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*As of 1 April 2010 Tony, G4LDL (co-opted member), has taken over the Secretarial role from Gordon, G3USR, to allow Gordon to take over the Treasurer's role from Nigel, G3TXF.

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

Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

You'll find Jane's *Digest* Questionnaire report on pages 11-12. A big thank you to her – and also to all of you who told us your views. I like to think the responses speak for themselves. I have, of course, been taking note and will soon be making a few changes. More on that next time round!

Meanwhile in this issue of the *Digest* we have no fewer than five DXpedition reports, two of them to Senegal - a country I've also been to, albeit without a radio. That was some years ago on a flight from Brussels to CX-land/Montevideo (don't even ask...). A late-night refuelling stop in Dakar, in fact, with just enough time to grab a can of Coke in the considerable heat of the airport café. They're very laid back down that way – so much so that the waiters never did get round to taking the money off me for that Coke.

Mind you, I can't imagine you'd get away with not paying in the Christmas Island (VK9) airport café - assuming they have one, which I'm sure they do. Perhaps I ought to ask Phil, G3SWH, who was down that way with Jim, G3RTE, in February of this year. You can read all about VK9X/G6AY on pages 16-21.

As for our two other featured DXpeditions this time round: ZK2V to Niue kicks off on page 25 courtesy of Chris, GM3WOJ/ZL1CT - whereas Andy, DL5CW, tells us all about his trip to Vietnam and XV4D starting on page 28. I've never been to either.

In fact the furthest east I've ever been is S79, the Seychelles. This involved a 10½-hour non-stop flight ex-LGW (via overhead Somalia...) on board British Airways 747 G-BDXH 'City of Elgin'. Under her

previous name of 'City of Edinburgh' this was the aircraft which was famously involved in a nasty encounter with volcanic ash over Indonesia. Which brings us more or less full circle, what with the recent eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which also features this time round in 'Not the GB2RS News' on page 50.

On arriving in the Seychelles I was also treated to a forceful reminder of what not to do in such places as a card-carrying aircraft enthusiast. No, whatever you do: don't walk down the steps off the aircraft, wander across the tarmac and then get out your camera with a view to casually taking a photograph or two of the aircraft you've just left behind. Within seconds I had a security guard pointing a machine gun at me. They take security very seriously down that way.

As for the furthest west I've ever been (yes, I bet you couldn't wait for me to tell you this...): that's Curaçao and PJ2/G3RFX, where I did actually manage a fair number of QSOs. This was after a flight on board a KLM 747 ex-Amsterdam, with a brief stopover in PJ5, Sint Maarten. Yes, the airport with that much photographed and rather scary-looking low-level western approach across the beach.

But why am I telling you all this? Well, why should our illustrious contributors to the *Digest* have a monopoly on telling us about these exotic, far-flung places, dammit? Also, as somebody said in their reply to our recent *Digest* questionnaire: 'the Editor's page sets the scene for the edition and usually raises a smile'. Which I hope it once again did on both counts.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

Chairman's Chat

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

It was a really great Annual Dinner. As you will see elsewhere in this *Digest*, the day started for some of us at 11:00 when John, G3WKL, held a DQRM workshop. We beavered away for a couple of hours before stopping for lunch and when we got down to the bar area there were already a good number of members ordering lunch. It seems the afternoon session is proving more popular as time goes by. And this year, that afternoon session was Michael, G7VJR, supported by other Committee members demonstrating our new membership information system and website. The Dinner was followed by an excellent talk on Ofcom's Baldock monitoring site given by Ken, G4RWD. Although the bar may stop serving at midnight, some of us stayed talking until almost 2am – you can always spot those LF operators!

The bands have been fairly dull of late, with the solar flux down at 75 following that nice run in the 90s earlier in the year. But there have been some good DXpeditions around – quite a few involving Club members. The Club has recently offered sponsorship to the following DX-peditions: 3CØC, Annobon (currently delayed due to airstrip problems there); T31X, Central Kiribati (May/June); E4X, Palestine (May/June); CYØ, Sable Is. (Oct) and ZL8X, Kermadec (November).

For my part this time of year is when I pack up my LF antennas for the summer and allow the lawn and the vegetable patch to return to their rightful use (although I might argue that point). It's been a good season on LF with a number of new band-slots from DXpeditions who have concentrated on LF in the absence of propagation on the higher bands. However, I'm planning on spending more time above 20m during the summer months, and enjoying the summer contests.

The LF Challenge was fiercely fought again this year and congratulations to Chris, G3SJJ, for an outstanding 168 DXCCs worked in the month of March. Although Chris won overall, we had three different band winners: Bob, MDØCCE, for 160m; Dave, EI9FBB, for 80m - and Shaun, MØBJL, for 40m. Well done to everyone who entered and thanks again to Michael, G7VJR, for ClubLog.

Committee activities have largely centred on getting CMIS and the website up and running and I am indebted to the members of the Committee for their hard work in this area. If you haven't logged in to the members pages yet, then please do, and if you have ideas on how to improve the website, especially with photos and news reports, then please contact any member of the Committee. And while we're on the subject, if you 'subscribe' to the 'For Sale'/'Wanted' Forum, you will get an e-mail every time someone posts an advert. Indeed, why not place an advert yourself?

Finally to our biggest, social event in the calendar - the AGM and Summer Social. The details are elsewhere in this *Digest* and for the first time you can book online for the event. Last year we had 85 attendees and this year we want to break the 100. Don't forget that partners and non-members are welcome to come to the Summer Social (but of course cannot vote at the AGM). Last year 27 members brought their partners, some of whom only met through the Club's social activities. You might also consider making up a car load; a number of members did that last year – it adds enjoyment and makes sense in these greener days – and why not offer a seat to an upcoming DXer too? I look forward to seeing you all there.

73 and good DX Chris, G3SVL

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

As Martyn mentioned in the last *Digest*, Trish and I have recently been on a trip to the Antarctic. Trish described the trip as both the best holiday and the worst holiday she had ever had!

Why the worst? The waves between the South Orkneys and the Antarctic continent reached 12 metres, making our 3B7 trip across the Indian Ocean seem like a trip on the Serpentine! And the wind reached 130 kph on the beam. I went up onto the bridge in the middle of this two-day storm – the seas were just like the side of a three storey house coming straight at us. Trish suffered for these two days and I was sick once. This was unusual for me as I am a good sailor, but only a quarter of the 120 guests were at dinner those two nights and the crew did a marvellous job looking after us. Our doctor recommended Cinnarizine 15 mgs tablets for sickness and they worked well.

We called in at the Falkland Islands and were met by Mike, VP8NO, who showed us around. He took us up Sapper Hill, where we saw the battlegrounds of Mount Tumbledown. It was a great day. Then on to South Georgia, which was really spectacular. We landed in several places, each time getting ashore in Zodiacs. These were wet landings – sometimes very wet! We particularly enjoyed the former whaling station at Grytviken. Then onto the Antarctic continent and the South Shetlands. The seascapes were really beautiful, with eight-mile-long icebergs towering above our ship and lots of wild life - whales, penguins, albatross, seals, etc. A photographer's dream.

Seeing these really made the trip. The final passage back to Ushuaia in Argentina via the Drake Passage was unusually calm. The

Prince Albert II run by Silverseas is highly recommended.

Having visited that part of the world, I really admire the DXpeditioners who activate the remote Antarctic islands. The logistics are formidable and living conditions very challenging. I see that the Microlite group are putting on a DXpedition to the South Orkneys next January. We wish them every success.

Back to the UK. I've been chasing the T32 IOTA team around the Central Pacific. They were really difficult to work on 20m SSB. On one occasion I managed to have a decent chat with Steve, 9M6DXX, but mostly it was a case of a '5-9, 5-9' QSO, although signals were really weak. The UK was a real challenge for the T32 team, with 20m opening for just 20 minutes on some days and not at all on others. Congratulations to the CDXCers on the team. In addition to Steve, they were Steve, G4EDG, and Mike, K9AJ. The T32 IOTA story should be a good read.

CMIS has been launched successfully and thanks to Michael, G7VJR, and the team for all their hard work. Wild Apricot is an excellent platform, with all the pages being editable. We are planning to use WA as the platform for the Pacific 2011 DXpedition web pages. This should work well and we will be able to update sponsor lists very quickly, a problem area in the past.

We have to pay an annual charge for WA and we are really grateful for the sponsorship of these pages by Martin Lynch & Sons, Nevada Radio and Yaesu UK.

The Summer Social here at LWB on Saturday, 17 July, will soon be with us. We look forward to a great turn-out, good

company, good weather and some good food and raffle prizes. Do try booking on line using CMIS.

73

Neville

Stop Press

Yaesu have again kindly agreed to donate a FT-450AT as our main raffle prize!

G3NUG's Antenna Set-up - Part 4: Solid rock again, the Readimix is poured and the two Versatowers are erected

Digging the trench from the side of the stream to the bases of the two towers was straightforward. But then we hit solid rock at one base. We didn't have a lot of flexibility as regards the siting of this base as it lined up with some oak trees that were shielding the masts from our neighbours.

The heavy pneumatic drill again did the trick, two large holes were dug and steel reinforcement added. Steel box sections were then formed above the ground. Two large loads of Readimix filled the holes, a template with the base plate fixing bolts was placed on top of the box section and the concrete was left to dry.

After two weeks our friendly local farmer lifted the base plates onto the bolts and these fitted perfectly. We used some shims to make sure that the posts were vertical as we tightened the bolts. We then sealed around the base plate with fine cement to prevent the ingress of water.

The next stage was to fit the five tower sections to each of the base plates. Again, this was straightforward. Finally, the various stainless steel lifting ropes were fitted together with the 12 volt electric winches. These are powerful beasts (8000 lbs pull) and can cause a lot of damage if the guys get caught up.

Finally, the C31XR was mounted on the special tilting bracket that I designed years ago and that was described in RadCom at that time. The mast, boom and elements are all set so they are horizontal at ground level. When the mast is raised to a vertical position the bracket closes and the beam swivels to a horizontal position. The marvels of science!

So G3NUG is back on the air. The location here is very quiet compared to Felden where there was a great deal of hash from the Hemel Hempstead electrics. I shall put my Force 12 1217 WARC Yagi on the second mast although the C31 works pretty well on the WARC bands off the back. Now for some LF antennas!

While all this was going on we had a party for all the neighbours, including those who had raised objections in the first place. We now get on very well with all the villagers and no-one seems to be at all bothered by the two masts.

New Member

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new member:

Call	Name	Location
G3SVK	Fred Curtis	Romford

CMIS Update

Michael Wells, G7VJR

Since the last *Digest* I am pleased to report that the Club has successfully launched the new CDXC Membership Information System (CMIS). On 2 April our old website disappeared, to be replaced by a new version, and the new membership database went live. The most obvious change you can see is the extra polish that the new website brought with it, but a more momentous change behind the scenes was the unification of all of the Club's membership records. This was a big step for CDXC, one that will assist in the running of the Club and greatly simplifying the operating of the Committee now and in years ahead.

We are over the threshold, with the first and most significant step of launching CMIS complete. There are now various follow-on jobs that I am working on. These include:

- Bringing the CDXC photo galleries into the website

Our galleries are currently hosted on a secondary website, which I hope to change by bringing these pages back into the main CDXC homepage. I am awaiting a software update from the team at Wild Apricot (in Toronto) this summer, which should enable me to complete this task. It will be an improvement to have these pages back on our homepage.

- Adding online shopping features to our merchandise pages

I am sure that many members would agree that it would be very convenient to be able to order clothing or other items that CDXC can currently only supply using paper order forms. With the launch of CMIS we have established a PayPal account for the Club, and I am now investigating PayPal shopping cart features. You can already join CDXC,

renew your membership or pay for event tickets on our website, so we are well on our way towards having full coverage with electronic payment options everywhere.

- Back issues of the *Digest*

PDF back issues of the *Digest* exist and I am now looking into bringing the last three years of these back issues online (for members only, with a 12-month gap). In time it is likely that the complete stock of all past *Digests* will be uploaded, with links to the expedition articles. There is a great deal of work to be done, as I am sure you can imagine. This is why I have elected to tackle just the more recent back issues to start with! I will update you as these jobs progress.

In the meantime, I hope you will find the existing features of the CDXC website helpful and the whole Committee would be interested to hear any further feedback from members at the Summer Social. It was certainly very useful to chat to members at the Annual Dinner (shortly before CMIS launched) and your feedback was very encouraging.

Lastly, I recently posted a short set of instructions on the Yahoo Reflector which explained how to receive an e-mail whenever there is a new For Sale/Wanted advert posted. This is a new feature on the CDXC homepage. Here are those instructions again (below), in case you missed them.

Vy 73 Michael, G7VJR

First, log in to the site, as you need to identify yourself as a member. Any problems, see www.cdxc.org.uk/help. I've tried to explain all the steps involved.

After you're logged in, go to the For Sale/Wanted menu on the left (or go directly to www.cdxc.org.uk/notices, which you can bookmark). You will notice above the ads, top right, there is text link which says 'Subscribe To Forum'. Click this! At this point you'll get an e-mail once a day (assuming there is something new in the forum).

There is an optional way to change how often you get e-mailed. If you want to change the frequency, go to your Profile (bottom left, where the login area is found, you will see a link to 'View Profile'). Follow these steps:

- 1) Click 'E-mail Subscriptions' at the top.
- 2) Click the big 'Edit Profile' button at the top (important!)

- 3) Use the pull-down options to change your subscription for the For Sale/Wanted forum.
- 4) Click 'Save' at the bottom of the form.



CDXC Treasury Notes

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

The CDXC subscription year runs from 1 July to 30 June. This May 2010 *Digest* is the last issue for the current subscription year. Your subscription needs to be renewed. The CDXC subscription rates will be the same for the coming year 2010-11 as they were in 2009-10. For UK Members the 2010-11 subscription is £18 and for Overseas Members the Sterling subscription is £24 (with the current approximate equivalents being \$40 or €30).

Standing Orders – many thanks!

Special thanks to all those members who have set up standing orders to pay their CDXC subscription in early July each year. Last year there were over 300 subscription payments made with standing orders by UK Members and by Overseas Members with a UK bank account. 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 own callsign which should be used as the 'reference'.

Overseas subscriptions

Overseas Members (who do not have a UK Bank account) can make their CDXC subscription payment by PayPal to

treasurer@cdxc.org.uk, by credit card or by sending cash. As always we are grateful to Martin Lynch at ML & S for his assistance in processing the credit card payments on behalf of CDXC.

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.

Seven years done – Treasurer finally QSYs back to the bands!

How times flies! It is now seven full years since G3TXF took over as CDXC Treasurer. That's seven CDXC annual subscription renewal cycles, seven CDXC AGMs and seven CDXC Summer Socials (well, it was six Summer Socials actually, because one SS got washed out!) and about 30 CDXC Meetings.

During this time there were several major changes in the way that the CDXC treasury function was looked after. Principle among these was the creation of a CDXC membership database which recorded in detail all transactions and correspondence with members concerning their subscriptions. The CDXC membership database provided useful statistics on membership trends as well as a full history of a member's subscription payments etc. This database was where the address records and contact details were also stored. In practice during this seven-year period the membership- record keeping and updating role of the CDXC Secretary was done by the CDXC Treasurer using the membership database.

A parallel CDXC marketing database was also created where details of potential new members could be stored for use in selective CDXC marketing mailshots. Potential new CDXC members were identified from numerous sources, but primary amongst these were DXpedition logs. By meticulously analysing DXpedition logs it was possible to identify seriously active UK DXers who were not already members of CDXC. Their details were added to the CDXC marketing database and over time they would receive a number of mailings inviting them to join CDXC. Happily for CDXC, many new members were signed up by careful maintenance and judicious use of the CDXC marketing database over several years.

For the future new systems are being introduced for CDXC centred on the web-based CMIS. As outlined elsewhere, CDXC membership records will now be held online in CMIS. CMIS will enable contact to be maintained with CDXC members through many different means and will help with the planning, promoting and running of CDXC events. In addition the online payment of subscriptions and other purchases will soon be introduced through CMIS.

A new Treasurer will be appointed at the forthcoming AGM in July. After seven years your current Treasurer will then be able to return full-time to the bands, to DXpeditioning and, of course, to his QSL card collection!

73 de Nigel G3TXF

CDXC Treasurer

2010 CDXC Annual Dinner Report

Gordon Rolland, G3USR

The 2010 Annual Dinner took place at the Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre on Saturday, 20 March.

Sixty CDXC Members and guests sat down to an excellent evening meal and were both informed and entertained by the after-dinner speaker, Ken Cheetham/G4RWD of Ofcom. Ken presented an interesting overview of Ofcom's Baldock-based Operations Room and the field work that often results from their observations.

I am also pleased to report that most members were very pleased with the standard of catering this year. It looks as if previous feedback to Wyboston Lakes was taken on board.

