the block

while I raced upstairs to meet George. However, we had to get home before dark as the roads are full of dustbin-lid-sized potholes and maximum speeds are around 15 mph. The 32 miles back home seemed to take a lifetime over the narrow winding mountainous roads.

Let us go back to Day 1, our arrival, and having been told of the Wi-fi link my first reaction was to check for news of the missing parcels.

I should have been suspicious when my filtered mains multi-way lit up earthed. Being keen to find my missing antennas I just plugged in the laptop. It booted OK, then went dead as a dodo. A quick check revealed nothing out of the PSU. The site owner, who was busy trying to fix a plug for the bathroom washbasin, overheard my groans and offered an old laptop used as a spare on site. Once into the Internet and e-mails read I dropped one into my office to let them know the situation. No news of the parcels.

In the garage a full-sized door made a suitable operating desk using a pair of patio tables, a bed sheet from the laundry, and things started to look up. A visit to the EI5DI website for SDC, then the Microham router, and a few more. The system was soon up and running. I could now concentrate on antennas when they arrived. Oh dear: we have no dits, just dahs - the cable was open circuit on the dit-core 5" up from the point it left the paddle body. What else can go wrong? Wait and see.

I did have a Plan B for an antenna. I hand-carried an OCD (off-centre-dipole) based on 80m. Roughly 90ft one side and 40ft the other and fed with 300 Ohm ribbon and a balun plus about 30ft of coax. I also had a 50m reel of 1.5mm Kevlar rope and with assistance raised the ends up 30ft. On key down I had severe RFI problems even running just 10W. We had reached Day 3 and not a lot further towards sending RF out to the wide world. Being jet-lagged I called

it a day, hoping for a better tomorrow. Saturday (Day 4) confirmed the parcel arrival, but more delays kicking heels until Monday. Lots of time was wasted trying to resolve the RFI problems and unless the keyer worked we had no station. I could, if required, use the K2 internal key and go back to pen and paper logging. Ah, high technology!

At last a QSO

Early on Day 7 we managed to relocate the OCD and get the K2 up to near full power without RFI. That evening (2330z) a listen on 40m found Bob, MDØCCE, calling CQ. I ignored two calls for supper and we had a quick exchange of reports. Overnight we experienced our first (of many) squally showers with wind blowing off the sea, up the canyon and making very turbulent air leaving the OCD draped around several high bushes, and impossible to recover except with the aid of cutters.

With the Commonwealth Contest only 3 days away, the 40m Vertical went up. The elevated feed point and two radials supported it. A 12m Spiderpole with a 34ft wire taped to the outside, and the feed point 5ft above ground. A fan dipole for 10-15-20 was built and an 80m inverted L using a second 12m Spiderpole, so by Friday evening (Day 9) we were ready for the 0600 local time start. A final check and I decided to use SDC with no CW from the computer and no CAT. The microHAM keyer was to be used in stand-alone mode.

More problems

With the alarm set for 0500 local time I had vague recollections of hearing the wind during the night. A quick shower, breakfast, and ready. 40m got off to a fine start with the vertical, but with just 70W clearly I was down the pecking order. Checking 80m I had problems with a high VSWR. Something had changed. It was just breaking first light and peering out of the window confirmed my worst fears. The fan

dipole and 80m-L were in tatters, palm branches adorning the wires like Christmas tree toys. Considerable time was spent recovering the wires and an 80m dipole was built which proved largely ineffective, although a few UK and Canadians were worked. The 15m and 20m dipoles worked well as slopers. Leaning them backwards facing towards Europe helped, but they were no answer to a beam. The 40m vertical was a revelation. Bob, 5B4AGN, was way over S9 some two hours before sunset.

Having struggled until 0300z I finally decided to take a break until local sunrise. On my return I found several strong UK stations on 40m, but very little from VK/ZL short path. As the contest ended at 1000z, UK stations were still very strong.

160m Plans

The last week only the 40m antenna and a top-loaded 160m vertical would be available. Working split shifts 2200-0100z and 0400-0700z, then 1000-1200z left little time for 40m. Local time was GMT -4. Going to sleep at 3am and waking at 6am took its toll.

The 160m vertical was assembled the day following the Commonwealth Contest and arrangements made to lift the antenna late afternoon. In my haste to get the job finished I slipped on a steep grassy bank and ended up sitting on the inside of my right ankle and sliding 25ft down the bank into the jungle. It would have been difficult to climb back up without the mishap, but with a damaged ankle almost impossible. Having managed to stand up, I lashed a guy rope, which came down with me, to a tree and hoped as I pulled myself out it would hold. The other end was at the 30ft level on the antenna. It had a good back rope tied to two water tanks and it held OK. By now it was almost dark and the chance of finishing the antenna had gone. With a swollen foot pleading to be removed from its shoe I called it a day, but not before connecting up the coax. Sadly the elevated radials would

have to wait. A 60-minute soak in iced water and confirmation that nothing appeared broken I then raided the medical box and found a suitable Ibuprofen-based spray. Not able to resist having a listen on 160m I put the rig on around 0000z, the band was quiet. At 0015z IK4GME popped up with a loud signal, tongue in cheek and with just 70W I went for broke and he came back 579; G3FPQ was calling CQ, so a quick exchange, and next in line Bob, MDØCCE. By 0038z my new antenna seemed fine despite a 4:1 SWR.

For several evenings I sat in the operating chair, foot soaking in a roasting tin topped up with iced water from the fridge and using a soup ladle managed steady and regular soothing of my now jet-black bruised toes. It did, however, keep me on the air.

Conditions on 160m went downhill after the first evening and regular late-evening rain showers increased the QRN. A bonus was that I secured the loan of a very old Heathkit amplifier, allowing me to run around 500W. I finished up with over 700 QSOs on 160m and only 150 of these were with the USA. 41 UK stations got into the log, including the usual CDXC/GMDX high rollers. I also tried something new: a self-spot on the DX Summit resulted in several speculative calls from Europe. The highlight after three attempts: completing a sked with Greg ZL3IX, giving Neil, GØJHC, a deserved new one, plus several hastily arranged skeds. I tried to update the audience daily via the CDXC Reflector and received several off-reflector comments re the mishap that could not possibly be repeated here. Thanks to all who encouraged me when it was so easy to have just quit. The bug bites were a nightmare and during BERU over 100 committed suicide on the small angle-poise lamp. I later found a mosquito net coiled up in the shack ceiling space. This was quickly deployed and draped over the operating table.

For the technically minded the 160m antenna consisted of a 51ft wire taped to an 18m Spiderpole with 3-28ft top loading

wires at 45° connected at the bottom of the third section down the pole. Anything above this is too thin. The feed point was about 2ft up the pole and by using four guys at the 20ft level (20ft out) the radials can go up and join each guy rope half way up it to provide an anchor for the elevated radial. The halfway point can then be tied back to the mast to provide a secure anchor when the radials are pulled out. This forms the classic 'gull-wing pair of elevated radials'. An interesting point: the antenna before raising the radials was on 1.725 Mhz and raising a pair brought the resonant point up to 1.880 Mhz. A two-turn coil wound round the fibreglass mast at the bottom brought it to 1.831 Mhz. A simple line choke removed any traces of RF on the feed line running 500W.

The Golden Wedding Anniversary

This was on the 21st March, six days after my mishap. We were going to have a decent meal out to say thanks to the lady who has not only shared 50 years, but never once questioned my second love, amateur radio. We had planned to spend the final 10 days playing tourist, but things did not work out for obvious reasons.

Having found an ideal place for dinner, it was over on the other side of the island and our 'Rent-a-wreck' boiled on the trip over. We did make it to the 'Heavens Best Restaurant' and, thanks to the owner, got the coolant system sorted well enough for the trip back home. The return in the dark over narrow mountain hairpin roads proved something of a white-knuckle ride with many on cars and taxis not having offside lights and locals walking in the middle of narrow road miles from home.

Finale

Overall a different trip full of surprises with more downs than ups, but one memory will be that despite the Third World living conditions the locals have smiles wider than any barn door. The innocent school children

seen everyday hand in hand chattering as they skipped down the road to and from school - something I fear gone forever back home in the UK. All, of course, dressed in immaculate white shirts and blouses - no jeans and sneakers.

