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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

By all accounts this year's RSGB HF & IOTA Convention was a resounding success. Don, G3XTT, also e-mailed me to say that he was "pleased to see G3RFX roaming the corridors of the Gatwick Worth Hotel with his official CDXC editorial briefcase – obviously on serious editorial business!". Well, that too of course, Don.

Amongst other things my roaming editorial presence did, though, result in a last-minute article from John, G4IRN, on his recent DXpedition to Swaziland and 3DAØRN (see page 20).

In this *Digest* you'll also find a report by Roger, G3SXW, and Nigel, G3TXF, on their recent trip to Papua New Guinea and P29SX/P29XF (page 13). In fact I received this one very soon after they got back. As Roger put it himself, "Hey, hot off the press, or what?? - QRT just 6 days ago!!".

Me throwing down the gauntlet in the September *Digest* and asking for 'Hints and Kinks'-type contributions on such topics as how to get on 136 kHz also resulted in an article from John, G3WKL, on that very subject. I received this a few days before the weekend of the HF Convention itself - and I'm still trying to work out how he managed to find the time to write it in the first place, bearing in mind his many other commitments at around this time.

Indeed I know I speak for all of us when I say many thanks and congratulations to John and the other members of the Organising Committee for doing such a grand job in coordinating it all.

It was also great to see so many overseas delegates and visitors to this year's Convention, many of them 'regulars'. The German contingent was particularly prominent in the shape of (amongst others) DF5WA, DL2SXX, DL2VFR, DL6ATM and DL7AKC. Thank you too, gentlemen, for your excellent company.

And directly outside the Gatwick Worth Hotel itself: the car park (admittedly the sort of thing you're less likely to find inside the hotel itself...). The perfect hunting ground for the trained observer and 'I-Spy Amateur Radio Callsign Registrations' enthusiast. Apart from the G3- and G4-reg Range Rovers and BMWs I even spotted a T8 and a P5, but then presumably these had nothing to do with us.

Yes, one of these days - DVLA pricing policy permitting - I must get round to acquiring my own personal callsign registration, assuming some scoundrel hasn't nicked it already. But then why on earth should anybody apart from me want 'G3 RFX'? Meanwhile I suppose we'll have to stick with good old 'L790 ETA', not exactly ideal these days for driving around down-town Madrid.

Returning to the *Digest*, it's thanks to Simon, MØCLW, for taking on the unenviable task of Picture Editor. Neville has done this up to now in truly Presidential style. Simon and I had many a handover-type chat in 'Cray Valley Corner' to the left of HFC Reception – again, with the famous editorial briefcase close to hand.

Finally, apologies for the slightly belated appearance of this month's *Digest*. This was

largely due to us wanting to include at least a few comments on this year's HF & IOTA Convention.

Failing that, feel free to blame the delay on the wrong sort of leaves on the line – or the usual signalling problems in the Paddington area.

Talking of which: the other day the 1515 First Great Western train from London Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads (I was on it) miraculously arrived in the central Bristol area a good five minutes ahead of schedule, then came to a sudden and rather mysterious halt a mere 500 yards short of the Temple Meads platform. Upon which we had the following

delightful announcement from the train manager, "I apologise for the delay to this train. This is due to this train being early". The mind boggles.

Yes, anything to fill an Editorial.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

www.btinternet.com/~g3rfx

PS: have fun using the new 40m extension, 7.100-7.200 MHz (as of 31 October 2004, 0100 UTC).

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

I hope that most of you will have finished your aerial maintenance before the winter sets in. I had a very salutary experience last month, having decided that the steel ropes on my 60ft tower really should be replaced. They had been there for about six years and didn't look too bad, although one was noticeably rusty. Fred, G4BWP, and Rupert, G4XRV, kindly agreed to help, ie to do it for me. As soon as we started to lower the tower, the rusty rope broke! If this has to happen, I guess the best time is when you are standing there with the replacements all ready. Fortunately, the position of the break was such that the top two tower sections fell only a few inches but even so, it was a bit scary. Almost any other scenario would have been very nasty indeed.

Fred, the expert, moved smoothly to Plan B, which involved him up a ladder, replacing the ropes with the tower still vertical. All went smoothly thereafter because he had done it

several times before and really knew what he was about. The morals of the story are (i) don't leave this kind of job too long, and (ii) if possible, get help from an expert. I don't expect to be so lucky again.

Now that job is over, I 'only' have to erect the 80m vertical and do a bit of messing about with the wire aerials to be ready for the winter season. They will have to survive for at least five months because you will have noted that we have decided to move the Penallt Trophy competition to March next year. This is to detach it from the New Year hangovers and, hopefully, to coincide with better band conditions near the equinox. Do join in. It doesn't take huge aerials and acres of real estate to get a respectable score and it's good fun. I'm not really a contest enthusiast, but the Penallt lasts only a month and there is a bit of a technical and operating challenge to give

you some satisfaction. For the uninitiated the rules etc. are on the website.

On the operating front, the Kure expedition trailed in the last issue hasn't happened yet, as you will know; another example of the many things which can go wrong in organising a major trip. With luck it will be resurrected next year, but meanwhile we can look forward to Peter 1 in January. This one still seems to be on the rails, although it must be even more fraught with potential problems.

Problems of a different (political) kind have, for years, dogged attempts to activate the Andaman Islands (VU4). However, if we keep everything crossed, there may be a chance that our Indian friends will succeed in gaining permissions before too long. It is ironic that a place which is so easy to get to and which is a high-profile holiday resort has risen to the top five on the DXCC wanted list because of sensitivities about allowing amateur radio operation. You may have heard that the VUs concerned are soliciting support in the form of tactful messages to reinforce their application. If you would like to help, see the DX bulletins like the Daily DX or the 425 DX News for details.

Your Committee has decided to make another Award of Merit, this time to the Five Star DX Association for the monumental effort involved in the 3B9C expedition. Nobody can be unaware of the magnitude of this undertaking or of its success by whatever yardstick you care to use as a measure. Some of the features which we noted in making the award were: quality of operating, inclusion of operators new to expeditioning, the use of .new. modes, innovation, eg the use of the .Star. software suite and the careful consideration given to liaison with local interests on the island.

The presentation was made at the HF Convention.

CDXC was again represented at the Leicester ARS Donington Show last month. As usual the stand was a focal point for members to meet and chew the fat. We really will have to invest in some nice leather armchairs and a private bar. Our next outing will be to the Kempton Park Show on Sunday, November 14. See you there!

Finally, make sure you have the 2005 Annual Dinner in your diaries. We are again going to the Pendley Manor Hotel in Tring, where last year's event proved very successful, despite some minor administrative hiccups in the period leading up to the day. The accommodation, service and, of course, the food, were excellent, so let's go for a record attendance on Saturday, April 16. Several members and partners made a weekend of it last year in the glorious Chiltern Hills – the spiritual home of CDXC. Full details will appear in the Digest and on the website, probably in the New Year.

Speaking of new years, it seems daft as I write this in the middle of October, but the next Digest is in January, so may I be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with bags of DX and freedom from QRM.

73 es gud DX John, G3LAS

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

Another HF Convention is over and what an excellent show it was! The Gatwick Worth Hotel proved to be an excellent location with a large area for the sponsor displays, for CDXC and the RSGB, and of course for the bar.

The lecture rooms were good too, as were the lecture streams. The hotel staff were very friendly and helpful and I felt this location had the atmosphere of the Beaumont which has really been missing for the past two years. I was delighted to hear that the Organising Committee is planning to book the Gatwick Worth again next year. It's also a very convenient location with such a wide range of flights into Gatwick for all over the UK and from the Continent and USA. Congratulations to John, G3WKL, as Chairman of the Organising Committee for another sterling effort.

My only criticism, which was shared by others, was that the gala dinner food could have been better. There are thoughts next year that we should have a carvery – this sounds an excellent idea to me – hot gravy on the spot! Bob, GU4YOX, did an excellent job as MC. What energy he has – by the end of the dinner I was thoroughly exhausted just watching him!

It was great to see so many of my 3B9C colleagues at the HFC. Perhaps after the four lectures at the HFC we can say that this project has finally come to an end. Well almost! – there's still some QSLing to do, although we are currently up to date.

I was delighted to receive the CDXC Award of Merit on behalf of the 3B9C team and was particularly pleased to hear Chairman John's words about the way we involved the

Rodrigues community and acknowledging the fact that we took a considerable number of operators with us who had not DXpeditioned before. Thanks, John.

I'm not a great lecture attendee, but I was much impressed with Chip Margelli's (K7JA, Yaesu US) talk about the new FT-DX-9000 transceiver. This sounds like quite a beast and Chip acknowledged our feedback on the Yaesu radios we used at 3B9C, D68C and 9MØC. I guess I'll have to strengthen the operating table at the new QTH!

I sometimes wonder whether we really all recognise the very high level of support given to HF radio in the UK by our sponsors. Without the support of ML & S and Yaesu, the HFC would not be viable. They both provide very substantial financial support as well as the main raffle prizes.

But the contribution of these organisations goes much further. They both support IOTA, Yaesu by direct contribution, ML&S by advertising. In my view these contributions are absolutely essential for the development of the IOTA Programme. The DOS-based IOTA systems are now years out of date and all must be replaced. The RSGB could not afford to do this. The new system has to be very cleverly designed, must be much more user-friendly and needs to eliminate much of the manual effort by checkpoints etc. If there are better systems more people will join the programme, submit updates and apply for certificates. Substantial development is needed and the sponsors contributions facilitate this.

Of course, sponsors such as ML & S, Yaesu and Nevada also make operations like 3B9C possible. The costs of these operations are

huge and the contributions from these key sponsors from the UK (and many others) help us to break even.

CDXC is of course supported by all the above organisations by advertising but here we must add Kenwood and Walters & Stanton to the list. As I have said before, when we are in the marketplace, let's support those organisations that support us.

We have two dates for your diaries – the CDXC Annual Dinner will take place on Saturday 16th April again at the Pendley Manor near Tring, Herts. We are trying to get a feel for the numbers, so please drop a note to Chairman John if you are planning to come.

The AGM and Summer Social will again take place on the third weekend of July (Saturday 23rd July 2005) This weekend seems particularly convenient as it falls between the IARU and IOTA contest weekends. We need to find a location preferably in the South-East.

We've had offers of Guernsey and Herefordshire, but perhaps these are a little far afield!

We welcome Simon, MØCLW, as Digest Picture Editor, a job I have done for several years. Thanks for taking this on, Simon, and thanks to others for offering to help. Please send your pictures and titles to Simon from now on at m0clw@yahoo.co.uk

Now to the next marketing drive – directed at the large number of non-member UK stations who worked 3B9C.



73 Neville, G3NUG

CDXC Annual Dinner 2005

Advance Notice

This highly popular event in the CDXC calendar will be taking place on

Saturday, 16 April 2005

at the

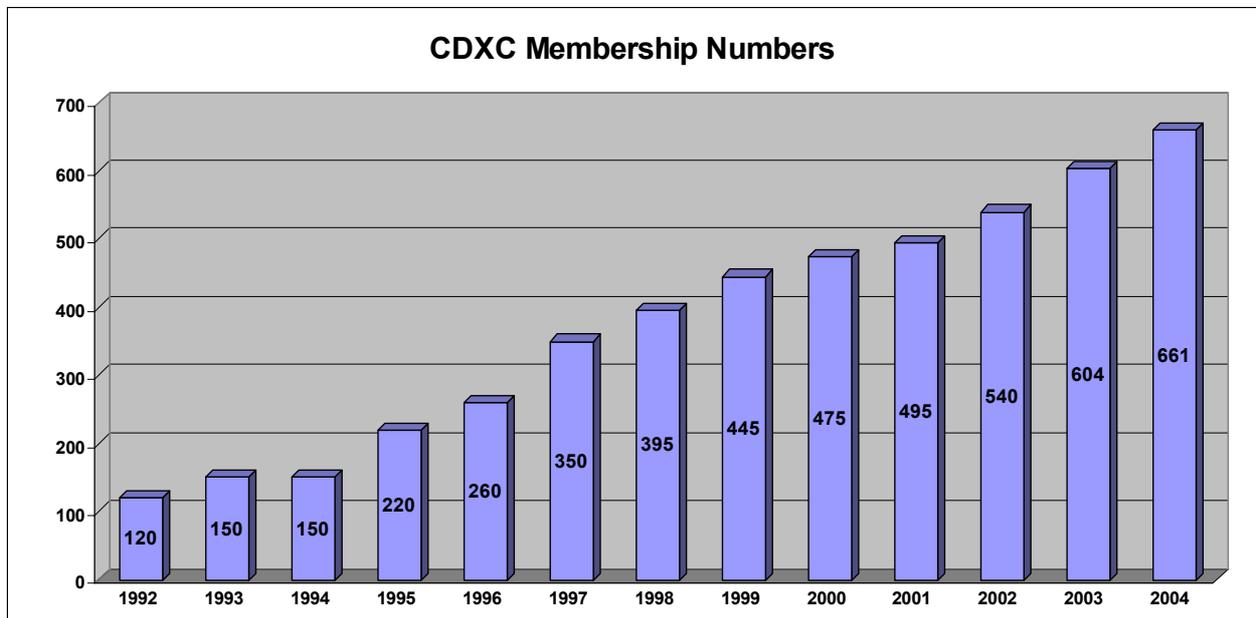
**Pendley Manor Hotel
Cow Lane
Tring
Herts HP23 5QY**

Further details (cost, menu, booking form etc.) in the January 2005 Digest

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
GØKTN	Trevor Smithers	Bath
G2HDR [rejoined]	Cyril Chapman	Bristol
G14MWA [rejoined]	Fred Ruddell	Craigavon
GU4WTN	Andy Hamon	Guernsey
MØCCE	Bob Barden	Northallerton
MØTDG	Timothy Grant	London
MØTIX	Rob Cowles	Soham
M3JFM	Paul Goodhall	Oxford
M3PHP	Peter Goodhall	Oxford
ZK1CG	Victor Rivera	Rarotonga



The CDXC LF Challenge 2005

Please note the change of the month of the Challenge from January to March

Aim: The aim of the competition is to work as many DXCC entities during the month of March 2005. Each DXCC entity is counted ONCE only.

When: 0001 UTC, 1 March 2005 to 2359 UTC, 31 March 2005.

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

Modes: No restrictions.

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

DXCC entity, Callsign, Date, Time, Band, Mode.

Entries which are not submitted in this format will be disqualified

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

Logs to be sent to awards@cdxc.org.uk or by post to Jim Kellaway, G3RTE, 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 1QW. Logs to be received no later than 30 April.

AWARDS – Multi-band.

1st Place – The winner will receive the Penallt Trophy (returnable) plus a small engraved plaque which is retained.

2nd Place – The runner-up will receive the Tindle Cup (returnable) plus a small engraved plaque which is retained.

3rd Place – For the person in third place a small engraved plaque which is retained.

AWARDS – Single Band.

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

Entrants who work more than half the Penallt Trophy winner's total will receive a certificate.

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT g3xtt@lineone.net

At last! Some decent band conditions over the past few weeks have finally brought life back to the higher HF bands. I am writing this a few days after the excellent HF Convention, and after a day in which I have been able to work my first VK and JA QSOs of the year on 24 MHz. Earlier in the month Nigel, G3TXF, was very workable as P29XF on 24 MHz. But he and Roger tell me they were unable to work into Western Europe on 28 MHz and this, too, has been a common feature. The 3 MHz gulf between 12m and 10m is a yawning chasm at times! The propagation gurus also tell us that there have been times recently with absolutely no visible sunspots, and there is a view emerging that the solar minimum could occur as early as 2006. This would lead to a prediction of a slightly earlier than expected date for the next solar maximum, probably around 2010. There's nothing unusual about that, as the 11-year figure is simply an average, with actual cycles varying from 9-13 years. See http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/18oct_solarminimum.htm?list69 for more on this.

In the meantime we can enjoy better LF propagation than we have been used to in recent years, and this season has already started with a bang, with West Coast stations workable from Europe on 160m. I'm working hard on achieving 9BDXCC in the year for the Annual CW table, run by G3WGV (previously by G3TXF), a feat which I have never quite achieved. As of late-October I have just passed the 100 on 10m, for band number 8, and am up to 89 on Top Band, for the last one, so I really need to squeeze that band as hard as I can from now on. Fortunately, with CQ WW CW and the Stew Perry Contest still to come, there is every possibility of achieving my goal.