Earlier in the afternoon Michael, G7VJR, demonstrated the new CMIS system and provided information on how members would be able to update their own personal data on this and control the extent to which personal data can be shared with other Club

members. Many of those present expressed their interest in the system's functions and complemented the way in which CMIS will help to make CDXC's administration systems more contemporary. This extended not only to the system's look and feel, but also to the way in which it will allow Committee functions to be organised and shared where necessary.

In addition feedback from members on the format of the day was good. The combination of an opportunity to rag chew, to learn about current and future developments in the Club and to chat with Committee members has begun to emerge as a successful event format and is likely to be repeated in 2011.

What's next? Don't miss the CDXC Summer Social on Saturday, 17 July 2010, at the QTH of President Neville, G3NUG. See you there.

Gordon, G3USR

CDXC News Service

News and updates are published through the CDXC News Service on our website at www.cdxc.org.uk/news.

Information about forthcoming DXpeditions, details of members' trips as well as CDXC events or other announcements which are relevant to CDXC members are widely publicised through this page. The News Service is also monitored by certain DX newsletter services and websites.

If you would like to submit your own news, please click the link at the top of the page, or go directly to www.cdxc.org.uk/submit_news. There is an option to submit a photo as well as text. All news is credited.

If you have any questions about the CDXC News Service, please contact Tim Beaumont, M0URX (tim@m0urx.com).

Digest Questionnaire Report

by the Chief Mini-skirted Maiden

Many thanks for the feedback. I will attempt to summarise the main points. Although the response rate was fairly low, the quality of comments and suggestions was high. Surveys such as these tend to produce a low return unless potential respondents are particularly unhappy or concerned about the services or products being offered. So I think the overall conclusion must be that most of you are happy with things the way they are, or maybe you didn't read Martyn's Editorial requesting your feedback (I refuse to refer to him as 'RFX'!).

What do you turn to first?

Many of you said you started from the first page and read to the end. The photo pages are very popular, with the most specific mentions. Other pages you turn to when you receive the magazine include the regular columns and the Editorial.

"Will read from cover to cover, but a quick flick through will be the first thing."

"The photographs, as they will give me some indication of the mouth-watering articles in store for me this time."

"Editors page, sets the scene for the edition – and usually raises a smile."

What do you want less of?

The overwhelming majority said that the balance of articles was about right.

"No way, I would be happy to have twice as much of everything in every issue of the *Digest*."

"Anything non-radio."

What do you want more of?

Suggestions included practical operating articles and pictures of stations; antennas

and logging software; product reviews and clear information on how to use the CDXC Cluster.

"A data section, with more on PSK31, 63, as more and more stations seem to be using this mode."

"I'd like more real debate (controversy even) and humour."

"More about members' stations, problems they've encountered both technically and physically and legally - antennas, planning permission."

"More stories of DXpeditions, tails of woe and daring exploits travelling to far-flung locations. (Just to get me jealous!)"

What new topics would you like to be included?

Lots of ideas here. The suggestions included a data section; information about antennas; a regular column written by a keen contester; DX operating experiences from both sides of the pile-up; product reviews and technical articles; tips on setting up a DXpedition; logging software; busting pile-ups with low power - and include other data modes such as PSK in the RTTY column.

"Occasional light (but DX-relevant) technical articles - add-ons to a station which improve DX working, and also antennas."

Length of the articles

Generally, most respondents thought the length of most articles and regular columns was about right, with the comment that a few articles could sometimes be over-long.

"About three pages with good pictures, even black and white, is about right - long detailed articles on the minutia of travel,

especially if they are repetitious, should be avoided.”

“About right, possibly some are a bit long. Occasionally, it looks like what the Victorians called ‘penny-a-liners’ are involved.”

You were asked what you liked best and why in the January *Digest*

A selection of the articles which received the most mentions:

“QSLing and LoTW”, I can see problems in the future for using paper QSL”; “AT9RS - IOTA Goa State Group. Good length article, enough variety, plus good photos”

“K4M because I considered it well written and informative.”

“Not the GB2RS News - great! I love the humour.”

“TX4T. Nigel, G3TXF, is in my estimation a wonder man”

“The Austral Islands and Niue, Part 2: Niue; I particularly liked the background of the island and its people, the human element.”

I also asked you what you liked least and why

There were a few suggestions, but no consensus. I suppose this really is a matter of what you are least interested in reading about.

“DX phone contest. Possibly a little too long, but not a serious criticism.”

“Crossword, I always struggle with it.”

“The RTTY column - I skip that as I do not operate RTTY... but keep it in as it is important to those who do.”

“I wonder if the list of DXpeditions is a good use of space – it’s widely available on the Web.”

Regular columns

I asked you which regular columns you like most and least. The Editorial; *Not* the GB2RS News; Chairman’s Chat,

President’s Patter, DX an’ all that and the Borneo column were mentioned most as being a favourite. RTTY was mentioned in both categories, depending on whether respondents used the mode and the Crossword was also mentioned as being the best and least liked.

“Best: DX an’ all that, Borneo Bulletin. Least: RTTY (but only because it’s not a mode I favour).”

“Editorial, Chairman’s Chat and President’s Patter are favourites. DX doesn’t always add that much for me - but then I subscribe to a number of DX-type feeds which are very current.”

“The regular columns I like are DX an’ all that, Chairman’s Chat, President’s Patter, Contest and of course the Editorial and *Not* the GB2RS News. (I think it’s important not take ourselves too seriously.) The column I like the least is the RTTY column, but only because I’m not active in that mode.”

“I like them all, and read every column!”

I asked what you would do differently if you were the Editor of the *Digest*

Most said nothing, as you think the *Digest* is fine as it is. Other suggestions included having a photograph from a DXpedition on the cover and photographs with the articles rather than in the middle of the *Digest*.

Other thoughts included “I think it is a thumping good read.”; “the *Digest* is CDXC’s greatest asset.”; “I appreciate all the work behind the scenes by the CDXC Committee, please pass on my thanks.”; “The *Digest* is a very good read and I look forward to it popping through the letter box.”. And finally to the person who wanted a photograph of the Mini-skirted Maidens, I did ask but they are very camera- shy!

Now it’s over to your Editor to decide what, if anything, he needs to change, include or do more of.

Best wishes, Jane (not the XYL)

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT *don@g3xtt.com*

Domestic matters have again meant that I haven't been on the bands as much as I would have liked, although when I have they seem to have been reasonably lively - and I see some serious scores already showing in the annual CW table, run by G3WGV, for example. 10m is still looking 'iffy', with the highest score just 18 entities, but Bob/ MDØCCE is showing 94 on 12m, which is way better than might have been expected at this stage of the past few years.

Recent contests have helped bring out some nice ones, with the Commonwealth Contest putting 3B9WR (good effort, John) and several others into UK logs on plenty of bands. After last year's Commonwealth Contest I received an irate e-mail from a US contester who felt it unfair that all these VK and ZL stations on the low bands were refusing to work the USA. I did point out that the DXpedition stations active in the ARRL DX Contests refuse to work anything but North America, which is equally frustrating for those of us in the UK and elsewhere.

Talking about recent DX, I wonder how many members made it with the T32 guys from their various island stops. I really didn't have much opportunity to listen for them, but I gather it was quite a challenge. I did catch up with a few Pacific stations - 5W and ZK3 (by the same pair of ops) were both new for me on 30m, while KH7XS was a huge signal on both 20 and 17m, but then he has a huge station of the sort that DXpedition efforts simply cannot replicate.

I must mention the S79GM expedition as being a great two-man effort (well done Rob and Gavin), although obviously the north-south path is more favourable for propagation from the UK. The YI9PSE team also gave many of you new slots, I feel

sure. And there were others too, such as VK9X by G3RTE and G3SWH, which I imagine will feature in these pages before too long.

If you are into longer-term planning, do make a note of ZL8X, Kermadec, scheduled for November/December. This should be probably the best-ever opportunity to work that rare one. And South Orkney by the Microlite Penguins DXpedition team next January/February. Interestingly, my needs for South Orkney are the WARC bands and RTTY, having worked AZ5ZA on 160m as long ago as 1983 and LU6Z on 80m in 1996. My most recent South Orkney QSO was AY1ZA in 2004. Kermadec, in contrast, I have worked only on 40, 20 and 15m, and on CW and RTTY. It is the only entity I need on phone! The big problem in the past has been getting permission to stay on the island overnight - I presume the ZL8X team have managed to crack that one. Sadly K3LP and YT1AD have cancelled their planned autumn operation from T31, Central Kiribati, apparently as a result of an announcement of an earlier operation by a Ukrainian team. This seems a pity as there must surely be enough demand for both, and autumn would have been a better bet for propagation. 3CØ, Annobon, has also been put on hold due to runway repairs on the island. Let's hope that one is resurrected before too long.

New Book

I see that the Idiom Press have announced the forthcoming publication of a new book by Bob Locher, W9KNI (the author of 'The Complete DXer'). It is entitled 'A Year of DX' and it follows Bob as he makes an all-out effort to win the 2008 running of CQ Magazine's DX Marathon (a year-long operating event during which a contestant

works as many countries and CQ zones as possible, any band or any mode). The book also contains discussions of what DXing is all about, the possibilities of DXing in low sunspot periods contributed by KF7E (an FSDXA veteran), a chapter on optimising your SSB transmit audio by K7JA, a discussion of what is the ideal linear amplifier, and much more. Book publication is 1 May, but advance orders are being accepted. 'The Complete Dixer' used to be pretty much required reading for anyone new to the DX game. Hopefully Bob's new book will prove just as absorbing.

Mount Athos

I see that the Greek team that visited Monk Apollo in Mount Athos has now posted a video to YouTube which can now be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsyRW7CT1Aw. This one is rare for very different reasons to most other rare entities, relying almost entirely on one individual to keep it active. Who knows what will happen if and when Apollo decides he has had enough.

Feedback

A few responses to my last column, which is very welcome. It's nice to know someone out there is actually reading this stuff!

From Peter, G3RZP:

Don, I thought your piece on DX in the latest CDXC news rather thought-provoking. I have been rebuilding my amplifier for a little while - since September 2006 to be precise - and so have been finding the joys(?) of running with 100W or so. A 4-ele SteppIr at 62 ft means that, to be honest, I haven't had occasion to really miss the amplifier. Bear in mind that I only (!) need KP1 for DXCC Honor Roll #1, and cards for 11 countries on 80m to finish 5BDXCC. Out of the countries needed on 80m, 14 of them have been worked since the amplifier went in for rebuild, so were done with 100W.

Your analysis seems to me to be spot on: an amplifier is going to be needed at times, and especially on the LF bands. There is one advantage in not running the amp: I notice the electricity meter does not click up the numbers anywhere near as fast as it used to...

From Ian, G3KZR:

Interesting comments as usual, Don. I agree totally with your comments about the use of power. I have 156 countries with 1W but to compete across 10 bands the best combination of available antennas and judicious use of power do make the game a lot less frustrating!

I had some very odd results from the recent expeditions: I had the Australs on most bands, but needed 160m. TX3D proved to be dead easy on 160m for a nice new band/country. However, TX4T was very hard going on 160m. The openings on 160m here were after sunrise, mostly very weak and QSOs invariably snaffled by the Great and the Good. Your feedback that the latter all still wanted French Polynesia on 160m helps ease the pain! I did get them on 80m CW for a new band/country despite having a poor antenna on that band (40m GP). Actually French Polynesia has been poorly represented outside the mainstream bands and modes. I still need it on RTTY as well as Top Band.

The VP8 team also yielded a new band/country on 80m, but the remarks for TX4T on 160m again apply!

The 9X team had very good signals and I noted that the only bands I still needed were 12 and 6m. Two days running they were pounding in on 12m (RTTY and CW), but I just could not get their attention. Admittedly the beam was wound down and firing into the roof void, but it was clear that other parts of EU were much stronger. The time I was on very few UK calls were noted, but I was lazy with the antenna and probably paid the price!

I was very impressed by N7OU and W7YAQ - and they have yielded new bands from both 5W and ZK3.

I just entered my country score to DXCC for the first time as I am now only three short of the maximum current entities (Crozet, Navassa, Bouvet). I felt sorry for the poor card checker, GØKRL, having to wade through all 335 cards, although he found some of my more historical cards interesting (comment: 'before I was even born'). I had three cards/entities rejected, but by linking to LoTW two of the entities were confirmed by QSOs with other stations for which I had no paper cards. This newish feature is a very nifty service, but I have had to dig into my very meagre stock of Iranian cards to find a replacement to send off.

The gilt was taken off the gingerbread by the fact that the original listing on the DXCC site dropped 12 entities accidentally and the administrator had to reinstate them when I pointed this error out. The administrator's response and the problem was cleaned up very quickly (48 hours, including helping with the LoTW link)), but of course I had been puffed up by the anticipation of entering the ranks of the Honor Roll, only to find my initial listing was way out of contention!

I need to get it right before the fun and games start with the PJ entities!

It was sad to miss BERU this year, as the lift in HF band conditions must have made it lively. The recovery on the higher bands has been very dramatic - which may damage my efforts to notch up 300 countries on 40m!

From Steve, GW4BLE:

Don, as a recent convert to iPhone - the old Nokia was so last century - your comments in the latest *Digest* were well-timed. Hopefully someone will pen an article soon.

I have a short-cut to DX Summit, which is handy when out and about for keeping tabs

on what's happening. [Since Steve wrote that, I too have succumbed to the iPhone temptation - any recommendations on useful amateur radio 'apps' would be gratefully received - XTT]

That wraps it up for another one. I do find it increasingly difficult to find new thoughts, especially ones that don't overlap with what I am writing in my RadCom column. With almost seven years writing this column, following five years as Editor, two previous spells as Editor and one as Contest columnist, I do feel that you have perhaps all been subject to rather an overdose of XTT over the years, so would welcome a willing volunteer to take over the reins. Do feel free to offer your services to young Martyn. [*'Young Martyn'? I like that one! Ed.*]

Meanwhile I look forward to seeing many of you in July at the CDXC AGM and Summer Social extravaganza chez Neville. I will be freshly back from Moscow as a judge at WRTC, and then there is the IOTA Contest later in the month which I manage, which I hope many of you will take part in (and, please, send us your log, if only for checking purposes).

73 Don, G3XTT

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A CW-only DXpedition to Christmas Island

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

Jim, G3RTE, and I have managed to make a trip most years since our first operation from Les Minquiers Islands (IOTA EU-099) in 1996, although he was unable to accompany me to Mayotte last year. However, he was keen to make a trip in 2010 and we started looking at possible destinations on the Top 100 Most Wanted List in mid-June 2009. Of the list of possibilities we discussed at that time, Christmas Island (VK9X) was by far the least dangerous and easiest to get to, and thus a fairly simple decision.

History

Captain William Mynors of the East India Ship Company vessel, the *Royal Mary*, named the island when he arrived on Christmas Day 1643. However, it was not until 1688 that the first recorded landing took place.

During his 1872-76 oceanographic expedition, Dr John Murray collected mineral specimens from the seabed adjoining what is now Indonesia and predicted that phosphate deposits would be found on an island in the area. Royal Navy landings on Christmas Island in 1887 confirmed his prediction, and Britain annexed the island on 6 June 1888.

Phosphate is an important substance in both agriculture and industry and the first commercial exports were sent to Japan and Germany in January 1900. Mining operations flourished in the period leading up to the First World War, with Japan the biggest customer. When war broke out in South East Asia in 1941, Christmas Island was a target for Japanese occupation because of the phosphate deposits and the island was occupied on 31 March 1942. Preparations were made to mine and export phosphate, but further acts of sabotage

meant that only small amounts were exported to Japan during the occupation. In October 1945 *HMS Rother* reoccupied Christmas Island.

After the war the island was administered as part of the Colony of Singapore. On 1 January 1958 Christmas Island was excised from the Colony of Singapore and made a separate UK Crown Colony. On 1 October 1958, and following a payment by Australia to Singapore of £2.9 million, sovereignty was transferred from the UK to the Commonwealth of Australia.

In more recent times Christmas Island has achieved some notoriety as the site of an Australian government Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) on the north-west end of the island, capable of accommodating about 1,100 refugees.

Climate

Christmas Island has a relatively uniform climate throughout most of the year. Temperatures vary little from month to month. The average daily maximum is 28°C in April and the average daily minimum falls to 22°C in August.

Being about 1,000 km south of the equator, the island has a typical tropical equatorial climate and has just two distinct seasons: 'wet' and 'dry'.

The 'dry' season ranges from June to November and is characterised by long dry periods with steady south-east trade winds and occasional showers.

The 'wet' season falls between November and May, when the island comes under the influence of the north-west monsoons, when the day starts with a bank of cloud moving

across the island from the north, bringing with it intermittent downpours of rain.

The monsoon also occasionally brings high swells and gale-force winds. Heavy rainfall can sometimes last for days, although it's more likely to alternate with periods of humid, calm weather. The heavy seas disrupt shipping activities for weeks at a time and heavy mists also occur at higher altitudes, often disrupting incoming and outgoing flights.

Although we were on the island in the middle of the 'wet' season, we only saw two short, but very heavy rain storms, the second as we were boarding the aircraft to start the journey home.

