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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

For me one of the highlights of the HF Convention weekend was trainspotting on St Neots station. Yes, I admit it. The King's Cross – Edinbugh expresses, they don't 'alf zoom through there - at what seems like three times the speed they normally manage to muster on our line out of Paddington. One young lad standing on the platform with his grandparents, en route for a day out at the Science Museum in London, was literally blown over by one of these trains.

But I digress: the HF Convention. I thought it was a great do – and by and large the venue was excellent, arguably the best in recent years. On the Saturday we even had no fewer than 46 CDXC members turning up to our delayed action AGM. Either way, I look forward to returning to Wyboston next year for the HFC – and of course St Neots station for more trainspotting.

But what of the *Digest*? Somewhat predictably we have plenty this time round on 3B7C, starting on page 14 with the full inside story by President Neville. This is followed by Don, G3XTT, tying the ribbons on it in his Press Release No. 8. Don, G3BJ, then homes in on a few RTTY tips in the wake of St Brandon…

… where, one gathers, two of the main bird species are the Sooty Tern and Brown Noddy. Yes, Sooty and Noddy: two children's favourites for the price of one.

Featuring in this *Digest* too: a report by Bob, G3PJT, entitled 'Round the world in 34 days'. In it he stops off in the Cook Islands for a spell as E51PJT, very wisely restricting his activities in between the storms and torrential rain to the island of Rarotonga. After all, you know what they say about 'too many Cooks…'. Or have we had that joke before?

In there too: 'SXW Corner'. This time Roger tells us all about a recent trip to the capital of TF-land. As I said to him at the time: Wreck yer Vic? Something the cast of Eastenders would never do.

And by all accounts the beer's a darned sight cheaper at the Queen Vic in Albert Square than it is in Iceland - where TF/G3SXW and John, TF/G4IRN, ended up with a total of some 2,000 QSOs. But then as Roger says, 'This was not a serious DXpedition to a rare country: it was a fun, relaxed weekend.'

And to complete this month's 'Out and About' feature articles: Richard, G3RWL, and his 'Ramblings on a trip to Barbados' and 8P6DR. The full 8P6 call basically because Richard used to live out there.

Whereas I myself have to make do with 8P9FX, something I do very gladly! In fact we're planning another (long overdue…) trip to there next year. I can't wait to step off the British Airways Boeing 777 at BGI.

Which almost ties the ribbons on it for another year. Many thanks to all of you for putting up with me during 2007. Have a very Merry Christmas - and an eminently rewarding and prosperous New Year. Meanwile go easy on the Christmas Pud and, of course, the seemingly inevitable turkey left-overs!

73 Martyn, G3RFX

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

I'm writing this piece a week after the RSGB HF Convention and I think a little review might be in order since CDXC is one of the major forums for HF DX operating in the UK – OK Neville, it's **THE** major forum!

I've heard views from a very large number of those who attended and they have been consistently positive. The new venue at Wyboston proved to be excellent. Everybody seemed happy with the location, the surroundings, the food, the beer and the company. The only significant complaint was that the meeting rooms were a bit small for the most popular presentations. This is true, but at least it's good that the talks were so popular.

However, several contributors to the CDXC web forum have pointed out the absence of any significant number of younger operators at the Convention. This, of course, has been an increasingly noticeable feature of the hobby as a whole for many years. The RSGB and other national societies have made great efforts to redress the age balance. Numerous initiatives: Foundation Licences, GB4FUN etc. have been launched and these have generally been very successful. There does appear to be a 'market' for our hobby among the younger generation. Sadly it seems that most of the large number of new, younger licensees are not particularly interested in HF operating and DX chasing. The numbers heard on the bands, seen at HFC and incidentally, joining CDXC, are not great.

So what are they doing? HF operating and contacting remote parts of the world are not such obvious excitements as they were for their fathers and grandfathers. Chatting to someone in New Zealand or even Kiribati can be done in numerous other ways these days. The competitive thrills of contesting are, perhaps, not dissimilar to those of the all-pervasive video games. If we are going to seduce these young people from their 21st century diversions, we have to persuade them that amateur radio and HF operating in particular are at least as exciting and in tune with the 21st century.

I suspect the answer is no different from the way most of us 'oldsters' (what an awful word!) were first enthused, twenty, thirty or forty years ago. Our US friends have another curious word for this: 'Elmering'. I have no idea where the word originates, but it means introducing, encouraging and helping a beginner to become established in amateur radio. The Elmer can be an individual or a club. Whoever does it, it is vital if the future strength of the hobby is to be assured. I'm sure there are examples of how members are already involved in bringing along the new generation of DXers. Tell us about it! I'm sure Martyn will welcome contributions to the *Digest* from Elmers and Elmeresses, demonstrating how, even in a world where we all think we are too busy to become involved with almost anything, great work can be done to pay back some of the debt which we owe to those who helped us in the past.

Apart from the Convention, the big event of recent weeks has been the 3B7C operation from St Brandon. Yet again, our friends from the FSDXA (actually they are all members of CDXC; Neville made sure of that before he let them leave the island…) put on another demonstration of how a major DXpedition should be conducted. 'Only' 137,000 QSOs this time, but in a period when solar activity was virtually zero this is still a major achievement. The strength of their signals into the UK on all bands from 160 to 10m was testament to their equipment and know-how, while the standard of operating, even from the less

experienced members of the team, was as immaculate as always, a fine example of group Elmering. Would you have predicted that some UK stations would make it on 24 band-mode slots?

It has been said before that good operators suffer less from the current curse of deliberate QRM, 'zoos' and 'policemen'. This was certainly proved again by 3B7C, except perhaps on the battleground of 40m. Nevertheless, it was very encouraging to learn at HFC that the RSGB is launching a major project which, in collaboration with other IARU societies, is targeting this scourge of the HF bands. Make no mistake, this is a serious effort to tackle this problem which makes our DXing so frustrating at times. We should all look forward to more details and, wherever possible, volunteer our help when asked to join in the fight. Details are scarce at present, but anyone wishing to make a contribution should contact John, G3WKL, to volunteer.

Finally, you will know that our Secretary for the past few years, Peter Hart, G3SJX, has decided that his garden needs him more than we do. Thanks for all your hard work, Peter. At the (delayed) AGM in Wyboston, we elected an excellent replacement: Chris Duckling, G3SVL. In fact we have found two more very welcome Committee members in Michael Wells, G7VJR, and Gordon Rolland, G3USR, so I'm sure CDXC will be able to go into the New Year with optimism and confidence.