On arrival back home I faxed a copy of the licence to the DXCC desk and put the logs

on LOTW. Conventional full-colour QSL cards are in hand, ordered from UX5UO.

Gwen and Jim at Sea Cliff are gracious hosts and nothing is impossible for them. For more details have a look at www.dominica-cottages.com. For amateur Radio go to www.j7hams.com. Also, www.heavensbestguesthouse.com has a lot of information on Dominica.

A Walk on the West Side

Gordon, G3USR, reports on the 2009 Visalia Hamvention

Each year the Northern California DX Club (NCDXC) and the Southern California DX Club (SCDXC) take it in turns to host this well-known international convention. The location is Visalia, a relatively small town approximately halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, just east of Highway 99, a major arterial road which runs North to South through the Californian San Joaquin valley. Visalia is attended by many of the best-known names in worldwide HF DXing and boasts one of the biggest annual amateur radio raffles in the world. This year there were over \$ 35,000 worth of prizes, including a top of the range Icom IC-7700 HF / 50 MHz transceiver.

Where it's at

The Visalia venue is a Holiday Inn which is taken over for a whole weekend almost exclusively by radio amateurs. The official programme begins on the Friday afternoon with traders exhibits followed by evening activities. These begin with an attitude adjustment hour at 1700. The evening continues either with your own outside social and meal activity from around 1900 - or you can attend an organised Top Band Dinner, Contest Dinner or IOTA Dinner and presentation. This year the IOTA session was led by Martin, G3ZAY, who presented

on the IOTA programme and the recent ZD8UW DXpedition. Martin was followed by Alan, AD6E, and Skip, W5GAI, who presented the autumn 2008 P29NI Papua New Guinea DXpedition which was led by CDXC member Derek, G3KHZ.

Saturday is the biggest attendance day at the Hamvention, with all those making a weekend of it being joined by many one-day attendees. The programme began at 0830 with a New Product Showcase and continued with forums and presentations throughout the day. QSL card checking was available for CQ and ARRL awards. Forum topics included DXing, Contesting and the Physiology of Human Hearing by Heil Sound. A number of recent DXpeditions were also represented. These included St Barts (TO5DX by Dave, K4SV), Papua New Guinea (P29NI by AD6E) and the Kerkennah Islands (TS7C by CDXC member Bob, N6OX). In the Exhibit Hall Elecraft, Yaesu and Icom were represented plus Force 12, Array Solutions and The DX store. There were also a number of traders peddling books, name badges, embroidered shirts, hats and similar wares.

Outside the main buildings, the hotel site was host to the seemingly obligatory Hamvention special event station. This was

BIG, American style. Signing N6V with an SDR 3000 transceiver and an Alpha 9500 linear, this provided 1.5 KW to a SteppIR 3 element yagi at 30 ft on a mobile tower.

At lunchtime on the Saturday there was a BBQ buffet. This was held al fresco and the usual radio hyperbole about the one that got away was heard all around. And a few that claimed to have 'shagged' on their first call. For the PC among you, shagged in NA means 'to have chased after' – it's a baseball term! And so then to attitude adjustment!

Attitude adjustment defined

Activities continued until the second and final attitude adjustment hour at 1730 on the Saturday.

Attitude adjustment is an opportunity to obtain a soft or alcoholic refreshment donated by sponsors, to mingle and to socialise. Our distinctive CDXC club badge and my ZD8UW polo shirt proved to be a great 'ice breaker' introduction to many I met. Discussions ranged from recent HF band conditions (awful on the West Coast), through recent and planned DXpeditions - to chats about portable amplifier specifications. Varied indeed and revealing a great depth of knowledge and experience in those attending and a generous interest and willingness to share.

And Saturday night?

Saturday evening traditionally hosts a DX banquet with a distinguished speaker and this year was no different. 600 guests sat down to a dinner. This year the speaker was Scott Redd, KØDQ, a retired US admiral who talked about various things military. These covered events from the last 30 years and particularly the last 10 when Scott was heavily involved with US counter terrorism activities. It probably meant more to

Americans than it did to me. However, after the banquet delegates migrated to the bars which were much more familiar!

And so to the final day

The Sunday morning buffet breakfast began at 0830 and was contemporaneous with the final presentation. This year Bob, K4UEE, told the tale of Desecheo, K5D. I hope that in due course CDXC members will get a chance to hear all about this 'most wanted' activation and its features and challenges first hand. Bob also reported that relations with the US Food and Wildlife Service (FWS), who control access to many US protected islands, are now better following K5D and that the prospects for a Navassa DXpedition sometime soon are perhaps at last improving. Following the Desecheo presentation the raffle was drawn and breakfast finished at 1100.

In conclusion

If you have the opportunity to attend Visalia I thoroughly recommend that you do. Based on two visits' experience I found the heady mix of major DXpeditions represented and contact with other DXers attending truly encouraging and motivating. The welcome was warm and sincere. Last year 10 CDXC members attended, following the 3B7C DXpedition in 2007. This year I identified seven members – Gordon, G3USR; Martin, G3ZAY; Eric, K3NA; Mike, K9AJ; Tim, MØTDG; Arnie, N6HC, and Bob, N6OX.

Whilst this year NCDXA made the arrangements, next year CDXC member Arnie, N6HC, will be President of SCDXC and leading his 'other' club at Visalia. It would be fantastic if as many CDXC members as possible were able to support him. I have no doubt that it will be another memorable occasion in the annual international DX calendar.

3C7Y DXpedition to Equatorial Guinea 2007

Anselmo Coll, EA5BYP

After a year of conversations with different ministries of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to be able to carry out a ham radio expedition to this attractive African country, we were finally granted the callsign 3C7Y in August 2007.

The plan was to activate 3C with an expedition of various operators to take place in Malabo. This way the island of Bioko, AF-010, would be activated and, after five years without any ham radio activity in this country, many amateurs would be able to log a new one for DXCC and a new island for IOTA.

In this way, together with the ham radio section of San Vicente, we began to prepare our project with Vicente/EA5YN, Luis/EA5BRE and Elmo/EA5BYP.

While visiting my good friend Fred, KH7Y, in Hawaii during the middle of April 2007 I mentioned the need for a CW operator to go to Africa. He didn't think twice about it and decided to join the group. Now our group was complete, four operators for a good expedition.

Each operator has his/her own ham radio licence in Equatorial Guinea: Luis/3C7L, Vic/3C7V, Fred/3C7Y and Elmo/3C7A.

The date for the expedition was set for the middle of October, a time of the year when the winter rains have disappeared and yet the place to install the shack was not defined. This would be a surprise, since the Ministry itself had assigned us a place to carry out the expedition. I remembered that place during my 1998 expedition, but could not imagine its present condition. We would see it only when we arrived there. However, they assured us that we would have at our disposal a 40m tower to install our antennas.

On 1 October Fred, KH7Y, arrived in Alicante and on 5 October we found ourselves at Alicante Airport en route to Madrid and then Malabo. We decided to carry on the plane our backpacks containing a pair of transceivers, wire dipoles, coax, PC etc. In this way we would save some money on shipping costs and at the same time we would assure ourselves of having a station on the air in case of possible complications.

We arrived in Malabo at 2145 the same day, 5 October. The humidity was very high and, in the middle of a torrential downpour, representatives of the Communications Ministry were waiting for us with all the documentation necessary for our stay in Equatorial Guinea. After a long time waiting for our luggage we were surprised to find that our boxes with the amplifiers, filters, tools etc. were not going to arrive. This was a great disappointment, since the next flight from Spain would not arrive until the following Monday, so that we would be three days without the most important part of our equipment.

On the Saturday morning we went to the place where they had prepared for us to erect the antennas and to set up our shack. Here we were again surprised, seeing as the place, a very humid warehouse with part of it almost in ruins, was hard to get to. We had to set up our antennas in constant rain that didn't let up until the expedition ended – and this made our work outdoors very difficult.