Anyway, enough of these ramblings! What's new? Many of you will have filled slots with VK9LA and TX9, among others (including P29, mentioned above). There have been some nice ones announced, with 9N and 6O coming up in the not-too-distant future, and Kerguelen, North Cook (our own M3SDE), Glorioso and others due for the New Year. And Peter 1 is still on track. Indeed, the main problem in chasing DX is that there is so much on the bands at times that their pile-ups have a habit of overlapping!

Feedback

My ruminations about DXCC last time have brought a flurry of comments, with some widely differing views. Ian, G3KZR, writes:

"Appalled that the DXCC committee is blundering into the realms of deciding whether a state is a failed one or not. It may not be popular with the current US administration's mind-set, but surely only the UN should decide whether a state is a state or not. Very soon I expect to see that YI has been divided into three - Sunniland, Shialand and Kurdistan and so on. This is a very unwelcome and unwise departure and could even lead radio operators into activities which are regarded as illegal by some power groups in these areas and resulting in retribution.

While on the subject of DXCC I also note the attempts to invoke litigation in the States to unlock the two KP entities which are now regarded as permanently closed nature reserves. The DXCC committee should in my view delete the entities until such time as any litigation resolves the matter. Otherwise anyone now trying to reach Honor Roll is heavily penalised by the fact that there is no

way they can be worked. The VU4/7 situation is somewhat different in that the military consider they have reasons of security for currently not allowing radio operations and not that radio operations are permanently off limits. However for the life of me I cannot fathom the mind-set of the military as the Andamans at least have a tourist industry. Sometimes some keen DXers get things a bit out of proportion!"

In contrast Roger, G3SXW, has this to say:

"I agree (CDXC Digest, Sep 04) that we shouldn't mix ham radio and politics, but sometimes it just can't be avoided. Most important, I suggest, is that no DXer should be disenfranchised because of a political situation. It seems to me an injustice that operators in Northern Cyprus have been debarred for the past 30 years. I have no idea whether they should count for 5B4 or 1B or TA, but they should count for something. We shouldn't punish them for the failures of their political leaders.

In line with this thinking I applaud the DXCC decision to accept stations who are licensed by regional governments in Somalia (namely Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland). It is already ten years since there was a central government which could issue licences, therefore the authorities in each of these three regions are indeed the senior body and there is no-one to dispute them. Much better to welcome the 20 new Somali hams trained by VK2BVS into our midst.

DXCC should try wherever possible to avoid any black spots on the globe where radio amateurs are banished from the DX hobby. This especially applies to local nationals who should be encouraged to participate - not eschewed like Free-Banders."

Roger, G3KMA, phoned me for a lengthy chat on the various matters. Roger knows what it's

like from the sharp end, as many islands fall into disputed regions, perhaps more so than DXCC entities. Country boundaries tend to be fairly clear cut but, until things like oil and fishing rights became important, the 'ownership' of many remote and uninhabited rocks was largely irrelevant. Roger has, therefore, to have some sort of 'official' benchmark against which to make decisions and, as IOTA is a British awards programme, relies on Foreign Office guidance. As such, he understands completely why ARRL would look to the US State Department for guidance on DXCC (for example, as to whether there is a viable government in a particular region). I suspect Roger's view, and ARRL's, would be that the UN isn't likely to be helpful in some of these cases, perhaps wanting to sit on the fence.

Roger also takes me to task for my comments about operations which take place from locations other than where they claim to be. Firstly, he believes that most SØ operations have, indeed, taken place from within the RASD territory, on which I stand duly corrected. As far as other instances are concerned (my ZS/7P/3DAØ example, for instance), he believes we as amateurs have a duty to bring peer pressure to bear on any offenders that are known to us, rather than expect ARRL, the IOTA administration or others to step in every time. I do agree with this, and it's equally applicable to contest operations where we believe entrants are breaking the rules. As IOTA Contest Manager I know how often there are complaints about other entrants and how rarely evidence is forthcoming. Some may be justified; many may be just sour grapes on the part of those making the complaints.

Mapping of DX Spots

I haven't checked the following, but it may be of interest (this taken from the ARRL Contest Rate Sheet by NØAX). I do know that DX

Atlas is to be highly recommended – we used it extensively at 3B9C.

“Alex, VE3NEA, has written a shareware program that downloads DX spots and displays them in different ways. One option is to plot the spots on a graphical band map. This allows you to identify the DX stations as you dial across the band. Band Master works with the programs DX Atlas and Ionoprobe to display the density of the selected ionospheric layer in real time on a world map. Band Master then plots the great circle path between the DX station and the spotting station on top of this ionosphere density map. Pretty neat and reasonably priced, too! Check out all of Alex's programs at <http://www.dxatlas.com/BandMaster>.”

DXCC News

Finally, if you haven't already spotted this, it's worth noting that there is no longer a single Annual Deadline for DXCC updates for the Annual Listing. This from ARRL:

“Beginning in September 2004, there will be no deadline for the DXCC Annual List. We have been working toward this end for several years. In previous years, September 30 was the cut-off point for compiling the entity totals for the DXCC Annual List, published in the DXCC Yearbook. Over the years, DXCC participants tended to collect cards and submit them once a year, in September, to ensure the highest possible total for the listing. A major downside of the deadline is that we receive over 25% of our annual credit submissions during the month of the deadline. This in turn creates a huge increase in workload and a lengthy processing time.

Going forward, the lists of DXCC standings previously published in the DXCC Yearbook will be replaced by complete lists on the ARRL Web site. The new Web-based lists should be ready and on-line early in the first quarter of

2005, when the listings in the DXCC Yearbook would normally have been published. After initial publication, the new lists published on the Web will be updated regularly, perhaps weekly or even daily. They will also include the standings of all DXCC members, not just those who made a submission in the previous year (as has been the practice with the printed Yearbook due to space limitations).

A smaller version of the Yearbook will be published, containing highlights of the standings, along with other features, as in the past.”

CDXC Kenwood Challenge

Judging by the website, this has become a three-way competition (myself, G3LAS and G3TBK) but there may well be others in the wings, and the CQ WW contests, as well as the various autumn DXpeditions, will almost certainly permit some serious catching up. Personally, I have found the Challenge a real incentive to be on the bands. I recall some early members of CDXC falling by the wayside when they had reached Honor Roll, which was a great pity. It's always nice to have a reason to hang in there and enjoy the chase. What I have noticed is that many of my new ones for the year (XW3DT was a good recent example) are most easily worked on the WARC bands (I caught that one on both 12 and 17m), and life has been much easier since I replaced my Force 12 C-4 (essentially, a tribander plus 40m dipole) with a Tennadyne T10 Log Periodic, which goes great guns on 17 and 12m. There's a down side, though. It's really far too big for my Hilomast, but I'll worry about that when the Challenge year is over!

It was good to get some feedback and input for this column. Keep it coming. For next time, it would be helpful to have anything by 13th December.

73 Don, G3XTT

Out and About

CW Trip to Papua New Guinea (PNG): P29SX and P29XF

Roger Western, G3SXW
Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

g3sxx@compuserve.com
Nigel@G3TXF.com

Callsigns: P29SX (G3SXW) and P29XF (G3TXF)
Location: Loloata Island Resort, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
Lat/Long: 9 South, 147 East, Grid QI 30
Dates: 8 – 13th October, 2004
Operators: Roger, G3SXW (traditional bands); Nigel, G3TXF (WARC bands)
Mode: 100% CW
Stations: Two TS-570D transceivers, 100W barefoot
Antennas: One Butternut HF6V-X, one WARC ground-plane
Logging: Two laptop computers, running CT in DXpedition mode

trip since their visit to Cameroon (TJ3G) in March 2004, so it was about time to pack our bags again.

Logistics

Transmitting licences were really easy – many thanks to Wendy at PangTel for great efficiency and a warm welcome. Bookings were made with Scuba Safaris and we were off. Airline reservations were easy, flying via Singapore with Singapore Airlines, connecting with Air Niugini to Port Moresby. On the outbound leg we again suffered a large excess-baggage charge (£45 per kilo) – airlines seem to have homed in on this money-spinner in recent times.

QSOs (no duplicates)

80m	434
40m	1,100
30m	2,540
20m	2,100
17m	2,878
15m	2,565
12m	1,752
10m	371

TOTAL 13,740

PNG is short for Papua New Guinea, a group of islands lying off the north coast of Australia. It ranks as 88th Most Needed Country in Europe, according to the DX Magazine's annual survey. Nigel, G3TXF, and Roger, G3SXW, had not been away on a

PNG is nine hours ahead of UK on the clock and the total flying time is nearly 20 hours, so we left London late on Wednesday evening and arrived in PNG early on Friday morning. The airlines delivered us on time, with our luggage intact. We were transferred to Loloata Island Resort by water taxi, a 15-minute speedboat crossing, with a stop at PangTel to pick up the licences.

Our main concern before picking this location was the local topography. We could tell from pictures on the web that the island has a high hill and that accommodation is on the Eastern shore. There is a spit of land poking towards the North, but would it be big enough to accommodate our two verticals, with enough separation, thus allowing good RF take-off to

the North-west for Europe? On arrival we found that our fears had been unfounded.

Location

Absolutely the most critical aspect of any trip is the location, especially unimpeded RF take-off. If this can be immediately beside salt-water, then all the better. There are many DXCC countries which are rare enough for pile-ups, so it almost becomes a matter of choosing one where we can find a great location. This means probably an island or coastline with North-facing salt water and minimal blockage in other directions.

The Loloata Island Resort possibly comes closest to the most ideal location that we have ever uncovered, to suit our peculiar needs. It matches the following requirements:

Fly-in, Fly-out	easy flights and airport transfers
Licensing	easily arranged, low-cost
Hotel	comfortable accomodation, good food
Rooms	No. 15 + 16, tables and chairs provided
Electrically quiet	no local QRN at all
Reliable electricity	never a power-cut
Good RF take-off	completely clear from West > North > East > South
Minimal RF blockage	the hill only blocked South > West (S. Africa and W. Australia)
Salt water	two verticals were planted at high-water mark
Coax runs	Rather long: 100 and 200 feet
Climate	perfect: 25 degrees C, sea breeze, no insects

The rooms were mounted on pillars set in the beach. They swayed gently, giving the impression of being on-board an anchored

ship. The island has a number of wallabies (small kangaroos) roaming free – twice they broke a radial on the HF6V, possibly a first for a DXpedition?

Stations

We both operated with essentially the same stations – Kenwood TS-570D with solid-state PSU, Samson ETM9C keyer and laptop running CT in DXpedition mode. We prefer to operate with an outboard, full-size keyboard which helps with running pile-ups.

We also used Dunestar bandpass single-band filters to eliminate any between-station interference. Each station had a large sign showing our call-sign – this helps, especially when tired.

Nigel's WARC ground-plane is simply one side of an A3WS driven-element, mounted vertically with two elevated, resonant radials for each WARC band. On the traditional bands (80, 40, 20, 15, 10) Roger used the Butternut HF6V-X with two elevated, resonant radials for each band. Both these antennas are very efficient and radiate extremely well. They also have the big advantage that they are NOT resonant on each other's bands, so inter-station QRM is minimised. They are also lightweight for airline baggage and are quick to install.

Competing DXpeditions

Most of the time these days there are several DXpeditions active at the same time, more so particularly around the equinoxes, and we do get in each other's way. On several occasions we found that some other rare station had started up just 1-2 KHz lower in frequency, whose pile-up then covered us up: TJ3FR, FW7AQR, FK/N5XX and V85SS all 'stole' P29SX's frequency at least once. Roger's only option was to start again further up the band. When running a nice, slick pile-up in orderly fashion this is rather irritating.

DXpedition operators need to check the band more carefully before starting up a new pile-up. It needs a block of several KHz free of other pile-ups, not just a clear frequency on which to transmit.

NCDXF Beacons

When a band is wide-open you hear lots of signals and can quickly judge band-conditions. However, there are many occasions when a band sounds empty but it is not – there is simply no activity at that time. Especially when checking for a short opening, for example on 10m, it can waste a lot of time to CQ with no replies.

This is where the Northern California DX Foundation Beacon system comes into its own. We use it very frequently, especially when we are away from home. Just set the receiver to 14.100, 18.110, 21.150, 24.930 or 28.200 MHz and wait for the three-minute cycle to run through to judge conditions on that band. In sequence the following stations transmit: 4U1UN, VE8AT, W6WX, KH6WO, ZL6B, VK6RBP, JA2IGY, RR9O, VR2B, 4S7B, ZS6DN, 5Z4B, 4X6TU, OH2B, CS3B, LU4AA, OA4B, YV5B.

Each station (moving East to West) transmits their callsign and four one-second bursts at 100, 10, 1 and 0.1 Watts output to an omnidirectional vertical antenna. From P29 we most frequently heard KH6WO, ZL6B, VK6RBP, JA2IGY and RR9O – their signal strength varied enormously at different times of the day and night, making very clear to us what state the band was in.

Band Conditions

There are three main populations of DXers: Europe, North America and Far East Asia. Any one DXCC country is most remote from one of these three, or any one is closest. On this trip JA/Asia was closest – Europe and North America were most distant. Being

Europeans ourselves we have a greater interest in working back to our home area, but on most occasions we are not forced into a choice because the bands are open usually to one area or to the other, not to both at the same time.

One major exception to this, and when a clear conflict of interest arises, is around 1200-1400z. At this time North America has sunrise, so this is ideal for the LF bands - but at the same time the MUF is peaking towards Europe on the HF bands. If there is any chance of working Europe on 12m and 10m it is at this time. All we can do is to rotate daily between these two openings, hoping to please most of the people most of the time. When DXing from home in the UK we do notice that many DXpeditions to the Pacific area prefer to work the LF bands into North America at their sunrise, ignoring the fact that Europe is hungry on the HF bands.

There was just one occasion when this clash could be turned to advantage. P29SX was working W6/7's on 80m at around 1400z and found that this coincided with sunset in Scandinavia. Roger worked W6s, VE7s, OHs, SMs all at the same time. This felt very strange!

The other clash of interest is on 40m around 1500z when all three areas provide loud signals. This peak at midnight local time seems to happen wherever in the world you are operating – the VooDoo Contest Group experiences the same phenomenon in West Africa when the '40 Metre Zoo' takes over.

From P29 the JAs were extremely loud at this time (common darkness), Europeans were loud at their sunset and North Americans were loud just after their sunrise. This was the only time during this trip when P29SX felt it necessary to call by region, rotating through the three regions working a dozen QSOs in each region before moving on. The big majority of stations respected the directional calls, for which Roger was very grateful,

although there was one OE3 and one DJ7 who wanted him to believe that they were living in Japan and USA and Europe all at the same time!

Working the 80m openings to Europe was fascinating. Common darkness happens only at P29 sunrise/Europe sunset. Approaching sunrise on Loloata Island P29SX worked firstly UA6 and UA4 stations and then watched the European sunset cross the continent, finally reaching DL, F and ON. At that point (still an hour or two before sunrise in PNG) this opening faded and the band closed. P29SX worked only three UK stations on 80 metres.

At the other end of the spectrum 10m barely opened to Europe, although a good number of JA and W stations were worked. The only parts of Europe workable were UA, UR and a few stations in South-eastern Europe.

Band Sharing: WARC vs Traditional

We have now made several dual-operator CW DX trips where the operators split the bands between the traditional HF bands and the WARC Bands. Roger, G3SXW, takes on the mightier pile-ups of the traditional HF bands and combines this with meeting the challenges of working good rates on 40m as well as winking out as much as possible on 80m.

Meanwhile Nigel G3TXF works everything possible on the three WARC bands. On several trips we have found that the number of QSOs made by each operator is broadly similar. The traditional HF bands do provide higher volumes of QSOs than the WARC bands, but the time spent on 40m/80m, where the QSO rates are necessarily lower, counter-balances this.

Nigel, P29XF, spent the six days on Loloata Island hopping from 30m to 17m to 12m and then back down again, as the propagation dictated. Prior to our departure we had

announced our intention of 'operating on the threes', eg 18.073 (or 18.083), 24.893 (or 24.903). On the two higher WARC bands it was quite practical to stick to these pre-announced frequencies.