Geography

About 2,600 km north-west of Perth, 500 km south of the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, and 975 km ENE of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island is a territory of Australia in the Indian Ocean with an area of 135 square kilometres and a population of about 1,400 Chinese, Malay and white residents who mainly live on the north-eastern tip of the island. This is a legacy of the historic, colonial-like system when indentured workers from China and Malaysia were employed in the phosphate mine. Following reforms pushed through by the unions in 1980, all are now Australian citizens.

Licensing

The normally major obstacle of getting a licence was eliminated by Australia having implemented the CEPT T/R 61-01 system in 2008, although the strict wording required VK to be 'appended to a visitor's personal callsign as a suffix'. Nigel, G3TXF, must have been one of the first to utilise this facility when passing through Queensland during his Pacific sojourn in March 2009 and he used VK4/G3TXF without any howls of protest from the WIA (or anybody else for that matter), being a much more

logical and conventional arrangement. Jim and I decided to use his G6AY call with the normal VK9X prefix and to operate as VK9X/G6AY.

However, in October 2009, and in conjunction with the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA), the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) issued a press release stating that from 1 November 2009 and following 'consultation' with the amateur community, they could no longer support having a suffix letter as a geographic identifier in VK9 callsigns to denote each of the six Australian external territories, including Christmas Island. The press release recognised that, although most operations from the external territories would require a VK9 callsign for DX-ing, contesting and/or QSLing purposes, under the provisions of the Amateur Licence Conditions Determination, portable operation is permitted using the amateur's home callsign /VK9 and stating their location.

Understandably, Jim was rightly concerned that the use of VK9X/G6AY would be contrary to the ACMA's rules and may thus invalidate our planned operation for DXCC and IOTA purposes. We certainly didn't want to use G6AY/VK9, as was inferred! Consequently he took the matter up with Jim, VK3PC, who had circulated the press release in the first instance and received the very reassuring response: "I would use VK9X/G6AY. The DX world knows where VK9X is, even if 'our' WIA don't".

Flights

I quickly found that there was a weekly charter flight operated by Australian Indian Ocean Territories Airways (AIOTA) using Malaysian Airlines aircraft from Kuala Lumpur (KL) via Singapore. Flights from London with Singapore Airlines integrated nicely with the charter flight times and in August 2009 I booked us both seats, departing Heathrow on 19 February 2010, returning on 27 February 2010. I also

booked and paid a deposit on seats on the AIOTA flights between Singapore and the island, with the balance to be paid in December.

Problems

When I contacted the island travel agency in December to pay the balance, I was told that AIOTA were no longer operating the service. It was now operated at slightly different times by Christmas Island Airlines and – most importantly - no longer stopped at Singapore. This meant that we would have to change our departure date to 18th February, take a connecting flight from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur (KL), stay overnight and then get the charter flight to the island on the morning of the 20th. It was obvious that the agency was highly embarrassed, as they booked us on the connecting Singapore-KL flights in both directions at no charge. We did have to pay extra for the changes to the outgoing London to Singapore flight, but did not need to make any changes to the timing of the homeward flight. For the night of 19 February I booked a room at the airport hotel, which is served by a free shuttle bus.

Accommodation

I contacted the Christmas Island Tourism Association, CITA, who manage various properties available for rent, carefully explaining a little about ham radio and about the purpose of our trip. Their recommendation was that we rent two rooms at The Sunset, located close to The Settlement and on the top of the cliffs at the north-eastern end of the island with a clear take-off to Europe and most of Asia. The owners were very happy for us to erect antennas and allocated us rooms at opposite ends of the first floor overlooking the ocean.

Competition!

In July 2009 four German operators announced a DXpedition to Christmas Island in November/December, with activity

on 160-10m using amplifiers on CW, SSB and the digital modes. The VK9XW and VK9XX operation did a superb job, focusing mainly on CW on the low bands and making some 27,000 QSOs over a two-week period. Naturally, I opened a dialogue with Rene, DL2JRM, who was kind enough to provide much helpful feedback.

Planning the antennas

Katrina at CITA sent me some photographs of The Sunset and the surrounding area in an effort to give us an idea of where we might rig our antennas, but there appeared to be no suitably located (or high enough) trees. I asked if she could suggest someone from whom we might hire some scaffolding poles and to give us a quotation for helping us to erect them. She recommended John McDonald, better known as Johnny Mac, and we exchanged a number of e-mails describing what we wanted. However, it was clear that our suggestions, based upon Katrina's photos, Johnny's comments and Google Earth images were impracticable and we had to wait until we were together on site before making final decisions. However, there was no problem in Johnny providing a number of 6-metre-long, 50-mm-diameter poles and rope etc. to guy them, which was a great relief.

Antennas and equipment

Jim is a great lover of dipoles, whereas I prefer to use a 30-metre-top doublet fed with 300 Ohm ribbon cable. With a small ATU the doublet covers all bands from 80 to 10m and it's easy to change bands without leaving the shack. Even in daylight changing Jim's dipoles tends to be a two-handed operation.

Jim took his Elecraft K2 and his brand-new laptop running Win-Test under Windows 7 in his hand luggage. I put my Kenwood TS-570D in the hold and carried a new (to me) hand laptop running N1MM in my hand luggage. To my horror the floppy drive on my ancient and much travelled Compaq

running Windows 95 and CT had finally died and had had to be replaced.

The outward journey

We met at Heathrow's Terminal 3 for the overnight flight to Singapore. Our bags were booked through to KL without difficulty, although we would have to collect boarding passes for the Singapore to KL leg on arrival in Singapore. The flight was uneventful, as was the connection to KL and the luggage arrived. Despite a confirmation e-mail, the hotel had no record of our booking, but managed to find us a room. We managed a fitful night's sleep and an early breakfast before taking the bus back to the airport and checking in for the flight to the island.

The flight was about half full, which meant that Jim and I had a row of seats to ourselves. Customs and immigration formalities were lengthy, even though most of the passengers held Australian passports. The Australians are quite paranoid about the importation of plants and insects, but we must have looked respectable, as our bags were merely passed through an X-ray machine and declared free of contraband.

I'd booked us a taxi for the transfer from the airport and the driver was waiting for us as arranged. Johnny Mac also turned up, promising to meet us at The Sunset later to help with the antennas. The drive from the airport took about 15 minutes and deposited us at The Sunset, which was deserted apart from a note on the door of Reception confirming our booking.

Rigging the antennas

We just had time to change and take a quick walk around before Johnny Mac arrived with scaffolding poles to make two 12-metre-high masts.

There were some apparently derelict buildings next door and a convenient palm tree to the north, so I decided to place my

mast on a piece of scrub land outside one of these buildings, a few metres from the cliff edge, guy it three ways and to support the centre of the doublet from it. The two ends of the doublet were supported by the palm tree at one end and the roof of The Sunset at the other, generally facing north-west.

Siting Jim's mast was a bit more problematic due to the access road, but after some discussion we decided to lash it to a conveniently placed timber post, guy it three ways and for him to rig his various dipoles as inverted vees. Jim's mast was even closer to the cliff edge than mine, again facing north-west.

It was very hot and we needed Johnny's industrial gloves to be able to handle the scaffolding tubes after they had been lying in the sun, but we had the masts erected and the antennas strung in record time. We rigged plastic dog bone insulators at the top of both masts and ran nylon halyards through them to facilitate changing antennas, which was a necessity in Jim's case.

It was then time to retire to the local pub to re-hydrate and to reward Johnny for his efforts, as he refused all other forms of reimbursement.

On the air

Jim decided to open on 17m, and was immediately busy with a mainly European pile-up. His first QSO was with UA9CCP at 1013 UTC (1713 local time). My first QSO was with JR5DPV on 20m at 1047 UTC, but I couldn't generate a pile-up, so tried 15m, also without much success - before settling down to a nice run of mainly JAs on 30m.

After a couple of hours we took a break for dinner. Being a Saturday, all the restaurants were closed, except one which was a short walk away. We then found out just how high the cost of living is on the island, mainly due to most things having to be

imported - plus the presence of the staff of the IDC. It wasn't helped by the adverse change in the exchange rate since August 2009, having deteriorated from better than 2:1 to around 1.6:1. A simple evening meal and a bottle of beer cost between £20 and £25. After dinner it was back on the bands for a few more hours before falling into bed, absolutely exhausted.

The Sunset has a WiFi network and a reasonable Internet connection, so we'd planned to upload the log on a daily basis to my website. After a successful upload on the morning of 21 February, the site crashed that day and I was unable to do anything about it until I got back home. What was interesting was the ability to log into the CDXC Cluster and watch the incoming spots and comments. It was also very useful to be able to put out a 'DXALL' spot when starting a new session, rather than have to wait for someone to spot us.

Conditions were much improved over those experienced over the last several years, with the SFI around the 84 mark for all of our stay. On the 21st I found 15m to be open to Japan and Asia from around 0500 UTC, with Europe starting to come through at around 0700 UTC. Jim found 12m open to Europe from around 1100 UTC. I was quite amazed to find 10m open to Europe at the same time and we did our best to take advantage of these openings.

To minimise the number of duplicate QSOs we agreed that, as far as possible, we would each stick to individual bands. I operated on mainly 30, 20, 15 and 10m, whilst Jim operated mainly on 40, 17 and 12m.

One evening, while we were changing one of Jim's dipoles, and much to his chagrin, the halyard came tumbling down on top of us. Only one thing could have happened, and that was the friction of the 2 mm diameter nylon rope running through the plastic dog bone insulator had sawn its way through, and so it turned out. It would be necessary to lower the mast and replace the

insulator and halyard, not a job that I was prepared to do in the dark with just the two of us, so we temporarily rigged a low 20m dipole as best we could and Jim was surprised at the results. The following morning we made contact with Johnny Mac, who came down that afternoon and very quickly got things back to normal.

Another odd thing that happened was that I was contacted by the manager of The Sunset who had a lady with her who wanted to speak to me 'about my wires'. My first thought was that I had some sort of a TVI problem, but it turned out that she claimed to be the owner of the piece of scrub land on which my mast was sitting and wanted it removed in case it 'fell down and injured someone or damaged something'. She had already cut through the rope securing the end of the antenna to the palm tree. I explained that to lower the mast safely required three people and that we would have to contact Johnny Mac, but would sort it out for her. Johnny subsequently spoke to her boyfriend and resolved the issue. I didn't put the antenna back on the palm tree, though, but found an alternative anchor point and didn't notice any difference in performance.

Operating standards

Generally the pile-ups were furious but well behaved and I saw no evidence of any DQRM. Stations trying to make duplicate QSOs have always been a problem and I was very firm with them, saying "QSO B4" and moving on. Only twice did the station concerned argue, and I logged those two QSOs. Jim worked about 40 on the first day, but after that took the same line as me.

We'd been particularly asked to listen for North American stations, as it was alleged that the German group had ignored the openings (although the statistics on their website seem to disprove this). The short path was not helped by a hill directly behind The Sunset. Consequently, when a US station broke the pile-up, we asked the pile-

up to stand by to see if there were any others. In the early days it was difficult to persuade the Europeans to do so. There was one well-known GØ station, unfortunately a CDXC member, who would just not stop calling and he was blacklisted by us both.

With the improvement in HF band conditions and the excellent job on the LF bands that the Germans had done in November 2009, we decided to concentrate as far as possible on 15, 12 and 10m. We

never did plan any 160m operation, but I tried 80m one evening and called CQ for about 30 minutes, but made only one QSO – with a UAØ, so there was no doubt that I was getting out. Jim operated on 40m towards the end of the week after 17m had closed.

Statistics

The table below shows the full QSO breakdown by band:

BAND	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	TOTAL
G3RTE	0	902	138	212	2,396	0	1,321	0	5,040
G3SWH	1	0	1,790	663	0	2,305	0	457	5,216
TOTAL	1	902	1,928	875	2,396	2,305	1,321	457	10,256

The table below shows the DXpedition statistics by DXCC entity:

BAND	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	TOTAL
DXCC	1	63	77	58	80	77	64	44	102

We made QSOs with 5,209 unique calls and 191 UK stations.

Getting home

The return flight to KL left the island at 1205 local time (0505 UTC) on 27 February and we were able to book our luggage all the way through to Heathrow, although we would again have to collect boarding passes in KL and Singapore. The flights were uneventful, although we realised we actually flew between KL and Singapore three times that day! It was a long journey, not helped by the fact that some children in the cabin seemed to wake up and cry at half hourly intervals during the Singapore to London leg. Arrival at Heathrow was on time at 0545 UTC on 28 February and the baggage also arrived.

The raw log was uploaded to LoTW on 4 March and has also been uploaded to (and is fully searchable on) my website (www.g3swh.org.uk/christmas-island.html), showing 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.

Our particular thanks go to our XYLs, Cheryl and Jan, for allowing us to go; to Katrina at the Christmas Island Tourist Association (www.christmas.net.au); to Kashirah at the Travel Exchange Christmas Island for sorting out the flights; to Angie and all the staff at The Sunset and to Johnny Mac for help with the antenna masts (what would we have done without him?); as well as to all of our sponsors: (RSGB, CDXC, GM DX Group, EUDXF, GDXF, Clipperton DXC, Swiss DX Foundation, West Tennessee DX Association, Nippon DX Association and Singapore Airlines) for their support and for making this DXpedition possible.

Senegal 2010

Tom Wylie, GM4FDM, and Ronald Stuy, PA3EWP

It has to be said that Senegal was not our first choice. Our first choice were the Solomon Islands, H44. We felt that these needed doing, especially on the low bands. We started to do our homework and even found a site to operate from on the north side of the island of Guadalcanal on the beach. Our problem was that there were only two of us and the baggage allowance was insufficient for us to carry decent antennas for the low bands plus a substantial linear to ensure we could put out a good signal on 160 and 80m.

A second search of the Internet found a shack for rent in Palau (T88). This shack is owned and operated by a Japanese consortium and operates from a hotel room. However, it seems that every time we e-mailed, the price went up a couple of hundred dollars, so at £3,000 (each) for a ten-day operation we quit.

Time was running out as Ronald had already booked his holidays, and so it was fortunate that he stumbled another rental shack on the Internet, in Senegal. We know that Senegal is not the most sought after location on the planet, but in our experience we know that if you can be loud on the bands, you can create your own pile-up. This is why we go on expeditions – to run pile-ups. It makes no difference whether the pile-up is European or Japanese stations, the pile-up gives the adrenalin rush.

Flying to Senegal was cheap on Iberia and the shack rental was within our budget. It didn't take long for us to make up our mind. The shack was located at Somone, some 70 km south of Dakar, the capital of Senegal, and our host would arrange that we got picked up at the airport. Iberia allowed us 2 bags each of 23 kg each – so there would be no problem with a weight limit. The

shack is owned by Jean François Lorne, F4AHV / 6W7RV, and is available for rent.

Jean François's property consists of four bungalows for rent, plus his own house and a three- storey building with the shack on the second floor. It is not air conditioned, but has a large noiseless roof fan. All the windows have bug screens, so can remain open in the evenings to allow the cool evening air to filter through. One wall has a bench top from end to end with sufficient electrical points to allow two - perhaps three - stations to operate. Antenna and rotator cables are brought in via a pipe underneath the bench top. The shack therefore is quite comfortable. Jean François has built up quite a workshop of tools and test equipment, in the main brought out from France. Purchase tax and import duty is considerable in Senegal, so I guess most things have been brought into the country by the back door.

The antenna farm consisted of two towers approximately 40 ft tall. One tower had a three- element monobander for 15m; the other had three-element monobanders for 10m and 20m. For the low bands there was a Titanex with a tuning box which allowed operation on 160/80 and 40m. We did count the ground radials, but concluded they were insufficient considering the poor sandy ground. It was obvious that we could only use one low band at a time if we restricted ourselves to the Titanex. Ronald has just purchased the DX Engineering control box for a 40m 4-square and it was given a good run out in Senegal. We went to a local electrical shop and just about cleared him out of single-strand wire - so much so that we had a minimum of 25 radials on each of the four fibre stick verticals. The only problem with the 4- square was that due to trees and bushes it was too close to the Titanex and it was impossible to beam to the

USA on 40m whilst running on 80m or 160m.

Our antenna farm was completed by two other fibre sticks with verticals for 30m and 17m, each with eight raised and tuned radials. When we found that 12m was open we quickly strung up a sloper for that band from the main 20m tower.

The main rental shack radio was a Kenwood TS-870 and this was complimented by my own K3. Gavin, GMØGAV, kindly loaned me his Tokyo Hi Power solid state amp, the one Chris/ GM3WOJ used while on ZK2. Ronald has his own home-made solid state amp. Both amplifiers ran around 600W. Each station was equipped with a Microham USB Microkeyer II and a laptop running Win-Test.

We did have a problem with my own laptop, which runs Vista, and this was in constant conflict with the Microkeyer and would not allow us to run RTTY. Ronald and I swapped PCs, as his was running XP and had no conflicts with the Microham unit. As Ronald used CW only, running the WinKey, he encountered no problems. Ronald and I compliment each other in that he quite likes to work the night shift, while I prefer the day shift. In the evenings we were able to run both stations by using of band pass filters.