After examining the place Luis and Elmo began to set up the Yagi for 10, 15 and 20m. The idea was to have a station constantly active until we got the rest of our equipment. At 0742 GMT on 6 October Fred made the first call on 20m CW, with the first station in our log being F2GC – and at 1759 GMT Luis started his calls on 20m

SSB, with YBØNFL the first station to come back. The pile-ups were enormous – and the whole group participated in the great demand there was for this DXCC entity.

We had an active station until noon on the Monday, when the Ministry of Communications told us that our heavy equipment was now at customs at the airport. Vicente and Elmo, our experts on navigating the bureaucracy, were in charge of getting this equipment. It took about three hours to complete all the police and customs formalities and finally, in the afternoon, all the equipment was in the shack. Now all our team members had a happier face and we were able to set up three stations. From the Tuesday onwards we had two and sometimes three stations in operation.

We finished setting up the rest of the antennas, a rigid dipole for 40m, two elements for 17 and 12m, another Yagi for 10, 15 and 20m – the 40m tower was used to support the wire for the lower bands.

Propagation was difficult, even with Europe. We had constant QRN, and on some bands we hardly had any openings – such as 12 and 10m, where sometimes our signals disappeared completely due to power outages that sometimes lasted for three hours. We were still able to take advantage of all the time we could be on the radio. We missed propagation with Asia on the lower bands, but on this trip openings to the West Coast of the USA were really good, both on the the higher bands and lower bands. We managed a total of 13,500 QSOs on CW, SSB and RTTY. The expedition manager was EA5BYP.

Our resting shack was 5 kms away from there and that didn't help much. We were keenly aware that our trip to the resting shack was not a safe one.

While the expedition lasted a technician designated by the Ministry of Communications was present on a daily

basis to observe and report our transmissions to the Ministry.

On 14 October, the last day of our expedition, we were surprised by a strong storm that brought down and destroyed some of our antennas. In the afternoon we concluded our expedition. At 1905 GMT Fred completed his last contact on CW with JA8JO.

On the morning of 15 October we picked up and packed everything into our boxes and by the afternoon we were back at Malabo Airport en route to Spain.

Behind us were days of happiness and days of sadness, since we were not able to work all the stations who called us.

We would like to thank all the groups, associations and individuals who helped and supported this expedition: NCDXF, Colvin Grant ARRL, INDEXA, GDXF, EUDXF, Lynx DX Group, Clipperton DX, Magnolia DX Assoc., CDXC, Ocean Fone, URE, EA5AR-RCA, Nippon DX Assoc., Proyecto4, Unión de Radioaficionados de S. Vicente, JR2KDN and W5BXX.

We would also like to thank the authorities of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea – and all of you for your constant calls.

Tnx and 73
The 3C7Y team

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

DX Demotivations

Roger Western, G3SXW

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We certainly seem to be in the DX (HF) doldrums and enthusiasm is flagging. Several impinging factors are in play at the same time. Some of them may be only temporary, others may be permanent and even get worse. Maybe the time is right to review the overall picture and try to predict future trends.

Sunspots

Or should we say the lack of them! It has been confirmed that we are now experiencing the quietest sun for many decades, almost a century. What I find interesting is that with masses of data and thousands of scientific experts it still seems to be impossible to predict future trends. The vagaries of nature!

So, for the time being the HF bands are in poor shape on most days. Even 15m is often devoid of DX signals, let alone 12 and 10m. Meantime, 20 and occasionally 17m still throw up some worthwhile openings, notwithstanding the complete absence of sunspots. And of course the quiet sun is providing an extended opportunity for LF aficionados.

If we assume that we are not in for another Maunder Minimum (the absence of several consecutive sunspot cycles) then we must hope for a return to sunspots, perhaps in 2010. Patience is a virtue, as someone once said! No-one seems to know, but some scientists are aiming for late 2009/early 2010 for a lift-off of the new sunspot cycle. It will happen - it *must* happen!

Deliberate QRM

This is a relatively new phenomenon which is becoming a serious DX Demotivator. It has to be said that the incidence of

Deliberate QRM, Continuous Callers, Frequency Cops and Lousy Operators has reached a new peak in this last year or two and these vandals are nowadays damaging almost every DXpedition. This is seriously dampening the enthusiasm of many skilled DXers

I, for one, am very deflated whenever this nonsense starts up and usually walk away in what used to be disgust, but is now resignation. I'd rather cut the grass. In fact, this (and other factors) has led to a rather extreme reaction: I no longer chase DX from home. The Deliberate QRMers, and those other three categories, are winning the war. Some DXers are so fed up with this situation that they are decamping to other aspects of the hobby - or to other hobbies altogether - because they see only further deterioration with no chance of finding solutions. The RSGB's valiant efforts to rally Europe-wide support for a DFing solution failed and ON4WW's educational initiative, while entirely laudable, is far too limited to tackle the problem. We just don't have time to wait for the educational approach to work. So the 'powers that be' are powerless.

At first, a few years ago, it was just another challenge. For those with better equipment and ears than those of other DXers the QRM actually provided an advantage. When most others could not hear through the policemen and vandals we could still sometimes copy and would often get the QSO. Then the problem grew worse and worse until it became impossible to hear the DX station at all for protracted periods. If it could have somehow been nipped in the bud, a few years ago, we might have been able to prevent this sad state of affairs. But it is probably too late now, since it has become 'normal' behaviour. My theory is that we in UK suffer most because the QRM is often

generated in locations somewhere around one F2 hop away from us. But let's not get into the who and the why.

On top of this well-known syndrome we also have inexperienced pile-up operators who chop and change their RX frequency, thereby killing the fun for the skilled DX chasers as they cannot then pick the best TX frequency. Calling blind drives me up the wall! There seem to be many more DXpeditions these days and many of them are manned by folks without the hoped-for operating expertise. They just tune around wildly, listening for the loudest signal. Maybe they are using poor receivers which mostly provide them with mush, instead of separated tones.

Deliberate QRM is a wide-ranging and important topic which has been discussed in these pages before. It seems that we have now passed the 'tipping point', the point in time when something crosses the threshold from being uncommon to becoming commonplace. Policemen, Deliberate QRMers and Continuous Callers crossed this point some time ago, so now it has become normal behaviour and normal for DXpeditions to be damaged. It is still just as unacceptable to most of us, but has become anything but a rare phenomenon, damaging almost all DXpeditions these days. Yes, the tactics of the DXpedition operator can help to minimise the impact, but the world's best pile-up operators cannot escape this destructive behaviour any longer – it is *that* bad.

Is it a sign of the times? Maybe: the moral decline of modern society. Forgive the pessimism, but unless someone can come up with something really revolutionary I see no way back. Maybe the next really big DXpedition could pre-announce that they will not work Europeans and will avoid propagation openings to Europe. Of course this will never happen and would horribly and unfairly disadvantage the good guys (majority) whilst hitting the bad guys (small minority), but it would perhaps at last send

out a powerful message that Europe needs to put its house in order. Almost the whole of this problem is European in origin, so W and JA operators must be especially resentful.

EMC

This comes some way down the priority list of demotivating factors, but is an important issue nonetheless. The incidence of interference to neighbours' gizmos has increased dramatically in recent years, not to mention our own gear which suffers from breakthrough, including laptops, telephones, wireless routers and so forth.

Eventually over a period of years this can really wear down the enthusiasm for the hobby. (But it is good for promoting the advantages of QRP!)

Incoming EMC is also a significant factor. Everyone is suffering the insidious creep of higher levels of man-made noise these days, sufficient to seriously damage our hobby. It seems to be an unstoppable trend, no matter how hard our RSGB and IARU experts work to curb it. BT Vision may be the worst offender, but most PSUs these days are also culprits. If you have more than a few close neighbours, as most of us do have, then this is just one more straw that can break the camel's back.

Technology

An odd thing to list as a demotivator. But it could be that many life-long DXers are not techno-wizards and are demotivated by the creeping take-over of our hobby by computers.

Nowadays technology is moving forward at a fast pace, leaving some of us in the dust: SDRs, SO2R, digital modes, remote stations, CW decoders etc. can be a turn-off for many. The hobby is changing rapidly into something quite different where the techno-hobbyists are king. Generating RF is a given, meaning that Internet-linking,

networks, DX Clusters, rig control, remote antennas, antenna modelling, etc. are the new game in town: all computer driven.