However, on 30m it is virtually impossible to pre-announce a working frequency because it is often quite hard to find a clear space on 30m when there are several DXpeditions active at the same time. On several occasions P29XF's 10.108 working frequency would be obliterated by the pile-up from another DXpedition starting up on 10.105 or 10.106.

In practice .going above the noise on 30m, ie above 10.113, is the only answer. P29XF used 10.114 on several occasions. However, upon returning home Nigel received several e-mails from US stations advising that 10.114 is a poor frequency for the US because it is used by a County Hunters net! Nevertheless, good runs were also had using 10.120. It really does help to have someone spot you on the Cluster when you are forced to QSY in order to dodge the QRM from other pile-ups!

Working the WARC Bands

The daily schedule of P29XF on the WARC bands was broadly similar each day. Immediately after dinner (at about 10z) several hours would be spent on 12m working into Europe. Unfortunately there were relatively few QSOs to be had with Western Europe on 12m, but there was no shortage of LZ, YU, UR stations to work in Eastern Europe. 12m died at about the same time each day (at some time between 1145z and 1200z). The next few hours would then be spent on 17m, again working mainly Europe.

17m was the champion band on this trip with 2,878 QSOs, including plenty of Western Europe. 17m closed each day at about 15z (1am in PNG). The rest of the PNG night (ie from 15z through to 21z) was spent on 30m. 30m closed each day at 21z, which was one

hour after sunrise. This brought us nicely to breakfast time in PNG (7am/21z). After breakfast it was time to work the USA on 17m and 12m. These trans-Pacific openings were quite scratchy. The HF bands would then take a nose-dive as we approached midday local time, and by then it was time to go to sleep (at about 11am local/01z). The next operating session would start about two hours before sunset as the bands began to pick up again following the midday doldrums.

The two hours prior to dinner (at 09z) were spent on 12m, 17m and 30m, but with rapid changes of bands as we went through sunset (08z). There was usually a good run of JAs on 30m just after sunset, which took us to dinner time. The only meals of the day were dinner (09z-10z) and breakfast (21z-22z). P29XF, the WARC band operator, was usually sound asleep at lunchtime.

Throughout a given single 24-hour period P29XF usually changed bands (between the three WARC bands) between six and ten times.

Duplicate contacts

Even on a relatively short six-day operation duplicate contacts already become a problem. They get exponentially worse if it's a two or three week operation. No-one has any problem with duplicate contacts which are made purely to cover for a possibly unsure previous contact.

However, the majority of the stations making duplicate contacts are pure time-wasters. The time wasted is to the detriment of the weaker stations who may well not make a QSO at all as a result of the time wasted by a QRO station making his umpteenth 'insurance contact'.

In order to avoid wasting even more time, the operators at P29SX/P29XF worked all duplicates as normal QSOs. It normally wastes

less time to work a duplicate than to say 'dupe' and then to risk having the station come back with a long stumbling diatribe 'vy sri OM, UR 599, UR 599 sri dup 73 73'. However, duplicate QSOs were simply not logged.

Weird Happenings

Every trip provides some weird, new experiences. On this one we got to meet many divers (mostly Australians) who really couldn't understand why we would want to visit such a world-renowned dive-site but never go into the water!

One weird happening was the red ant attack. The island has many, large pale-red ants that run very fast. Nigel was tying off a guy around a tree but hadn't spotted that the tree was covered in these red-ants, running up and down every branch. They attacked him in numbers, by biting and clinging on. The bite really hurts and it left Nigel literally hopping up and down trying to brush them off. He finally ripped off his shirt and Roger removed a dozen ants from the skin of his back. We quickly learned to respect these vicious, little creatures.

Wave QRM was a new experience as well. High-tide occurs twice a day. On several days the wind was non-existent and the sea was completely smooth. But on a couple of days there was strong wind and three-foot waves crashed onto the beach. These waves at high tide were immediately beneath our operating-positions and were very loud. We wished for noise-cancelling earphones or at least ones which enclosed the ears. This provided yet another aspect of challenge to managing the pile-ups.

One morning we witnessed the technique of local fishermen. A large canoe with 6-7 fishermen aboard started slapping the surface of the sea with an oar and banging out loud rhythms on drums. This was designed, we

supposed, to drive the fish in one direction towards the shore line, to make it easier to catch them. In the hotel, it goes without saying, we enjoyed wonderful lobster, prawns and fish. A big advantage of this site was sitting operating for long periods with a fabulous view of the sea and surrounding islands – very relaxing.

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QSLing

As always we are happy to accept QSL requests by any route – direct, bureau or e-mail. For a bureau reply please simply e-mail the QSO details: P29SX is via G3SXW

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Statistics

QSOs by Continent

Continent	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	Total
Percent									
Europe	25.6	45.9	67.0	67.5	62.8	46.6	51.5	21.0	56.2
Asia	38.5	32.3	24.6	23.6	22.3	26.1	27.2	55.5	26.5
N America	31.3	19.8	5.9	5.7	13.2	24.7	19.8	21.0	15.0
Oceania	4.1	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.4
S America	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.0	0.3	1.0	0.1	0.8	0.6
Africa	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

QSOs

Europe	111	505	1702	1418	1809	1195	902	78	7720
Asia	167	355	624	495	641	670	477	206	3635
N. America	136	218	150	120	379	633	346	78	2060
Oceania	18	19	34	38	29	35	20	5	198
S. America	1	1	18	22	10	25	2	3	82
Africa	1	2	12	7	10	7	4	1	44
Total	434	1100	2540	2100	2878	2565	1751	371	13740

Top Twenty Countries – No. of QSOs

Prefix	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	Total
JA	150	279	522	375	535	527	391	166	2945
W	127	205	136	111	361	588	334	78	1940
DL	15	71	311	225	322	205	167		1316
UA	11	96	153	148	166	130	82	25	811
I	7	24	141	109	123	83	75	15	577

UR	10	34	108	101	113	94	77	8	545
SP	1	40	142	74	122	71	86		536
OK	3	17	128	92	127	56	74		497
G	3	28	91	77	97	80	29		405
UA9	15	44	57	77	60	76	33	22	384
F	1	20	80	84	93	49	40		367
OH	31	36	40	41	63	49	17	1	278
SM	14	25	59	37	74	32	13		254
EA	1	5	35	42	53	35	28	1	200
HA		10	40	42	36	38	24	2	192
OM		5	39	38	42	18	29	4	175
ON	1	7	38	28	37	31	11		153
9A		5	27	30	30	25	19	10	146
S5	1	10	37	25	20	21	13	3	130
HL	1	15	21	12	16	27	19	7	118

Eight-Banders

P29SX and P29XF were active on eight bands, 80 to 10m on one mode, CW. So, the maximum possible number of QSOs (without

duplicates) was eight. Many thanks to the following 20 stations who made QSOs with P29SX/P29XF on all eight bands:

7M4GTU	EA8AK
JA0DAI	JA0UUA
JA1CLW	JA1CQK
JA6BZI	JG1IGX
JH3SIF	JP1NWZ
JQ3DUE	JR7DXN
LZ2DF	N2LA
RA3AJ	RX9TX
UA0CW	UT3IZ
W5IZ	ZL1MH

Web-Search

P29SX/P29XF DXpedition site
Loloata Island Resort
Scuba Safaris

www.g3txf.com
www.loloata.com
www.scuba-safaris.com

DXpedition to Swaziland: 3DAØRN

John Warburton, G4IRN

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Planning

My original intention this year had been to do a one-man DXpedition to Lesotho. Earlier in the year I made a few inquiries with previous visitors to that country and was very soon pointed in the direction of André, ZS6WPX, who runs a small business, '*DX Safaris*'. The business seemed primarily targeted at the US market. However, I made a few inquiries with André and he came back to me with a quotation for hire of radios, amplifier, tower, antennas, accommodation, licence, and transfers - in fact everything I needed apart from the flight to Johannesburg.

On the face of it the quotation seemed quite expensive, but then I thought back to the excess-baggage charges I received last year on my DXpedition to Seychelles and Mayotte, the hassle of carrying radios and associated gear, the possibility of lost luggage (my SteppIR vertical got delayed in Paris last year), customs problems etc. and it started to seem more reasonable. I could even pay for the bulk of the flight cost on air miles, so that seemed like a done deal: In June I booked the package with André, the British Airways flight for departure in September, and André facilitated the 7P8RN licence.

Change of Plan

A couple of months prior to my departure date to Lesotho, a couple of Americans booked a 'triple hop' DXpedition to Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland, also through *DX Safaris*. I noticed this on the usual DX notice boards and André confirmed their visit in late July, but assured me that all would be well -

they were only in Lesotho for just less than a week and there would still be plenty of pile-ups to play with. I reluctantly accepted this and looked forward to my visit.

The Americans arrived in Lesotho and I managed to work them on most HF bands. They were doing too good a job, I thought! In fact, worse than that, they thought the same - they cancelled their plans for the further two destinations and stayed in Lesotho for nearly three weeks. At this stage I really felt my DXpedition had been scuppered and got on the phone to André to see if I could change my plans. Half an hour later my new destination was to be Swaziland and André applied for the call sign 3DAØRN on my behalf.

The Journey South

After an uneventful overnight flight to Johannesburg on September 2nd, André met me at the airport and we went to his house in the suburbs to collect the mobile tower and kit. I'd arrived in South Africa with lots of preconceptions about security and I wasn't to be disproved. For instance André's children are educated at home, partly because his wife is not prepared to take the risk of driving them to school; André told me stories of unfortunate drivers who broke down and were never to return home; all the houses in André's well-presented suburb had high fences and gates. Furthermore the political situation has created a country where the pendulum has swung the other way and the white population are now at a distinct disadvantage in many areas of life. Right or wrong, that's another debate, but the bottom line is that André and his family feel very uncomfortable in Johannesburg and

would love to get out of the country. As a stopgap, André told me that he had purchased some land in the sticks, away from the city, and he planned to build a house for his family in the relative safety of the countryside. However, for now it was time to get on down to Swaziland.

Motoring through the South African countryside, my opinion of the country was starting to develop. I was just praying that we didn't break down! The undulating farmland en route was interrupted by the odd village or town where schoolchildren were playing by the roadside and the grown-ups were getting on with their daily lives. We stopped half way for lunch and a beer and André told me of the armed raid that had taken place at our stopover a few weeks previous. However, my nervousness was subdued by the presence of an armed security guard.

A few more hours of motoring, steadily climbing through the hills, and we were at the Swazi border post. It was quite an organised affair with us having to depart the truck, declare the equipment and ourselves before being rubber-stamped into the country. There was quite a queue and André explained that many Swazis work in South African diamond mines and the volume of people was probably down to them returning home. It was all a big nuisance for the Swazi customs officials who plainly just wanted to carry on listening to their boogie boxes and play Solitaire on their PCs.

Soon after, we were in the capital of Swaziland, Mbabane. First impressions were of a busy African town with a climate just like home! We were, after all, quite high up in the hills here and I was immediately starting to think that my collection of T-shirts and shorts was not going to be sufficient. We arrived at the very smart-looking hotel and I could see immediately that there was an absolutely fantastic take-off to the USA on the long path, but that Europe would be much more of a

challenge with upwardly sloping ground in that direction. Nevertheless, I was raring to go and we had a few hours before darkness to get the antennas up.

Getting On The Air

The full-sized quarter-wave 80m vertical was the first challenge. It was certainly no lightweight Titanex, but the two of us managed to get it up and guy it at two levels. This antenna was also to be the Top Band vertical with the addition of some base loading. Twenty-five 20m long radials were laid and then we got going on the tower and two yagis: a 2-element for 12m and 17m and a Cushcraft A4S for 10m, 15m and 20m. For 40m and 30m we installed an inverted V dipole aloft the tower at about 45ft.

The antennas were finished off in torchlight and after dinner, André retired to bed to rest for his long journey home in the morning and I got going on 40m. The pile-ups were big but I really noticed the lack of western European stations; the following day I tore down the inverted V and installed an L antenna – a vertical suspended from the top of the tower and a single sloping radial pointing towards Europe. The L antenna proved to be much more successful on 30 and 40m according to the e-mail reports I later received.

Propagation from Swaziland

Within a few days I got used to the various openings that were available to me around the world. Daylight hours brought openings on the higher bands and lots of frustration! After a couple of days of being there, the weather was kinder than it had been and the sun shone for the first time. This brought a major problem: a local electrical supply transformer was hurling out interference at S7 on all bands and it was right in the direction of western Europe. To say I was disappointed was an understatement. This QRN was to blight me for more than

50% of my daylight operation for the entire DXpedition (ie whenever the weather wasn't overcast and the sun heated the transformer); it was difficult enough having upwardly sloping ground towards Europe, but to have this too really put a downer on the whole experience. Still, there were other fish to fry so I sought out other openings and got on with the situation as best I could.

The JA pile-ups were never-ending on one band or another and, as I initially suspected, the location was absolutely superb on long path to the US Western seaboard because of the drop in that direction. Each afternoon after my lunch 20m opened up in that direction and reports of 10dB over 9 were not uncommon; even the QRP stations were loud. It's just a great shame that the drop into the valley wasn't in the direction of Europe! Openings to Europe were dependent not only on the propagation gods but also the local electrical QRN; there were good openings on 17m, 15m and 20m in my late afternoon and several good openings on 12m. Whilst on 12m one afternoon I received a text message saying 'ZS6 beacon very loud on 10m!' and sure enough, I QSYed to experience a super opening to Western and Northern Europe on that band for about an hour. In fact a couple of USA stations appeared in the pile-up too.

I spent lots of very unproductive hours on the low bands to see if anything interested popped up. On 160m I only worked one European station (OM5DP) who was very weak and a couple of US stations (DE and NC states), worked at my sunrise, who were absolutely booming through. No JAs were worked despite me targeting their sunrise.

My 80m efforts were concentrated around my sunset, JA sunrise and my own sunrise. At my sunset I could only hear the odd ZS station, the JA path was open on most evenings and at my sunrise I worked mainly US stations; to my astonishment two KH6 stations called me, a path that's really on the edge of grey line

propagation. Most of the Europeans I worked were in the evenings, around 20z, although only two UK stations made it into the log: G3TXF and G4WFQ. I also had a prearranged sked with ZL1IU and after 5 nights of calling each other we eventually made it despite the very difficult polar path.

Each morning after sunrise when 80m closed, I would go up through 40m to 30m, but both seemed to drop off fairly quickly; however, there were plenty of loud (and weak!) West Coast US stations there while the openings existed. When the 30m opening ended, that would mark time for breakfast and I could take a break, catch up on e-mails and grab some sleep.

Getting to know Swaziland

During my stay I hooked the spare transceiver up on 2m with a home-made wire dipole inside the hotel room. André, ZS6WPX, had informed me of the local repeater frequency and I was looking out for a local ham, Andy 3DAØTM, who I knew was active on HF. As it turned out I bumped into Andy (who hails from Cornwall) on 20m SSB and within 20 minutes we were in a local bar exchanging radio gossip over a few Castle lagers. He very kindly invited me over to his QTH the following night for dinner and to see his station. If I thought I had a bad take-off to Europe, his made me feel much better! Andy is right in the bottom of a valley and not in an ideal location whatsoever. Although I felt much safer in Swaziland than South Africa, he told me that for security reasons at least one family member is always left in their house whenever they go anywhere.

Andy really drove home the reality of the AIDS problem that is being suffered by Swaziland. He is the owner of the Panasonic franchise in Swaziland, employing about 20 people. He explained to me that he has lost a number of staff through AIDS; furthermore when he fills a vacancy, he doesn't know

whether to employ and train one, two, three or even four people for the job – the chances are that his new employee will die of AIDS. It really is a sad situation and 1 in 4 of the population are reported to be HIV positive.

I should have taken more warm clothes! The weather had been quite warm in Swaziland leading up to my visit, but it obviously took a drop when I arrived. I had been disappointed when I arrived that the hotel pool was empty for cleaning. However, as it turned out there's no way I would have been out there in the cold! (All invitations to take part in Antarctic expeditions will be declined.)

The hotel I stayed in was owned and managed by a friendly Irish ex-pat family. It was quite a bustling place, with overnight 'explore Africa' coach parties staying over on many nights, church missionaries using it as a base and a couple of business conferences taking place during my stay.