The pile-ups were large, constant and it seemed never-ending. The only band where we ran into difficulty was Top Band, where we had no separate receive antenna. Ronald worked in the 160m contest which ran during our first weekend. No receive antenna and high noise levels ensured he only made just over 300 QSOs during the contest. Outside the contest we persevered on 160 and 80m to make as many QSOs as possible. 40m, with the 4 –square, had to be the star performer. From 6pm each evening Europe was VERY loud on 40m. Sometimes we got 50dB-over S9 signals. From around 8pm the JAs started filtering through just as loud as the Europeans. By

around 10pm the signals from JA overpowered even the European signals and were consistently many dBs over S9. After midnight the JAs started to fade and signals from North America became very loud. On several evenings I tried to work on 40m SSB.

One evening I stood by for only UK stations and worked around 40 before extending my calls into Europe. Signals were so strong and the pile-ups so large that it was impossible to run more than a couple of stations per minute. We encountered the usual problem of constant callers, especially from SP and EA stations. I admit to almost losing my cool with a certain EA station who was 50dB over S9 and just refused to stop calling. His signals were almost blocking the front end of the receiver. The heart says don't give in to bullying, but the brain says work him and get him out of the way. The problem is that if you do that, another station just as loud and annoying will take his place.

The vertical on 30m worked very well, also with signal paths much the same as 40m, but a little weaker. It was fascinating to work three stations in a row: a ZS6, a JA1 and a VE9. It seemed that after tea time 30m was open to most parts of the world.

We tended not to work much SSB on 20m as there are many 6W stations who work SSB, but don't or can't work on CW, and so it was further down our list of priorities. We tried to capitalise on any openings on 10m and 12m, but during the second week the temperature rose and rose until it peaked at 42.7°C. This seemed to cause havoc with nearby overhead line insulators and the noise levels evened out at about S8 or so - and it became almost impossible to continue to work these bands.

Some evenings Ronald would go to bed early and get up for the morning greyline. One morning he worked 25 VK or ZL stations and three KH6s on 40m.

BAND	SSB	CW	RTTY	TOTAL
10	29	11	0	40
12	80	195	0	275
15	790	628	106	1524
17	747	1033	355	2135
20	2514	766	646	3926
30	0	1743	250	1993
40	1347	3184	407	4938
80	3	1307	0	1310
160	3	659	0	662
TOTAL	5513	9526	1764	16803

Daytime propagation during the second week was very difficult due to the heat and very high noise levels. The heat also seemed to produce many prolonged power cuts, especially frustrating if they occurred at peak operating times in the evenings.

We would like to thank Jean François and his wife Corinne for their help and hospitality. Nothing was too much trouble and they went out of their way to make our stay as easy and comfortable as possible. The bungalows are self-catering. There is a large supermarket in the village, almost of

European standard, and we even found a 'takeaway' where they would deliver our chicken and rice or goat and rice in the evenings so we didn't have to stop for dinner. The shack is to be recommended. Uplift and drop-off at the airport is part of the deal. The local Senegalese are a very friendly people, always willing to stand and gossip. Our only difficulty was that neither Ronald nor I speak more than a few words of French. Details on the shack rental can be found at

www.le-calao.com/A/shack_A.htm.

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.

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ZK2V 2009

Chris Tran, GM3WOJ / ZL1CT

After many years of contest DXpeditions and portable working with friends, I had always dreamed of doing a single-handed DXpedition to a rare DX location. Single operator DXpeditions are the best in many ways, but can be risky - you cannot blame anyone else if things don't go well! Deciding where to go was not too difficult: the island of Niue is only a 3-hour flight from New Zealand, where I was living in early 2009. It hovers around number 50 in the 'Most Wanted' list, none of the few resident amateurs are active, and the logistics of a DXpedition to there were fairly easy to organise.

Planning

Planning started in October 2008, with a target of March/April 2009. However, unforeseen complications with our NZ residence visas meant I had to reschedule to May/June 2009. This was not ideal propagation-wise, but as things turned out March and April 2009 would not have been much better. I decided early on that one way to overcome the lack of sunspots was to stay for a longer time – 5 weeks – and hope that this would compensate for any spells of poorer propagation. My XYL, Pippa, agreed to come with me to provide support as well as visiting a wonderful island.

I was surprised at how relatively easy it was to find sponsors for my DXpedition. Amateur clubs and individuals worldwide were very generous with their support. We spent all the money on accommodation and living expenses on Niue, which sustained our longer-than-average DXpedition. Thanks everyone!

Niue poses some difficulties for any DXpedition. It is a raised coral reef, so there are no beaches. There is a reef about 100m wide which is exposed at low tide, but the sea is usually rough and would destroy any

reef-mounted vertical antennas fairly quickly, especially on the east side of the island. The accommodation I arranged was about 300m from the ocean, so I had to think carefully about antennas. Luckily the Namukulu Motel was 'radio friendly' and almost on the north coast of the island – ideal for short-path to USA, Europe and Japan.

I am a great believer in resonant antennas. Many newer amateurs don't realise that they could improve the performance on any band by making themselves a resonant antenna. Results will be much better if you can re-engineer things to do away with ATUs, traps, coils, linear-loading etc. I dislike them all equally! Uli, DJ2YA, kindly e-mailed me the construction details for his 2-element vertical dipole array, as used so successfully by VP6DX. He told me "these do not work unless on a beach". I constructed one and tested it at my home QTH, which is about 5km from the sea, and he was 100% right: it was lifeless when used inland.

It can be difficult to buy materials in NZ. You often have to wait weeks for delivery from other countries and the NZ\$ is often a weak currency. I wanted some 'Mini-8' coax, but ran out of time for getting it, but luckily was able to buy a 'used once' 100m reel of RG213U from the 1999 ZL9CI DXpedition. I hoped that this coax would bring me DXing good luck! I ended up taking only 20m of this coax and 2 x 20m lengths of RG58U.

Another key issue for a single-handed DXpedition is how much weight can be carried on flights. This is a careful balance between weight and the ultimate efficiency of the station. Luckily Niue has a reliable postal service, so I sent 9kg of wire antennas and coax as a parcel about 6 weeks before I left for the island.

Con, DF4SA, kindly donated two 12m Spiderbeam poles, so these were my main antenna supports. It turned out that there were several conveniently placed mango trees which, although not very high, were in the right place. I ended up making eight separate wire antennas made from 1mm diameter hard-drawn copper wire – springy and difficult to work with, but much lighter and stronger than PVC-insulated wire where a lot of the weight is useless plastic.

After an anxious wait in the departure lounge at Auckland Airport, watching for my sports bag full of antennas and gear going up the conveyor belt into the aeroplane, we had a short but turbulent flight to Niue. On arrival we were asked about swine flu (the Niue population are especially vulnerable to imported illnesses), then set up the station after a quick look around locally. There was a slight hiccup when I went to collect my licence documents – a ‘special fee’ of NZ\$100 had to be paid before I was issued with the first-ever single-letter-suffix callsign, ZK2V.

On the air

Daily operating quickly fell into a routine. I started with 40m, 30m and 20m antennas and after a couple of days had most antennas installed. I wanted to make maximum use of propagation to Europe and the UK. Coming from Scotland I know how often DXpeditions QSY just as their signal is peaking in NW Europe. I had with me blank tables for ‘band notes’. If a band was open at a particular time of day, I noted briefly what I worked during that opening. One surprise was the number of e-mails I received telling me about openings that their prediction software indicated. In 9 out of 10 cases the predicted opening just did not exist with the low SFI numbers during May/June 2009. I made sure that I checked bands like 12m and 10m regularly and called ‘CQ’ even on seemingly closed bands as often as possible. This was a radio DXpedition, not a holiday, so I operated for as long as possible every day.

The most successful antenna was the ‘half-square’ which I used on 20m and 17m. This old-fashioned simple antenna is easy to construct and resonate and works well for DX. It consists of two quarter-wave verticals connected at the top by a half-wave of wire and fed at a top corner. However, it does have one downside: the lower ends of the two vertical sections are ‘hot’ with RF and easily touched by someone passing by. I watched carefully out of the window whenever any of the other motel guests passed near the antenna.

I had never intended this to be an ‘LF bands’ DXpedition and that was just as well. Despite the Niue 11kV electricity distribution system being 95% underground, there was strong local power-line noise (S9 on 80m and S9+20dB on 160m) which made these two bands very difficult. The line noise even reached 20m, but was not a problem there. I only worked Greg, ZL3IX, on 160m and even that was a real struggle. I think any LF DXpedition to Niue would find that the absence of beaches, the local QRN, tropical static and lack of open spaces for RX antennas were serious problems. On several bands I used quarter-wave verticals with two elevated radials. These are easy to install and resonate, but ideally should have a current balun at the feedpoint (I could only take one W2DU balun with me) and would have benefited considerably from an earth screen of wires below them. The solid coral of Niue, which is only 1cm below the ‘grass’, is a very poor earth. Please visit www.zk2v.com for full information about the equipment and antennas used at ZK2V.

Propagation during the five weeks was good to Japan and the USA as you would expect, but patchy to Europe. I was surprised at how different from South NZ propagation on 40m and 30m was, with good openings in the first week of the DXpedition, but poor afterwards. 20m and 17m were good for most of the five weeks. 15m was patchy and 12m was only open on three days in total. I obtained a special one-week permit to operate on 60m, the first-ever activity from

Niue. My simple inverted-V antenna and the high QRN resulted in only 55 QSOs on 60m in total. I did not enjoy 60m much; it is full of noise, nets and ragchewers! Without the 500W Tokyo HyPower amplifier (kindly loaned by Gavin, GMØGAV) I would have found operating on all the bands very frustrating. Contest weekends can be difficult. QRM levels are higher, you can't usually work split and often your ZK2 prefix is 'just one more mult'. Obviously you can go to the WARC bands, but as a contester I wanted to take part if possible without reducing the DXpedition QSO total. In the CQ WPX CW contest I made 700 contest QSOs in a few hours out of the 48.

Mostly CW

Most of my operating time was spent on CW. This was not entirely by choice (I can work stations faster on SSB), but was dictated by the propagation conditions. The Elecraft K2 is a great little CW radio. It was always easy to separate out the pile-up signals. On SSB the Elecraft is not so good, but still worked well. Strangely there was strong local digital noise on 20m between 14.180 and 14.210 – blanking out the usual 'DXpedition' part of 20m for SSB. Daily QSO rates varied from over 1,000 on good propagation days to only 200 on poor days. I had four great QSOs with Bodo, 5NØOCH (on 17m CW, 20m CW and RTTY and 30m CW). Nigeria is very near to the antipodes of Niue and a difficult path.

I've never been a datamodes operator, but enjoyed using RTTY for short periods. It was a contrast to the tough CW pile-ups. I used the FT-840 instead of the K2, which meant changing cables over each time I wanted to use RTTY, but this was not a big deal. The pile-ups on RTTY were huge and spread over many kHz, but it was generally easy enough to maintain a good QSO rate. By using CW reverse on receive and LSB on transmit and always working split I could use the INRAD 250Hz CW filter in the radio which made separating the pile-up stations easier. I made 1,276 QSOs on

RTTY and 18 QSOs on PSK31. The writers of PSK software should go on a DXpedition and they would quickly shorten all these tedious macros.

Internet access was fairly good, so my daily diary of results kept everyone interested and I was able to rant about bad operating and other radio issues without fear of reply. One of the most popular webpages on www.zk2v.com was the online logsearch. Michael, G7VJR, and Marios, 5B4WN, put a lot of effort into making the 'leaderboard' software work with the CDXC ClubLog website in time for ZK2V, which meant that stations were able to compete against their friends (or rivals!) to see who had worked ZK2V on the most band slots. Some people think that having a leaderboard encourages people to make extra QSOs, but I don't think this is true. At an early stage I decided that I wanted all QSOs to be confirmed on LoTW as quickly as possible – daily or every second day - which made it easy for everyone to see whether their QSOs with ZK2V were valid for DXCC or not and would help to reduce 'insurance' QSOs. Kathy, KA1RWY, at LoTW issued me with an LoTW certificate about four weeks before the DXpedition and I posted her a photocopy of my licence after it was issued.

Unexpected problems

You have to be prepared for unexpected problems. For example, for the last two weeks of the DXpedition the neighbouring motel cabin only 6m away was occupied by an Australian family. They were heavy smokers and their smoke would often blow into the ZK2V shack. The father also got up every day at 4.30am and sat on their verandah coughing: very annoying when you are trying to catch up on sleep, but I decided there was not much I could do about it without spoiling their holiday, so I just kept quiet and kept working stations.

The final QSO total was 15,817 QSOs. As a keen contester I prefer short QSOs and had hoped to work at least 30,000 stations but it

was not to be this time. Overall ZK2V was great fun, despite an uncooperative sun and disappointing conditions to Europe. The Niue TV crew visited me and I was on the nightly news, so everyone on Niue waved when they saw us out walking. Niue is a very interesting place to visit, with extremes of climate, beautiful Pacific sunsets and plants which grow amazingly fast. I have arranged a new QTH for another ZK2V

DXpedition in the future which I hope will be better for the LF bands

My wonderful XYL, Pippa, made many friends in the Niue weaving community and is happy to go with me for six months next time! Thanks to CDXC for sponsoring me, my support team and to everyone who worked ZK2V 2009. Please QSL via N3SL.

XV4D DXpedition to Paradise Island - Phú Quốc

Andy Paulick, DL5CW

“How does it look this year - are you joining us?” After my first expedition with a team led by Sigi, DL7DF, to Botswana last year, this was not an unexpected question. “Where are we going?” “Vietnam” was his answer. That was perfect: my first visit to Asia. So I didn’t hesitate and said yes. The team this time were Manfred, DK1BT; Wolfgang, DL4WK; Sigi, DL7DF; Frank, DL7UFR, and myself, Andy, DL5CW.

Our journey had us departing Germany on 2 November 2009 and heading to the Vietnamese island of Phú Quốc, IOTA AS-128, located to the southwest of the country. We would need an overnight stay in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) to pick up our licence.

But before we could start our journey we had to take care of the usual formalities. First we each had to apply for a visa for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and everybody needed a 'Harmonized Amateur Radio Examination Certificate' (HAREC) - an English language form with the stamp and signature of the German Federal Network Agency.

After sorting these items we had to address the bigger issues. We elected to fly from Berlin to Saigon via Doha in Qatar. Once in Saigon we would change to a small aircraft for the final leg to Phú Quốc. The flight to Doha was with Qatar Airways, but they are

really strict with their baggage allowance - exactly 20kg per person and the carry-on luggage should not exceed 7kg. In a small expedition group of five people this means 100kg plus the small carry-on luggage. There was no way to persuade the very pleasant Qatar Airways staff otherwise - every additional kg is priced at 31 Euros per kg. This meant that our budget would swell and we still didn’t know how the Vietnamese Airline would react to our baggage.

So we had to optimise our luggage - 'everything for the technology, but nothing for the operator' became our mantra. The problem was that we needed everything to cover all bands and modes from 160m to 10m, and we planned to have three complete stations with amplifiers available. Our final weight was quite a few kilograms heavier than planned and included 18m and 15m fibreglass poles for the low-band verticals, a Spiderbeam for 20 to 10m, lots of wire and a Butternut HF9-V as an all-round antenna. We had our inevitable Elecraft K2 transceivers and an Icom IC-7000 for the digimodes. Some netbooks with WinTest, filters and a bunch of coax cables completed our equipment.

The 2nd of November arrived and we set off from Berlin-Tegel airport. Our luggage was

checked right through to Phú Quốc, or so we were told! We had a relaxed 16-hour overnight flight via Doha to Saigon, but on our arrival at Doha we were surprised to see all of our baggage there in baggage claim - it was not on its way to Phú Quốc! So we had to leave it at the airport for one night hoping there wouldn't be any problems the next morning.

Once in Saigon Frank and Sigi took care of organising the licences and the rest of the team went by taxi to our hotel. My travel guide took up a lot of pages explaining how to cross streets - now I know why - in Saigon the streets are crowded with motorbikes, nobody takes any notice of traffic lights - or traffic rules. There are some rules for surviving: walk slowly, never ever turn back and do what the locals do.

After two hours Frank and Sigi were back to show us our license: XV4D.mThe next morning our journey continued and again nobody paid any attention to our luggage weight restriction. We arrived at the small island airport - outside temperature 34°C and almost 100% humidity. The guy from the Sea Star Resort, 'Mr. Wunderbar', was waiting for us. We named him after the only German word he knew, and which he used often for the next two weeks, 'Wunderbar' (wonderful) - meaning awesome.