Yes, of course they complement our hobby, but only for those who are motivated by technology. For me mobile phones are for talking to people, not for taking photographs, playing games or watching football on the Internet! Gizmos for gizmos sake: just because we can, not because we need it! Some people love it, others less so. Compliance by death: our DXing hobby will be controlled entirely by technology and those who decide not to participate will eventually die.

Tee-Shirt Syndrome

Let's admit that 'Got the Tee-Shirt Syndrome' can also play its part.

What we need are new personal ambitions. At its most simple, eg DXCC and IOTA, we are highly dependent on all the problems listed earlier: low sunspots, Deliberate QRMers, EMC problems etc. So, in order to maintain self-motivation maybe we need some fresh targets to aim for. Maybe our traditional targets are becoming a bit tired.

Maybe we need to branch out: go on DXpeditions, go to more DXer social events, start writing. (Oops, sorry, these three seem to have become *my* new interests!) Or simply start chasing new awards, different contests, support LF Challenges – just break the mould. Because without new challenges it can all get rather samey and we can get jaded, with the inevitable outcome.

Predictions

What does the future have in store?

1 – Sunspots: It is unlikely that we are now entering another Maunder Minimum, so we can predict that the new sunspot cycle *will*

start some time. We just have to be patient. The nice thing here is that we *cannot* influence nature – we just have to accept what it throws at us and make the most of it.

2 – Deliberate QRM (including those other categories which damage DXpeditions). Sorry, but here we can only assume that it will continue to gradually get worse. We seem unable to come up with any solutions.

3 – EMC: Again, it's a pity to be negative, but things can only get worse as new techno-gizmos are invented, each of which add another dB of man-made noise to the HF spectrum. We will eventually be drowned out. Some folks already are.

4 – Technology: The DXing hobby will continue to become more the domain of techno-hobbyists. For them the future is bright. For non-techno-hobbyists either 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em', or we will become dinosaurs and die out.

5 - Tee-Shirt Syndrome. Here, at last, is something that we *can* all do something about. But it might involve a degree of fresh thinking and some 'get up and go' to devise new targets.

It's hard to finish on an upbeat note when there are so many depressing factors. This is not the end of a DXing era, but it is a slippery slope down which we are already sliding: 10-20 years from now our HF bands may become literally unusable because of the factors discussed in this brief synopsis. Then we can all migrate to the Internet, Echolink, eQSL etc. and simply stop battling to save HF RF.

Meantime, the only factor which *should* be in our own hands, but is not, is Deliberate QRM. This is the most frustrating and possibly the most demotivating factor of all for DXers. How can we put our own house in order?

Criticising DXpeditions

Roger Western, G3SXW

Our CDXC Reflector attracts many critical comments about the performance of DXpeditions. I write this as the K5D Desecheo project comes to an end with over 100,000 QSOs in the log.

A few CDXC reflectees have criticised this operation: why are they not on band x when it peaks at *my* location; why do they not reach *my* number more quickly when operating by numbers; why is he working JA when the band is open to *me*; why is *my* QSO not in the online log instantly?

I have no insight into the K5D operation apart from what is available to us all on the Web. Whether or not these negative Reflector comments are justified or not, they are surely always inappropriate. Armchair DXers have no right to criticise any DXpedition. They are uninformed about the local circumstances facing the operators.

It seems that the K5D team were faced with dreadful weather conditions. They had to repair and replace antennas destroyed by winds etc. Goodness knows what other deprivations and crises they were fighting with each day, while still manfully struggling to maximise the number of contacts logged, doing their absolute best and no doubt ending up exhausted. Anyone who has been on a serious DXpedition will tell these instant-gratification DXers that there is always a host of difficulties to overcome just to keep on the air, trying to please most of the people most of the time.

How can they be so selfish as to criticise when they know so little of the local conditions? These complainers lose respect each time they air their personal grievance. They seem to have no idea about what

happens during a real-life DXpedition when the operators do their very best to supply multiple band-slots to all the 'Deserving'.

Maybe we should blame the 5-Star blokes for this? After all, they set the bar so high with every one of their projects that perhaps now DXers expect every DXpedition to reach their high standards. It seems these days that expectations are too high: it is the DXpedition's duty to work *me*, even if my half-size G5RV is only 15ft above ground.

These selfish DXers in their warm shacks with their steaming coffee and heated slippers surely should show some understanding and tolerance. Do they honestly think that the DXpedition is trying to avoid working *you*; to make as few QSOs as possible; to irritate as many people as possible - that they are swanning about swigging beer just to annoy you? Believe me, they are striving mightily to maximise the success of their project and do not deserve your criticisms - no matter what they are.

Hal Mee, G5MY

We have been advised of the passing of Hal Mee, G5MY, on 8 December 2008 after a short illness. He was 93.

IOTA News

New IOTA Directory

A new edition of the IOTA Directory celebrating 45 years of IOTA will be published about the time you read this and will be available from RSGB HQ (see www.rsgbshop.org or telephone Sales at +44 (0)1234 832700). This 128-page edition features an historical review, the current year's Honour Roll and other performance tables, the latest IOTA island listings, DXpedition stories, the Most Wanted List, and articles on how to get started in IOTA. It is a 'must have' for anyone seriously interested in the programme. From the next *Digest* onwards we will refer to the 2009 Edition in updates here.

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2007 edition)

New IOTA reference number issued

AS-177	VU	Goa State group (India)
AS-192	HZ	Red Sea Coast South (Jizan Province) group (Saudi Arabia)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AF-037	9LØW	Banana Islands (November 2008)
AS-177	AT9RS	Grandi Island (April 2009)
AS-192	HZ1FS/P	Hibar Island (March 2009)
NA-192	VX8X	Ellice Island (April 2009)
SA-065	LU1EUU/W	Leones Island (February 2009)
SA-065	LU3DJI/W	Leones Island (February 2009)
SA-065	LU5DEM/W	Leones Island (February 2009)
SA-065	LU7DSY/W	Leones Island (February 2009)
SA-080	PX200JMU	Tinhare Island (February 2009)
SA-080	PX6T	Tinhare Island (February 2009)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
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20 April 2009

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The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

Just in case you have not yet heard, it has been decided that the ANARTS RTTY is to cease. Pat Leeper, VK2JPA (YL op), who currently manages the contest, sent an e-mail to say that she can no longer continue to do the job of adjudicating the contest due to chronic ill health and eyesight problems. I mentioned this to John GW4SKA, the BARTG contest manager, and it was decided that BARTG would step in and adjudicate the contest for this year only. We felt it was a good thing to do, and John had hoped to be able to move the BARTG HF contest from March, which now clashes with the Russian DX Contest, to the June date previously held by ANARTS. However, public opinion has meant that the BARTG HF contest will stay as is. Most were citing better propagation in March, and also the fact that most of us like to enjoy what little there is of the British summer.

So, this year will be the very last ANARTS contest, and I am sure it will be sorely missed by many ops. The scoring method was very good, giving you more points for working more distant stations. It was a real incentive to try and work some real DX, as opposed to hundreds of the usual DL/IK/SP stations. Mind you, CQing from GU presented a real challenge in hearing the weaker stations under the usually large pile from those countries.

If you hadn't planned on operating the ANARTS contest, why not have a go, just to say goodbye to ANARTS?

In the last issue I suggested some ways to improve macros, and to give some thought about how you compile them. It really is worth considering what you send in a contest exchange, as it can make life so much smoother, not only for the person you call, but yourself too.

This can also apply to working DXpeditions as well. SØ4R was a recent good example, where I saw several G stations calling them. Some just did not manage to work out that calling them while they are transmitting is not a good idea. There is no 'full break-in' version of RTTY!

Sometimes it pays not to call, but to observe. It is very tempting to hit the TX key, but it can pay to watch and see who they are working and where. It is so wasteful to send

S04R S04R S04R DE G1ABC G1ABC
G1ABC

as it is fairly certain that he knows his own call, and by the time it gets to your callsign (which is what he really wants), someone else is calling over you. There is an argument for not even putting DE in front of your call, but just sending:

GUØSUP GUØSUP GUØSUP

This way, he gets your call quite quickly, but again, timing is the key! And why waste lots of time by sending several carriage returns before your call to him? Again, someone is likely to call over you, and if they get it right, their call gets heard, not yours.