On my final day André arrived at my hotel after the long drive from Johannesburg to help me dismantle the kit and take me back to the airport. He was actually several hours late; he had stopped off to get some fuel and use a cash point on his journey over, but suffered a mugging incident at the cash machine. There had been an armed security guard at the stop-off only a few minutes previously who André later realised had 'disappeared' whilst the incident occurred. The police weren't interested; it's an everyday event. The only consolation that André could take from the event was that unlike his previous brush with crime, the perpetrators didn't have guns this time.

We hit the road for the journey home. Surprisingly, André didn't seem to be shaken by the morning's events; he was more annoyed that anything. I reminded him that he would be out of the city and living in the countryside

when his plot of land was ready for development. "No, that's on hold", he said. Apparently the indigenous tribe in the area had made a claim through the courts that they have a right to the land that André had purchased. It was a timely reminder of how lucky I am to live in a relatively secure and politically stable nation; I was pleased to be on my way home.

On Reflection

Whilst I had a great time on the trip, the geography of my location did drive it home about the advantage of sloping ground towards the target area (ie Europe in my case), particularly on the low bands. I believe the QSO statistics show this very well: the European QSO percentage on LF is way down compared to the higher bands.

I had a full 9 days of operating in Swaziland, although I was virtually inoperative on one due to illness. (Well, actually it was the hotel's cold remedy that knocked me out for a day!) The QSO statistics are shown below. The total QSO figure is not as high as I had hoped for, I believe for two reasons:

- 1) The local electrical QRN drove me nuts at times and gave me a good excuse to go and meet the locals in a nearby pub! I always like to get a flavour of the locality when I am away and that gave me a good reason.
- 2) The poor take-off towards Europe meant that my night-time QSO totals on LF were much lower than I anticipated. The QSO stats really reflect this.

André of *DX Safaris* was a fantastic host and supplied everything imaginable for the trip from licence, antennas, Yaesu 897 and amplifier down to tools, spare rig and PSU etc. His website can be found at www.dxsafari.com.

	AF	AN	AS	EU	NA	OC	SA	Total Q's / band
10m	0	0	5	118	2	0	0	125
	0.00%	0.00%	4.00%	94.40%	1.60%	0.00%	0.00%	
12m	3	1	372	424	2	4	0	806
	0.37%	0.12%	46.15%	52.61%	0.25%	0.50%	0.00%	
15m	5	0	379	521	33	5	3	946
	0.53%	0.00%	40.06%	55.07%	3.49%	0.53%	0.32%	
17m	6	0	170	1,057	67	3	4	1,307
	0.46%	0.00%	13.01%	80.87%	5.13%	0.23%	0.31%	
20m	12	0	320	1,121	507	12	5	1,977
	0.61%	0.00%	16.19%	56.70%	25.64%	0.61%	0.25%	
30m	3	0	174	207	150	2	1	537
	0.56%	0.00%	32.40%	38.55%	27.93%	0.37%	0.19%	
40m	4	0	132	78	134	2	6	356
	1.12%	0.00%	37.08%	21.91%	37.64%	0.56%	1.69%	
80m	6	0	47	32	69	5	0	159
	3.77%	0.00%	29.56%	20.13%	43.40%	3.14%	0.00%	
160m	4	0	1	1	2	1	0	9
	44.44%	0.00%	11.11%	11.11%	22.22%	11.11%	0.00%	
	44	1	1,600	3,559	966	34	19	6,223

DL1RTL and DL2RMC in OY

Heiko, DL1RTL, and Tom, DL2RMC were in the Faroe Islands from 31st of August - 9th of September 2004.

This island group belongs to Denmark, but it is an autonomous region with its own parliament, own banknotes and it has its own language as well, Faroese. The official language, spoken by about 45,000 inhabitants, is Danish.

For amateur radio the 'Forøyar' have the IOTA ref. no EU-018 and it counts as a DXCC entity. In 2004 the '425 DX News' asked for the Most Wanted EU-DXCC. OY ranked worldwide as No. 12 – ahead of ZA or

T7 - and for Asia it ended up as No. 9! A good reason for a DX-trip to the islands. A 10-day stay is typical for somebody who is travelling by ferry. The 'Smyril Line' serves the northern Atlantic from Iceland via Norway, the Shetlands and Denmark, and always goes back to Thorshavn/Faroe, the ferry's hometown.

Heiko and Tom's QTH was on Eysturoy, one of the two main islands, in a little village named Gjogv. The youth hostel there became the 'shack' and the camping site nearby the antenna site. They used an IC-706 plus a 600W amplifier for the traditional bands and a TS-530 plus 300W for 160m and the WARC

bands. For 160/80/40m an 18m Vertical was installed. A lightweight Spiderbeam was installed for 20/15/10m at a height of 10m and for WARC a rotary dipole. In order to work simultaneously, band filters designed by the Bavarian Contest Club were installed between transceivers and amplifiers. Close to the sunspot minimum the propagation was critical, as expected. They were able to make more than 7300 QSOs with a total of 91 DXCC entities, but more than 90% of the

contacts with European stations. Not very typical, however: the nice weather conditions during their stay. There was only one storm, but that broke the vertical and the rotary dipole came down. The islands are not only a nice place for amateur radio but for sightseeing as well. Still a rare spot – and not too far away for a short expedition. More details on <http://www.hkmann.de/oy>.

[thanks to DL2VFR]

Well, do you need a Licence?

Steve Telenius-Lowe, G4JVG

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I read the article ‘Do I need a licence?’ by Roger Western, G3SXW, in the September *CDXC Digest* with interest. Following its publication I exchanged a series of e-mails with Roger on its content and he encouraged me to write this piece.

Roger made a fundamental error in the article, and that is that he did not differentiate between CEPT countries, and CEPT countries that have implemented CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01. That a DXer with Roger’s experience should make this mistake only shows what a confusing matter it all is (and so what chance does the newly-licensed MØ have?!). I do not claim to be any great expert on the workings of ‘the CEPT Licence’, but I have operated abroad under its auspices probably more than most and so offer this by way of an explanation.

CEPT, which stands for the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunication Administrations (in French), is the European umbrella organisation of national radio spectrum licensing administrations. Amateur

radio is, of course, but a tiny - and probably not particularly important - part of its work. Consequently, many countries that are full members of the CEPT club have not signed up to its Recommendation T/R 61-01. It is this Recommendation that is known by most amateurs as ‘the CEPT Licence’.

Roger was quite correct in pointing out that there is a number of *non*-CEPT countries that have, nevertheless, also adopted the CEPT Recommendation. So we now have *three* groups of countries that concern us: (1) CEPT countries that have *not* adopted CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, (2) CEPT countries that *have* adopted CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01, and (3) *non*-CEPT countries that have adopted CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01.

Category (1) need not concern us any longer: if you want to operate from any of those countries you must apply for a reciprocal licence in the same way you would for any non-CEPT country. This category includes such places as Malta, the Vatican, Russia, San

Marino and Albania – all CEPT countries, but *not* T/R 61-01 countries.

The good news is that all the countries in groups (2) and (3) are listed at the foot of your licence Validation Document. The bad news is that a strange one-, two- or three letter country code is used, the meaning of which is sometimes obvious but in other cases is anything but. The key to most (but not all!) of the country codes is published in the *Amateur Radio Licence Terms, Provisions and Limitations Booklet*, aka *BR68*. So, armed with your licence Validation Document and *BR68* you can work out pretty well which political countries you are allowed to operate from – although you will also need a DXer's or contester's knowledge of world prefixes to know what callsign you should use if operating from those countries. And, as Roger pointed out, there are plenty of additional DXCC entities associated with those political countries which the CEPT licence also allows you to operate from.

The story doesn't end there, though. As Roger also pointed out, although the CEPT Licence provides you with a valid amateur radio licence in those countries, in some cases there are other restrictions which mean you are still not necessarily allowed to operate from everywhere within those countries. This is perhaps not too surprising: while your G or M licence allows you to operate from anywhere in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, you still need separate permission to operate from the Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast because they are owned by the National Trust. The same applies, for example, to Mt Athos: the CEPT licence grants permission from a *licensing* point of view to operate from anywhere within Greece, but you still need separate permission from the Monks' Council to operate from Mt Athos.

After T/R 61-01 was first introduced, the number of countries that had implemented it

changed frequently, and it often took a long time for the UK licence Validation Document to catch up. That is no longer the case: the T/R 61-01 countries have been pretty static for a few years now. My current licence Validation Document lists 38 political countries, as shown in the table below, from which I may operate under the terms of the CEPT Licence. The key to 37 of these are given in the *BR68*. The one that isn't given is 'SP'. This *could* be Poland – but according to *BR68* the country code for Poland is 'PL', not 'SP'. But 'PL' is *not* listed on the licence Validation Document, so who knows? As I said, I'm no expert!

The final area of confusion is that of France and her overseas territories. The CEPT Licence applies in France, but not in France's overseas territories. But what is an 'overseas territory'? The French, it seems, consider Guadeloupe and Martinique to be parts of metropolitan France. French Polynesia, on the other hand, is an overseas territory. Therefore I could operate as FG/G4JVG or FM/G4JVG under the CEPT Licence, but I would have to obtain a local reciprocal licence if I went to Tahiti. To make matters worse, if I did go to Tahiti, the authorities there would issue me with the callsign FO/G4JVG – so there's no way you can tell from the callsign whether someone is operating under the CEPT Licence or with a locally-issued reciprocal licence. Note too that I mentioned Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Polynesia. These are examples that are reasonably clear. In other territories, such as New Caledonia and Wallis & Futuna (as Roger found out!) it is not clear whether you have to obtain a local licence or not. And then there are those places such as the Glorioso Islands where the *licence* is (probably) covered by CEPT (on the grounds that Glorioso is part of Reunion, and Reunion is CEPT) but where you need landing permission, so you cannot just turn up and operate.

Despite all these vagaries, the CEPT Licence is a truly wonderful thing. The vast majority

of us do not need to worry about whether we need separate permission to operate from Tromelin or Navassa Island; we know we can operate from such interesting DXCC entities as JW, SV9 and OHØ – or even FH and KH8 - without the bother of having to obtain a reciprocal licence and for that I, for one, am very grateful. I covered the CEPT Licence and licensing in general in a chapter of *DXpeditioning Behind the Scenes*, jointly edited by Neville Cheadle, G3NUG, and myself. This book is a must if you are considering putting on any sort of DXpedition, big or small.

In the table below is a list of all 38 political countries currently covered by the CEPT

Licence and the DXCC entities associated with them from which it is also possible to operate.

I have not included those DXCC entities where the licensing is probably covered by T/R 61-01 but where you certainly need some sort of additional permission before you are allowed to operate. This group includes Mt Athos, French Polynesia and those other French overseas territories discussed above, as well as Jan Mayen, Bouvet Island and Peter 1st Island under Norway, as well as a number of US territories and possessions such as Guantanamo Bay, Navassa Island, Desecheo Island etc. and New Zealand and South African outlying islands.

Country code on Licence Valid. Doc.	'Political country'	Additional DXCC entities	Prefix to be used
A	Austria		OE/
B	Belgium		ON/
BG	Bulgaria		LZ/
BH	Bosnia Herzegovina		T9/
CH	Switzerland		HB9/
CY	Cyprus		5B/
CZ	Czech Republic		OK/
D	Germany		DL/
DK	Denmark		OZ/
		Faeroe Islands	OY/
		Greenland	OX/
E	Spain		EA/
		Balearic Islands	EA6/
		Canary Islands	EA8/
		Ceuta & Melilla	EA9/
EST	Estonia		ES/
F	France		F/
		Guadeloupe	FG/
		Mayotte	FH/
		St Barthelemy &	
		St Martin	FJ/ & FS/
		Martinique	FM/
		St Pierre & Miquelon	FP/
		Reunion	FR/
		French Guyana	FY/
		Corsica	TK/

FI	Finland		OH/ OHØ/ OJØ/ HBØ/ SV/ SV5/ SV9/ HA/ 9A/ IK/ ISØ/ 4X/ EI/ TF/ LX/ LY/ YL/ 3A/ LA/ JW/ PA/ PJ/ PJ/ CT/ CT3/ CU/ OA/ YO/ SM/ OK/ SP/ TA/ W/ KHØ/ KH2/ KH6/ KH8/ KL7/ KP2/ KP4/ VE/ ZL/ ZL7/ ZS/
		Aland Islands Market Reef	
FL	Liechtenstein		
GR	Greece	Dodecanese Is Crete	
H	Hungary		
HR	Croatia		
I	Italy	Sardinia	
IL	Israel		
IRL	Ireland		
IS	Iceland		
L	Luxembourg		
LT	Lithuania		
LV	Latvia		
MC	Monaco		
N	Norway	Svalbard	
NL	Netherlands	Netherlands Antilles Sint Maarten	
P	Portugal	Madeira Azores	
PER	Peru		
RO	Romania		
S	Sweden		
SK	Slovakia		
SP	Poland? (see text)		
TR	Turkey		
USA		Northern Mariana Is Guam Hawaii American Samoa Alaska US Virgin Islands Puerto Rico	
VE	Canada		
ZL	New Zealand	Chatham Islands	
ZS	South Africa		

Total: 38 'political countries', 69 DXCC entities (plus UK countries).

Political countries and DXCC entities associated with them that are covered by the CEPT Licence.

W9DXCC DX Convention and Banquet

Chicago, Illinois – September 2004

Chris Duckling, G3SVL G3SVL@manyoaks.co.uk

I understand that researchers have calculated the odds of sod's law applying in any given situation – but I know that whenever I'm likely to be on a business trip near Dayton, Friedrichshafen or the like that the trip will never manage actually to coincide with the event!

So I was quite surprised when in early September I realised that I would be visiting a client in Chicago the day before the W9DXCC convention. As I would be en route home from giving a paper at a conference in Ottawa, there was a good chance this one might hold. An announcement on the Top Band reflector suggested that this would be a good lowbanders event, so I duly dropped an e-mail to John, N9DJ, who works at my Chicago client asking him what he knew about it. His response of "I go every year" convinced me to rearrange my travel and stay over the weekend and attend.

The W9DXCC Convention and Banquet is an annual event organised by the Northern Illinois DX Association (NIDXA). The event was first held in 1953 when a group of DXCC holders invited every W9 DXCC holder to a gathering. Thirty three turned up and it has grown from there over the past 52 years. The stated aim of the event is

"... to put together a program that will appeal to both 'Big Guns' and 'Little Pistols' – all united in the common interest – a love of the art and sport of DXing".

This year it was held at a Holiday Inn hotel near Chicago's O'Hare International airport. NIDXA organise a good B & B rate with the

hotel that worked out around £85 for my two nights in a room the size of an average house and with a breakfast buffet guaranteed to increase your cholesterol levels! The entrance fee for the convention and the banquet is \$55 (approx £30) on the door, or 10% less for advance bookings.

While the lectures and dinner all take place on the Saturday, there was an NIDXA hospitality suite on the Friday evening. I had hoped to start meeting people then, but sod's law came into play because at the end of my client meeting the President invited me to dinner at his golf club – a tough call that one, but he who pays the piper...

Coming down to breakfast on Saturday morning I found the whole place buzzing to the sounds of old friends' greetings and discussions over pancakes of cycle 23! The convention started at 0900 and I was amazed to see close on 200 attendees. There is just one lecture stream and it seemed that most people stayed with the lectures (ie not so many side gatherings and propping up the bar as we have at the HFC!).

W9WU was an excellent master of ceremonies with a great sense of humour. He has been doing this since 1979 and I'm sure will continue for a long time to come. He is also responsible for the prize draws which take place between most lectures.

The 'door prizes' are included in the entrance fee and once drawn your ticket is removed for the rest of the day, but replaced in the draw for

the 4 big prizes at the end. With 130 door prizes and 200 attendees the odds are good. 'Minor' prizes drawn throughout the day were generally \$20 to \$30 in value, but with half a dozen worth a few hundred dollars (for example 40% off any SteppIR antenna and a Butternut HF2V antenna).

The main prizes were a Ten-Tec Argonaut V, Tennadyne T8, Bird 43 wattmeter and a NCG-BR200 antenna analyser – not bad for a 'free' raffle. There was also a \$5 per ticket raffle for an IC-706 MkIIG in aid of NCDXF – which raised \$1300.