By the time you read this it will be well into November. I hope it isn't too early to wish all CDXC members a very Happy Christmas and Good Luck for 2008.

73 es gud DX

John, G3LAS

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Call	*Name*	*Location*
2EØOSE	Paul Pope	Salisbury
FM5CD	Michel Brunelle	Martinique
G3UZM	Colin Haddock	Exmouth
G4BYG	Vic Lindgren	Hull
G4OHX	Sam Kennard	Great Yarmouth
G4UDU	Phil Godbold	Steyning
G6DGK	Gavin Keegan	Newick
M3WPX	Gemma Taylor	Harlow
N6HC	Arnie Shatz	California
N6OX	Bob Grimmick	California
SM5GMZ	Pete Arninge	Västerås

CDXC Annual General Meeting: 13 October 2007 at 1300

Venue: RSGB HF Convention, Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre, Wyboston, Bedfordshire

The AGM had been originally scheduled for 13 July 2007, but was postponed at short notice due to severe weather conditions.

Minutes

John, G3LAS, CDXC Chairman, welcomed everyone to the AGM.

Present: (46 members)

5B4AFB, 5B4AGX, GØHSA, GØLUQ, GØMTN, GØOPB, GØPHY, G3KMA, G3KWK, G3LAS, G3LZQ, G3NKQ, G3NUG, G3OCA, G3PSM, G3RAU, G3RFX, G3RTE, G3RWF, G3SJX, G3SVL, G3TXF, G3UEG, G3USR, G3VPS, G3WKL, G3WYW, G3XTT, G3YBY, G3ZAY, G4AXX, G4BYG, G4FKA, G4IUF, G4KIU, G4OBK, G4VSS, G4WGE, G7TMU, G7VJR, G8DQZ, HSØZGL, MØBLF, MØPCB, M3JFM, MMØBQI

Apologies: (6 members)

5B4AGN, 5B4AHK, 5B4AGC, GU4EON, G3BJ, G4JKS

Previous Minutes:

The minutes from the 2006 AGM had been printed in the September 2006 Digest and were available to all members present as part of the 2007 AGM handout. There were no questions or corrections and the Minutes were accepted.

Chairman's Report

John, G3LAS, reported on another successful year. The membership had decreased, but this was not unexpected since it is primarily a result of non-renewal by many of those who 'joined' through the free membership initiative by Martin Lynch, G4HKS. However, the scheme has shown a net gain for the Club, so again we must express thanks to Martin for his proposal. As always we have to work hard, not just to increase our numbers, but also to counterbalance the inevitable attrition due to 'natural wastage'.

Our Annual Dinner was a success, both in terms of an increased number of diners after a few 'lean' years and also by virtue of the event itself. Thanks to Don, G3XTT, who spoke on 'DXing Then and Now'.

We have made our usual 'official' appearances at rallies and shows, eg Donington, Kempton and HFC. Unfortunately we had to miss Elvaston this year since none of the Committee members could attend on the day. We expect to keep these events going as a valuable means of meeting members and, of course, recruiting new ones and would welcome assistance from the membership. (Note that unfortunately Elvaston will no longer be held) If any members would like to take a Club stand at other events around the country, we would be happy to support them in any possible way.

The *Digest*, as always, has attracted many complimentary remarks, especially since we have burst into full colour for our photo pages. Martyn, G3RFX, continues to do a great job as Editor, supported by Mike, GU4EON, who looks after the picture pages.

A new venture has been the establishment of a Member's web forum or reflector. This is moderated by Mark, G4AXX, and is very popular as a hotline of news and gossip. We must ensure that it does not degrade, as so many such reflectors do, into a vehicle for the moans and groans and hobby horses of a few individuals.

Our finances are secure, thanks to the efforts of our Treasurer Nigel, G3TXF, who makes sure that we don't waste money. However, costs rise continually and we are looking forward to many exciting expedition proposals as the solar activity begins to rise. We propose to raise the subscriptions slightly after several years of steady state.

Finally, John thanked the Committee for their efforts over the year. Without them there wouldn't be a CDXC, and we and the DX community as a whole would all be a little bit the poorer. Sadly our Secretary, Peter, G3SJX, has decided to 'retire'. We will miss his hard work and wise counsel, but a successor has been found.

There were no questions arising from the Chairman's report.

Secretary's Report

Peter, G3SJX, reported on the Secretarial tasks. Although membership is down on last year, true support from DXers remains high and unlike previous years we have not actively canvassed new members via targeted mailshots. This will soon happen. New members information packs were sent to 33 new members joining during the year since the last AGM.

Although much of the day-to-day business of the Club is handled by email, four Committee meetings were held during the last year at different Committee members' houses. General enquiries are relatively few and usually directed to the website address and this remains the preferred means of contact.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Corus Hotel, Crowthorne, on 31 March and was a great success. The Summer Social regrettably was cancelled due to flooding.

Peter is standing down from the Committee at this AGM and thanked everyone for support over the last three years that he has been Secretary.

There were no questions arising from the Secretary's report. A vote of thanks was proposed to Peter for his work as Secretary (proposed G3NUG, seconded GØOPB).

Treasurer's Report

The full accounts for the year prepared by Nigel, G3TXF, were published in the July 2007 *Digest* and copies were available at the meeting. This showed that overall the Club is in a healthy financial state. Sponsorship for the cancelled VYØ trip by G3OCA had been returned and will be included in the 2008 accounts. A marketing mailshot aimed at recruiting new members will shortly be sent out and will hopefully boost numbers.

Nigel explained the reasoning behind the proposed subscription increase. This would provide a greater fund for DXpedition sponsorship and for extra costs incurred with the *Digest* and postage.

Subscription Rates from July 2008

The proposal from the Committee to raise the annual subscription to £18 for UK members and £24 for overseas members was carried unanimously (proposed G3TXF, seconded G3LZQ).

Election of Committee

At this point, the entire Committee resigned, as required by the Constitution.

Don, G3XTT, took the chair for the election of a new Committee and thanked the retiring Committee on behalf of the members. Peter, G3SJX, is retiring, but the remaining members were standing for re-election. G4IUF proposed and G3WYW seconded that they should be re-elected en bloc. G3SVL was nominated for Secretary (proposed G3UEG, seconded GØOPB). G7VJR and G3USR were nominated for Committee membership (proposed G3SVL, seconded MØPCB). This was passed unanimously and brings the Committee to full strength. The new Committee is therefore:

President	**G3NUG**
Chairman	**G3LAS**
Secretary	**G3SVL**
Treasurer	**G3TXF**
Digest Editor	**G3RFX**
Committee Members	**G3RTE, G4AXX, G7VJR, G3USR**

Following the election of the Committee for 2007/8 the re-elected Chairman, G3LAS, re-took the Chair.