On 30m RTTY SØ4R were rarely working more than one station on a frequency, but were searching up the band, and then down the band. It was quite interesting to see the number of folk asking their QRG on the Cluster. And when someone spotted them as 'worked 2 up', there was an almost instant pile-up 2 kHz up! This is a great time to move 3 up and call, as they will probably avoid the noise and search out a call in the clear. This usually works for me, but sadly I missed them on 30m RTTY this time,

although I finally got them on 17m RTTY for a new band-slot, plus 17m and 15m CW. I wasn't bothered about 20 or 15m as I have SØ confirmed on both bands already. And did you notice the number of spots for SO (Sierra Oscar) instead of SØ?

One reflector recently had an e-mail from someone querying the call VR6A. It transpired that he had worked VC6A (a special commemorative call for Canada), but he was convinced that it must have been VR6A, as there were several other spots for that call. I commented that this was similar to the spots for VK9LA, which was being spotted quite regularly on the bands, and attracted huge pile-ups. This one transpired to be VQ9LA, and not VK9LA.

Just because a call has appeared on the Cluster doesn't mean it is true. I mention this because mis-spotting calls does happen on RTTY too, although you would have thought it less likely. Entering SO4R into your log is going to produce another QSO with Poland, and NOT Western Sahara! Spotting it is not really going to have much effect either, other than maybe to get you a few silly comments from cluster users.

Despite the growing trend for creating new digital modes, yet another has arrived with us! You may have already seen mention of it in the May edition of QST. It is called MFTT, Multi Frequency Tele Type, and is by Norbert Peiper. QST says he is known for his MRP40 Morse decoder, but I have to say that I had not heard of him before the mention in QST. More about MFTT can be found on the website www.polar-electric.com/MFTT/index.html.

As far as I can see, MFTT is an AFSK mode, meaning your current PSK31 set-up should work fine and uses DTMF tones onto which the signal is encoded. I am not sure whether I will bother trying this new mode, but if I do I will let you know in a future edition. Part of the reason for mentioning this is that despite so many new modes coming on to the market, RTTY is growing

at a huge rate. PSK31 is still very popular, and there is often some PSK63 and even PSK125 to be heard on the bands. However, many of the other variants of PSK are all but absent. This includes PSK63F, PSKAM10, PSKFEC31, and even QPSK. Others, such as MT63 are quite rare, and even Olivia only seems to be apparent on odd occasions.

It has been interesting to note that many of the recent DXpeditions have not included PSK, and used only RTTY. As the BARTG Awards manager I get quite a few award applications each year, and from what I can see, those who use RTTY also tend to dabble in PSK and other digimodes, mostly to work new ones, but those that apply for the awards with 'PSK only' never seem to use any other mode. I know most of the calls of RTTY regulars, and it is often interesting to see that the calls listed for a PSK-only award are not amongst those. I wonder what other new modes will come about this year? Any guesses?

The upcoming contests are as follows:

ANARTS (Australia) 13-14 June
The last one ever!

Ukrainian DX Digi 27-28 June

DL-DX RTTY 4-5 July

SARTG DX 15-16 August

SCC RTTY (S5) 29-30 August

Russian WW 5 September

CIS DX RTTY 19-20 September

As usual, full rules can be found at www.rttycontesting.com.

That's it for another issue, so 73 and good DX!

Phil, GUØSUP

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Welcome to this edition's 'Contest'. The Commonwealth Contest is a firm favourite with many CDXC members, with many taking a trip abroad to enjoy being on the DX end of the pile-ups. I've not received any reports directly, but I'll bet there will be some tales of hoisting dipoles up on palm trees appearing elsewhere in the *Digest*. To increase the variety, here I've focussed on some different home and away activities in the Russian DX Contest and the CQ WPX SSB Contest.

Russian DX Contest

The 2009 Russian DX Contest was the last qualifying contest for the 2010 World Radiosport Team Championships to be held in Russia. Whilst realistically I don't have any hope of qualifying, the WRTC rankings have added an extra incentive to try to do well in certain events. It's been fun to be part of a results table formed from the combined results of several years' worth of DX contests.

So it was for this reason I thought I'd have a serious go at this year's RDXC. I've entered the High Power section on previous occasions which, as you would expect, added to the overall QSO and multiplier count. In terms of overall placing, though, I was always completely outclassed by the very serious competitors. Dropping down to low power has historically brought more relative success, similar to Bob/MDØCCE's strategy that he told us about in the last *Digest*. The WRTC rules have a points weighting factor for low-power entrants compared with the high-power ones. But assuming I've done my sums correctly, for the results I would be likely to achieve, I would earn more WRTC points for a fairly good low-power entry compared with a distinctly average high-power one.

A discussion point on the CQ Contest Reflector in the weeks prior to the contest commented on the relatively high amount of contacts that are removed during adjudication for this contest. Checking up on UBNs and last year's results is, of course, vital homework for all serious entrants. If either QSO partner makes any error, the QSO credit is removed for both. On the one hand, this is a good approach as it encourages accuracy and confirmation of QSO data. However, if you are a contest station calling CQ using the traditional contest QSO format, you never get a confirmation that the station answering your CQ has your callsign correct. With DX Cluster access permitted for all stations in this contest, this further increases the risk of erroneous callsigns being typed in the log. Certain contests, such as Sprint types, necessitate both stations sending both callsigns in their rules as an attempt to reduce confusion and improve accuracy. But with ~4000 QSOs achieved by Multi-Single stations this year in RDXC, even with hardly any 15m / 10m propagation for most stations, the high rates in the contest may be hurt by a change in the QSO format.

So, as the contest started I had accuracy firmly in my mind. Early on I made a mistake logging a QSO in WinTest before I'd got confirmation that my exchange had been received correctly. I was unable to complete the QSO, so I abandoned it. Using WinTest I could delete the logged QSO, so I would not be put off from trying again later by a 'dupe' message appearing in the log. As I logged further contacts, I didn't immediately spot that due to the deleted QSO, the 'QSO number' in WinTest no longer matched the outgoing serial number. There were a few seconds of confusion before I realised what was going on. For the SSB QSOs I realised that my eye was drawn

to the 'QSO number' on the very left-hand side of the screen, rather than the 'serial number' which was in the middle of the QSO data and perhaps subconsciously less easy to focus on. There was going to be a risk I'd be giving out the wrong serial number many times during the next 24 hours with things as they stood. I could configure WinTest to not display the data columns I didn't need, but I didn't have time to start tinkering too much whilst operating. So instead I fashioned a bus ticket and some sticky tape to block out the unwanted data. A true 'Blue Peter' moment!

But the dupe contact angst didn't end there. There were a couple of instances where I called another station and was told 'QSO before', immediately followed by a new CQ call from that station. If we assume that the majority of stations active in contests in 2009 may have some form of electronic logging or other dupe checking, and considering the rule mentioned above that require both sides of a QSO from submitted logs to be 100% accurate, in my mind it would be more prudent to give out a serial number instead of refusing to make a contact. If I'm calling you, unless I've misheard your callsign for this alleged second contact, or I do have it as a dupe contact already in my log (and I'm hopefully not that daft!), then you're losing points by not working me again, as I almost certainly don't have your callsign logged.

My response of 'You're not in my log' on SSB, or 'NIL' on CW was on occasions met with still further CQs. One time this happened the other station repeated me the alleged QSO time and serial number as proof. The other station was not in my log, and neither was a similar callsign. I was fairly confident I'd not made a copying error, so perhaps the other station had logged my call earlier in the contest whilst I was working someone else on an adjacent frequency, or himself incorrectly copied someone else's callsign. I had no way to 'insert' this extra QSO into my log, and meanwhile this exchange of data has taken

far longer than simply logging a new QSO would have been. If I had time to browse my log to the time and serial number quoted by the other station, and found I had logged S55SH instead of S55HH (for example), then of course it would be a simple edit to correct the call and carry on. But, as can of course happen, there were no calls looking remotely like S55HH in the log at that time, so then I can't insert the QSO without replacing other good QSOs. Scribbling notes on paper, editing the Cabrillo log afterwards in Notepad, and submitting two 'QSO number 37s' is, of course, a solution, but certainly not something I'd promote.