The lectures were very professionally presented and included an ARRL talk on BPL, bandwidth planning and LOTW. For me the highlight was a lowband forum with ON4UN, K9DX and KB9Z. However the analysis by Eric, K3NA, on propagation from 3B9C to North America on 160m came a close second. Ed, K9TX gave a Voodoos 5U5Z talk which included many pictures of familiar Gs.

In all nine lectures covered from 0900 to 1700 and the use of two large screens made viewing easy. Free coffee and water were available all day on a serve-yourself basis at the back of the room. There were no traders' stalls, but some companies had sent their brochures. Ten-Tec had an Orion on show to support of their lecture.

The banquet included a good 4-course meal with coffee and about an hour of after-dinner speeches and presentations, including the main speaker John, ON4UN – amazingly his first ever after-dinner speech. One of the after-dinner events is to have everyone stand and the MC calls out increasingly higher DXCC counts - you sit down when he reaches your current DXCC total. It seemed to me that more than half the room were still standing well into the 300s!

At around 10pm the formalities ended, but a hospitality suite hosted by the Greater Milwaukee DX Association (GMDXA) went on well into the small hours. (note: I was able to attend this one and keep the 'G' flag flying!)

On Sunday morning people started to drift off home after another chance to chat over breakfast. The whole convention atmosphere was upbeat and as one would expect the American hospitality to overseas visitors was warm and genuine. Indeed I was invited to a BBQ at Jerry, WB9Z's, that afternoon – but regrettably I had to be back in UK the following day and was unable to make it.

So I made my way to the airport and BA kindly gave me an upper-deck bed for the journey home. As I dozed off, I reflected on a really enjoyable weekend at a well-organised event that appears to attract many regular attendees. Perhaps the bottom line is that the NIDXA, who organise it, is limited to just 55 members! If you get a chance to be near Chicago in mid-September you should definitely make the effort to attend this convention.

Chris G3SVL

Websites:

W9DXCC <http://www.qth.com/w9dxcc/>
NIDXA <http://nidxa.org/>
GMDXA <http://www.qsl.net/gmdxa/>

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

The Easy Way to Work Data Modes

A Review of the RigExpert Interface and MixW Software

John Butcher, G3LAS

Every once in a while one comes across a product which makes an immediate impact as something really good. To do this, it must provide a function or performance which outstrips what has gone before. Often it will address the deficiencies of earlier competitors or even represent a completely new approach to a particular task. It should not only be well conceived and designed but also be marketed, delivered and supported in a way which impresses the buyer/user. It should also be reliable in operation and as uncomplicated as possible to use.

The RigExpert

Imagine a little black plastic box, only slightly larger than a computer mouse, with two sockets on the back which connect it between a USB port of your computer and your transceiver. That's all, apart from three LEDs on the front – no switches at all!

What if this box, with some minimal software drivers, provides an interface which enabled you to operate your rig on SSB, AM, CW, BPSK31, QPSK31, FSK31, RTTY (either FSK or AFSK), Packet, PACTOR, AMTOR, MFSK, Throb, MT63, Hellschreiber, Fax and SSTV modes?

There is even a built-in electronic keyer – OK, there's a paddle socket on the front as well. If, like me, you had graduated from the early days of homebrew bits and pieces to computer sound card technology and from cobbled up interfaces to various commercial units, I think you'd want to know more. It might even seem too good to be true.

Of course, the RigExpert needs to interact with a suitable program for display, logging and transmission functions. It was designed specifically for use with MixW, a well-established data modes logger and control programme from the same stable – Nick, UT2UZ, and Denis, UU9JDR. It will also work with Digipan, a freeware program which has also been around for some time. Recently there has been a release of a new driver which enables the device to work with other programs as well.

The key to the RigExpert is that it doesn't use your computer's sound card at all. It has its own sound processing hardware interfaced to the computer's USB port. This enables the interconnections to be minimised to one lead in and one lead out. There is no external power supply because the box derives its power from the USB socket. I have heard it said that the self-contained audio processing yields better decoding performance than the more traditional systems using the computer card, but I have no facilities to make such measurements.

Suffice it to say that on the modes I have tried so far, it works very well indeed. It seems at least as good as any other set-up I have tried, including the well-known RigBlaster boxes. The following quote may be of interest. It comes from VE3GFW/K6 via the DXLab reflector:

"...I ran the RigExpert in parallel with a RigBlaster, each on a different computer but connected to the same radio. This configuration enabled me to get an exact comparison of the two interfaces on the same

signal at the same time. In every case the RigExpert was able to copy signals that were at least 1 S-point weaker. The RigExpert does not suffer from the sound card aliasing and artefacts that I see on the RigBlaster. Most impressive performance...”

Setting up is simplicity itself. Plug in the USB lead provided and connect the 25-pin output socket to the keying, PTT, Audio in/out, CAT, etc. terminals of your rig. If you don't fancy making up your own cable for this you can buy one with the RigExpert, tailored for your transceiver model – not particularly cheap, but it saves an awful lot of hassle. If you're a soldering junkie you can save a few bob by buying it in kit form – the cable, not the RigExpert itself.

Software installation is equally straightforward. The unit comes with a CD which enables you to install a virtual com port driver for the USB port. It also has the latest version of the MixW software. Recent earlier versions will work, but the pace of development is such that the latest version is highly recommended. In my case this was version 2.13 which was later even than the beta version on the MixW web site at the time. Often product CD software is well behind the current version.

By the way, the system runs under Windows 98, ME, 2000 and XP, and also Linux operating systems. The help files are very good.

If all the above sounds too good to be true, I have to admit that there is a possible shortcoming. The RigExpert is assembled in a plastic box and the leads are not screened. I found that using a linear on 15m the RF pickup was sufficient to paralyse the computer USB port. Fortunately this was cured completely by winding a few turns of the USB lead on a ferrite ring from the junk box. I noticed that in a brief review which appeared in QST in August, the reviewer, WB8IMY,

had the reverse problem with RF interference generated by the RigExpert itself.

I reported my problem to the UK supplier, KMK UK Ltd, aka Konstantin (MØBDQ). He replied that the RF pick up was due to a high SWR on my aerial lead. I doubt this was the case as the SWR on 15m was well below 2:1. I also emailed Nick, UT2UZ, who acknowledged that the plastic box was an economy choice and told me that he was working on a metal box for a later model.

However, such pick up problems will obviously depend on the particular local parameters, so it is a case of hoping for the best and solving empirically any problem which might arise.

The MixW Software

Without going into deep technical detail, that's about all there is to say about the RigExpert box. This is as it should be. After all, we're talking about an interface, which should be simple and seen, but not heard nor needing to be interfered with.

I have been using the MixW software for data mode operation with sound cards for some years, albeit not exclusively. Programmes like Digipan, Zakanaka and WinWarbler all have features to recommend them.

More recently, I have favoured MixW because of its ability to run a DLL link with my main logging programme, Prolog, which I reviewed in the Digest some time ago. This has enabled me to use Prolog for CW and SSB operation but to switch to MixW for RTTY and PSK etc. At the end of a contact I can export the QSO record to Prolog with the click of a mouse. No doubt many RigExpert/MixW users will be quite happy to use the inbuilt logging features of MixW itself.

MixW is a multi-mode logging and coding/decoding programme which supports all the

modes listed in the first paragraph of the RigExpert description above, even SSTV and exotics such as Throb and Hellschreiber. It also has a DX cluster interface linked to the transceiver CAT control functions. The latter is particularly simple to use. It will connect automatically on start-up, either to DX Summit by default or to any other internet cluster. It can also connect by Telnet to a packet cluster. Filters can be set up for bands, modes or DX call signs 'needed'.

You have a choice of spectrum or waterfall displays with a number of customisable settings. These include frequency markers, 'bookmarks' to indicate the positions of received call signs, zooming and selectable colour 'palettes'. Peak and average spectrum displays are selectable. Navigation between different transmit and receive frequencies is done by mouse clicking on the display itself.

The digital mode interface can support any number (in theory) of independent receive windows. There are also selectable displays of received signal phase characteristics, tuning trimming and a global map display which indicates the path to selected received signals. The latter is probably of most value if you have a computer-controlled beam rotator, because it will display arrows which can be clicked to activate the rotator and indicate the beam direction.

MixW also interfaces with the excellent DX Atlas programme. After completing a few simple set-up steps, a station received in MixW can be plotted on the map of DXAtlas. If you also have a suitable callbook installed on your hard disk and coupled to MixW, the relevant latitude and longitude will be read and the map plot will be correct for the station concerned, rather than placed in the middle of the appropriate prefix zone. Of course, the call book information relating to a call in the logging window can also be displayed in MixW itself.

Contest operation is supported with a number of preset configurations for the major contests. These may be edited and added to by the user. DLL files can be downloaded which track scores and statistics for many of the contests. Contest mode customises the display for serial numbers, contest exchanges, macros, dupe warnings etc.

MixW has several features which aid the design, printing and emailing of QSLs. It can also be interfaced to www.eqsl.cc and to the ARRL Logbook of the World. The details are more than I can cover in this short review, but I can say they are more comprehensive than in most other logging programmes I have tried.

Source, Cost and Competition

The latest information on both the RigExpert and MixW can be found at www.mixw.co.uk.

At the time of writing, the RigExpert and MixW bundled together cost £149 while the dedicated, prefabricated rig cable is £35, all plus post and packing charges. The RigExpert on its own is £127 while MixW on its own is £44 on a CD or £38 by download and email. There is a 15-day free trial period for MixW.

For those who would like to compare these products with the competition, I can suggest you look at the West Mountain Radio RigBlaster, the MFJ 1273/1275/1279 series and the MicroHam interface by OM7ZZ. Details of all these products can be found on the Internet.



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The UK DX Foundation

An 'alternative band' ramble...

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In the last Digest our esteemed Editor threw down the gauntlet challenging someone to explain what 136 kHz and 5 MHz are about. More by accident than by design I am involved in both, and so because I feel that CDXC members are more likely to have empathy with 136 kHz, I will start by talking about this band. If my enthusiasm for writing hasn't been dented by the experience, I will follow up with an article on 5 MHz in the next issue of the Digest.

The 136 kHz allocation, 135.7–137.8 kHz, is 'true' LF and definitely not DC as some wags might suggest, as the band falls within the frequency range 30 kHz and 300 kHz. By saying that I don't mean to put off the Top Band enthusiasts, but more the opposite, since many of them have both the skill, some of the station set-up and, most importantly, the ears and the patience necessary for 136 kHz.

But, I can imagine you thinking, if 136 kHz is LF doesn't that mean that propagation is mostly ground wave and thus rather predictable and uninteresting? Well yes, there is significant ground wave propagation, and yes, it does normally extend out to 2000 km or so as it is less effected by absorption than is the case at higher frequencies. The good ground wave propagation at LF has been and is for many commercial and military applications the *raison d'être* for using this part of the spectrum.

Indeed, many commercial systems have been so successful in managing to avoid the effects of skywave propagation, and so much has been written about ground wave systems over the years, that it is easy to understand why many think that a skywave propagation mode

either isn't of much significance or of much interest at LF! However, to think that no skywave exists is far from the truth. The band offers true DX potential, but through a different mechanism than that of its nearest neighbour, 160m.

I believe that being involved with the 136 kHz band brings one closer to the roots of our hobby, probably more so than any other amateur band below the microwave part of the spectrum. It almost makes one feel like one of the early pioneers on HF, but with the help of some modern technology.

The latter is important, since digital signal processing, direct digital synthesis and computer display techniques are not only readily available, but are actually more affordable and easier to implement on 136 KHz than at other amateur bands because of its low RF frequency. For example, many chips will operate at RF, whereas in many applications on other amateur bands they would have to operate at an intermediate frequency.

There are some problems, though, because of the knowledge and expertise needed to design and build using these techniques. Fortunately there are enough technically competent amateurs around who show a generous amateur spirit and have created some amazingly clever and useful software/hardware for the rest of us to use and/or build.

We have also greatly increased the speed at which such developments can be used through the use of Internet-based communication. It's difficult to be precise, but in the early days of our use of LF the informal communication

available via the Internet speeded up the acquisition of new techniques and allowed the general level of capability to grow to where it might have got, say, over ten years in a matter of a year or so. This is also being used now to great effect to assist in DX operating. This is through the use of spectrum monitors, beacon and individual amateur transmission status indicators accessible via the Internet. Whilst to some this might seem like cheating, it's only really an extension of DX Cluster techniques that many use to advantage on other amateur bands.

Some of you may be thinking from the above that most of the fun from this LF band is concerned with overcoming the various technical issues in getting a station working and propagating further than the beyond the garden fence.

Whilst this is probably true in my case, for many, once the technical problems have been understood and solved, operating and working DX is the true challenge. For several years now the technical issues have become well known and understood and 136 kHz DX has become the main challenge for many. There have been some fiercely contested awards for being the first to complete a 2-way transatlantic QSO, and the RSGB's 136 kHz Award shows the leading stations with 20 DXCC countries.

So what would it take to become active on 136 kHz? Well, firstly, with a wavelength of around 2 km most people on the band will, by definition, have extremely small aerials! Many of us have to make do with an inverted L that was cut for Top Band, or perhaps strapping the feeders on a G5RV. Some, who pioneered the band, had even smaller wire aerials.

Given that small aerials, in terms of wavelength, will exhibit significant loss relative to a dipole, and I mean tens of dB, it means that you will need to run transmit powers of hundreds of watts or even a kW or

two in order to achieve the maximum permitted ERP under the UK licence of 1W. What fun, and quite legal - the only real limitation is what you can get out of your ring main in the shack!

In considering the types of aerials, receivers, transmitters, operating modes and propagation there are numerous excellent websites devoted to describing tried and tested designs. Some of these not referenced directly in this article are added at the end. The recent book by Mike Dennison, G3XDV [1], contains many of the designs and represents excellent reading for the newcomer to the band, as well as a good reference source for the 'old hand'.

For the transmitter most start with a crystal VXO and a converted audio amplifier, or perhaps purchase the only commercial transmitter made for the band: 'The First', by Ropex, marketed by Nevada Radio [2].

However, many progress to something more versatile and possibly more powerful. Firstly, some form of variable high-stability and high-accuracy frequency source to take advantage of the narrow-band modes. Designs, and in some cases partial kits, are available [1, 3 and 4] for these as well as for building high-powered class D or E power amplifiers. Whilst soldering surface-mount ICs for the signal sources can be a challenge, the PAs aren't as difficult to build as at higher frequencies, and often usefully use inexpensive power FETs intended for switch mode PSU applications. Alternatively, you might be lucky and be able to lay your hands on a surplus Decca Navigation System transmitter.

For reception most use some form of converter or tuned pre-amplifier in front of their HF receiver. Whilst many receivers cover down to 100 kHz, the filters and pre-amplifiers are not optimised for 136 kHz, resulting in poor sensitivity and sometimes poor dynamic range. As a rule of thumb, in

my experience if you are to have any chance of receiving DX on 136 kHz, the commercial transmitter, DFC39, on 138.830 kHz needs to be S9+20 and the noise floor around S3. G3XDV's book [1] gives a full treatment of how various receivers have been found to perform at 136 kHz, so I won't digress into that subject here.

In my own case, as many others find, the main problem with reception is locally generated noise. This is in many cases found to be switched mode PSU-related, so it is very wise before one gets too excited about 136 kHz to check the local noise floor. In some cases the culprits can be identified and a solution found.

The other limiting factor is the galloping horses sound produced by on-air interference from LORAN. LORAN operates at 100 kHz, but the low-level spectrum spreads out over the 136 kHz band. It is mostly a nuisance to UK amateurs along the south coast of England. However, even then LORAN is not a showstopper, as evidenced by Peter, G3LDO, who lives near Worthing and is one of the top 136 kHz DX operators.

OK, so you have an idea of what is needed by way of transmitter and receiver. So how do you use your G5RV or Top Band inverted L, etc.? What would you have to do to put up a special, more effective aerial for 136 kHz?

Well, firstly taking an existing aerial you would treat it as either an inverted L, or by strapping feeders you would treat it as a T. If you can measure the feed impedance relative to ground you will find that at 136 kHz it will look something like a capacitor of a few hundred pF. To get it resonant, you will need a series (or serious!) inductor of the order of few mH. By serious I mean that I wound my coil on a 2 ft length of 10in diameter plastic sewer pipe!