Election of Auditor

Martin, G3ZAY, was thanked for auditing the accounts for the last few years, but wished to retire from this role. G3LZQ offered to audit the accounts for 2008 (proposed G4OBK, seconded G3PSM) and this was accepted unanimously.

AOB

There were no other items of formal business.

HSØZGL (G3TMA) raised the question of receiving the *Digest* by email. The Club will not do this except in very exceptional circumstances to guard against the *Digest* being circulated easily to non-members. The *Digest* is seen as a key attraction to membership.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of the CDXC operating trophies to the winners or their stand-ins – Penallt Trophy to 5B4AHJ, Tindle Cup to MØBKV and CDXC Plaque to GØMTN.

Peter Hart, G3SJX

DXCC Honour Roll – March 2007

Taken from the September 2007 QST by Jim Kellaway, G3RTE

RTTY

328

GØARF
G4BWP

Apologies for omitting the above in the September *Digest*. Please note that next year I will also include our overseas members.

73 de Jim G3RTE

The CDXC LF Challenge 2008

Following a small survey carried out during 2006, the results of which were discussed at the last Committee meeting, it was agreed to keep the rules the same for 2008. If the response is as poor as it was this year, ie 2007, then we will review the situation for 2009. It is planned that the website will be working for this contest, enabling entrants to update their scores.

Aim:

The aim of the competition is to work as many DXCC entities during the month of March 2008. Each DXCC entity is counted ONCE only.

When:

0001 UTC, 1 March 2008 to 2359 UTC, 31 March 2008.

Bands:

ONLY the 1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz bands

Modes:

No restrictions.

Logs:

Send a list either by e-mail to jkellaway@btinternet.com or by post to Jim Kellaway, 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar EN6 1QW. Headings in the following order only will be accepted, otherwise logs will be disqualified.

DXCC Entity, Band, Call, Time and Mode.

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 log.

Awards – Multi-band

Penallt Trophy – Awarded to the first-placed station. The trophy is returnable, but a small engraved plaque will also be presented to mark this achievement.

Tindle Cup - Awarded to the second-placed station. The trophy is returnable, but a small engraved plaque will also be presented to mark this achievement.

The station in third place will receive a small engraved plaque to mark this achievement.

Single Band Awards – The leading station on each band (1.8, 3.5 and 7 MHz) will also receive a small engraved plaque.

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

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT *don@g3xtt.com*

Have you seen the latest prognostications about the sunspot cycle? It seems that it's a bit like getting lawyers or consultants to agree on anything: for every five propagation experts you get six opinions (or something like that). But one forecast is saying that solar activity is declining overall and we can expect a very modest cycle with a late peak. Anyway, who needs sunspots? Rumour has it that a recent expedition managed 137K QSOs without any. Surely there must be some mistake?

Let's ban expeditions?

Perhaps it's because a pre-trip article about that expedition appeared in its pages, but *Practical Wireless* recently received a 'Letter to the Editor' arguing that DXpeditions were bad for the hobby and should be banned. The main points seemed to be that they clutter up the bands and bring out the worst behaviour in the pile-ups. The writer also asked the question, "What are they (expeditions) trying to prove?"

Let's deal with the last one first. Personally, I don't see why expeditions need to prove anything. Surely they are for fun. The fun of the DXpeditioners and the fun of those who chase them. This is a hobby – we don't need any heavy justification. The world's far too serious a place as it is.

As for the other arguments, a good DXpedition won't use up much band space, just its own frequency and a small spread for receiving. Just because some DXpeditions have got this wrong is no reason to condemn all DXpeditions. Rather, it's a case of educating those DXpeditioners who get it wrong. Veteran DXpeditioner Martti Laine, OH2BH, likens the DX station's role to that of an actor on stage: he can have the audience eating out of his hands or, if he loses confidence, will be booed off stage. In other words, the DX operator is the one who has the lead role in the process. As for DXpeditions attracting bad behaviour: sadly there does seem to be some justification for this argument, but surely that's not a reason to ban DXpeditions. Rather, it should be a case for trying to deal with that anti-social element who gain pleasure from disrupting the perfectly legal and pleasurable activities of others.

But, having made these points, I did get to thinking about the plus and minus points of DXpedition activity. After all, as DXers (and I assume 100% of CDXC membership fall into that category to a greater or lesser extent, or you wouldn't be a CDXC member), DXpeditions are a major element of our enjoyment from the hobby. Yes, there is great fun to be gained from working other DX too; the resident amateur in a rare spot, the ex-pat who likes to run a pile-up from time to time, and so on. But, with the demand for rare ones being so great nowadays, DXpeditions will provide the majority of our DX QSOs.

I guess the first question to ask, in any case, is what constitutes a DXpedition? They can vary from one amateur taking a rig on holiday to a fully-fledged multi-op effort to 3YØ or BS7, as examples, costing tens of thousands of pounds. But there is every shade of operation in between. Let's not pretend that DXpeditioners are altruistic in any way. They do it for fun, a point that Jim, G3RTE, made when presenting the VP2MTE expedition (which he made with Phil, G3SWH) at the HF Convention. Nothing wrong with that and, in the process, an expedition will indeed make others happy by filling the demand for a DXCC slot, an in-year band slot, the opportunity

for a nice QSL to put on the shack wall, a chance to test one's operating and/or station, or maybe all of the foregoing. At the same time a DXpedition may actually be beneficial to local amateurs in the country concerned. I know that many GJ and GU amateurs, for example, stick to VHF or maybe to skeds with friends, because otherwise they get mobbed every time they go on the bands. A DXpedition can take some of the pressure off them.

But DXpeditions can and do achieve more than this. Martti Laine, OH2BH, has made a point over the years of trying to make a contribution to the host country as part of a DXpedition, for example by providing some training to local amateurs or potential amateurs, and maybe leaving some equipment for them to use. I know other DXpeditions and DXpeditioners have done something similar. DXpedition logs are also used increasingly for propagation analysis. Bob Brown, NM7M, is well-known for doing this, and started some years ago with an analysis of lowband propagation during the VKØHI Heard Island expedition. Our own 3B9C trip three years ago provided some fascinating data which Eric, K3NA, was able to use to good effect to study Top Band propagation. It looks as though we might have the wherewithal this time to help with analysis of marginal openings on 10 and 12m at sunspot minimum (we worked East Coast US on both those bands) and also to compare and contrast propagation at the two ends of 80m.