Within two days we were QRV on all bands. We focused on the low bands. The demand on 160m and 180m was exceptionally high, so we optimised those antennas more and more. Our efforts were rewarded with better signals reports. For the higher bands we had only the Spiderbeam. Whenever another band was open we used a wire beam aimed at Europe for 17m and the HF9V as a multiband antenna. The conditions were as expected on all bands - bad. Higher than 20m we had only short openings. The signals were really weak, so we were limited to CW. For SSB the signals just didn't suffice. So unfortunately we couldn't fulfil our expectations. However, even here the "cluster mentality" appeared. We called for minutes on a most likely dead band, until suddenly we were spotted and a

pile-up soon followed. Fortunately our shack had a more or less stable Internet connection - and therefore a stable DX cluster connection via wireless LAN. We could even update our online log on our homepage.

We consistently tried to use every short opening to North America. But we couldn't satisfy everybody's wish for a QSO.

For most days the bands did not open until the afternoon at the earliest, so we arranged some trips to surrounding areas. Phú Quốc is the biggest island of Vietnam and is situated in the Gulf of Thailand, 40km from the south-west coast and only 12km from the mainland of Cambodia and just 4km from the island of Kaoh Ses, belonging to Cambodia. The highest point of Phú Quốc is a 600m rain forest running from the north to the south of the island. The island has 70,000 inhabitants and is 48km long and between 3 and 28km wide. Most of the residents live in the capital, Dong Duong. There is a small airport, some asphalted streets and some more dusty tracks, some banks, a hospital, a post office, a police station and a lovely small market. The island has palm-tree-covered beaches, crystal-clear water and an almost deserted jungle. The west coast was the perfect place to spot the sunset over the sea, a real rarity in Vietnam.

During our expedition we always had a tropical climate with day- and night-long high temperatures around 30°C. Even in the night we found our spectacles fogging due to the high humidity. What else could we do other than use some 'brewed water' to balance our fluid loss? The cheap, native, ice-cold Saigon beer fitted the bill perfectly!

The native people were friendly and open-minded. We always felt safe and enjoyed our trips to the surrounding areas. The best way to move around was to rent a motorbike at the hotel for only 100,000 Dong (3.75 Euros) for the whole day. We spent mornings at the north and the south tip of the island, visited a pepper plantation, a bead farm and some waterfalls in the middle

of the rain forest, always followed by different smells: brackish water in the small sleepy harbours, the smell of fish in places where billions of small fish were dried in the sun, palm oil aromas and chicken when you passed by cook shops. Most interesting was the market in Dong Duong. Here we experienced how lively a small town like this can be; it seems that everybody who is able to walk visits this place once a day for shopping. Vegetables, chicken, spices, meat and fish, everything is there in rich amounts. For West Europeans the meat and fish market was a real adventure. Some of the ingredients of the Vietnamese cuisine on sale were, let's say, unusual! Here I would count for example frogs and toads, alive, or nicely gutted and skinned. Luckily we never

had to deal with this in our hotel cuisine.

After two weeks of amateur radio our expedition ended. JN3TRK was the last QSO in our log. The results are shown in the tables below. Getting the gear down and the flight back to Berlin on 17 November were uneventful. As this article goes to print, our QSL cards have already been printed and are on their way to their recipients. You can find some more details and photos of our expedition on our homepage at www.dl7df.com.

After this DXpedition to Asia I still have a dream - to join an amateur radio team to Oceania. Hopefully this will happen one day.

XV4D QSO Statistics

Band	All QSO's						'G' QSO's			
	SSB	CW	RTTY	SSTV	PSK31	Total	SSB	CW	RTTY	Total
160m	0	479	0	0	0	479	0	9	0	9
80m	0	2128	0	0	0	2128	0	46	0	46
40m	0	2760	0	0	0	2760	0	56	0	56
30m	0	3389	246	0	0	3635	0	62	1	63
20m	146	2653	241	10	162	3212	0	34	4	38
17m	356	2283	0	0	0	2639	3	23	0	26
15m	297	2003	169	0	92	2561	0	29	2	31
12m	15	865	16	0	0	896	0	12	0	12
10m	6	100	0	0	0	106	0	0	0	0
mode	820	16660	672	10	254	18416	3	271	7	281

XV4D Band-slot Statistics

	All Stations	'G' Stations
1-Band	4906	110
2-Band	1563	25
3-Band	779	16
4-Band	493	5
5-Band	313	2
6-Band	223	2
7-Band	130	2
8-Band	48	0
9-Band	6	0

My Carabane Story

Laszlo 'Laci' Radocz, 6W/HAØNAR, J5NAR

The tropical climate of Basse Casamance (South-West Senegal) cycles between a dry season and a wet season, which usually starts in June and ends in October. In May and June the air temperature is around 28°C (82°F). In January and February, the coldest months, it is around 24°C (75°F). Temperatures of below 18°C (64°F) are quite rare. This was one of our reasons to visit Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in January and in February of 2010. We (my XYL, Susan, and myself) were also invited by Peter (HA3AUI, 6W2SC, J5UAP) who spends several months together with his family there every year.

"Il faut s'armer de patience pour rejoindre l'île de Carabane" is a common French phrase which means "One must have patience to reach the island of Carabane". While this adage continues to hold true, it was even more appropriate in the 19th century when, according to one traveller, a 26-hour boat trip from Dakar to Carabane was deemed fairly short, and was credited to a favourable wind.

Travelling from Cap Skirring by a motorised pirogue is also possible, but the channels of salt water are not easily navigated. Carabane's landing is located on a small peninsula on the north-eastern coast of the island, which means that boats need to sail along a significant portion of the coast before being able to land. Carabane, also known as Karabane, is an island and a village with a total area of 22 square miles. Carabane (AF-078) is the last major island in the mouth of the Casamance River in the extreme south-west of Senegal. Nearly 37 miles away from Ziguinchor, the capital of the region of the same name, and a little over 310 miles from Dakar, the country's capital. Most of the island is covered in mangroves, forming an impassable jungle that can only be crossed in constructed passages.

On January 22, 1836, the village leader of Kagnout in return for an annual payment of 196 Francs ceded the island to France. After World War II the population of the island has gradually declined for a variety of reasons. Although Carabane was once a regional capital, the village has since become so politically isolated from the rest of the country that it no longer fits into any category of the administrative structure decreed by the Senegalese government. In 2003 the village of Carabane's official population count stood at 396 people and 55 households. The literacy rate is approximately 90%. Students attend a primary school on the island. Carabane Island was added to the list of historic sites and monuments of Senegal in 2003.

My radio equipment consisted of a Yaesu FT-857D with 100W and a multi-band Dunax GP for the WARC bands. A 10m fibreglass mast was used on 20 and 40m. During 31 hours of operation 2,180 QSOs were logged (all CW), 69% on each of 17 m CW and 40 m CW, the rest on 30/20 m CW, with 1,824 stations from 112 DXCC on 6 continents.

I also made 4,737 CW and SSB contacts on 160-10m as 6W/HAØNAR from Cap Skirring (Senegal) and 5,995 CW and SSB QSOs on 80-10m as J5NAR from Varela (Guinea-Bissau). The online logsearch for these operations can be found at:

http://cqafrika.net/hu/radio/online_log/index.html

I am deeply grateful to my XYL, Susan, for her strong and continuous support all along. Peter Brucker (HA3AUI, 6W2SC, J5UAP) is graciously thanked for his logistical help in bringing my West African project to life.

The financial support received from the Island Radio Expedition Foundation (IREF), German DX Foundation (GDXF) and Clipperton DX Club (CDXC) is graciously acknowledged.

HAØDU (Steve) and HAØHV (Sanyi) are gratefully outlined for their enthusiasm,

encouragement and significant support. Special thanks to AD5A, DK8UH, F8BBL, G3KMA and HAØHW. I would also like to thank all those who included some support with their QSL request (see J5NAR page at QRZ.com for the complete list).

Visalia 2010

Gordon Rolland, G3USR

Introduction

Visalia is the first major American convention of the year, typically being held annually in mid-April. This was my third successive attendance. The town of Visalia is located some 200 miles north of Los Angeles in California. The location makes it equally accessible to those in the north and in the south of the state. Principal organising responsibility is taken year about by the Northern California DX Club (NCDXC) and the Southern California DX Club (SCDXC), with other Western Time Zone DX clubs involved as necessary.

The venue is the Visalia Holiday Inn and attendance is such that virtually the whole town's accommodation is taken over by event attendees as well as an adjacent RV park. Registration begins around midday on the Friday; events start shortly afterwards and continue until late on Sunday morning.

Convention Format

The Convention programme structure is well-established. Friday afternoon sees the opening of traders' stands, which continue to operate until late on Saturday. Friday evening has two significant events. Firstly, there is a Top Band Dinner, which is particularly for LF DXers and has an appropriate after-dinner speaker. This year Bruce, W6OSP, talked about 160m

operations on the Midway DXpedition, K4M. Secondly, there is an IOTA buffet dinner which features invited speakers. This year included a presentation of last autumn's P29 activation of the rare Tanga, Green and Woodlark groups in Papua New Guinea. Other interests are also well catered for, with Saturday features including DXpedition presentations and more specialist events such as DX and Contest forums and a CW Pile-Up Competition.

Fellowship and Fun

The overall emphasis is on social contact and informal chat. The event attracts DXers from all over North America, with additional representation from most other continents. Throughout the weekend there is an enormous raffle, with frequent prize draws. This year these included a star prize of a Yaesu FT-2000 and the long prize list also included an FT-950. The biggest and best prizes are reserved until the final draw on Sunday morning following the breakfast presentation. There is also a separate prize draw for those amateurs attending their first Visalia Convention. Entries can only be made by collecting other DXers' signatures and call signs on special entry cards which, when filled with completed lines, are exchanged for a raffle entry. This is a popular way of getting new attendees involved and doubles as an easy ice breaker.

Other Features

Vendors showcase new products. This year I was particularly taken by a new small amplifier announced by Elecraft, the KPA-500. This promises 500W from solid-state devices, 1.8 to 50 MHz coverage, full break-in, auto-band select, diode T/R switching and delivery in the autumn. And the indicated price? Around \$2,200 in North America. Oh, by the way, the weight is around 10 kg. Could be a good one for DXpeditioning.

Besides the Top Band and IOTA Dinners on the Friday, Saturday evening sees a Convention Banquet with an after-dinner speaker. This year Tom Harrell, N4XP, and other team members talked about last October's Midway DXpedition, K4M. On the Sunday morning there was a Convention breakfast and some entertainment entitled 'Are you smarter than a DXer?' This was followed by a presentation by Richard Crouch, N6RC, talking about CR2X and CQ8X, the Azores superstation sponsored by the Finnish 'Radio Arcala'.

Anything Else?

Another Convention feature is the availability of an embroidered Convention shirt complete with name, callsign and annual Convention badge. When combined with the CDXC membership badge there is little chance of anyone not knowing who you are!

There was also a special event station, K6V. This sent a kilowatt from an Icom 7600 with Alpha amplifier to a new, small footprint SteppIR yagi on display at the top of a 75 ft US Tower mast in the parking lot. This looked neat.

How did it all go?

The weekend passed in a flash. I had a welcome opportunity to talk to a number of North American traders and DX enthusiasts including Bob Locher, W9KNI, author of a

new DXing book 'A Year of DX' which includes a chapter on 'Propagation in a Time of Low Sunspots' contributed by CDXC member Jim, KF7E. It was also particularly good to meet up with CDXC members Bob, N5ET; Arnie, N6HC; Bob, N6OX (who was just back from the YI9 DXpedition to Kurdistan, Iraq); Eric, K3NA; Ned, AA7A, and John, N7CQQ.

In conclusion

I would highly recommend this Convention to anyone who enjoys DX presentations and fellowship with other DXers. This year's event seemed to be better attended than last year and the venue perhaps struggled a bit to accommodate the numbers with some presentations being 'standing room only'. But nevertheless the fellowship was second to none.

Q.: What are the Icelandic radio amateur's favourite dances?

A.: The Tango and the Foxtrot, of course.

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Theo's DXCC

Roger Western, G3SXW

Theo was bright. He won a place at Bristol to study mathematics. His parents were proud and so was he. Of course, he took it all in his stride with an undeniable self-confidence. Well, that's how he came across to his mates anyway. But he was a nice guy, popular and did alright with the girls too. Naturally, his prime love in life was drinking and partying, with little thought for the future.

He devoured knowledge with an insatiable appetite and was the world's biggest Google user. While studying physics at A Level, which he gained with a top grade of course, he had come across radio astronomy and was fascinated by the measurement of billions of miles by analysing signals in various portions of the light spectrum. He soon encountered the work of a Nobel prize winner, an American called Joe Taylor, astrophysicist at Princeton among other institutions. Joe had won his Nobel prize for discovering a new type of pulsar, which opened new possibilities for studying gravitation. Theo was fascinated, but needed to find out why this chap went by the nickname of K1JT. They were his initials, but what was the 'K1'? So Internet searches were launched yet again and suddenly the whole world of amateur radio opened up right before his eyes, a wide array of issues with which he could get involved himself. Great – he wouldn't have to wait several decades for his career to develop before he could take part. He could just dive right in!

One of Joe's software programs was called WSPR, which stands for 'Weak Signal Propagation Reporter'. You needed a receiver and an antenna and this software, which was free! Theo decided to give it a go, little realising at the time that this one step would lead to a lifetime of interest in radio waves: the technical aspects seemed a fascinating challenge. He read and read,

absorbing information like a sponge. To cut a long story short, within a year Theo had obtained his own transmitting licence and mastered WSPR. He experimented with several other software programs whenever his socialising pals would allow him.

Early Days

Things went a little quiet on the amateur radio front while at university. He met some nice guys at the Bristol radio club, but he sensibly made his studies number one priority for the next three years. Then he was able to make time for his new hobby and found yet more challenges, especially in the HF radio spectrum where signal propagation was so unpredictable. His transmissions with very low power were picked up and reported by WSPR receivers all over the world. Wow! How many countries could he 'contact'? He set himself targets and ticked off the countries one by one on his control sheet. At the same time Theo had come across all sorts of other ways in which to make contact with other radio amateurs around the world. To be honest, at first he was less interested in the people he 'spoke' to than the digital technology which allowed him to do so. He found RTTY rather old-fashioned, with no error correction, and was amused by the braaaaap-brap of AMTOR, but it was Joe's programs which always drew him back. Could he really bounce his own puny signals off the moon? Surely not!

During lighter moments Theo also came across 'DXCC' (DX Century Club) and contests, yet another whole range of new challenges. By this time with a burgeoning career, he could afford to upgrade his computer and had the time to build antennas. He was soon competing successfully in digital contests, learning the operating skills and developing that sixth

sense about the vagaries of HF propagation. Of course he had experimented with several different programs for keeping a log of his activities, for tracking stations worked, countries, zones, and had joined various Internet forums from which he continued to learn. And all this came about from asking one question about radio astronomy!

New Challenges

A little later, still a young man, Theo's competitive spirit got the better of him and he found that spending time chasing a new country was so much fun. This DXCC programme seemed an impossible challenge, not just to work the first 100 countries (that was easy...), but to work them all - all 338 'countries'. Everyone told him that this was a lifelong challenge, but he decided he could manage it in five years and got to work. There were so many sub-categories: frequency bands, transmission modes, transmitted power, number of countries contacted... but his software kept track of all these details. Soon the walls of his radio station, in a corner of the lounge, started to fill up with certificates.

Finally, Theo realised that he had better prioritise. Chasing these awards in so many sub-categories was daunting and would take too long. He subscribed to several online bulletins which fed him information about upcoming operations from rare locations and he couldn't keep on calling in sick. So he decided that 'mixed mode, all frequency bands' would have to do. This simply meant that he could work all of these 338 countries on any transmission mode and any frequency. He'd continue to record all his new band points and mode points for new countries worked, but the target would become the overall list of DXCC countries.

After contacting the first 150 countries things started to slow down, but he was still able to pick up a new point every week or so. He was thrilled to achieve the 200 level, but realised that it was getting harder; each

new point was taking longer and longer. Approaching 250 his five years were nearly up, so he'd best alter that target to ten years. To get to the next level of 300 would be a real uphill struggle and he'd have to use all his skills, especially the power of his computers, which gave him some advantage over the older guys, but he began to wonder if it would ever be possible using only digital modes.

Other Modes

Long ago Theo had decided that voice communication was too simplistic. What was called SSB (Single Sideband) involved shouting into a microphone, not at all technological! But he had learned how to get a sound card in his computer to do the hard work for him and, after all, many of the rare countries were only available to him by using SSB because they didn't use digital modes. And he had discovered that listening was a skill all of its own, to be able to discern the needed signal from all the others causing interference, not easy. He was always drawn back to the digital modes. His bag was technology after all, but fewer rare stations could be contacted on the digital modes than on the mainstream modes of SSB and CW. What's this CW all about? Morse code? Didn't that die out years ago, he asked? Wait, many rare stations can be contacted on CW and some of them use this mode exclusively. I'd best learn Morse code, Theo thought, or I'll never work all 338 countries.

From the outset this seemed pretty daft: a digital mode of dots and dashes invented in the 19th century. How on earth could this still be used when computers are able to decode much more complex digital signals? So, Theo being Theo he downloaded a free software program, listened on the radio and sure enough printed the text of a CW signal on the screen. Even better, it worked both ways: he could transmit and receive on CW just like he had done with RTTY, AMTOR, PSK and various other digital modes.