Others have used plastic dustbins, wound a flat basket-weave coil or else created an

engineering masterpiece such as LX1PD's coil, constructed on a beautifully machined Perspex former - last seen for sale in the flea market at this year's Friedrichshafen Hamfest!

Others have used large loops very successfully, however with loop currents of around 30A you do need to use thick wire, if your resistive losses aren't to become prohibitive. Generally, all aerials need to be kept away from trees as they absorb RF. Remember too about personal safety – the RF voltages around the loading coil can give a nasty burn and at high power the RF voltage at the extremities of aerials could cause problems with corona discharge and insulator breakdown.

The ultimate aim is to get as much vertical radiator and as large a capacity hat as is possible – it's really just like the Top Band mobile aerial that many of us have played with in the past. At 136 kHz this translates into an array of parallel wires separated by a few feet, joined together, and as high as possible, connected to the matching coil at ground level by a long vertical wire. If the support structure for the top wires can cope mechanically, some of the matching inductor is better located at the top of the vertical section. Having done this, of course, you won't need all those KW to get your 1W ERP!

With a band only 2.2 kHz wide you will need to be sensible about the modes that you use. Most people start with CW, and some stay with it, whereas others turn for the more challenging DX contacts to modes that take advantage of the processing gain given by use of narrower transmit and receive bandwidths.

It is important to try and make this diverse range of modes available in your station, since the current population of amateurs on the band is low, hence to maximize your QSOs and take advantage of DX opportunities you need to build flexibility into your station set-up. In true Yorkshire fashion you do tend to get 'owt for nowt' – if you trade bandwidth for the

ability to dig signals out of the noise, then you sacrifice the speed at which you exchange information. However, as with most HF DXing today, the fun and sense of achievement is not so much about what message was passed (i.e. the ubiquitous 599 or 59) but the tactics, decisions, equipment set-up & operating skill necessary to get that QSO, which gives you the satisfaction and sense of achievement.

The narrow-band modes fall into two camps. Modes like QRSS (very slow CW), DFCW (dual-frequency CW) and JASON (a multiple-frequency system) can all be transmitted without the need for the PA to be linear. The others are more familiar to HF users, perhaps, like PSK08 (an 8 Hz bandwidth variant of PSK31) and Hellschreiber.

OK, so I hear you saying there are some technical hoops to go through, but that there is now plenty of experience at hand to help. But what about the DX, and how does skywave propagation work at 136 kHz?

As far as DX stations are concerned there are around 27 DXCC entities that regularly licence amateur activity. As far as I am aware these include CT, DL, EA, EI, F, G, GD, GI, GM, GU, GW, HA, HB, I, LX, OE, OH, OK, OM, ON, PA, UA, S5, SM, SP, VE, YU and ZL.

In addition PY and CO have submissions for 136 kHz access under consideration, and there are beacons operating from the US (WD2XDW on 137.7752 kHz, WD2XFX on 137.7807 kHz and WD2XES on 137.7792 kHz). In addition, just like on the HF bands there are the DXpeditions, or other short-term 'holiday' operations, notably LW2ETU, 3D2KL and UAØLE this year and OHØRJ and CN2PD last year.

The current DX world record is for a QSO over a path of 10,300 km between UAØLE, in Vladivostok and ZM2E in New Zealand. Only

the best, well-honed stations will be able to manage QSOs with most of these DXCC entities. Some paths may still be impossible because of the distances involved and the geographical relationship with the ionosphere. However, for the UK amateur there are certainly many good opportunities, and perhaps for those who operate in DX locations something to think about for their future trips.

Many of the stations that can be worked from the UK will be in the range of ground wave propagation, but most 'true' DX will need to take advantage of skywave propagation. When not altogether absorbed by the D-layer, the skywave is refracted in the D-layer during the day or the upper part of the D-layer / lower part of the E layer by night. Shortly after sunrise, ionisation in the D-layer increases, causing signals to be weaker through higher absorption.

However, as the ionisation in the D-layer increases still further, the refraction point starts to drop in height to around 50 km. It is thought that this reduction in D-layer height results in lower overall absorption and hence stronger skywave signals, albeit over a shorter hop-length. The opposite occurs around sunset.

One significant peculiarity at LF is that during X-ray flares and the aftermath of Coronal Mass Ejections (CME) from the sun, the skywave signal at 136 kHz can be significantly enhanced over that during flat conditions [5]. Thus 136 kHz enthusiasts get really excited during some solar storms and happily retire to 136 kHz as the higher frequency bands close down!

The hypothesis for this enhancement effect is that it is thought that ions with greater energy than those produced by photo-dissociation enter the D-layer and lower its point of refraction. Although absorption increases as well, it would appear that this is offset by the shorter D-layer path. During daylight hours a

good correlation between solar disturbances and signal strength improvements of 20dB has been noted over paths of up to 1000 km. After a CME event has nearly worked itself out, nighttime transatlantic paths can be enhanced by as much as 6dB relative to flat conditions. This is thought to be because the absorption created by the CME event is wearing off, allowing a single-hop mode, which is more prevalent during enhanced D-Layer ionisation, to constructively interfere with the normal double-hop mode.

Right from the outset of having a foothold on LF at 73 kHz, as a part of my role on the RSGB's HF Committee I started an informal group sharing and swapping notes and ideas about LF. Initially, this was carried out by a mix of packet, Top Band skeds and letters. For the past six years or so we have used a reflector [6], which has become the *de facto* place to discuss topics and share matters about

forthcoming skeds, etc. In recent years Dave, G3YXM's, LF column in RadCom has supplemented this. Many of the European members of the LF community meet at Friedrichshafen, and the UK members get together at the HF & IOTA Convention and any *ad hoc* 'round-table' events during the year.

As an informal group the UK's LF community has more than once expressed its interest in encouraging newcomers to the band. It has done this by suggesting that its members could loan equipment or put on a demo station at a newcomer's QTH to try and encourage more to have a go on the band. If any CDXC member is interested in discussing the idea of operating on 136 kHz further, I would be more than happy to correspond.

John Gould, G3WKL

References

- [1] 'LF Today – a guide to success on 136 kHz', Mike Dennison, G3XDV, RSGB 2004
- [2] <http://www.nevadaradio.co.uk/index.html>
- [3] G3YXM's website (info, news and designs): <http://www.wireless.org.uk>
- [4] GØMRF's website (projects and designs): <http://www.g0mrf.freemove.co.uk/>
- [5] G3NYK's website (propagation): <http://www.alan.melia.btinternet.co.uk/>
- [6] RSGB LF Group. To subscribe send an e-mail to majordomo@blacksheep.org with no subject and only *subscribe rsgb_lf_group* in the body of the e-mail.

Further information

The following is really the tip of the iceberg of LF-related websites:

RSGB Spectrum Forum LF website: <http://www.rsgb-spectrumforum.org.uk/lf.htm>
G3XDV's website (info news and designs): <http://www.apersonalguide.co.uk/lf/>
G3LDO's website (aerial info and updates on books): <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/g3ldo/>

Member Profile - an addiction to Top Band

Dave Gould, G3UEG

david.gould@btinternet.com

Why have I made life so difficult for myself by persevering with Top Band when I have never had a garden greater than 60ft long? Having just joined the CDXC committee, I was asked to do this profile of my amateur radio activities, which may or may not answer the question.

My start in amateur radio was conventional, but from an unusual direction. In 1962 I was 16 years old and interested in 'computers'. These were new, but I was hooked and started building my own logic devices using punched paper tape and relays. I bypassed valves and quickly adopted the newly introduced transistors. As a teenager I also wanted to listen to the pirate station Radio Caroline, which was difficult to receive in Nottingham on my parents' radiogram. I built a single transistor RF amplifier, which made a dramatic improvement. Tuning around the dial I stumbled across the 80m band, and this was the start of over 40 years interest in amateur radio.

The first stage really started in September 1964 when I went to university to do a degree in physics, electronics and computing. I joined the college radio club, obtained an R1155 for listening and took the RAE exam in the December. With an interest in physics and electronics I found the RAE pretty straightforward - not so the Morse test, which I struggled with, taking two attempts to pass. My licence arrived and I had my first QSO in May 1965 with a Codar AT5 and an old Eddystone 888A. (I still drool over the dial on that receiver)

Back in Nottingham during the holidays I erected various temporary antennas and one

day a neighbour, whose garden backed onto ours, came round and asked about the latest antenna. I was fearing the dreaded TVI scenario, but no, he said his son was interested in short wave listening and wondered if I could show him my station, which of course I did.

The outcome of this was that we put up an inverted-U antenna, supported between the ridges of the two houses, and shared it between us (but not at the same time!). This seemed like luxury to me.

At this time I got to know Chris, G3SJJ, also living in Nottingham. When he heard about this antenna he was round like a shot and introduced me to the world of Top Band contesting (and the simultaneous consumption of numerous bottles of Newcastle Brown ale). Chris has remained a life-long friend ever since. By 1968 I graduated and started working for the UK's major computer company, which involved a fairly nomadic existence that was not conducive to amateur radio, so the radio equipment was sold and I was inactive for 5 years.

The second phase of activity started in 1973, triggered by the impending introduction of VAT. The amazing part of all this was that I had got married in 1971 and seemed to have omitted to mention my then dormant interest in amateur radio to my wife-to-be. Getting agreement to finance equipment was one thing, getting agreement to construct antennas was another thing entirely! An FT-101 was purchased and, despite the small garden, I was able to erect an end-fed inverted-V using an archer friend to shoot a line over the 70ft trees.

Later that year I met Chris, G3SVL, who lived close by, which was the start of a long-term friendship which has resulted in many ongoing radio activities as well as the continued friendship between our respective families ever since.

The FT-101 only had one VFO, but did have the ability to install some crystals. I found a crystal that came out right in the middle of the DX window so I could work split frequency, transmitting on the crystal frequency and listening using the VFO. This set-up yielded its first results in January 1974, when I heard over 20 North American stations and worked three of them, my first QSOs across the pond.

The next momentous occasion was in November 1974, during the weekend of one of W1BB's transatlantic tests. Unfortunately this coincided with when our first son was due! Everything worked out in the end, Robert was born around 0300 and I started hearing W1BB at around 0530 and worked him at 0710. It took until February 1976 to log my first transatlantic QSO on SSB.

Activity peaked again from the early 1990s, when we were in our third QTH with yet another small garden. To overcome this disadvantage I decided to operate some contests on a portable basis to enable me to use some better antennas. By chance I met an understanding farmer who allowed me to use some of his land. I started experimenting with antennas using kites and helium-filled balloons. One year, when very low winds were forecast, I built a 170ft vertical which consisted of 50ft of aluminium pole, 30ft of fibreglass fishing rod, plus 90ft of aluminium wire to be held up by the balloon. This arrangement, together with extensive radials, worked fantastically well.

The next plan for improvement was to operate from more desirable locations by mounting contest DXpeditions primarily aimed at the CQ WW 160 SSB contest. For these I teamed

up with both G3SVL and G3SJJ and we have operated from Jersey, Guernsey and Cyprus. The highlight of these was achieving World 5th in 1999 when we operated from Jersey racecourse, situated on top of a 200ft cliff with take-off over water for 270 degrees. We also had enough space to put up five receiving antennas, including one 1000ft beverage directed to North America. One aspect of these DXpeditions was that we always did a recce trip in the previous autumn, which was also a holiday that our wives could enjoy.

Having operated portable from the local farmer's field, the opportunity arose for me to set up a more permanent second site. The main antenna is a modified Titanex which is 108ft over an extensive radial system and can be raised quickly single-handed. I have recently added a beam for the HF bands. Having this facility I wanted to make more use of it, so in 2000 I started thinking about operating the second site remotely via a phone line. After 16 months of negotiations with the RA, I eventually got an NoV to allow me to experiment and had my first remote QSO in November 2001.

There is little space for details here, but overall it has been a successful and interesting project. The first system used a Kachina transceiver, which is no longer available, so recently I have been developing a second system based round an open framework to allow more flexibility of components, but still within the original stringent requirements demanded by the RA.

My interest in amateur radio has always been in the technology, and the QSOs are largely the proof that the various things I have experimented with are working as well as possible. I shall be retiring at the end of this year and this will give me more time for developing the second remote system and to extend my operating to a wider range of bands and modes.

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory – 40th Anniversary Edition

New IOTA reference numbers issued

AF-095/Pr TJ Cameroon group
(Cameroon)
AS-170/Pr R0I Shelikhova Bay group
(Russian Federation - Asia)

AS-172 R0C Sea of Okhotsk Coast
North group (Russian Federation - Asia)
AS-173 VU Tamil Nadu State group
(India)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AS-108 OD5RMK Ramkin Island
(July 2004)
AS-172 RI0CM Malminskiye
Islands (July 2004)
AS-173 AT0RI Pamban Island
(August 2004)

EU-159 F5JOT/P Cordouan Island
(August 2004)
EU-159 F5LGQ/P Cordouan Island
(August 2004)

OC-058 FK/KM9D Huon Island,
D'Entrecasteaux Reefs (September 2004)
OC-079 FK/KF4TUG Pott Island,
Belep Islands (September 2004)

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

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

Operations from which validation material is awaited as at 19 October 2004

AF-095/Pr TJ3MC/P Mondoleh
Island (April 2004)

AS-059 RZ0IWZ/P ????? (July
2004)
AS-170/Pr RI0IMA Matykil' Island
(June/July 2004)

OC-052 FO/I1SNW Hereheretue
Island, Duke of Gloucester Is (Sept 2004)
OC-052 FO/IT9EJW Hereheretue
Island, Duke of Gloucester Is (Sept 2004)
OC-052 FO/IT9YRE Hereheretue
Island, Duke of Gloucester Is (Sept 2004)
OC-223 VI2MI Montague Island
(August 2004)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

19 October 2004

Email: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk

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

Visit the website for the latest IOTA information

IOTA 2004

Don Field, G3XTT

We're into the last quarter of the year, and there are some high scores being posted on the CDXC Web page. But there's still time to join in and earn a certificate.

Remember that you can not only build points and claim a certificate for chasing islands, but you can also get certificates for activating new and rare IOTAs as well.

Islands counting for premium points during the remainder of the year include (there are plenty more):

November 2004

NA-036	VE7	Vancouver Island
NA-051	VE7	Queen Charlotte Islands
NA-065	W7	Washington State North group
OC-027	FO	Marquesas Islands
OC-044	VP6	Pitcairn Island
OC-046	FO	French Polynesia, Windward Islands

December 2004

OC-013	ZK1	Rarotonga Island
OC-019	KH6	Hawaiian Islands
OC-030	KH4	Midway Islands

OC-040	ZK2	Niue Island
OC-045	KH8	Tutuila Island
OC-048	ZK3	Tokelau Islands
OC-067	FO	French Polynesia, Leeward Islands
OC-083	ZK1	Aitutaki group
OC-097	5W	Samoa Islands

Full details of the various awards, and how to apply (certificates will not be issued until after the end of the year) can be found on the CDXC Web pages (follow the IOTA 2004 links): www.cdxc.org.uk

Any questions can be addressed directly to me, though please check the FAQ page first: don@g3xtt.com

73 Don G3XTT

(Managing the IOTA 2004 programme on behalf of CDXC (Chiltern DX Club, the UK DX Foundation))



The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

From what I have seen on the bands and in the claimed score lists on various reflectors, it would appear that many of you are having a go at RTTY, entering contests and having some fun! Over the past few contests, I have noted quite a few Gs taking part in RTTY contests, which is excellent news. I hope you are enjoying the mode?

If you haven't yet found it, there is an excellent RTTY reflector which you can sign up to by going to <http://lists.contesting.com/mailman/listinfo/rtty> and following the instructions.

I would imagine many of you are using contest software, but I know a few are still using general RTTY software. If you find you can't produce a valid Cabrillo file after the contest, a free utility has been provided by Marek, SP7DQR, and is called ADIF2CABR.

You can download this utility from http://sp7ps.pl/sp7dqr/eng/index_en.html.

This is a small free utility that will convert an ADIF file into a Cabrillo file for contest submission.

Once you have downloaded the zipped file, unpack it into a directory and then run the EXE file. You get a window that is split into two parts. On the left-hand side you have the HEADER information, and on the right hand side are the contest details and exchange. A few fields have a grey background, and these are fields that MUST be completed.