It's not all good news, of course. With the best will in the world, a DXpedition opening up from a rare spot will cause QRM to existing QSOs on its listening frequency(ies). We were astonished, for example, at the width of the RTTY pile-ups we generated from 3B7 – the waterfall display gave a very graphic illustration of what was happening on the band. Even when we were announcing a specific split, on whatever mode, there always seemed to be a few hopefuls who called outside that range 'just in case'.

Unfortunately there will always be those in our hobby who are inclined to knock their fellow amateurs who do something that they don't ourselves follow - ragchewers knock DXpeditions and contests, contesters deplore Echolink as not being 'real radio', QRPers decry those who (quite legally) run 400W, etc. Surely our hobby gains from being a broad church with enough facets to interest us for a lifetime? The fact that 3B7C worked 137,500 contacts with about 35,500 different stations is testimony to the fact that expeditions are popular for whatever reason - the chase, the awards, the sheer fun - I'm sure it varies. But that's a lot of folk compared with the number who can be heard ragchewing on the bands each day, so clearly DXpeditions are here to stay. Some of our 3B7C team members will be on Clipperton next February and others from the team will be on from Ducie in March. I, for one, can't wait for those trips and will happily join in the chase!

Feedback

Owen, GØPHY, writes:

Dear Don,

Here are some random thoughts and comments on recent and not so recent operations.

BS7H

Looking at the pictures of this operation one cannot but feel admiration for the dedication and bravery of the operators on their platforms. However, I have a question. How do these structures differ from an oil exploration platform with regards to counting for DXCC? I thought that an operation from an oil rig did not count for DXCC in the same way that maritime mobile operations were not eligible for DXCC. Obviously the ARRL have thought this through and approved the operation, but any enlightenment would be appreciated. *(To answer that Owen, as others may be curious too, the difference is that the rocks*

of BS7H are actually above the sea, and any operating platforms must be built on those rocks, not on the seabed, as an oil platform would be. Scarborough Reef is actually very extensive – several miles in diameter – it's just that very little of it is above water at high tide. The BS7H presentation at HFCC, by Mike, K9AJ, showed all this very graphically.).

1AØKM

The old adage about waiting till the end of the DXpedition until trying to work them paid dividends with this one. I worked them relatively easily on 14, 18 and 21 MHz, all SSB) over the final three days. The contacts on 14 and 18 MHz took about 10 minutes, but I got through on 21 MHz first shout. Listening to them on 14 MHz on the final Saturday morning, there were periods when they were not very busy at all. My contact on 18 MHz occurred on 22 July, exactly 7 years after my first contact on 14 MHz.

OX/PA3EXX/P

Much to my surprise I bagged this one on 14 MHz SSB when he was calling by numbers, but listening up 5 to 10. I heard him working quite a few UK stations and for once it was nice to be the first landfall for signals from a DXpedition and not having to fight through the EU wall.

Vlad, UA4WHX

What more is there to say about Vlad? I still cannot believe how easy he was to work from some of the rare spots he visited in Africa. When he was operating as 9XØVB I worked him third call without the benefits of the DX Summit. Other contacts were just as quick. A truly great operator.

News from Thailand

Most of you will already be aware, but G4UZN, E21EIC, 9M6DXX and others have passed along the very welcome news that Thai amateurs now have access to the 12, 17, 30, 80 and 160m bands with no time restraints. Thai ops can now operate on the following frequencies:

160m 1.800 - 1.825 MHz
80m 3.500 - 3.540
30m 10.100 - 10.150
17m 18.068 - 18.168
12m 24.890 - 24.990

Goodbye WARC bands? *(from The Daily DX)*

In 1979 during the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) Amateur Radio obtained the 12, 17 and 30m bands, which have traditionally been called the WARC bands. WARC is long over and it is well past time to discontinue the use of this reference. Effective immediately The Daily DX, The Weekly DX and How's DX will refrain from using this term and will instead refer to them as 12, 17 and 30 meters. I encourage other DXers and editors to do the same. Besides, we need to look forward to future WARC bands! See you on 12, 17 and 30 meters?

Bernie is quite right: it's crazy to continue with this terminology almost 30 years after the conference at which these bands were granted. We've come a long way since then, with 73 kHz (for a while), 136 kHz, 5 MHz and, most recently, 500 kHz. And in the UK and many other countries 50 MHz is more recent than 12, 17 and 30m.

Finally Tony, G3CWW, writes,

"Am pleased to report that I have achieved 5BDXCC # 6086 plus DXCC on all three WARC bands, all on CW only, and have joined the Challenge Award listings with a score of 1117. All this with a maximum of 200W, using a succession of single vertical antennas, over 48 buried radials".

Well done, and a good note on which to draw another column to a close.

73 Don, G3XTT

Borneo Bulletin

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX *teleniuslowe@gmail.com*

A shorter than usual *Borneo Bulletin* this time because I have very little to report. For much of the time since the last *CDXC Digest* came out I have not been in Borneo at all but on the slightly smaller island of Ile du Sud, St Brandon, which no doubt you will be reading about elsewhere in this *Digest*.

3B7C was a lot of fun and it is interesting to reflect that even when there were no sunspots (an SSN of zero for every day of the DXpedition!) it was still possible to make 137,500 QSOs. I made nearly as many QSOs in under three weeks as I have done in almost a year of activity from 9M6. One reason for this is that here I am still plagued with a very high noise level from local power lines, particularly on 20m. On 40 and 80m I am unable to put up sufficiently good DX antennas to be able to work DX regularly on those bands. I get really good reports from DU and YB on 80m, but that's about it! I'm looking forward to the improvement in high-band conditions that surely must start before too long and which will allow me to work more DX, particularly on 15 and 10m (at present, although I have worked 200 countries in the last year, I have only worked 45 on 10m).

V8FEO QRV Again

One week from today, as I write this, I will be driving the 550 kms from here to Brunei to operate from the new rental shack there, 'Tungku Lodge', run by Ambran, V85SS. With only just over a week to go before the CQ WW phone contest, there is still no beam at Tungku Lodge. Apparently it has been held up somewhere between Singapore and Brunei, so I am keeping my fingers crossed that it will arrive in the next few days and that Ambran will then have sufficient time to get the beam on the tower before the contest. We shall see! Tungku Lodge is also the location for the November DXpedition by Tom, GM4FDM; Ronald, PA3EWP, and Flo, F5CWU, which is scheduled to be on the air 4 – 19 November (see http://www.v8.pa7fm.nl/).