Brilliant! Now he could contact those new countries which only used CW. He fussed over the commands of this new software, but soon had his callsign set up so it could be transmitted by hitting the F1 button on his computer and F2 contained the 'exchange': if he got through to the rare station he would need to exchange callsigns to make the contact valid for DXCC and it was also normal to exchange a signal report, in order to give the contact a fixed format. On the transmit side he was ready to go, just keep hitting F1 until the rare station came back to him, then hit the F2 and all would be well, another new one in the bag. Better still, he could adjust the speed of the transmitted CW. It would be more efficient to send at a high speed so he chose 40 words per minute.

Problems

Suddenly up popped on his computer screen a nudge that a station was transmitting from Burma. Wow, action stations – that was one that Theo had never worked before. Click, click with the mouse and his receiver and transmitter were set to the frequency of the Burmese station and sure enough he could audibly hear the signal, quite loud. Much of the time it was hard to hear because of interfering signals, but he'd definitely have a crack at contacting this station. He knew from using other modes that the rare station usually listens for calling stations a little higher in frequency, so he randomly chose 4 kHz above the Burmese station as his transmit frequency and started hitting the F1 button to send his callsign. He watched the computer screen, avidly waiting with fingers crossed to see his own callsign appear, to indicate that the Burmese station had heard him. It didn't happen. Panic. Of course hundreds of others were also calling, so maybe Theo's antenna wasn't big enough to be heard at the far end above the mass of other callers. But he persevered, hitting F1 whenever Burma stopped transmitting. Much of the time the screen decode was garbled. It seems that these CW decoders

are pretty useless at separating out different signals on the same or almost the same frequency. So, to be honest, Theo really didn't know what was going on, all he wanted to see on his screen was his own callsign coming back at him, so he'd just have to keep calling and calling in the hope that Burma would hear him, would reply to his callsign and that the reply would be in the clear at that exact moment so it would be decoded on his screen. After an hour of frustration Theo gave up and went down the pub to drown his sorrows.

Analysing what had happened over his second pint of bitter, Theo realised that he could audibly hear the Burmese signal, but his computer couldn't decode the text. Could this be possible, that his ears and brain were more powerful than a computer? But this revelation didn't help – he couldn't interpret CW, he didn't even know which dots and dashes made up the alphabet. Then, horror of horrors, he thought maybe Burma had replied to him but his decoder hadn't printed it on screen, so he had lost the contact. Sacrilege! Sure enough the next time he visited the Bristol radio club Bill, one of the old timers, told him that he had been listening and heard Burma reply to him two or three times, but he had not responded with the 'exchange', he just kept sending his callsign with F1. What can I do to prevent this happening again, he asked Bill. The old timer gently suggested that he might need much more powerful software which separated out the various signals to within just a couple of Hertz of each other and even then signals on exactly the same frequency might be garbled on his screen. Theo went home with a new challenge, to track down such software. But he couldn't find it - it didn't exist. Panic again. He phoned Bill for more advice. Well, said Bill, pausing to gather his thoughts, if you really want to work all 338 countries you're going to have to learn Morse code, so you can interpret these rare stations. Decoders, said Bill, are pretty useless when many signals are on the same frequency, but the human brain can sort them out.

Wrong Solution

Theo really didn't want to learn Morse code. He had heard from others that it takes a long time, like learning a new language, and it seemed so antiquated. So he'd keep trying with his decoder. The next night he found a station in Morocco with a nice loud CW signal. Theo had already ticked Morocco off his list on RTTY, but it would be good practice. The number of stations calling was much less than the Burmese station and the interference on top of Morocco was much less. Sure enough he could decode nearly all the transmissions in plain text, so he started hitting F1 to send his callsign. After just a few minutes he saw his callsign on the screen and completed the contact. Lesson learned: it can be done, but only if the rare station's signal is in the clear, and it quickly became apparent that the rarer the station then the more interference there was on top of him, not to mention problems with weak signals and fading.

By this time Theo had reached the giddy heights of 269 countries worked and was getting desperate for new ones. Still dismissing the idea of struggling to learn Morse code, he found a station in Bangladesh, another one which he needed. Having quickly got set up, he started hitting F1 to send his callsign, but as with Burma he could only decode bits and pieces of the Bangladesh transmissions. Every time he audibly heard Bangladesh finish a transmission Theo hit F1, time after time, until the rare station started up again. No good, just like Burma this one 'got away'.

Theo and Bill had become friends by this time and had dropped in to see each other's station and antennas. Bill was long in the tooth and knew pretty much all there was to know about contacting rare stations. He wanted to encourage Theo to keep learning new operating skills, recognising that he was a bright fellow. Next time that they met Bill said that he had heard Theo calling the Bangladesh station and asked how he had got on. Theo admitted that he had not made

the contact and even began wondering if he would have to learn Morse code after all, otherwise he'd never be able to work all 338 countries. Not wanting to hurt Theo's feelings, Bill began to gently explain a few facts of life about chasing rare stations on CW. Theo already knew that many of these stations were active on the radio for only a short time and their aim was to contact as many callers as possible in the time available. They could contact 100 or even 200 stations per hour, making so many callers happy in the process. Then Bill dropped his bombshell: while calling Bangladesh Theo had prevented several other stations from getting through.

What? How could that be, asked Theo. You just kept sending your callsign when the Bangladesh station had been asking for only North American callers, Bill said. He had locked on to a station in New York, but you happened to be exactly on the New Yorker's frequency and kept covering him up by sending your own callsign. Evidently your signal was louder than New York, but Bangladesh didn't want to contact you, he wanted to contact New York. Every time Bangladesh asked for 'W2?' your signal interfered with New York. It had taken Bangladesh several tries to complete the contact with New York and in the meantime hundreds of other callers simply had to wait. Bill suggested to Theo that this had cost at least four or five contacts that American chasers could have made in that time, but were prevented by Theo's interference.

With decoders being so inefficient when there are many CW signals, Bill suggested, then the only way to avoid this happening again was to learn Morse code, his earlier suggestion. Then Theo would be able to understand what the rare station was saying and react accordingly, in other words to stop transmitting when the rare station was asking for another station. Theo instantly recognised that he had hugely embarrassed himself by committing this blunder when so many other stations were listening. His

reputation as a CW operator was fast disappearing down the toilet.

Success

Theo's reaction at first was to make sure that he was decoding most or all of any station's transmissions before calling. He continued to pick up the odd new country but this was clearly not enough. So he finally set himself the task of learning Morse code! Actually, it wasn't nearly as hard as he had been led to believe and within a few months he could copy CW signals in his head at 25-30 words per minute, enough to understand his own callsign when sent by other stations. It took a little longer to interpret all the transmissions so as to be able to follow instructions issued by the rare station, like 'North America only'.

At that point Theo's DXCC score started to rise again, this time without the embarrassment of making a fool of himself, or worse still when other chasers thought he was simply being incredibly selfish by continuously calling when he shouldn't. He

certainly did not give up on the other modes and still enjoyed digital whenever the fancy took him. He is still chasing those elusive few rare countries, but has just broken the 300 barrier and is now aiming for Honor Roll. That may take a while, waiting for them to be activated, but he would stick with it.

Old Bill finally passed away, aged 84, and Theo of course went to his friend's funeral. Bill was a 'Silent Key'. Theo had learned so much from his older mentor and they had developed real mutual respect. Some radio amateurs gave their eulogy about Bill's life, then at the end of the ceremony they had arranged to broadcast a message over the church PA system. It was in Morse code, at about 25 words per minute, and said '73 DE BILL SK'. Theo choked back the tears, so happy to have interpreted this farewell message himself, without using a computer. Thanks for everything, Bill, old pal.

MØDXR, a serial record breaker

CDXC member Mark, MØDXR, has notched up another major achievement. Already well-known as one of the UK's young contesting stars, he has now gained the all-time single operator record score for England in the CQ WPX CW contest. Operating from the QTH of John, G3LAS, his 2009 entry was placed #1 in England, #6 in Europe and #10 in the World, his score of 6.3 million points in the single-op, all band, high power, assisted category beating the previous record by over a million points.

This record adds to the UK record score Mark achieved in the 2008 CQ WW contest, also from the G3LAS station, which was reported in the January 2009 *Digest*. Well done, Mark!

G3LAS

The First Class CW Operators' Club

President: Dr R.C. Whelan, G3PJT

2 April 2010

To G3RFX, Editor, CDXC Digest

Dear Martyn,

Improving HF DX operating behaviour

I am writing to raise a matter of increasing concern about the standard of on-the-air operating. A number of your readers have, I'm sure, commented to you that there is now a serious problem with operating behaviour, especially when calling DX stations in pile-ups on the HF bands.

As President of the First Class CW Operators' Club (FOC) I and Randy, W6SJ, in partnership with leading DX operators, have decided that we will take the initiative to encourage all DXers to work together in order to improve standards. To this end we have created the following simple DX Code of Conduct which I would ask you to bring to the attention of your readers. If we all pull together to improve standards then we will all be able to work more DX and have more fun on the air.

More information is available at the FOC website at www.g4foc.org/. Please translate the DX Code into your local language if that makes the message more effective.

Thanks for your help and 73,

Bob

Bob Whelan, G3PJT, President, FOC.

DX Code of Conduct

1. I will listen, and listen, and then

listen some more.

2. I will only call if I can copy the DX station properly.
3. I will not trust the Cluster and will be sure of the DX station's callsign before I call.
4. I will not interfere with the DX station nor anyone calling him and will never tune up on the DX frequency or in the QSX slot.
5. I will wait for the DX station to end a contact before calling him.
6. I will always send my full callsign.
7. I will call and then listen for a reasonable interval. I will not call continuously.
8. I will not transmit when the DX operator calls another callsign, not mine.
9. I will not transmit when the DX operator queries a callsign not like mine.
10. I will not transmit when the DX station calls other geographic areas than mine.
11. When the DX operator calls me, I will not repeat my callsign unless I think he has copied it incorrectly.
12. I will be thankful if and when I do make a contact.
13. I will respect my fellow hams and conduct myself so as to earn their respect.

Kaizen ['improvement'] Blitz at Wyboston?

John Gould, G3WKL

Those avid Reflector fans can't have missed the flurry of postings on the CDXC Reflector in late February and early March, complaining and putting forward all manner of ideas on the topic of DQRM. It came at just the right time. This is because I had put a paper concerning DQRM to the Region 1 meeting scheduled for February. I was prepared to have another go, although my memory was still vivid of a 'good kicking' on the subject at the Region 1 General Conference in late 2008. I had decided to have another go as CDXC again urged the RSGB to take further action over DQRM at the Spectrum Forum meeting last September, and also because of more general feedback from the HF Forum at the RSGB Convention the previous October. Lots of us are extremely fed up with the situation, and at a loss as to why we can't seem to get anything done to improve matters.

I know that some feel, with some cause, that the IARU appears disinterested in the matter. In their defence it has to be said that they did 'fast track' the publication and publicity for ON4UN and ON4WW's operating ethics booklet (Ref 1). What Region 1 member Societies didn't like, to be fair, was the RSGB's proposal that I put forward, which focused on DFing the source of jamming. The process was that once radio amateur effort had been used to identify the approximate location of the jammer, the relevant national society would then follow up by asking the local administration to DF the 'last few miles'. If the culprit was identified, the administration would then try and 'encourage' the person to stop the jamming, possibly with the threat of sanctions. Several countries spoke up strongly against such an enforcement approach, insisting that education should resolve the problem.

The Region 1 meeting that I attended this February is the one where one can deal with urgent policy matters, float ideas or put up proposals roughly halfway between the triennial Region 1 General Conferences. I've been involved in trying to combat DQRM since 2002 and struggle with the assertions that many make as to both the causes of the problem or their solutions. That is not to say that I don't often agree with the ideas, but I am cautious that some of the solutions put forward may be addressing just the symptoms; that is not addressing the underlying causes. Whilst I'm not against addressing symptoms, if the causes are beyond our action, the ideas that are sometimes proposed do not give thought to the unintentional consequences. My engineering background makes me uncomfortable too in dealing with assertions that are not backed by a reasoned critical analysis.

My own analysis of the wider DQRM issue is that some countries in Region 1 are in denial, and need to find those causal links for themselves before moving on to a position of accepting that there is a problem. Applying an analytical approach to DQRM and involving the detractors, I feel might just break down the barriers. Thus, armed with this idea I went to the Region 1 meeting this February with a plan to get the group to pilot an analysis of the issues. I hoped that they would be sufficiently enthusiastic to then agree to do an analysis in slower time, back in their national societies, following the meeting.

This plan worked! I was given an hour of the agenda, during which there was much creative thinking and sifting of the problem areas and causes. Importantly, everyone enjoyed the workshop and those involved were positive about taking this process back home. This is how we came to arranging a workshop on the day of the CDXC Dinner.

A quick exchange of e-mails with our chairman, Chris/G3SVL, resulted in our Secretary, Gordon/G3USR, securing a room at Wyboston (at no extra charge), which included flip chart, pens, etc. and a nice box of chocolates to keep our energy level up. Following a posting to the CDXC Reflector I gained plenty of support, with more than enough volunteers for a workshop that I knew as a Kaizen Blitz or Kiakakau – I can't pronounce the latter, so I prefer the former.

In addition to not liking unsubstantiated assertions, I am also a keen advocate of a form of change that is called 'continuous improvement'. This is where one makes a number of small iterative changes to a problem over a period of time. No surprises then that Kaizen is the Japanese that roughly translates as 'continuous improvement'. The blitz, as it suggests, is a workshop, event, etc. and hence Kaizen Blitz.

The workshop run at Wyboston used a number of simple analytical 'tools'. Initially we focused on identifying the most significant aspect of the DQRM range of issues, analysed that issue to find its root cause and then tried to identify how this could be addressed. After an initial briefing the group quickly got down to the task ahead and soon found that nearly all the work was done with 'Post-it Notes' onto flip charts mounted on the wall. Everyone had some fun when we got lost by confusing issues with causes and solutions. We had a 'parking' space for these so that they could be recovered later. Whilst the concept of many of the 'tools' is simple, their use can be quite demanding if one seeks a reliable outcome. Most of us tend to be convinced that we know the solution to a problem and find identifying the causal link is quite demanding.

We gave the blitz four hours, by which time the energy levels were falling roughly in line with the bar filling up with friends arriving for the Dinner and

Michael/G7VJR's demo of the new CDXC website.

So what did we achieve, and what is happening next? In line with the agreement at the Region 1 meeting we focused on the aspects of DQRM that are more easily addressable – picking off and sorting the easy issues first. This meant that we looked at those aspects of DQRM where the perpetrator is identified: the continuous caller, whose operating practice destabilises the rhythm of the DX operator and the orderly nature of the pile-up. If European pile-ups sounded and felt more like those experienced in the Far East and also USA, tempers and frustration should be reduced, which might just reduce the even more pernicious and unidentified forms of DQRM.

The analysis of this issue proved to be great fun, and whilst a large range of causes were identified, the ranking of these was fairly close, which means that there will be plenty of scope for further iterations of this Kaizen approach. We perhaps didn't quite get down to the root cause of the issue that we addressed as we identified two 'root' causes (which is a contradiction of term), one which was seen as a lack of a structured approach to mentoring within the DX community, and the other was a lack of any consequence management. Whilst the lack of mentoring may be obvious for the newcomers to the hobby, where there appears to be a hole in the educational content as far as DX operating is concerned, we also saw that there has been plenty of change in DXing of late (interpreting DX Cluster spots and propagation, CW readers, skimmer, Band/Mode slot competitions, etc.) that probably need mentoring to some of us ol' hands. Consequence Management is an important issue that we parked for the follow-up activity.

The Post-it Notes used and the chocolates eaten, we were all on a 'high', having felt that we had made some real progress. Since the event a Reflector group has been formed

so that the group can continue with the Kaizen Blitz process so that we can develop the emergent solutions and create an implementation plan. The documentation that was drafted to support the event has been reviewed and improved and sent to the Region 1 HF Managers – we hope that our experience can encourage other DX clubs to replicate our work and eventually compare and share results. This is where my experience of virtual working is showing again its limitations – e-mail reflectors just aren't the right medium for this type of work. It's too asynchronous a medium – these things ideally need face-to-face or at least everyone agreeing to work at the same time. As I draft this note for the *Digest* I know that I am going to have to be creative to get our own (= CDXC) Kaizen Blitz moving again and also get a few national societies or related DX Clubs within Region 1 to do their own.

Overall, addressing DQRM will not be either quick or be complete. But I am convinced that we can improve on the current behaviour and this will need some patient work to address and gradually turn around the various issues. I've been approached since the event by several people asking to join the Reflector; in all cases I have not allowed this to occur as a significant part of the Kaizen process is the group behaviour that was formed on the Saturday at Wyboston. If we get enough new volunteers I would prefer to form a second group that could form its own identity and address slightly different aspects of the overall problem.