Please note that this won't actually produce a Cabrillo file for a specific contest, but it will give you basic file to work from.

I know MMTTY can produce a Cabrillo file, but it would appear that in most cases the file isn't suitable for submission.

If you aren't using one of the contest programs, then perhaps now is a good time to consider the change? I guess Writelog is one of the more popular programs and whilst it isn't the easiest bit of software to get used to, it is certainly one of the best on the market. You could try N1MM, which seems to be quite popular, and is free, so that may be what you are looking for. Alternatively, check out RCKRtty or MixW.

Contesting seems to be on the increase, but from what I see on my screen quite a few people are a bit unsure as to how to conduct an RTTY contest QSO.

It is easy enough, but often needs a slightly different technique to that of CW or even SSB. With those two modes, calling slightly off frequency can get a response for you. It all depends on the operators' skill, plus a bit of callsign recognition.

With RTTY, adding your tones to those of other stations just results in meaningless garbage being printed on screen. You need to get your call noted clearly, and timing can be the key here.

If you call me with GUØSUP GUØSUP DE G3XXX G3XXX there is a fair chance that by the time I have read my own call, someone else will have started to call, so your call – THE IMPORTANT ONE! – is buried in the garbage. Far better to call me with just DE G3XXX G3XXX, including a carriage return before and after. Sometimes just watching the

station for a few minutes will be prudent too, as you may note that he simply responds to the last caller every time. Therefore, just wait till all the noise has died down and then slip your own callsign in. If he comes back to you then send your exchange, wait for him to confirm the contact, and then move on.

If you don't get through first time, don't spend too much time waiting and calling. Move away and call a few others, and then return to that elusive one. Chances are that after a few minutes, the pile will have died down enough. Don't waste too much time trying to work that rare DX in the first few hours of the contest either. Remember that they will still be around later in the contest, and by the last quarter of the contest they will be willing to work anyone at all, often taking time to complete the contact.

I often find that the last few hours of a contest are the best time for 'little pistol' stations like me to call CQ. This is the time when some of the big DX stations hunt around the bands for the final few mults, and it can be quite productive.

Personally, I find calling CQ at the start of a contest hard work, seeing as all I seem to get is a long run of European stations, most of which are not mults. It can be far more productive to search out all the mults you can find in the early stages and then call CQ later on, but I do understand that this is a personal choice. I guess it depends on whether you enter to win, or just to take part and have some fun!

If you are in the latter category, then take a look at some of the claimed scores after a contest, and you will easily spot those stations that haven't made the most of their time! They will be the ones with a high QSO count, but way down the list in terms of points.

Over the years, I have found it useful to program some of the buffers with my callsign

just once, and also with the exchange just once. This way, if conditions are marginal, you can press the appropriate key as many times as you feel is necessary.

For example, if you send DE G3XXX G3XXX, and he asks QRZ?, don't just send the same buffer, as he may not be able to get the whole call. If you have a buffer with just your callsign in it, send the DE G3XXX G3XXX and then press the buffer key to send your single callsign as many times as you need.

Again, with the exchange, if you send GUØSUP TU UR 599 001 001 DE G3XXX BK, he may not get the serial number clearly, and ask you for a repeat. DO NOT send this same buffer twice, as that is not going to be any better!

I usually send the single-call buffer, followed by the single serial number buffer 6 or 7 times, and then my call again once, just to make it clear that it is me sending, and not someone else.

Consider the exchange too. For CQ WW it is the CQ zone, so sending it twice ought to be adequate, but if it is a serial number I prefer to send it three times, just for the sake of clarity. If you received G3XXX TU UR 599 213 113 DE GUØSUP BK, which number would you log? If you get 599 123 113 113, then the 113 is the more likely.

If you are responding to his CQ and you are not sure what he sent, you can either ask for a repeat, or wait for him to work the next one and see what is sent then. If he has a large number of callers, just wait, as that will be much easier for you.

And lastly, please do submit your log, even if it is only a few contacts! Good luck in the contests!

Phil GUØSUP

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Hello again, and a warm welcome to November's edition of Contest. Although I was writing the last column in what passed for 'the height of summer' in the UK this year, I'd forgotten I actually needed to include any rallying calls for CQ WW DX SSB in that issue, for at the time the end of October seemed like a long way away. Similarly, there are reminders for the 2005 RSGB AFS contests (CDXC team, anyone?) and for putting in a club affiliation with your CQ WW DX CW contest logs. More details later !

On the bands....

As I was finishing off the last Digest column I dipped in to the Worked All Europe CW Contest. With just limited time to play, and a simple '100 watts and low dipole' set-up, it was quite hard to make lots of QSOs, but the option is there to boost your score by receiving QTCs. There seems to be a knack of finding when the DX stations have some to give away. Also I suspect some save their QTCs for more deserving stations who are taking the contest more seriously and have a higher signal number. A first for me was when in the middle of a QTC exchange with KC1XX on 21 MHz, Matt's signal faded away completely. When this sort of thing happens, it's a safe bet to report that HF conditions are not great...

Some European stations were routinely sending 'QRV' as part of their exchange as a way of quickly indicating they were happy to receive QTCs. I tried this for a while, as well as sending 'QTC?' very quickly, either immediately after my QSO, or when calling back a station I'd already had a QSO with. The intention was not to hold up the DX station, but this sometimes had the effect of

being sent QTCs at a similar high speed at 40 wpm+. I was sweating a bit after those barrages and should have been brave enough to send QRS. In the SSB contest I moved to high power and, after seeing the effect of the low-band multiplier bonus on my score, for the first time realised how some of those top scores might one day be reached.

August and September saw several popular RTTY contests, with the SARTG and SCC events on concurrent weekends. This year a Russian RTTY contest moved to the following weekend at the start of September, prompting a little worry about 'having too much of a good thing' which I hinted at in an earlier column. There still seemed to be plenty of life on the bands for all of the events, with no obvious diluting of activity.

The first September contest is the SSB Field Day weekend. Whilst the number of groups entering had been on the wane for several years, in recent years it has picked up and it's been pleasing from the results to note the number of participants can be totalled in the hundreds, if there are not actually hundreds of UK stations on the air.

There has been some on-and-off discussion in recent years about a UK or European version of the ARRL Field Day, which perhaps could be a good springboard to 'regular' contesting for people, as well as giving opportunity for positive publicity for the hobby as a whole. I know that some UK contest groups have operated contests at public events, or as part of special event stations. My local club's activity in VHF NFD this year was bolstered by 3 separate FT-817 installations playing on HF, in addition to a portable entry in the DL-DX RTTY contest, which was more in the spirit of

a true 'field day' rather than a wholly competitive event.

The end of September saw the first of the 'big three' CQ WW DX contests, with the CQ/RJ RTTY Contest. As something new this year I loaded Writelog onto a second PC, connected them via a crossover Ethernet lead, and very quickly had two networked PCs talking to each other. RTTY is the easiest mode to get to grips with in 2-radio operation. The simplicity of Writelog allows for CQ calls to be made automatically and QSOs made by just clicking the mouse. Hence there was lots of time for tuning around on the second radio, looking for new QSOs on another band.

The only disappointment was that my second radio antenna, the stealthy loft-mounted G5RV, was not very efficient. Partially because of the antenna limitation, and also due to the conditions, when I was running on the main band open, I found that the next most usable band was often difficult to make QSOs on. Still, at least when this happened the second radio could still be effective as a spotter station, and I then used the run station and antennas to jump to the other band and make the QSO. The second radio also removed those feelings of guilt when sitting there calling CQ that you were missing multipliers, or the start of another band opening, so for me I found it worthwhile for that alone. The next step will probably have to be a bolder one, perhaps trying some more efficient second radio antennas in the front garden, at least on a temporary basis.

The RSGB 21/28 MHz contests remained a challenge, considering the state of the sunspot cycle, but for those with perseverance some contacts, and more importantly, a range of multipliers can be found. I look forward to receiving the CW contest logs in due course. It is interesting to note how the UK stations take part in their domestic contests, say, compared to the Scandinavians in the SAC contest, or the Germans in the WAG contest. In the SAC

events, most of the Scandinavians call CQ, and rarely stop to answer CQs from other stations. So the (non-Scandinavian) sections of the contest can be won without ever calling CQ. In contrast, in the 21/28 MHz events the winning Overseas entrants will spend most of their time calling CQ to catch the high numbers of UK casual operators. It's an interesting difference, affected by the contest rules and scoring, and also the amount of contesters there are in a country, and how many amateurs are just taking a casual interest in the event.

I must also mention the autumn European Sprints which have now taken place. Although only four hours long, the constant need to QSY, plus the required exchange makes it seem far longer. For the SSB leg at least, it seems records have been broken again, showing that the participation is continuing to grow. Likely winner Tonno, ES5TV, noted a lot of G stations calling in with a 001 serial number. The next step is to find these guys and persuade them to carry on and give someone else 002! For the complete beginner the contest must sound very strange – firstly the very strong station you just called completely disappears. Often, other people will then call you for a second QSO, which is also very unusual. Finally, after that QSO, just when you're getting enough confidence to call CQ, the frequency is taken from you!

Thanks to a timely reminder from Dave, G4BUO, on the UK-Contest reflector, in the CW Sprint I persevered with the different order of the exchanges depending on whether I was calling CQ, or answering a CQ. I had been worried about causing confusion, as in previous years not that many entrants had adhered strictly to the format. In the main it paid off, and only a couple of times did the 'out of place' sending of my own call sign clash with the other entrants' 'TU.' I got the order wrong a few times myself, ironically twice with Clive, GM3POI, but I could certainly appreciate the overall benefits.

Several times I was able to send my callsign after a QSO, complete the QSO, and then have someone else call me, with no need for a QRZ? or a CQ call between us. Combined with the higher speeds on 80m in the closing minutes, when working stations for the second or third time (and hence having the entrant's name confirmed already), the 'last 10' QSO rate meter hit 120+. Immense fun – give them a go next year if you've not done so before.

QSO B4 !

I smiled when I tuned across a contact towards the end of the CQ WW RTTY contest, when a station calling CQ replied to a station 'QSO before' and carried on calling CQ. The other station called in again, stating 'not in my log', but this was met with another 'QSO before' message and no new contact. This situation can be both very frustrating and time wasting.

Whatever mode you're operating on, there are a variety of ways to respond to a caller who you have apparently already worked. If someone calls you who genuinely does not have a contact with you in their log, if you don't 'work them again' and both logs are sent in for adjudication, then your contact could be removed. Hence I often wonder why some contesters are so reticent to make a second QSO and don't believe that it is possible that a mistake has occurred.

Some people, of course, are not using a computer to keep the log, or on the first contact mislogged your callsign. In other circumstances a station may think he has worked someone when in fact the other station was calling a third station. With DX contests, where stations can be lost in skip, and one QSO partner normally only ever sending their own callsign, it's easy enough for things to become confused.

In the heat of the moment, we can't stop to work out what category a caller falls into when the DUPE message flashes up on our PC

screens. If it's a contest with a very short exchange, it may be most efficient to simply work them again. If it's something like the EU Sprint contest, which has a lengthy exchange of both callsigns, a serial number, and a name, and also requires QSYing afterwards, it would be much more prudent to double-check.

Some people send or say 'QSO B4' and then immediately launch into a CQ call. Others pause to check if it's understood with the other station. Nearly all logging software will give the details of the other original contact, so immediately replying to the other station with the details 'SP1ABC, sorry QSO before, your QSO number 48, OK?' might be a way to quickly resolve the situation.

If you seem to get a small run of dupes, then it's quite likely your callsign has been put on the DX Cluster incorrectly and the stations calling you are not actually noticing you are calling CQ with another call. Similarly, if there seem to be odd pauses, or people calling slightly out of synch, it's likely another station has appeared on your frequency who you can't hear.

Last year at 5U5Z during CQ WW DX CW over 1,000 duplicate QSOs were made. There was a suggestion we should put all of these QSOs into a separate log and see how many points it would have earned as a stand-alone entry. It was quite poignant, seeing as making 1,000 QSOs is often a good achievement for me in a contest, and here we were talking 1,000 *duplicates*. Contest stations from rare locations may suffer additional dupes as some of these contacts may have been made on purpose as 'insurance' QSOs.

Obviously it's a personal choice about how best to approach this situation in different contests. There's no absolute right way of course, but it's often possible to listen to some obvious examples of the wrong way to go about responding to dupe calls!

5U5Z – Voodoo Contest Group

Roger G3SXW has sent me the following announcement:

“This November the VooDoo Contest Group will activate 5U5Z for the second year running, in CQ WW CW. This is a special anniversary for the group: it is the eleventh straight year that we have activated a multi-multi station in WW CW from West Africa – a whole sunspot cycle! We hope to clock up our fifth contest win. This whole story is being told in a new book, just published, called ‘Contesting in Africa’.

The team this year is Lee/GØMTN, Bob/G3PJT, Roger/G3SXW, Fred/G4BWP, Andy/G4PIQ, Vince/K5VT, Mike/KC7V and Wayne/M7NG. We will fly to and from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso and drive to Niamey and back in a hired bus, a whole day’s journey each way.

On the return we will bring all the equipment with us back into XT2 from 5U, where it has been in storage for the past year courtesy of the Peace Corps. So next year will be QRV again as XT2DX or, hopefully, move straight through Mali, TZ. This stock pile of equipment consists of more than one tonne of towers, antennas, cables, rigs, rotators, switches, filters – you name it, a whole seven-station multi-multi set-up.

As the sunspots decline we are turning our attention more to 160m again. Normally we are lucky to make 200 QSOs on this band, but maybe this time we can lift this total. We have just invested in a 87’ Titanex for this purpose. We decided to buy just the tubes and make our own accessories (guys, radials etc.) and Bob/G3PJT is working his magic with a home-brew tuner.

On 80m we will use a 50’ vertical with L wire and of course on 40/20/15/10 we will have our trusty monobanders. We are targeting

17,000+ QSOs in the 48 hours, making over 40 million points. QSL is via G3SXW. Please come on and work us on as many bands as possible in this, the biggest and best CW contest of the year. We will appreciate the points!”

Thanks, Roger. It was certainly a fun experience to meet up with the rest of the UK team last month and have a trial run at putting up the 87’ Titanex. I remember the recent articles from CDXC members about erecting them. Now, having experienced one, I’ve got a new respect for anyone that can put them up single-handedly, and/or in a steady breeze.

CQ WW DX Logs

I’d like to ask any CDXC members to put CDXC (Chiltern DX Club) as their club affiliation when sending in their CQ WW DX entries. Last year in the CW contest club scores listing CDXC made a very respectable 9th place with a combined score of 51 million points.

AFS Contests 2005

The club has seen some very strong entries in previous years and I hope we can see a repeat for the 2005 AFS season. If you intend to participate in the CW or SSB contests, please let me know of your intention as soon as possible.

10th Anniversary Contest Club Finland Meeting 2005

Pasi, OH2IW, has just announced some of the details for the 10th anniversary Contest Club Finland (CCF) meeting, along with the Finnish OH DX Foundation (OHDXF), to be held in January 2005.

You are invited to join Finnish contesters and DXers going maritime mobile aboard Viking Line M/S Gabriella en route OH-OHØ-SM-OHØ-OH. The ferry leaves Helsinki on Friday

21st January at 1730, arriving in Stockholm at 0930 on the Saturday. Departure is at 1650 on Saturday, with arrival back in Helsinki at 0955 on the Sunday. All times are local.

There will be presentations on the Friday evening and on the Saturday afternoon, with a Contest/DX buffet on the Friday evening, and a dinner on the Saturday evening. More details of special cruise packages, agenda, registration etc. are still to be announced –

please see <http://www.qsl.net/ccf> for more information. Many visitors from the UK have attended in previous years, and thanks to budget airlines, for surprisingly little cost. You can be assured of a very warm welcome, despite the cold weather.

That's it for now – have a good holiday season, and see you in 2005!

73, de Lee GØMTN

Contesting in Africa

A new book by Roger Western, G3SXW

and the VooDoo Contest Group

The VooDoo Contest Group has visited West Africa every year for over a decade to enter the CQ World Wide contest, moving a ton of equipment across borders and operating in seven different countries. In 192 pages we describe these exotic, exciting projects and offer a detailed description of our contesting strategies and techniques. The 90 photos, maps and graphs help to paint the picture.