There are some special circumstances when querying a duplicate QSO makes sense. For example, if you start to work a string of duplicate contacts, it's quite likely that you have been incorrectly spotted on the DX Cluster, or perhaps a station has appeared on frequency, but is inaudible to you because of the skip distance. Stopping the rhythm and repeating your callsign several times to get the message across not only to your present QSO partner, but also to possible others also listening on the frequency, may be an overall benefit. But most of the time, when faced with a 'dupe', I find it's simpler to 'work them again' and guarantee a good QSO there and then, as the earlier QSO has a chance of being invalid in one of the logs.

In the last *Digest* I'd mentioned my aim to enter fewer contests this year, but perhaps take them more seriously. So for RDXC I'd cleared the weekend with my other half, stocked up on a few snacks for the small hours, and ate my dinner at the rig (during a CW session of course). So I was quite disappointed to receive a phone call from my neighbours in the middle of the evening, complaining of significant RFI from my 100W. "Have you changed anything?" I asked. "No" was the reply. To maintain harmony, I went QRT and was understandably a little grumpy for the rest of the night.

The following day my confusion abated when I found out that the neighbours had recently purchased a new 'plasma TV and media centre', which inspired a variety of visions in my head of remote speakers and wires, all ready to pick up the slightest amount of local RF. Recounting my tale of woe with friends afterwards, I did concede that perhaps I was lucky to be able to receive anything at all, considering some of the horror stories that surround some models of plasma TVs.

I had fitted some high-pass filters to the neighbours' old pre-amplified TV / video / DVD spaghetti of wires and boxes in the past, but now they were not keen on me doing the same on their new pride and joy. To resolve the impasse the neighbours have said that if I let them know when I will be on air, they will watch their old TV which has been relocated to another room. It's a slightly strange arrangement, and if my thoughts are correct, will only be necessary when using 40m.

Oh well. Whilst this was an important event for claiming WRTC points, in the grand scheme of things there will be another 'big contest' to get psyched up about in a few week's time. And if any of the CDXC membership are similarly suffering with RFI or TVI, I hope this tale will be some light relief and remind you that you have many brethren in a similar situation up and down the land.

CQ WPX SSB

To make up for the RDXC disappointment, I spent a few hours with the MØXXT Multi-Single team for this year's CQ WPX SSB contest. Operating using different antennas brought home any weaknesses or advantages of my own antenna system. The main run antenna at MØXXT was a very large loop at almost 100 ft. A windom and a triband Yagi were also available, used mostly by the multiplier station. I distinctly noted that the 'loud' VKs and ZLs I found and worked on 40 m were nowhere near as

strong as home. The KL7 that called me on 40m on the Sunday morning was a personal first. However, the big loop does perhaps suffer with a little directivity, as I was finding it easier to pick out US stations using my home Yagi when I was back home listening to the guys after I'd finished my on-site commitments. Finding the perfect antenna, within space and budget constraints, is an ongoing campaign.

Another novelty was being connected to the GetScores.org on-line score tracking system. I've visited this site before to see how different operators were faring in some contests. Since being popularised by the WRTC score tracking system that launched in Finland in 2002, and was updated in Brazil in 2006, Gerry/W1VE's GetScores is available all the year round. The system allows Internet tracking of contest scores, by entry category, for most of today's major DX contests. Spectators can view the results from a webpage, and score submissions can be made via a number of popular logging programs automatically every couple of minutes (if desired.)

So after returning to the station to relieve the overnight team very early on the Sunday morning, on the 'spare' PC to the right of the run station operating position, I was following the live updates of the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix care of the BBC's website, and in a very similar manner, also seeing how the other WPX entrants were battling it out using GetScores. The idea of providing an electronic information feed to armchair or casual supporters is certainly in the mainstream. Considering the BBC regard their F1 multi-media experience to be very important content, the service provided by GetScores during the 'race', and the pre-/post-race commentary provided by radiosport.net are similarly very important for contesting to help spread enthusiasm. Whatever next? Murray Walker presenting at Contest University?

In our particular case, MØXXT was very close in score to the S51A team throughout

the weekend. Both teams had noticed this and greetings were passed on the Sunday evening saying how they had enjoyed their own particular competition. It certainly kept up morale and an urgency not to slacken off. If either of us had managed to leave the other one behind, as may often happen, the motivation could have reduced. But we were lucky that we were exchanging places on the scoreboard nearly all of the weekend. After the contest the teams exchanged friendly e-mails and details of their stations.

Team captain Callum, MØMCX, had also found a good alternative use for a digital photo frame. Instead of family photos being displayed, a series of captions acting as memory joggers and motivational messages

were presented. For example, “Don’t forget to check 10 metres”, “Remember double points on the low bands”. Extra reminders about switching the stub filtering system were also good to insert into the subconscious whilst trying to run or find mults. A useful idea!

Endpiece

I’m always happy to receive similar stories of contest derring-do, ranging from multi-thousand QSO entries from the older hands to how a first-time entrant to RoPoCo enjoyed their experience. I’ll try to cover any topics you may request as well.

73 Lee, GØMTN

G3NUG Hall of Fame

Congratulations to CDXC President Neville, G3NUG, on his upcoming induction into the prestigious ‘CQ’ DX Hall of Fame.

Nigel, G3TXF

[And so say all of us! Ed.]

JD1BMM

JD1BMM, Masa Ishihara (JA6GXX) has been quite active from Minami Torishima since May 2007 and had worked over 4,800 QSOs by the end of February 2009 excluding JAs with all-mode on 160 through to 6m. Masa works for the Japanese Coast Guard and maintains the ‘C’ Loran station at Minami Torishima, 1,950 kms SE of Tokyo, the eastern end of Japanese territory. Masa is now using an HL-1.2 KFX, Tokyo Hypower amplifier which is helping a lot to enable EUs to QSO on the low bands – also an inverted Vee dipole on the low bands, a rotary dipole on the WARC bands and 3-element tribander on the other HF bands.

Vy 73 Joe, JA1LZR

E-mails to the Editor

From G4PLY

GB9ØWWI

During the middle of November 2008 after watching a TV program celebrating the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I, I thought it a good idea to see if I could get a special event callsign to commemorate this, and also include Harry Patch, a local celebrity.

For those who don't know, Harry is 110 years old and the oldest surviving soldier who fought in the trenches during World War I. I found a really good photo of Harry on the Daily Telegraph website, so rang them explaining what I had in mind. Within hours this was granted, provided I gave them and the photographer credit for doing so. This was incorporated on the reverse side of the QSL card, plus a thank you to Ofcom.

Then I contacted Ofcom and fortunately spoke with Rod Wilkinson (G3TXA), who realised this was a great opportunity not to be missed. I have to say that all the stops were pulled on this and permission was granted for GB9ØWWI to operate from 14 November to 31 December 2008. This was done from my QTH, with the following set-up: Elecraft K2, a brilliant bit of kit, and just so I was heard, a TL-922. Antenna: Cushcraft A4S / A3WS at about 45ft and 40ft respectively. Lower bands were taken care of by the proverbial piece of wet string.

Just over 1800 contacts in 108 countries, all bands from 10 through to 160m, using SSB, CW and PSK. We, G4DZW, G4EJW, G4JBW and G4NQQ thoroughly enjoyed the mini pile-ups and considered the event a success, and we even got a write-up in the local paper. Fame at last!

Vy 73 Viv Morris

From G3SXW

EP2IA Pirate

A station signing EP2IA has been QRV this week on 40m CW, asking for QSLs via qrz.com. This was my call in the 1970s, but I know nothing about the current operation. If the callsign had been re-issued I would expect him to give a valid QSL route. But qrz.com points at G3SXW, so I must conclude that this is a pirate operation.

Please help me to spread the word: PIRATE! I will receive many QSLs that will be returned to sender (extra work for me) and very disappointing for many DXers who think that they have worked a new country. There are some very selfish people in this world.

73 de Roger/G3SXW

23 March 2009

From G3JNB

Friend or Foe?