My final words are addressed at our team – Chris, G3SVL; Chris, G1VDP; Dennis, F5VHY/G3MXJ; Don, G3BJ; Hilary, G4JKS; Jim, GØEJQ; John, EA5ARC/G3OLU; Mark, G4AXX, and Stewart, G3RXQ – and to thank them for giving their time for this work.

IOTA News

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2009 edition)

IOTA reference numbers issued

NA-231 VYØ Nunavut (Hudson Bay – Ontario Coast) North group (Canada)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

NA-201 CO7PH/P Anclitas Island, Los Jardines de la Reina Archipelago (January 2010)

NA-231 VYØV Eat Pen Island (March/April 2010)

OC-223 VK2HAK/P Montague Island (August 2009)

OC-223 VK2MIK/P Montague Island (August 2009)

OC-260 V63MY Oroluk Atoll (March 2010)

OC-260 V63TO Oroluk Atoll (March 2010)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA, RSGB IOTA Manager 20 April 2010

JW5E - The situation after JW5NM /LA5NM SK

Rag Otterstad, JW5HE / LA5HE

During my recent visit to Longyearbyen I had an opportunity to meet with the widow of JW5NM, Mathias Bjerrang: Inger, JW8KT. I also met with the recent arrival, Harald/JW7XM, who is the new managing director of Telenor on Svalbard.

The good news is that Inger is prepared to continue making the JW5E hut available along the same lines as Mathias did until last autumn. Her plan is to remain on the island for the next six years until she retires. To make it easy for her it is imperative that all visitors follow the house rules which are placed inside the hut.

The hut is primitive, with no running water or toilet facilities. Inger will provide water for basic hygiene and cooking. There is an electric stove and a refrigerator, so you can prepare simple meals. A WC is available at the nearest hotel (SAS Radisson), where you can also book a sauna. 3-4 people can sleep in the hut. You must bring your own sleeping bags.

The permanent set-up of radio equipment is not to be altered during visits. If visitors bring their own gear, there is a spare table with antenna terminals connected to the antennas outside.

The station has today:

TS-870 transceiver. An old Icom IC-2KL with reduced output, not working on 30m. Fritzel tribander 3-element Yagi with 15m element 'amputated'.
Dipoles for 160, 80, 40 and 30m. Thirty and 40m are particularly good bands when the higher frequencies are dead, which is not uncommon.

The noise level on the low bands is a problem. If somebody could bring a good

RX antenna it could make a difference for low band activities in the future.

The JW5E website for reservations is not updated yet. Inger will make efforts to have it back on track asap. For the time being enquires about renting the hut and station can be made by e-mail to ibjerr@online.no.

If you are prepared to make a contribution to the maintenance of the station or donate equipment, please let us know. What would be perfect is a new automatic amplifier and a new beam covering 10-40 meters.

Harald, JW7XM, is willing to make himself available for visiting hams. He can be reached by e-mail to harald@fagermoen.com or by phone on +47 9003 9600.

26/03/2010

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

The RTTY Column

Roger Cooke, G3LDI

roger@g3ldi.co.uk

GB5ØATG

This call has been used for the last ten months by several of the BARTG Committee and also during March by Graeme, G6CSY. It has been used on a variety of data modes, but predominantly on RTTY and PSK. During May and June the honour falls to Arthur Bard, G1XKZ. Arf, as he likes to be called, will try to be on as much as possible during May and June, including the contests during that period. I think the two prominent ones are the ARI DX on 1 May and the Volta on 8 May.

If you require a contact with GB5ØATG for the Golden Jubilee Award, this will be your last chance, as the NoV runs out at the end of June. I had to resort to a sked in order to have a QSO with our Golden Jubilee station. How embarrassing. However, John/GW4SKA was quite willing to oblige and I feel sure that Arf will too if anybody wants a contact toward the Golden Jubilee award. Just e-mail Arf or look for him in the contests. The year of GB5ØATG operations end on 30 June. Details of the awards can be found on the BARTG website.

75 Baud Contest

The interesting contest taking place in June is the BARTG 75 Baud Sprint. This is to test the behaviour of 75 Baud RTTY under contest conditions and to compare it to the old standard 45 Baud RTTY.

Those of you who regularly run RTTY contests using N1MM, Writelog, MixW or even the stand-alone MMTTY will know how easy it is to just change from one speed to another. I have now had a number of normal QSOs on 75 Baud RTTY and I have found it very robust and with very few errors. GW4SKA, the BARTG contest

manager, has therefore decided on a short contest on HF to see what success we have with that speed under contest conditions. The only parameter to change in your contest program is the speed and that is very easy to do.

It will take place on Saturday, 12 June 2010 from 2000 – 2359 GMT. I cannot see too much activity taking place on 28 MHz. I suspect the main activity will be found on 14 MHz with perhaps an opening, if we ask nicely and behave ourselves between now and then, on 21 Mhz. I think the time might be against us there, however!

Full details were in the last RTTY Column and can also be found on the BARTG website. It's only called a Sprint because the period is shorter than a normal weekend contest, so the CW sprint rules don't apply. Please try to take part and let's see if we can drum up some interest and activity on 75 Baud RTTY. You can also use the same macros as for the BARTG Sprint. It would be a great idea to try and get the RSGB Contest Committee to consider using 75 Baud RTTY in the Club Cumulative contests. It would allow us to make more contacts on RTTY during the 90 minutes for the mixed data contests.

Cracking the Pile-up

Cracking a pile-up on RTTY can be fraught with difficulties. One only has to listen to the RSGB Club Cumulative data contests to see how difficult it is to drag a call out of the QRM of several stations all calling at once, especially on the same frequency. The same applies to a DX station when working split, even though the spread might be several kHz above him. If I am in S & P in the CC contest, I usually wait until the pile has finished calling and then just drop my call in once. Hopefully it will then be in the

clear, the others having stood by to listen. Invariably this works well, because all the QRM caused by several stations calling at once on the same frequency produces absolutely zilch on the caller's screen. Before he can then call again with a 'Pse repeat' or 'QRZ?', dropping my call in once puts it on his screen and he invariably goes for it. It's worth a try.

Working split requires a bit more thought. If the DX station is tuning low to high, or QLH as we used to say on 2m in the 60s, you have to set the second VFO just above the station he is working, assuming you can hear that. In the QRM this may not be possible. The same happens in reverse, ie if he is tuning high to low, or QHL, you place the VFO just below that of the station he is working. The problem with this strategy is that a lot of others think the same. They have learned that calling the DX station on the frequency of the station he is working does not work, because nearly everybody does that. Thinking like the DX station thinks may pay dividends. I usually think that if I were a DX station I would jump around a lot, looking for a station in the clear. So, I try to pick a frequency just above his declared range, if it is an unused frequency, away from the melee, and call

there. RTTY has to be on its own to work, so this strategy usually pays. It really is disappointing to hear some of the behaviour when a DX station is running a pile-up. Even when the DX station gives directional calls, such as 'G3RF? Only', there will be loads of stations calling regardless and lot of those stations know better. This is not peculiar to RTTY, of course, but annoying nevertheless because it generates needless repeats and time wasting.

DX

Propagation has been mostly poor, but every silver lining has a cloud, so we have to accept what we get in a solar minimum. I have worked a few nice ones, with 'few' the operative word. YI9PSE and V63T were among the best I could muster with my beam still stuck. I did not even hear the T32. I am looking forward to some warm weather in order to get on with my antenna work. Even though I am retired, there does not seem enough hours in the day to do all I want. I hope some of you take part in the 75 Baud test and work some interesting DX. Please let me have your comments if you do, as I would be interested to know your opinions.

73 de Roger, G3LDI

K5VT SK

Just after I mailed my 'DX an' all that' to Martyn, I heard the very sad news that Vince, K5VT, had passed away after a brief illness. I know that Roger, G3SXW, a close friend of Vince, wants to put together a personal reminiscence, but this will have to wait until the next issue of the *Digest*. Meanwhile, let me just record a few of my own recollections. I first met Vince in the early 80s when he gave me several new ones from Africa during his annual trips to do voluntary medical work. But it was some years later, in 1998, that I had the chance to get to know him, when he joined us for the Spratly (9MØC) trip. I afterwards operated with him as 5U5Z (Niger) and, most recently, 3X5A (Guinea, 2008) as part of the Voodoo Contest Group. In every way Vince was truly larger than life and many stories are already appearing on the Internet and elsewhere. He was a great operator and a fascinating companion, as well as being very much respected in his professional (medical) life. He will be much missed and our condolences go out to his family.

G3XTT

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

The winter DX contest season is over, and many contesters will be forward planning some traditional summertime activities like NFD or IOTA. HF band conditions remain encouraging, albeit frustrating. As 15m returns to life, many contest weekends have seen some pleasant surprises, although often it's a case of being unlucky and a chosen event is reported as being 'not as much fun as the contest the week before sounded'. Sp-E conditions on 10m can only be just around the corner, giving the possibility of reasonable QSO volumes on all six HF contest bands.

Personal SCCs

Until now all UK special contest callsigns were Notices of Variation to club callsigns. Their use has been in multi-op entries by these clubs, and also in single-op events where a member of the club or society uses the call. Some of the clubs with an SCC have a small membership, perhaps with only one or two contesters amongst them. Some of these SCCs have hence become synonymous with individuals, although they were not officially 'personal' SCCs.

All this has now changed, thanks to the great efforts of G3PSM, G3XTT, GW3SQX and others patiently progressing the issue with Ofcom over the last 2 years. Any UK amateur who so wishes will now be able to apply for their own SCC. Of course it's not quite as simple as we would hope, although there are some reasons behind this. There are 520 possible combinations of SCCs in total, given that there are 2 x prefix letters G and M, 10 digits, and 26 suffix letters. $2 \times 10 \times 26 = 520$. At least 130 are already allocated to clubs and contest groups. Ofcom assumed that there could be a high demand for individual SCCs, which could exhaust the available supply of callsigns, but also present too much demand on the Ofcom staff to process the requests. Hence

qualification criteria have been announced with the intent to reduce the amount of callsigns issued that are not used. Evidence of participation in several contests is now required, although this should not be a barrier to anyone serious about qualifying, even with a modest station.

The CDXC club callsign MØCDX has the SCC MØC, and has seen a lot of activity with single and multiple operator contests from several different DXCC entities around the UK. Despite many thousands of QSOs being made overall, there's not been so much activity in the last couple of years, so I'm including the list of HF and 50 MHz contests (as this is CDXC) where the callsign can be used. If you are interested in using the callsign this year, please contact Neville, G3NUG. It could be a case of 'use it or lose it,' as there will be no automatic extension to club SCCs without proving they have been used, so please get in touch.

- ARRL DX (CW and SSB).
- ARRL 1.8 MHz (CW only).
- ARRL 28 MHz (Multi-mode).
- ARRL RTTY Round-up.
- CQ WPX (CW, RTTY and SSB).
- CQ World Wide (CW, RTTY and SSB).
- CQ World Wide 160 (CW and SSB).
- IARU Championship (Multi-mode).
- RSGB IOTA (Multi-mode).
- WAE DX (CW, RTTY and SSB).
- BARTG RTTY.
- Russian DX.
- IARU 50 MHz Trophy (Multi-mode).

If you are interested in obtaining your own personal SCC for use in the above contests, go to the Ofcom website here to read more and then download the application form:

www.ofcom.org.uk/radiocomms/ifi/licensing/classes/amateur/special_call2

It is possible that there will be some further changes or confirmations above what I'm mentioning here by the time this copy of the *Digest* reaches you.

The benefits of SCCs are often discussed. They can save minutes of dead time over a long contest that would be wasted sending a longer call, and potentially result in fewer copying errors as there are fewer characters to get wrong. Short or unusual callsigns could attract more casual callers too. But on the other hand the time saved with the shorter call could be wiped out with one extra toilet break, so we should keep the benefits in perspective. Actually, a shorter callsign might make correct identification of a partially decoded callsign actually harder. With weak signals or lots of adjacent channel interference, when using SuperCheckPartial to assist, it's easier to guess who GØMT? or GM3PO? is and get that confirmed with 'QSL' or 'Roger', than being met with 'G1?' or 'MM8?' which will require the calling station to send their call or the missing letter again. The simpler confirmation may be easier under marginal conditions.

All being well, I should reach 200,000 QSOs using GØMTN later this year, so I'll probably continue using that, despite often being copied as GØMC on CW, and all manner of 'Golf Zebra?', 'Mike Zero' and 'Golf Mike Zero' combinations on SSB. I shall not indulge in the discussion about alternative phonetic alphabets, which has bizarrely proved to be the lengthiest thread on the UK-Contest reflector in months.

Stay in band

After the CQ 160m contests this year there was some public condemnation of out-of-band operating by the IARU Region1 President. It's significant that such a high profile complaint has been raised, and it's

hoped that the contesting community will take heed from it.

I suppose the argument for operating below 1.810 MHz from Europe is that in some parts of the world the spectrum is licensed for the amateur community, worldwide propagation was available, and the offending stations calling NA from IARU Region 1 were transmitting for only fractions of a second. We don't see any activity below 14.000 MHz in the busiest contests, and in terms of legality the 160m transgressions are as wrong as calling on 13.995 MHz would be. The amateur community are relatively forgiving during very busy contests when the RTTY or SSB contest activity far outgrows their normal segments. So the message is to always remain in band, whilst 'out of mode segment' usage is permitted, but only where band occupancy requires it and the contest rules don't specifically prohibit it.

What still seems to be a grey area is whether it is the dial frequency or the RF energy that is important when the legality of the transmission is not in doubt. That is, transmitting on 14.349 MHz USB puts RF out of band and is illegal. But transmitting on 3.600 or 7.040 MHz LSB is permissible within the licence conditions, and potentially within the contest rules, depending on the contest.

Browsing some old *Digests* recently, I found some discussion on this from back in 1999. The question was concerning 40m SSB split operation, and whether it was right to operate in what was obviously the middle of the CW segment, and whether replying to a station there was any more acceptable. From memory, few EU stations seem to call CQ very low in the band.

11 years ago

One sunspot cycle ago one of the adverts in the *Digest* was celebrating the achievements of Jeff, N5TJ, for breaking the 10,000 QSO barrier as a single operator in the CQ WW

DX SSB contest. When will this next be repeated? When will 10m support it? Answers on a postcard to the usual address.

Remember the fun?

Some of the folks debating rules, ethics and the like on the public contesting Internet reflectors can be very passionate about their points of view. It's ironic that many of these folks don't actually appear to get on air very often. For a relative newcomer browsing these lists, or listening to contests live during a very congested event, it can sometimes be quite off-putting. Members of my own local club have told me they didn't take part in certain events because it sounded too horrendous! Contesting with the intent to win can also require lots of preparation, and intense operating over a long period will be physically and mentally exhausting. But, that's why it's a competition – winning is very rarely 'easy.'

But many contest entrants operate without any intention of winning, just to make some activity, contact old friends, or give some points for their team or club if applicable. Whilst lots of activity is being seen in the 80m Club Championship contests, there are a variety of other events each and every weekend which would benefit from extra support, and can be fun to take part in. UK participation in these events can often be very low.

At my local club's radio rally in March, I am usually assigned the car park marshalling duties. I've been told I probably only have to do this another 20 or 30 times before I can graduate to a job inside, away from the elements, with the other club elders. On previous years we've had lots of rain, and even snow, so I was pleased to be greeted with some sunshine this year. When the need to physically run up and down the field pointing at people had subsided, I fetched my FT-817 from the car, sat down on a nearby picnic table, and started making some QSOs. 20m and 15m were still very busy in the closing stages of the contest,

necessitating quite some patience – if anyone else called when I did, I was always going to be the weaker station. The log was scribbled on paper, and a soft drink can doubled as a vital paperweight. I tried CW only with a mini-paddle, I think SSB may have been more frustrating with only QRP and a counterpoise-less Miracle Whip.

However, this made for a very pleasant hour's operating in the sunshine. As a bonus many of the rally visitors stopped by to see what was going on as they made their way back from the rally to their cars. There was no time to assemble a more substantial demonstration station, but it still gave the essence of the contest, and QSOs were made over four continents. There was a comment that I should have made my log writing a little more legible, though. This activity was also with my club's SCC, to try to get maximum use of it, and hopefully ensure it will still be available to my club in the future.

Contest activity does not have to be 'winning' to be successful, or great fun. If you have the resources and inclination to potentially win, of course 'Go for it!' and don't forget to tell us how it went. But if you've only a few hours in the EA RTTY or SP DX contest, similarly there's no reason not to shout about it. Send in an entry too – if the rules have been followed there's no reason not to send in an entry, no matter how small. Don't send in a check log – submit a full entry and boost the numbers in the results table. I've been right at the bottom of a results list as many times as I've been near the top, and it's done me no harm at all!