Visitors to Borneo

Only one that I'm aware of since the last *CDXC Digest*: Hans, DF5UG, who is an old friend of Malaysia and South-East Asia in general. He holds the callsigns 9M2QQ, 9M6QQ and 9M8QQ and he activated 9M6QQ on 21 and 22 August while passing through Sabah for a couple of days. Hans operated from the Borneo Amateur Radio Club's club-house building. This is not yet normally open to other amateurs, but there is a long-term plan to make it available as another rental shack.

Certainly the location is superb, being on the very top of a 700ft hill overlooking the city of Kota Kinabalu (which is mostly at sea level) and with a clear take-off over the South China Sea. At present there is a Cushcraft A4S beam at 30ft, but on the very edge of the cliff, with 40 and 80m dipoles some 70ft up a tower. The potential is incredible, but a lot of work still needs to be done to make this a walk-in-and-operate location.

Last time I said that I was expecting visits to Borneo from at least three different groups later in the year. One of them is the V8 DXpedition mentioned above, but sadly the other two have decided not to come to Borneo this year after all. I receive enquiries about operating from Sabah quite frequently and would be pleased to help with licensing and arranging suitable accommodation for any CDXC member who wants to operate from 9M6.

The 3B7C Story

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG – Joint Leader

"137,500 QSOs with no sunspots"
or
"It all went to plan until there was a murder in Port Louis."

When we were on Rodrigues, operating as 3B9C in March/April 2004, the conversation naturally turned to 'Where Next?'. We liked the Indian Ocean with its ease of access, particularly from the UK, and we had developed some really valuable contacts in Mauritius, the most valuable being Captain Yves Goilot, who had been an enormous help with 3B9C.

The Pacific did not look feasible at the bottom of the sunspot cycle; Libya was another possibility, but a German team beat us to it with their 5A7A operation.

Our thoughts naturally turned to 3B6/7, Agalega and Saint Brandon, the latter also known as Cargados Carajos Shoals. This DXCC entity was well up on the wanted list, around No. 45 (and higher in North America). Agalega in particular looked attractive – a boat service, a landing strip and a new resort (the first on the island) was planned to open in 2007. Ideal we thought, a good place to operate, we could do a deal with the resort owner and publicise the new venue.

But then a new government was elected in Mauritius and all developments on the offshore islands were halted. Operations had been undertaken from Agalega before, but we were warned off this location – there is apparently a great deal of bureaucracy to be overcome amongst local officials.

Trish, my XYL, and I visited Mauritius and Rodrigues in 2005 and met Yves Goilot again to talk about St Brandon. Rafael Island, the location for previous 3B7 operations, was one possibility, Ile du Sud was the other.

We quickly ruled out Rafael Island. It was too small, approximately 400m square, and a fishing company and a customs post were based there. There was not enough room for a FSDXA operation. Also, it smelt and was full of rats!

So Ile du Sud became the target location. Yves (he went to school with one of the former Mauritian Prime Ministers) made some investigations for us. Ile du Sud was leased by a fishing company and there were two lodges used for game fishing parties from Mauritius. There was enough accommodation for around 12 people; the balance would have to camp. The island itself looked ideal. It was a long sandbar running East-West, about 1 km long and 250 metres wide. It seemed perfect since all the main areas of the world – North America, Europe and Asia lie between the North-West and North-East from 3B7.

So how many operators would be needed at the bottom of the sunspot cycle? We used the very excellent Australian ASAPS program which suggested 170 hours per day of usable propagation, which would justify a team of 20.

We expected good low band propagation, but 10 and 12m were expected to be limited (but open to Japan) and 40 to 17m were the banker bands. Other propagation programs suggested a more optimistic outturn. Had we used these projections we could have had four to five operators sitting around for much of the day!

Ile du Sud brought some new challenges for FSDXA. There was very limited power on the island, so we would have to take 30 KVA of generator power from six large generators, allowing for breakdowns.

We had never chartered a ship before, but Bob Allphin, K4UEE, of 3YØX and many other operations gave us some very helpful draft contracts. This charter cost £16,000. We also needed a contract with the island leaseholders to house and feed 20 people. We would also need various permits from ICTA (licence), the Offshore Islands Development Corporation (access), Coastguard, Prime Minister's Office, Customs and Police.

We made two visits to Mauritius to explain to the various ministries what we were up to and also to discuss the ship charter and the island contacts. Mauritius is an interesting place to do business. It is becoming more bureaucratic by the month, a combination of the worst of the British Civil Service, Africa and India all in a single country. Things do happen but much patience is required and lots of time. We had both!

The licence and landing permits duly arrived – we were in business!

During the second visit to Mauritius, Don, G3BJ, visited Ile du Sud (I caught a bug in Mauritius) and he came back with a positive report.

To summarise, Ile du Sud looked like an ideal location with its East-West aspect. It was surrounded by a reef but had a constant wind of 20-25 knots and much higher on occasions. There was a basic kitchen, three cold water showers, three toilets and power for eight hours a day. There was stored rain water for showers and washing but this was topped up with sea water and was sometimes fairly salty. There were thousands of ground nesting birds, but no nasties. Larger boats had to moor 500 metres from the shore, the local fishing boats landed close to the shore. These were sizable open boats; in fact one carried all six generators.

To summarise – not Five Star, perhaps Zero Star, but doable and a real challenge.

So what was our strategy? We planned on twelve stations sharing six linears with a switch-over of linears between night and day. Monoband Yagis would be used for 6m to 30m. In addition we had our four-square for 40m, two pairs of phased verticals for 80m (for CW and SSB), an 85 ft Titanex for 160m, simple computery (no network this time) and log upload by Iridium satellite.

Very early on we realised we would need two stations on both 20m and 80m if we were to make our 100,000 target. This was a real challenge for Tony, GØOPB, our RF King. But Tony designed some fantastic filters so that we could have two stations on each of these bands at the same time.

Yaesu, our Principal Sponsor, loaned us the RF equipment. It was outstanding. The power system comprised six Evopower HD 6000 SL diesel generators each weighing 175 kg. They were lightly loaded; in fact three or four of these generators could have run all the stations.