"Contesting in Africa, by the VooDoo Contest Group, offers a compelling array of contesting and DXing experiences from one of the most unique operating venues on Earth - the African continent. The opportunity for the reader to benefit from personal stories told by the world-renowned and witty personality, Roger Western, G3SXW, makes this book a 'must have' in any ham radio library." John Dorr, K1AR - CQ Magazine Contest Editor.

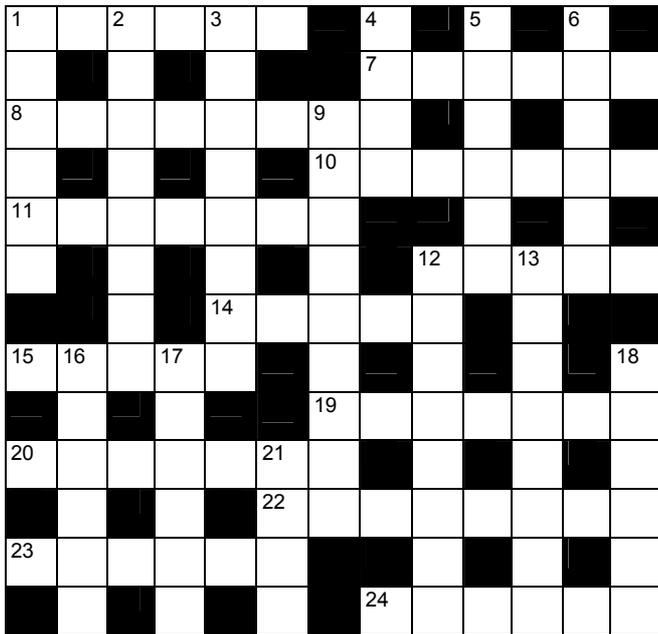
Order your copy online from www.idiompress.com.

Or for a copy signed by G3SXW by post to:

Roger Western
7 Field Close
Chessington KT9 2QD, England

Price (including shipping & handling): GBP £15, USD \$25 or Euro 22.

IOTA 2004 Crossword



This is the fairly straightforward definition-type crossword I compiled for the HF & IOTA Convention. If you haven't seen it before, you might like to give it a go.

Compiling an island-only crossword proved to be very difficult, at least in the time available, so it's not all islands! But it is mainly geographical, as you'll see. With most of the islands themselves I have obviously left out the word 'Island', if that appears in the usual name, eg Christmas Island (not in the crossword!) = simply 'CHRISTMAS'. The island names are as they're to be found in the latest IOTA Directory.

No prizes for this one. Solution next time round. Have fun! *RFX*

ACROSS

- 1 Tungsha (6)
- 7 Island (Russian) (6)
- 8 OC sex abuse trial venue (8)
- 10 AF-001 (7)
- 11 Commotion (as in pile-up?) (7)
- 12 Ischia neighbour (5)
- 14 Like Texel or Terschelling (5)
- 15 Ham capital of 5? (5)
- 19 OC-005 (7)
- 20 Part of T32 (old name) (7)
- 22 Closest part of ZL to 9 (4,4)
- 23 Bears (6)
- 24 Cabinda parent country (6)

- 16 Legendary island paradise (6)
- 17 DU capital (6)
- 18 VE7 river (part of his keen art!) (6)
- 21 Loch or headland (4)

DOWN

- 1 HV system of government (6)
- 2 Central and SA edentate (8)
- 3 Snake (8)
- 4 LGA and JFK are on it (4)
- 5 AF-018 parent-a country-a! (6)
- 6 Sandbank between G and OZ (6)
- 9 Part of ZK1 (9)
- 12 Sangatte's rail counterpart in G (8)
- 13 Port in KH8 (4,4)

Solution to Digest Prize Crossword 6

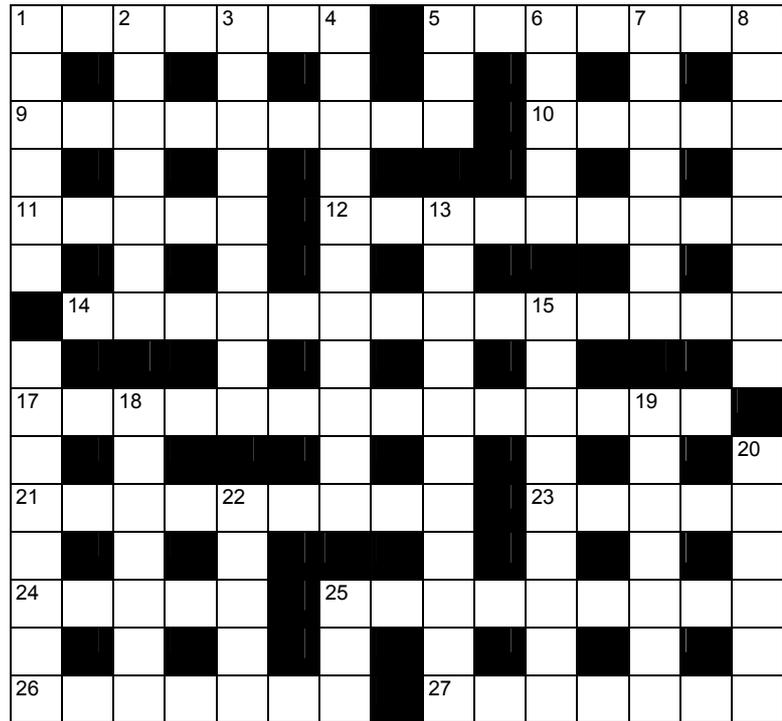
I	N	B	A	D	T	A	S	T	E	L	V	O	V
N	A	I	B	R	R	Y	E						
C	E	L	E	S	T	A	O	X	O	N	I	A	N
A	L	A	D	U	M	N	T						
S	L	E	E	P	L	E	S	E	I	G	E	R	
	R	P	G	E	O								
R	H	I	N	O	G	E	R	I	A	T	R	I	C
O	N	I											
D	I	A	G	N	O	S	E	D	D	R	O	V	E
R					T	A	O	J	G				
I	D	I	O	M	V	A	N	G	U	A	R	D	S
G	S	E	E	E	E	L	A	I					
U	P	L	A	N	D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

Digest Prize Crossword 7 by RFX

The next *Digest* will be in January, so may I be the second person (after Chairman John, G3LAS) to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I wonder what Father Christmas will bring? Last year I received no fewer than five copies of that fascinating book 'Eats, Shoots & Leaves', by Lynne Truss – all about punctuation. I've almost finished the fifth one.

Deadline for entries for this Crossword: 20 December. The winner of Prize Crossword 6, September 2004: Doug Roberts, GØWMW, Weston-super-Mare (via e-mail).



ACROSS

- 1 Girl from Iowa, Bruckner's first (7)
- 5 People exhibiting 13 addiction (7)
- 9 Draw good maps at Churchill's place (9)
- 10 Cut corners – novel in Poland! (5)
- 11 Cherubs employed by glazier up north, say? (5)
- 12 17 server providing the backing for many an erection (9)
- 14 Fake Meissen trade TV commercials (14)
- 17 Troubled oil claim centre's means of communication (10,4)
- 21 Spice not available for starter in quiet time of the year (3,6)
- 23 Desktop symbols one looks up to? (5)
- 24 Contests for the little pistols, less so the big guns? (5)
- 25 Support vessel chap looks at closely, we hear (9)
- 26 Bandage again by way of compensation (7)
- 27 Monotonous part of Bremen, DL essayist assures us (7)

DOWN

- 1 Say yes to current licensing agreement (6)
- 2 Drank to Edward following SOTA reorganisation (7)
- 3 Goodness me, turn ITN off! (9)
- 4 Supplies under half of GM city, causing irregularities (11)
- 5 Unwell state (3)
- 6 German author nominally from the Frankfurt area (5)
- 7 Composer of sound UK stock (7)
- 8 High-ranking members of a military band? (3,5)
- 13 Trendy story about quiet GM island (11)
- 15 Well preserved like Tootin' Common for the Americans, say? (9)
- 16 Official instrument (8)
- 18 HQ postcode area reporter (7)
- 19 Re-mastered oldies I worship (7)
- 20 Size up female donkey? (6)
- 22 Starts to explain new system undergraduates eventually follow (5)
- 25 Call for help starts to spur on survivors (1,1,1)

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

01/01-31/12	IOTA 2004
till 16/11	3B8MM: Mauritius (AF-049) by DL6UAA
till 18/11	5Z4YT1CS: Kenya by YT1CS
till November	7Q7HB: Malawi by GØJMU
till November	EL2PM: Liberia by EL/EI5IF
till 20/12	JR6TYH/JD1: Minami Torishima (OC-073)
till 20/12	SU8BHI: Egypt by HA3JB
till 31/12	9A8ØADE, 9A8ØZ, 9A8ØABD: special event stations
till 31/12	HA2ØØ4EU: Special event call
till 31/12	HB75A: Switzerland (USKA 75th Anniversary)
till 31/12	HS72B: special call and licence (Thailand)
till 31/12	NL7AU: Upper Matecombe Key (NA-062)
till 31/12	OE8ØXRW: special event station
till 31/12	SF3ØA: special call by SM5AQD
till 31/12	SG1RK: special event call (EU-020)
till 31/12	W1AW/9Ø: ARRL's 90th anniversary
till December	HFØQF and HFØPOL: So. Shetlands (SP-01)
till December	OX2KAN: Special event station
till December	TT8FT: Chad by F6GYV
till December	VKØDX: Davis Station (VK-03): Antarctica by VK4LL
till December	VQ9LA: Diego Garcia (AF-006)
till December	WL7CPA: Unalaska Island (NA-059)
till December	YI9MC: Iraq by KC4MC
till January	HA2ØØCVM: special station (Hungary)
till February	YI9KT and YI9GT: Iraq by SP8HKT and SP3GTS
till 31/03	T98AQL: Bosnia-Herzegovina by IZ4AQL
23/10-23/12	VC3W: special call + Canadian islands by VE3JFF
01/11-15/11	FR/F6BUM: Reunion Island (AF-016)
01/11-15/11	PJ2/DL5CW: Curacao (SA-006)
06/11-15/12	KC4AAA: Amundsen-Scott base (K-08) by NH6ON
11/11-19/11	ZWØCF and ZXØGTI: Comandante Ferraz Base (PY-01)
16/11-20/11	3B8/F6BUM: Mauritius Island (AF-049)
16/11-05/12	9N7BCC: Nepal by DJ3WE, DK7YY, DL6RAI, IV3IYH
17/11-22/11	VYØ/KD6WW: Belcher Islands (NA-196)
18/11-22/11	3DAØNN and 3DAØCG: Swaziland by AA4NN and W4GMY

19/11-21/11	SEANET Convention
21/11-02/12	XU7ADF: Cambodia by AA4XR
22/11-09/12	VK9XG: Christmas Isl. (OC-002) by WØYG (and WØMY)
23/11-01/12	CN2KM: Morocco by SM2EKM
24/11-26/11	C91NN, C91CG, C91F: Mozambique by AA4NN and W4GMV
24/11-28/11	V26K: Antigua (NA-100) by AA3B
27/11-28/11	VO2AAA: Zone 2
27/11-28/11	CQ WW DX CW Contest
28/11	3D2FI: Viti Levu (OC-016), Fiji by GØUIH
29/11-05/12	3D2FI: Nacula Island (OC-156), Fiji by GØUIH
01/12-05/03	8NØSON: Special Olympics World Winter Games
03/12-05/12	III TPG: special event station
06/12	3D2FI: Viti Levu (OC-016), Fiji by GØUIH
07/12-10/12	3D2FI: Beachcomber Island (OC-121), Fiji by GØUIH
11/12	3D2FI: Viti Levu (OC-016), Fiji by GØUIH
24/12-30/12	ZK1GND: Rarotonga (OC-013), South Cooks by VK2GND
26/12-09-01	5T5DY: Mauritania by F6GDC, F6CQX and F5SSM
2004-05	R1ANC: Vostok Base (UA-10) by UA1PAC
21/01-04/02	3YØX: Peter I Island (AN-004)

Letters to the Editor

from DU9/G4UNL

Dear Martyn,

I did chuckle over Neville's comments about incoming QSL cards [September 2004 Digest], so I am enclosing one of the envelopes you can purchase here in the Philippines. As you can see: no sign of glue – and this is quite good quality.

As for C6-size envelopes, that's fine in Britain, but not in Asia or the USA seeing as they use the small ones that Neville complains about and the CDXC QSL card is obviously made to fit!

Hiding Dollars? Of course, there are too many light-fingered Larrys looking for them, so sorry about that too. As for Sellotape to seal

the joins? Yes, that's necessary for the same reason.

It probably is very annoying to get foreign stamps, but in our country (at least in our city) you can't get Dollars and the Philippines no longer accepts IRCs – nor can you get them.

Yes, it isn't difficult in UK to buy gummed or self-sealing envelopes, Dollars or IRCs, but there are still many third world countries way behind – but then here fuel is still under £1 per gallon, food also four times as cheap, 50p for a bottle of good rum, 13p for a beer, cigarettes 15-20p. Which would you like? Oh, and I forget the warm Pacific and the lovely women. Cheer up!

Roy DU9/G4UNL

from Randy, W6SJ

Dear Martyn,

I will be making a DX Venture to the Bahamas for the CQ WW CW contest and will be operating as C6AWS.

During non-contest periods I hope to operate the WARC bands as much as I can and hope to contact lots of CDXC members that are hard to reach from W6-land.

Please identify yourself as a member when we QSO as this is NOT intended to be a '5nn BK' during non-contest periods.

from GW3UOF

Dear Martyn,

I will be active, mainly CW, all 9 HF bands from the Dominican Republic between 28 November and 12 December 2004. I will also use SSB and digital modes.

73

Mike

GW3UOF/HI3

9V1YC videos

VHS expedition videotapes are now being sold at US\$5 per video + shipping. In PAL VHS: plenty of VP8THU, VP8GEO, A52A, WRTC and just four or five FOØAAA. The rest are sold out.

Contact jamesb@pacific.net.sg.

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

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

CDXC Members QSL Card

Priority Order Form

Quantity	Price	Tick the appropriate box ✓
500	£36.42	
1000	£66.38	
2000	£122.78	
3000	£178.60	
4000	£234.41	
5000	£290.81	

All the above prices are inclusive of UK VAT. Packing and postage within the UK included.

To customise your card please enter your details below:

Callsign:

Name:

Address:

Please Note: Delivery will be made to the address given above, unless notified otherwise.

Payment details:

Name of cardholder (as given on card):

Card Number:

Card Type * : Mastercard Visa Switch

** Delete as appropriate*

Expiry date (Month/Year):

Issue Number (Switch cards only):

Cardholder's address, if different to one given above:

E-mail this order form to: sales@hdprint.co.uk

or fax to: +44 (0)1920 463212

or post to: Hertfordshire Display plc, 51 High Street, Ware, Herts SG12 9BA UK

Tel: +44 (0)1920 461191

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

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

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

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

1. starting with an **initial payment TODAY**
2. followed by an **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter,
starting with 1 July 2004 and until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

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

Name(s) :

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :

.....

Postcode :

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

How to fill in the CDXC Standing Order Request Form

1. The form should be addressed to your own Bank and branch.
2. Write your CALLSIGN after 'reference'. This is very important as it is the way your subscription is identified in the CDXC bank statements.
3. Delete one of the amounts (£15.00 is the 2003-04 subscription for UK members; the subscription is £20.00 for those living abroad.)
4. The form has been pre-filled with "today and on 1st July annually thereafter".
5. Enter your account details after 'Name of account to be debited' and your account number.
6. Complete the lower part of the form with your name, address, date and don't forget to sign it.
7. THE COMPLETED FORM SHOULD BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE BANK BRANCH WHICH LOOKS AFTER YOUR ACCOUNT.
8. It helps the CDXC Treasurer if you also tell him that you intend to pay by Standing Order in future.
9. Check your bank statements after the first payment should have been made to ensure that your bank is executing the order correctly.

Thank you for helping CDXC by paying your subscription by Standing Order!

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Account : 44532385
Account Name : CDXC
Reference : [your callsign]
Bank : NatWest - Kingston-upon-Thames Branch