At G3JNB I am currently engaged in a personal '10W DXCC Plus' drive for 2009, just for fun. Running 10W, instead of my usual 5W for QRP, seemed a reasonable option bearing in mind the continuing poor propagation figures.

Last night, 10 March, at 2230 UTC I had been chasing the HKØ/EA7HEJ station on 17m for around 20 minutes, when I became aware of another station using my call, G3JNB, just a smidgeon up from my spot on the split.

Each time I went back to receive I could hear a strong 'JNB' – he was still sending. Needless to say, with the HKØ just above

the noise here my more powerful shadow soon worked them and that was that! I was in their log, like it or not. I left it at that. A quick couple of queries on the Cluster did not bring a response from the op in question.

As this event was a new experience for me, it seemed rather odd and I was led to contemplate whether it was just some joker playing a prank, a hardened vandal - or, perhaps, just a kind soul taking pity on my fruitless QRP and doing his bit to put my call in the log? The operator did not continue with anybody else's call, so I am inclined to believe the latter.

Victor, G3JNB

From WB2YQH

Correction

Dear Martyn,

As always, I enjoy the *Digest* from front to back. However, I have one correction in connection with *Digest* 178, March 2009, Page 45. In the article 'George Beasley, G3LNS, 5B4AGC' the callsign should read WB2YQH (and not 'WB2YQN').

I think most CXDC members will know it was me as a good pal of George and Pete, GW3KDB.

Vy 73 Bob, WB2YQH

'DX Delights – Tales of Travels with my Radio'

A new book by Roger Western, G3SXW

DXpeditions always provide exciting challenges and we often encounter unexpected events. Readers of 'Up Two, Adventures of a DXpeditioner' enjoyed descriptions of travels to many exotic corners of the globe, but some folks felt the need for the human touch: "I want to hear what it really *felt* like, what you really experienced".

So here it is: 60+ anecdotes that describe what *really* happened. All of these events took place during forty years of travels with my radio, but only a few of them are radio-related. Most of these stories are personal experiences and are written with no amateur radio jargon, so hopefully may also be enjoyed by non-hams.

It's good to read about flights and hotels, antennas and radios, but now we can dig a little deeper and describe the unusual happenings. Some anecdotes are amusing, some dramatic and a couple are entirely bizarre!

Future DXpeditioners may pick up some tips. Long-in-the-tooth DXpeditioners may identify with some of these tales. Hopefully others will simply find it entertaining. Here we read about blatant bribery, stupid airport security officers, angry policemen, heat-stroke, near suffocation, cabin fever, culture shock and much more besides. These, I imagine, are typical of events also experienced by other DXpeditioners while they are out there helping DXers to work new countries.

Your 130-page illustrated and signed book will provide much DXpeditioning entertainment and reading pleasure. Send cash or a sterling cheque to Roger Western G3SXW, 7 Field Close, Chessington, KT9 2QD, England. Or bank transfer to: Sort code 20-90-69, A/C 80953636, IBAN GB06 BARC 2090 6980 9536 36, SWIFTBIC: BARCGB22. Mention 'DX Delights' and your callsign as the reference. Or by PayPal to g3sxw@btinternet.com - price GBP £12, USD \$20 or €15.

Not the GB2RS News

- Council Tax rebates for amateur radio frequent flyers
- German courses again in Friedrichshafen
- Record number of new Canadian licences issued
- French amateurs under attack again
- Morse code requirement reduced to 1 wpm in Sri Lanka

The Chiltern DX Club (CDXC) has negotiated substantial Council Tax rebates for UK radio amateurs who are out of the country for more than 50% of the year. Local councils taking part in the scheme so far are Weybridge (Elmbridge) and Chessington (Kingston-upon-Thames), with others likely to follow. Indeed Weybridge recently organised a special parade in honour of one well-known local radio amateur when they discovered that he'd been at home for a hitherto unprecedented 14 days in succession.

With the 'Ham Radio 2009' in Friedrichshafen just around the corner, Fred's Harbour freelance Franziska Frohmacher (whose name means 'happy maker' in German...) is once again extending her usual warm welcome to any UK visitors with a bit of time on their hands and wanting to learn a smattering of German. Franziska's always had a soft spot for the British and over the years has allowed many of them to find it. As always you can find her propping up the bar at the Fred's Harbour railway station buffet.

In Canada there has been a considerable increase in the number of amateur radio licences issued to lumberjacks. This was after one amateur radio retailer launched a highly successful series of advertisements in

the lumberjacks' favourite magazine, *Fellers Fortnightly*, extolling the virtues of amateur radio logging programs – and the fellers' now favourite type of antenna by far, the log periodic.

Radio amateurs in France have once again been accused of dubious dealings, this time in connection with late requests for QSL cards from DX stations. For example, they worked you a few years ago under their previously VHF-only F4 call, but now firmly expect you to send them a QSL card for this contact made out to their new F8 call, one which they acquired only last week.

In Sri Lanka the Morse code requirement for the Advanced examination has been reduced from 22 words per minute to 1 word per minute. This is to give less able candidates the opportunity, if uncertain, to either phone a friend or go 50-50 with the examiner – assuming, of course, that the latter hasn't long since fallen off to sleep listening to such painfully slow CW in the first place.

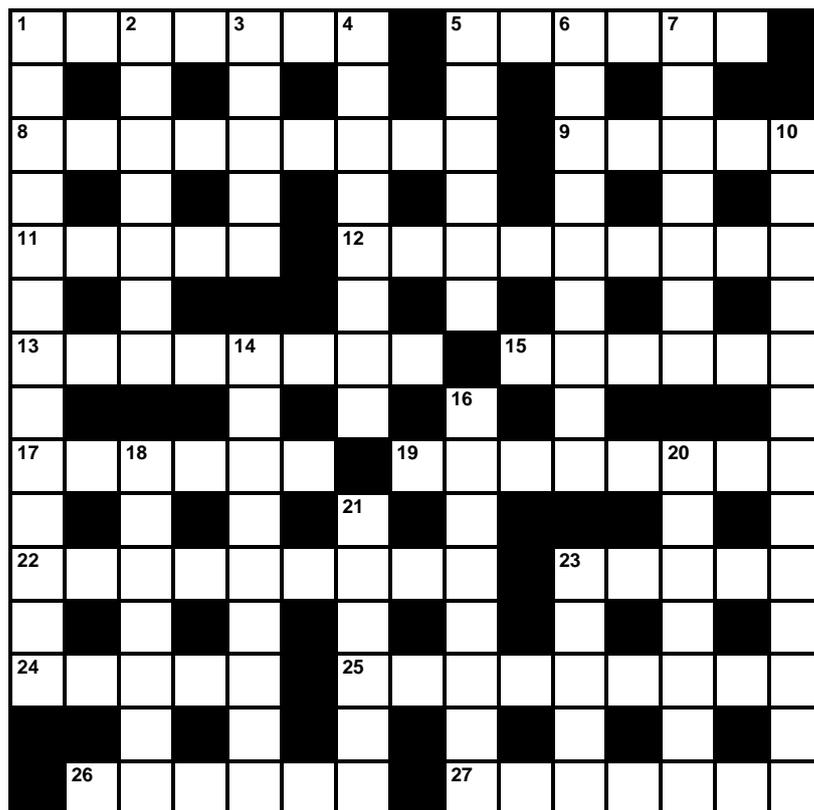
Solution to Prize Crossword 33

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

Digest Prize Crossword 34 *by RFX*

You will have spotted the small typo in Crossword 33, ie 1 Down should have read 'NHS advice prepared [and not 'device repaired'] in Cambridge laboratory'. Clearly the Mini-skirted Maidens typed it in wrong. Anyway, this didn't stop many of you from coming up with the correct solution to this one.

The winner of Prize Crossword 33, March 2009, and that brand-new £10 note: Ian White, GM3SEK, Whithorn, Newton Stewart.