Our antenna farm was formidable. We started with 14 antennas as follows:

- 6m: 7-el Yagi Trident TA6M7LDX
- 10m: 6-el Yagi Force 12 EF-610
- 12m: 4-el Yagi Force 12 EF-412
- 15m: 4-el Yagi Force 12 EF-415
- 17m: 4-el Yagi Force12 EF-417
- 20m: 3-el Yagi Cushcraft 203CD for SSB
- 20m: 3-el Yagi Trident TA20M3L for CW
- 20m: Pair of Trident phased verticals
- 30m: 2-el Yagi Trident TA30M2L
- 30m: Pair of phased verticals
- 40m: Four-square with elevated radials
- 80m: Pair of Titanex V80S phased verticals for SSB
- 80m: Pair of Titanex V80S phased verticals for CW
- 160m: Titanex V160S 85 foot vertical

However, the number of antennas grew throughout the DXpedition as we experimented with verticals on 15m and 17m to give us second stations on those bands. We also used two Beverages that worked very well on this particular island. Many told us that Beverages would not work there. They did!

We also experimented with K9AY loops and a special three-element phased loop with mixed results.

By July 2007, all the permits were in place and we even had a licence for 6m. The team was also in place with a doctor, Arnie N6HC. The 625 line inventory was finalised and seven tonnes of kit had been shipped in a container to Mauritius. The generators were tested and shipped separately, Justin G4TSH, our Antenna King, produced an antenna plan and the website was fully operational.

A Polish group had made a small DXpedition to Rafael Island earlier in the year. It was announced after we went public. They made around 40,000 QSOs; we did not believe this operation to be significant.

The sponsorship drive was well under way. Team members paid all their costs including the cost of food and lodging on the island together with a significant contribution to the cost of logistics. But, as always, there was a big gap. A glossy brochure was produced. Bob, GU4YOX, lead the club sponsorship drive, very ably supported by Taizo, JA3AER, in Japan – Jens, DL7AKC, in Germany and Wes, W3WL, in the US. They did a great job. I dealt with the UK corporate sponsors, ARRL and NCDXF.

We also initiated a Personal Sponsorship programme; this was very successful, with over 250 individual sponsors supporting 3B7C.

The website proved very popular. Our thanks here to Mark, 2EØNCG, as Webmaster. New features included an enhanced logbook search that gave an actual propagation guide from your own country based on contacts made. This was a world first thanks to Marios, 5B4WN. I gather a few people were caught out, though, when we popped up on a band at an odd time when there had never been a previous QSO! The band-slot game was also very popular with many trying to fill all the slots. There were 500,000 hits before the DXpedition and 6.7 million during the operation of 18 days

The team of 20 comprised the following:

Steve	9M6DXX
Falk	DK7YY
Jens	DL7AKC
Paul	EI5DI
Michel	FM5CD
Tony	GØOPB
Don	G3BJ, Joint Leader
Ivan	G3IZD
Chris	G3NHL
Neville	G3NUG, Joint Leader
Chris	G3SVL
Don	G3XTT
Gordon	G3USR
Justin	G4TSH
Clive	GM3POI
Eric	K3NA
Bob	MDØCCE
Arnie	N6HC
Bob	N6OX
Pete	SM5GMZ

Bob, N6OX, and Michel, FM5CD, were both on 3YØX. Pete, SM5GMZ, had operated from many parts of the Far East. Clive GM3POI, Gordon G3USR, Bob MDØCCE and Chris G3SVL were all new to the big DXpeditioning game. Everyone else had been with us before. We all got on well together, a great team. And the support team did a great job too:

Capt Yves Goilot: Mauritian logistics

Bob GU4YOX: Club sponsorship and power system design

Bob M3RCV: SWL QSL manager
John G3WGV: Finance, pilot and technology
Keith G3WRO: UK logistics
Marios 5B4WN: Log server
Mark 2EØNCG: Webmaster
Robert F5VHN: Sponsorship/France
Taizo JA3AER: Sponsorship/Japan
Wes W3WL: Sponsorship/North America

We had a very tight schedule. The advance party comprising the two Dons G3BJ and G3XTT and myself arrived on Saturday, 1 September, two days ahead of the main team. The container was unloaded and cleared by Customs in just two hours on the Saturday morning. The main team arrived on Monday, 3 September – our two Californian friends having lost their bags. They did a quick shop in Port Louis for some kit. There are usually some small last minute hitches to be overcome. There were two this time, but they were easily overcome.

Our fishing boat, the Sainte Rita, some 300 tonnes and about 35m long, sailed on Monday, 3 September, 20 minutes ahead of the original schedule.

Some had a great journey of around 30 hours with an excellent breakfast of bacon and eggs! Others, unfortunately, suffered very badly. The seas were 3 to 4 metres high and the Sainte Rita rolled very heavily. I noticed the inclinometer on the bridge reaching 23 degrees on occasions. Eventually we reached Ile du Sud, the tents were erected and we went to bed early on Tuesday night.

We had an early start on the Wednesday morning at 6am local and here the near military operation began. The fishing boats were unloaded and all the equipment was kitted up by Clive, GM3POI, and Gordon, G3USR, so that the antenna teams could start their work. We had three teams building antennas lead by Don G3XTT, Justin G4TSH and Chris G3SVL, two teams built the HF antennas and 40m four-square and the third team worked on the LF verticals.

This all went like a dream. We were concerned about the strong winds, so we had taken 60 1.5 metre heavy stakes. In front of most of these we dug in boards as sand anchors. These worked really well and we had no problems keeping all the antennas up in the strong winds.

The fourth team built the stations and computery and the power set-up. This team comprise Tony GØOPB, Chris G3NHL, Ivan G3IZD and Eric K3NA. Don G3BJ videoed the whole operation and I was Quartermaster.

We commenced operation at 2000 UTC on the Friday evening exactly to plan. The pile-ups were awesome! In the first day we made 9,800 QSOs - not the 12,000 or so we had experienced at D68C and 3B9C, but encouraging nevertheless.

6m was poor and 10m and 12m very variable. The main differences with our previous operations were that band openings varied very substantially from day to day, making scheduling particularly challenging. We operated in 4-hour shifts, all bands being staffed when they were open. As the operation developed we added voluntary shifts; these were very popular with those trying to break the 10,000 QSO mark.

In reality even the predictions by ASAPS were over-optimistic, so we were thankful that we had not over-staffed. We had some great openings into the West Coast USA including some on the long path and we worked hard to exploit these. We also worked the West Coast on LF and two stations on 160m. LF static was lower than in D68 and 3B9 and HF conditions generated huge pile-ups, much greater and for longer periods than we had experienced previously.

The demand for RTTY was higher than ever. We decided not to do PSK so that we

could try to give the RTTY enthusiasts a new one.