WPX Rule Changes

There are changes to the CQ WPX contests rules from this year, changing the Multi-Single category rules amongst other things. The idea is to enable a multi-operator category where stations can be competitive that only have a single radio and set of antennas. Previously in WPX, and some

other contests Multi-Single categories, effectively a complete second station needed to be operational in order to be competitive. This incurs much greater complexity, with RF filtering and computer networking to consider. Hopefully this will make for more entries in the category, as the criteria to have a competitive station have now become simpler. Some groups have felt disappointed by this change, but there are other contests where a two-station multi-single set-up can be used. The variety of different rules in the worldwide calendar should be celebrated, rather than trying to make the events all clones of each other. Search on the Internet for a webinar, hosted by the Potomac Valley Radio Club, where the WPX contest director Randy, K5ZD, covers the rule changes and plans for the WPX contests. Whilst on the topic of the WPX contests, the WPX RTTY contest now holds many years of results in a searchable database, just the like the WPX SSB and CW contests.

DARC Contest Logbook

Entries for DARC-run contests, such as the WAE series, and other contests such as CQ WW are now being aggregated in a large

database system called the DARC Contest Logbook. These contacts can be used to apply for DARC awards. This has now been expanded with a link to the eQSL system, where eQSL confirmed contacts can be transferred to the DCL.

Endpiece

Thanks to Derrick, G3LHJ, for recent copies of the Torbay ARS Contest Newsletter. It's obviously paying off to keep the local club members enthused – well done.

That's all for this time. Apologies if I appear to be repeating some old topics, but I think the important things deserve to be repeated, and refreshed every so often. There will likely be a number of newer CDXC members who weren't reading the *Digest* a few years ago as well. As ever, suggestions for content for the column will be welcomed, as would any content for print. Send details to contests@cdxc.org.uk. I will reply to all correspondence personally. I've only received one non-spam e-mail via this address since April last year, so please get in touch.

73, Lee GØMTN

E-mail to the Editor

From G3TXF

Dear Martyn,

The March 2010 *Digest* was a bumper edition for DXpedition write-ups, with no less than seven in the one issue. Just like the DXpeditions themselves, the style of each of the write-ups was different. But taken together the seven articles covered DXpeditions involving a total of 26 operators who between them made some 120,000 QSOs. Not bad for just one issue of the CDXC *Digest*!

With four of the DXpeditions being to the Pacific (each with European operators) and one to the Falklands, the total miles travelled by the operators soon starts to rack up. My estimate is that the total distance travelled by the operators on these seven DXpeditions was something over a quarter of a million miles. Not only is that a lot of Air Miles, but it's greater than the distance to the moon!

73 Nigel, G3TXF

Not the GB2RS News

- Reykjavik's Revenge
- Commonwealth Contest under fire
- The one millionth amateur radio licence issued in Italy

After the collapse of their banking system, Iceland proceeded to exact terrible revenge on the United Kingdom for calling them financial 'terrorists' by craftily engineering the eruption of their Eyjafjallajökull volcano on 14 April ('Ash Wednesday'), duly covering the UK with volcanic dust and grounding airline flights for days on end. To warn of any possible revenge attacks, Iceland then set up an Over-The-Horizon (OTH) radar system similar to the dreaded 'Woodpecker' during the days of the Cod... sorry, Cold War. This system has now gone on the blink, causing the virtual shutdown of the entire shortwave spectrum in Europe. And Cod only knows how to fix it.

There have been renewed protests about the RSGB's Commonwealth Contest (BERU), with several non-Commonwealth countries saying that it's unfair. They want to join in as well, even if their country was never part of the Commonwealth in the first place. Or even better, they say, let's start an 'Old Colonies Contest', from which Commonwealth countries would be firmly excluded. The idea would also be to use the old colonial prefix, for example CR6 for Angola, FA for Algeria, MP4B for Bahrain and so on – just like in the good old days.

The one millionth amateur radio licence was issued recently in Italy. A jubilant Arsenio Cretino of Montelasagne di Spaghetti Bologna said that he was overwhelmed when he came across his licence last week at the bottom of a Corn Flakes packet. He said he now plans to get on the air within the week and consistently call as many rare DX stations as possible, preferably on their

frequency, adding that this way they'd be bound to hear him better.

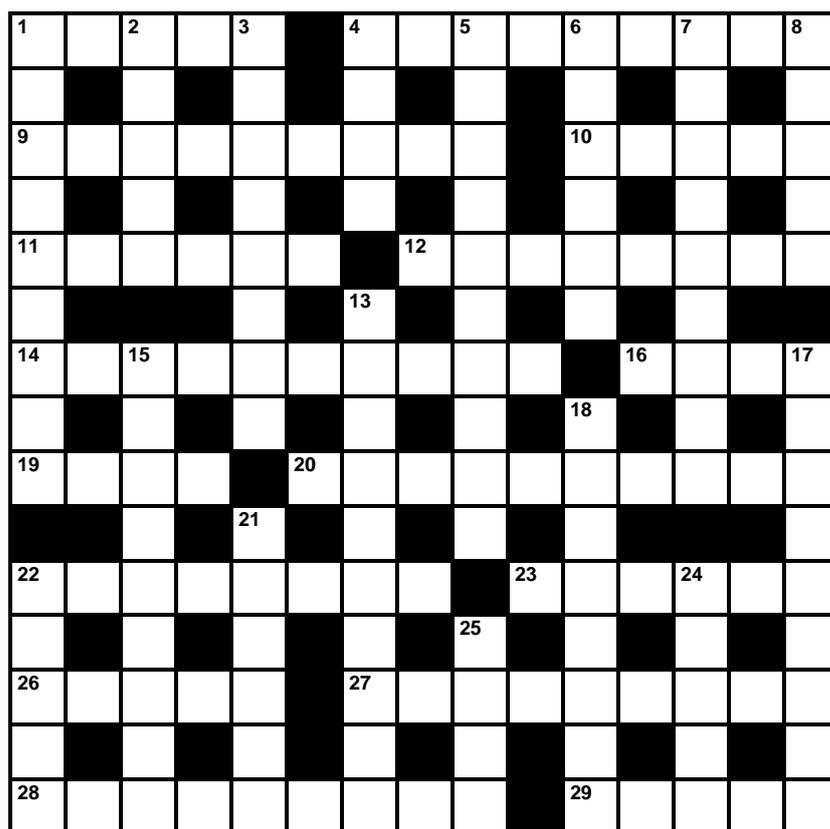
Webcasts of amateur radio meetings and rallies are becoming increasingly popular. If you can't get along in person, you can now follow the proceedings live via the Internet. However, we gather that a recent webcast of the AGM of an amateur radio club in the South West of England will not be repeated. The following day several online viewers contacted the organisers to say that they'd fallen off to sleep after watching the proceedings for only a few minutes.

With Europe's biggest amateur radio event, the German 'Ham Radio', once again just around the corner, the spotlight will be on Fred's Harbour aka Friedrichshafen. Indeed that well-known frequentee of the Friedrichshafen railway station buffet, Franziska Frohmacher, is already limbering up to receive the usual influx of radio amateurs keen to keep abreast of the times and also learn a smattering of colloquial German. With her soft spot for the British, Franziska also says that this year she'll be offering special rates to the up-and-coming young UK radio amateur.

Solution to Prize Crossword 39

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

Digest Prize Crossword 40 *by RFX*



The winner of Prize Crossword 39, March 2010: Peter Hart, G3SJX, Medstead, Alton (via e-mail).

Deadline for entries: 20 June

ACROSS

- 1 Turn red, if cooked (5)
- 4 Practised on black car at the start of day (9)
- 9 Cantonese cake? (5,4)
- 10 Verses from endless part of Europe (5)
- 11 Artist reportedly providing us with hiding place during time of conflict? (6)
- 12 The Rev. Spooner's domesticated horses showing signs of ownership (4,4)
- 14 Comparatively dull instrument found in European high-rise (10)
- 16 Opera singer's enthusiastic return (4)
- 19 Headcases for heads (4)
- 20 Wet cosy bed? That's out of order in this Welsh location (5-1-4)
- 22 Fuel provided by high-jumper from Helsinki, say? (8)
- 23 Two graduates getting fair backing in African capital (6)
- 26 Sound unstressed in Romansch waters (5)
- 27 Spicy cuisine's extra in US city (9)
- 28 Tongue weird person ate (9)
- 29 Female graduate seen in land of noted royal arrival (5)

DOWN

- 1 Highly promiscuous female athlete? (4,5)
- 2 Here in France the Queen's more hostile (5)
- 3 Find out the record's finished (8)
- 4 Girl from Albert Square heard in top of building (4)
- 5 What William and Mary each had between them in old money? (4-1-5)
- 6 German city with a long name (6)
- 7 Romanians deployed in another part of Europe (3,6)
- 8 Abandons liquid medication (5)
- 13 Refuse to be moved by this (7,3)
- 15 Trip south that may result in teaching job (9)
- 17 Group of stars accompanied by capital lawyer (9)
- 18 Start to satisfy two women quietly climbing ancient monuments (8)
- 21 Business in which a beautiful female gets involved (6)
- 22 'Please wait inside' - in CW? That's old-fashioned (5)
- 24 Make amends quite early in the day (5)
- 25 Part of feudal society too (4)

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 31/05	YU140Z: special event station
till May	VK9WBM: Willis Island (OC-007)
till 10/06	TT8PK: Chad
till 30/06	3Z0FCH: special event station (Poland)
till 30/06	GB50ATG: special event callsign
till 01/07	EM20UCC: special callsign
till 12/07	ZS10WCS: special callsign
till 09/08	VQ9JC and VQ90JC: Diego Garcia (AF-006), Chagos
till 31/12	3Z0RADIO: special event callsign
till 31/12	4A1B: special callsign (Mexico)
till 31/12	4B: special prefix (Mexico)
till 31/12	9A500AA: special callsign
till 31/12	DR2010L, DR2010O, DR2010N: special callsigns
till 31/12	HA2010S: special callsign
till 31/12	IR1C: special callsign
till 31/12	LM50NRK: special event station
till 31/12	4M200AJ, YV200D, YW200A: special callsigns
till 31/12	YW200ER, YW200L, YW200T: special callsigns
till 31/01/11	DT8A: King Sejong Base, South Shetlands (AN-010)
till March 2011	AT10BP: Maitri Base, Antarctica
28/04-30/06	8J1P, 8J4P, 8J6P: special stations
30/04-27/05	GB10GKA: special callsign
01/05-31/05	4U10NPT: Austria
01/05-31/05	IU3AC: special station
01/05-27/05	OX3RC or OX3/N0RC: Greenland (NA-018)
01/05-28/05	PC600P: special event station
01/05-31/10	VK100WIA: special callsign
13/05-26/05	TL0A: by DJ8NK and F6EXV
15/05-28/05	OH0/PA0VHA, OH0/PA2A, OH0/PA2AM: Aland Isls (EU-002)
15/05-28/05	OH0/PA2VMA, OH0/PA3ALK: Aland Islands (EU-002)
15/05-28/05	OH0/PA3BAG and OH0/PB5A: Aland Islands (EU-002)
15/05-24/05	OZ/PA1H and OZ/PA7PA: Lango Island (EU-172)
21/05-02/06	OZ/DB5YB: Fano Island (EU-125)
21/05-28/05	TM0B: Brehat Island (EU-074)
22/05-01/06	T31X and T31UR: Central Kiribati (OC-043)
23/05-10/06	PA/DL1EAL: Texel Island (EU-038)
25/05-02/06	JT9YAB and JT9YW: Mongolia

28/05-02/06	9A/I2OGV, 9A/I2RFJ, 9A/I2ZBX: Sveti Nikola (EU-110)
28/05-02/06	9A/IZ2AMV, 9A/IZ2LSC: Sveti Nikola (EU-110)
28/05-06/06	E4X: Palestine
29/05-12/06	OZ/DL4VM: Fano Island (EU-125)
May	ZS8M: Marion Island (AF-021)
02/06-17/06	LA/SP7IDX: Engeloya (EU-062)
02/06-06/06	ZK3X: Tokelau (OC-048)
05/06-06/06	GB70BRS: special event station (England)
09/06-15/06	PW8J: Ilha dos Lencois (SA-041)
10/06-17/06	VP5/WB2REM, VP5/KD2JA, VQ5M: Caicos Isls (NA-002)
16/06-18/06	PW8L: Sao Luis Island (SA-016)
18/06-21/06	MS0INT: Flannan Isles (EU-118)
18/06-23/06	OZ/G0GRC: Fyn Island (EU-172)
05/07-14/07	FP/K9OT and FP/KB9LIE: Miquelon Island (NA-032)
20/07-27/07	CQ8SV: Corvo Island (EU-089)
21/07-26/07	VE3ZZ/VY2 and VY2X: Prince Edward Island (NA-029)
23/07-25/07	F/OR9W/p: Tombelaine Island (EU-156)
23/07-26/07	F/ON3CO,F/ON5ANN,F/ON5OO,F/ON5RA: Chausey I. (EU-039)
23/07-26/07	F/ON7BT,F/ON7EQ,F/ON7LX,F/ON7TK: Chausey I. (EU-039)
24/07-26/07	J49A: Gavdos Island (EU-187)
24/07-25/07	TM7T: Chausey Islands (EU-039)

Barry James Phillimore G4VXT SK

20 November 1938 – 2 March 2010

G4VXT has gone ‘Silent Key’. After battling with bone marrow cancer for over six years, he died peacefully at home on 2 March. Having suffered from a near-continuous course of treatments, Barry came to feel that he had ‘had enough and just could not go on’.

The funeral took place at Flitwick Church on 15 March with a large congregation of family, business associates, friends and fellow members of CDXC and his Shefford club.

At the CDXC Annual Dinner on the following Saturday the cheery presence of Barry and his beloved partner Pat was

greatly missed by so many long-standing friends. Lionel, G5LP, with whom he had so often shared these occasions, found it particularly poignant to find that, quite by chance at this sell-out event, the only two vacant seats in evidence were at his table.

Dozens of letters of appreciation and condolence have been received and Ken Amos, G4YRF, Chairman of the Shefford ADARS, described the importance of the role played by Barry as a formidable operator in the club’s contest activities, his committee work and as a regular participant in the weekly programmes of the club. His contributions will be sorely missed.

Born at Eversholt in Bedfordshire, Barry had always lived in the area, with spells at Steppingley, Millbrook and, for the past eleven years, at Harlington. Indeed as a lad he became a cinema projectionist for the Zonita picture palace in Ampthill.

A born engineer and able to turn his hand to anything mechanical, Barry eventually trained as a tool maker at Sharpenhoe for the Production Tool Ally Company. Subsequently he worked with Hunting Engineering at Maulden.

A highly skilled and respected craftsman, particularly so in the days before computer-aided technology, in 1960 his work took him to Ndola, in what was then Rhodesia, for a six-month tour. On his return he married Shirley and set up home in the historic market town of Ampthill, where they raised their two daughters Helen and Michelle who, in turn, presented him with three delightful granddaughters Annabel, Lottie and Tilly, all of whom he simply adored.

Tragically Shirley died in an accident. Time passed and Barry was joined by Pat Justice, the charming lady that we have all come to know so well. Partners for the past 17 years, Pat has supported Barry in his many interests, attended countless amateur radio events and, throughout the recent difficult times, has been at his side caring for and comforting him.

Pat has described their various trips abroad, happy holidays at Sheringham (Barry and the 'Poppy Line') and their shared interests, although, in common with most XYLs, she did not actually rise to a callsign of her own! She speaks of the Barry we all knew so well as "a very kind and clever man who would do anything to help anybody". His mechanical expertise even extended to the design and building of four extensions to his house.

Barry was an accomplished cricketer in his youth, a keen fisherman and was fascinated

by steam engines and railways. A connoisseur of bonsai trees, he had collected and cultivated an impressive collection. But of course CDXC members knew him as the consummate 'DXer', with a state-of-the-art station at Harlington featuring the top-of-the-range Icom IC-7800 transceiver, an Acom linear and a 60ft tower with a 9-element Optibeam.

First licensed in August 1982 as G6KVQ (never activated), G4VXT was issued to him on 18 December 1983, with his very first QSO taking place on 40m with G4KPK.

A long-serving member of CDXC, the RSGB and the ARRL, Barry's shack walls were covered with an impressive display of DX awards, certificates and trophies. He achieved both the ARRL 5BDXCC and the ARRL Honor Roll. Holder of the 'Islands of Scotland' Supreme Award, his impressive scores in the RSGB IOTA programme resulted in his being presented with the IOTA 'Plaque of Excellence'.

To Pat and to his surviving family, CDXC members join in offering our sympathy, our deep appreciation and the assurance that G4VXT will remain for ever in the collective memory of our society. We too mourn him, miss him and are united in our view that it was a privilege to have known Barry, one of 'Nature's Gentlemen'.

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

5B4AFB	Alf Wilson
GW3NXR	Terry Miles
KI6T	Gary Stilwell

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

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

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

The amount of **£18.00** (eighteen pounds)

1. starting with an **initial payment on 1st July 2009**
2. **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

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

Name(s) :
.....

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :
.....

Postcode :

After completion, please send the signed form to the UK bank branch looking after your account and not to CDXC. If you are using ONLINE banking, then make the Standing Order request directly ONLINE.