ACROSS

- 1 Fanatics seen in Belize a lot, surprisingly (7)
- 5 Peacekeepers tucking into Dutch cheese in Baltic city (6)
- 8 Sport played in place of another (9)
- 9 Architectural style a girl finally changed (5)
- 11 Capital fellow who's at his best in the morning? (5)
- 12 Starts to recommend extensive reforms and free votes (9)
- 13 Circular route - like the one taken by Frodo and Sam? (4,4)
- 15 21, say, the product of an Italian mother and Labour leader (6)
- 17 The drink to put an end to? (6)
- 19 Radio that's not what it says it is (8)
- 22 Aiming to achieve international resolution (9)
- 23 Board that's positively bilingual (5)
- 24 Eat too much Cheddar, say? (5)
- 25 Graves opened by this team of sailors from Southern Ireland (9)
- 26 Frank, the son, needs treatment (6)
- 27 Iranian holy man meets a German sculptor (7)

DOWN

- 1 Transit facility provided for African native? (5,8)
- 2 Islands displayed together with a bloke (7)
- 3 Plant which a-peeled to Günter Grass? (5)
- 4 Twenty-four hours in which, for example, to seize a despicable person (8)
- 5 Martial art seen in the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nuremberg and Fontainebleau (4,2)
- 6 Agree to do the funeral arrangements (9)
- 7 Troubled monarchy loses head of household giving us Ernie, for one (7)
- 10 According to Spooner, the author's prize of tea for the naturalist (7,6)
- 14 Drunk once - never meet up again! (9)
- 16 Hang on, that's underwear! (8)
- 18 Unusual train seen in model gauge in part of North America (7)
- 20 Flighty sort of female? (7)
- 21 Jaguar, say, one with a large exhaust filter? (3,3)
- 23 Watering hole provided by little girl from Peru (5)

Deadline for entries: 20 June

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 31/05	XL, XN, XM, XO: special prefixes (Canada)
till 20/06	S21UGZ: Bangladesh
till June	5X4X: Uganda
till June	AP2AHSF: Pakistan
till 02/07	TT8CF: Chad
till 24/07	5NØOCH and 5NØEME: Nigeria
till 31/07	HG16ØFNY and HA16Ø: special event station and prefixes
till 31/08	LY1ØØØ: special prefix
till 31/08	VR2/F4BKV: Hong Kong Island (AS-006)
till September	LZ8WHST and LZ17ARDF: special event stations
till 30/11	FT5WO: Crozet Islands (AF-008)
till November	HFØAPAS: South Shetlands (AN-010)
till November	OD5/W5YFN: Lebanon
till 31/12	9AØ9P: special event station
till 31/12	9A48IFATCA: special event station
till 31/12	9A8ØØVZ: special event callsign
till 31/12	GB25ØRB: special event call (Scotland)
till 31/12	GB4ØWAB: special callsign
till 31/12	HE8 and HB8: special prefixes (Switzerland)
till 31/12	IA3GM: special callsign
till 31/12	II2RAI: special callsign
till 31/12	Z3ØMCWG: special callsign
16/05-20/06	ZK2V: Niue (OC-040)
30/05-06/06	9A/OE3WGC and 9A/OE3ZK: Palagruza Island (EU-090)
May	MMØRAI/P: Rockall (EU-189)
10/06-15/06	ZYØF: Fernando de Noronha (SA-003)
13/06-28/06	IY1GMN: special event station
19/06-05/07	5JØM: San Andres (NA-033)
20/06-21/06	SX2MT: special event station
27/06-28/06	SX2MT: special event station
05/07-07/07	SX2CM: special callsign (Greece)
22/07-29/07	V31UR and V31WL: Caye Caulker (NA-073)
23/07-27/07	C6APR, C6AXD, C6AQO: Crooked Island (NA-113)
23/07-26/07	CG2ØØI: Ile Verte (NA-128)
23/07-05/08	KL7RRC: Ogliuga Island (NA-233)
23/07-26/07	W4T: Tangier Island (NA-083)
24/07-27/07	MMØNDX/P: St. Kilda Islands (EU-059)

27/07-29/07	OY/IW4BLZ: Faroe Islands
31/07-11/08	TF/IW4BLZ: Iceland
07/10-14/10	NØTG/CYØ, WA4DAN/CYØ, AA4VK/CYØ Sable Is
09/10-19/10	K4M: Midway Island (OC-030)
19/10-17/11	VK7ACG: Tasmania (OC-006)
22/10-09/11	P29NI: OC-102, OC-231, OC-205 by G3KHZ and others

How to make friends with a DX station

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Having some time on my hands during a two-month solo trip to Uganda, I started to scribble down things which really make life worthwhile if you are operating from somewhere which is not very rare, but has a callsign sufficiently interesting to encourage callers. All the events are real (-ish) and we have probably done some/all of them ourselves if the truth were known. The list may ring (or wring) some bells. So for some interesting operating you should follow these tips from the experts (well, they were very loud, even if a bit rasping):

- Always send your call at least twice without a break to prevent the DX station from shortening the QSO by replying quickly.
- If the pile-up is moving too fast for comfort, call very frequently - then fail to reply several times when called. It really helps to slow things down.
- If you can't hear the DX station, call anyway - you may be due for a miracle.
- Tune your linear carefully on the calling frequency to ensure a really really low SWR - then call him when finished. The frequency is often much quieter then. This doesn't always work.
- If the DX station gets your call wrong, just send your correct call once – make him try several times to get it right – it's not your fault he is in a thunderstorm.
- Send your callsign three times without gaps between characters. It's a great one – he will get so messed up - can be even better with a couple of CQs in the middle.
- Don't tire yourself copying the DX station – just call every time he stops transmitting, or whenever everyone else seems to be piling in.
- If you suddenly remember you need to QSL (it happens), just send 'HW QSL?' or shout on top of the pile-up and keep on asking. After all, it is the final courtesy.
- If he calls 'NA NA', assume he really means 'Italy - just your last two as usual'.
- If he calls 'AS AS', assume he really means 'Lots more Italy now'.
- If he calls 'ZL ZL', assume he really means 'Really loud South and East European stations now – and for everyone else, it's a good time to

tune your linear or practice a string of dots’.

- In a pile-up ask the DX station to check his log for a previous QSO (shouldn’t take him long – he’s probably got a computer somewhere).
- Include a previously unknown Morse character in your callsign – and change it subtly each time you call. (Grown men have been known to cry)
- If he’s working North America on SSB and you (in Europe) need him for a new one, try begging (“I’ve been calling for an hour and my 90-year-old cat is dying”). Alternatively, suddenly become ‘QRP please’ or perhaps just give the second half of your call. He might be soft in the head and answer you. On the other hand he may also be a CDXC member... mmm... difficult.
- Change your call to something like S55ESI or OMØMOO – well, is he really any good at CW?
- Get a callsign longer than the field in his computer log. A callsign such as EA5/GI9POX/P/QRP (yes, really) is good, but YT2009BIGPILEUP isn’t bad.
- Work your fourth DUPE, but make it sound like it’s another call from an old and dear friend (“Hi Nick”).
- Send a signal report with your initial call – this usually messes up the logging quite well and makes him wonder if he nodded off.
- Swoop onto the frequency with your transmitter sending dots as you move (a clever trick – not sure my rig could do that - must get a new T1154).

- Don’t get upset if he suddenly reverts to simplex – he is suffering from dementia anyway (why else would he be there?) and has forgotten that Elecraft rigs lose ‘split’ if there is a short break in power.

I hope these few hints may help if you are tired of sending ‘TU 599’. It is often possible to hear almost all these things going on at the same time in a European pile-up, which saves time and is reassuring.

Answers (from p. 15):

1. Libya
2. Sumatra
3. Belgian Congo (now Zaire, 9Q5)
4. Lebanon
5. Algeria
6. Trieste
7. Tangier
8. Saarland
9. Don Wallace
10. Cyprus – the British Sovereign Bases were not recognised as a separate entity until some time in the 1980s after representations by G3ZAY, among others, with contacts from 16 August 1960 counting for the new one.
11. 5R8
12. New Guinea (later deleted, along with Papua Territory, the two becoming part of the new entity of Papua New Guinea)

CDXC Clothing

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

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

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Children's sweatshirts	Polycotton raglan sleeve	3, 5, 7, 9, 11 years	£16.00
Rugby shirts FR1	100% cotton	S, M, L	£25.00
		XL, XXL	£26.00
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Rugby shirts FR2	Quartered 100% cotton	S, M, L	£29.00
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Tie			£14.25

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