Eric, K3NA, looked after the technology and prepared daily charts showing propagation by hour for each band. These proved to be very valuable. To summarise the propagation situation briefly:

- 160m: Exceeded 3B9C, 400+ North America (2 West Coast. 276 QSOs on SSB).
- 80m: Ran two stations simultaneously on CW and SSB. 3,580 QSOs with North America (over 400 with the West Coast)
- The two ends of 80m seemed like different bands as the propagation was so different.
- 40m: The real work horse, open for 16 hours each day.
- 30m: A new DXpedition record.
- 20m: Two stations, highest number of QSOs for any band.
- 17m: Second only to 20m for volume. We tried a second station with a vertical with some success.
- 15m: Patchy. Also used a second vertical on occasions.
- 12m: Great to Europe and Japan and a handful of North American QSOs
- 10m: Great openings similar to 12m
- 6m: Very disappointing. We tried hard but failed to make a QSO.

So what were the real issues we had to face at 3B7C?

- The generator batteries were poor, some failed, so we had to develop a work-around.
- The satellite data upload was problematic. We worked out rather too late that this was caused by RF.
- There were some nasty ticks and some of the team were attacked. Fortunately, they were disease-free. Doc Arnie N6HC was kept busy.
- The supply boat was late and we nearly ran out of beer. That would have been a real disaster; we had four cans left when the boat arrived.
- The wind was strong, but the long guy stakes with sand anchors held well. The top of the 85 ft Titanex broke off one night, something many of us have experienced at home.

As to the positives:

- The reliability and performance of the Yaesu equipment was excellent.
- The size of the pile-ups were enormous even on the last day.
- The support of the island staff and the ship's crews was outstanding.
- The weather was wonderful, with just a few heavy showers.
- The team spirit was excellent – we had a great and willing team.
- We had excellent and regular feedback from our pilot John G3WGV.

But it wasn't all radio. We organised trips to Cocos Island, some fishing expeditions – and held a fishing competition. Pete SM5GMZ caught 25 fish and I caught eight. I have since donated £17 to CDXC! We also

recruited four new members to CDXC: Michel FM5CD, Arnie N6HC, Bob N6OX and Pete SM5GMZ.

We finally closed down at 0400 UTC on Tuesday, 24 September, a day later than the original plan. We had taken down some antennas and stations on the Monday. All the equipment was loaded onto the Sainte Rita the same day. On Wednesday we had an early breakfast, then joined the Sainte Rita, which sailed at 0900.

Some had another great journey and enjoyed watching two whales, mother and daughter, frolicking in the Indian Ocean. Others were rather more uncomfortable in their bunks. The Sainte Rita started by rolling and then pitched and tossed into the waves. I spent a lot of time on the bridge. It was a fantastic sight, the bows would disappear into the waves that would then cover the bridge. The windscreen wipers were working hard!

We eventually arrived at Port Louis just after lunchtime on Thursday, 24 September. Then we hit a snag. We could not get permission to enter the fishing port. Apparently two Indonesian sailors had been killed in a knife fight a little earlier and the pilots had to move the boats to find the bodies. We finally got ashore around 4pm local. The team went off to have a well deserved shower. Don G3XTT, Yves Goilot and I organised the packing of the container. This took just one hour using local labour. We then met up with the team for a great final dinner and said our goodbyes to this great team, many of whom left that evening.

Answers to the two usual questions:

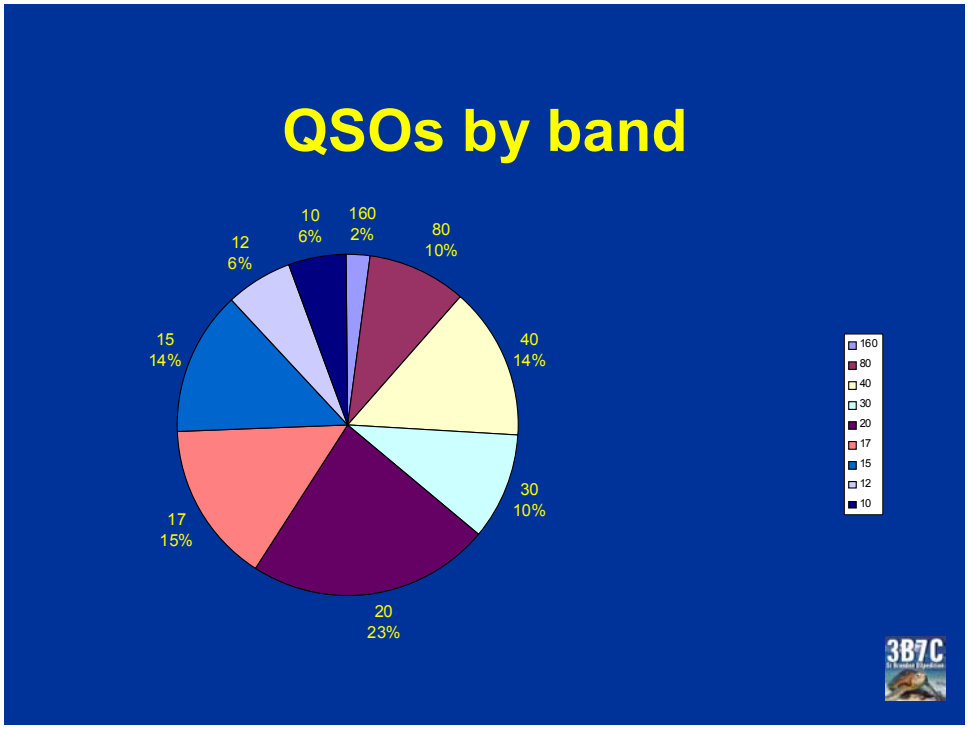
- QSLs: The sponsors' QSLs and first batch of directs will be mailed in mid-November.
- Where next? The Pacific in 2010. Where? Suggestions welcome.

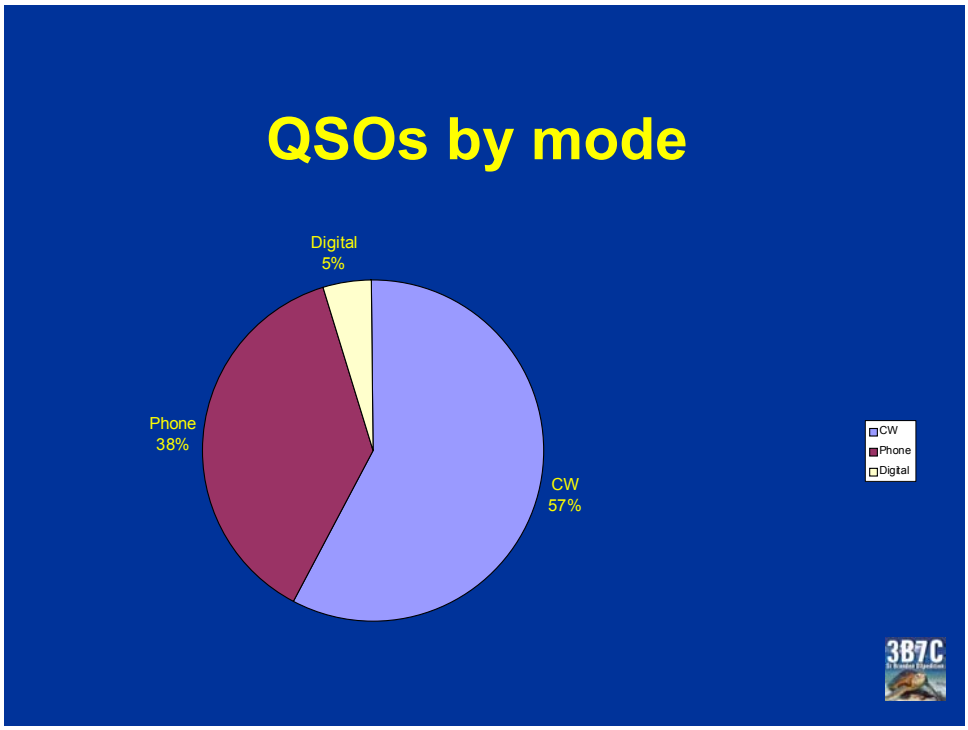
We did have fun. We hope you had fun too!

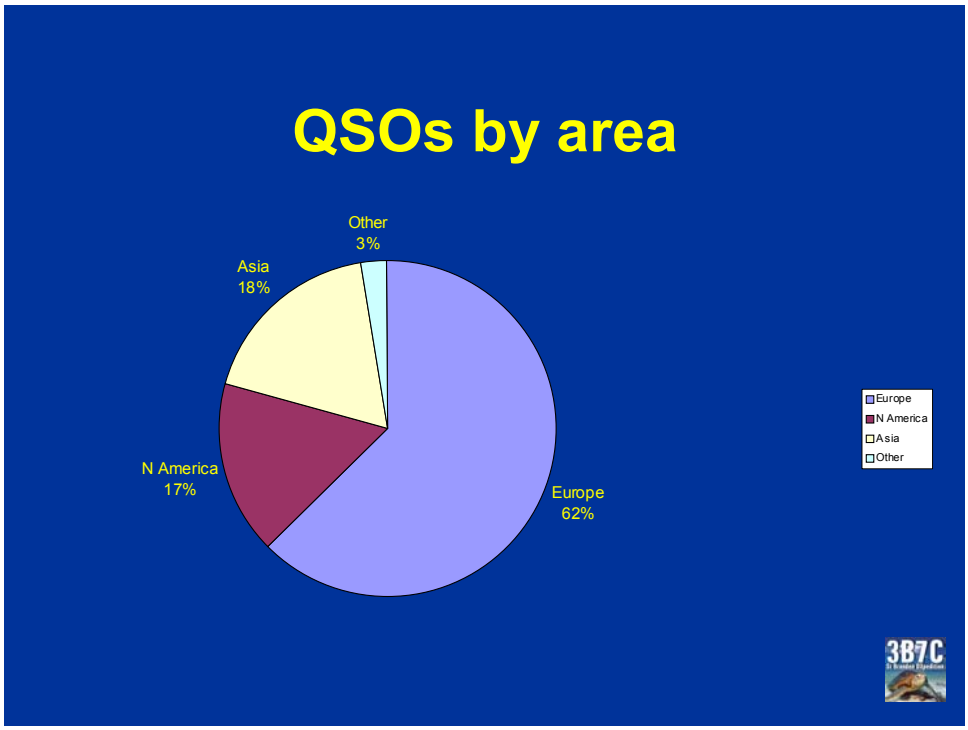
73

Photography: Peppe Arninge, SM5GMZ

We made 137,500 QSOs. The following charts show the breakdown.







A really big thanks to all our sponsors. Paul, G3WYW, of Yaesu; Martin, G4HKS, of ML & S and Mike, G3SED, of Nevada each gave us tremendous support. Thanks too to the CDXC Committee and to all our sponsors as shown below. Your support made 3B7C possible.

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K4KAL
K4UEE
K4XR
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K5YG
K6GEP
K6XG
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ND0N
ND4V
NE1RD
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PA3FQA
PG4M
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SM6CNN
SM7BIC
TF3YH
VA3PL
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WW3QB
XE1L
YC1SAM
ZL1BYZ
ZL4PW

Press Release No. 8

Don Field, G3XTT FSDXA Publicity Officer

3B7C closed down on schedule on Tuesday, 25 September, with a total of 137,500 QSOs in the log (subject to final checking). The return journey went without a hitch, although once again we had something of a rough crossing! The QSO total makes this expedition 3rd only to D68C and 3B9C, and perhaps we might claim a new DXpedition record for QSOs made with zero sunspots! This was also a new record for a generator-powered expedition.

We are very happy with the final outcome. Some of the statistics (subject to a final tidy-up of the log) appear below, but a band-by-band commentary reads something like this:

160m

We exceeded our 3B9C QSO total on this band and were pleased to make over 400 N. America QSOs on the band, including two West Coast. The overall total includes 276 SSB QSOs. Antenna was a Titanex 87ft vertical, with Beverages, K9AY loops and other receiving arrays.

80m

We were delighted that our attempt to run simultaneously on SSB and CW was successful. This was achieved by separating the two sets of antennas (a phased pair of quarter-wave verticals for each end of the band) by some 500m and by the use of custom-built bandpass filters. The result was a QSO total that was considerably in excess of what we have previously achieved on the band, including 3,580 with North America (over 400 of which were with the West Coast). A surprising finding was how propagation varied between the 3.5 and 3.8 MHz ends of the band, with the latter often opening significantly earlier and closing later than the CW end.

40m

Once again 40m proved to be a true workhorse, open long-path to North America some two hours before our sunset and closing two hours after our sunrise. The elevated 4-square worked as well as ever, and we were very happy with the overall results.

30m

This band is always consistent, although it closed for a while each night as the MUF dropped below 10 MHz. Nevertheless, we are able to claim a new DXpedition record for this band. Antennas were a full-size 2-element Yagi at 40ft and an elevated quarter-wave vertical.

20m

We had two stations running on this band whenever it was open, offering CW and SSB or CW and RTTY. Not surprisingly it gave us more QSOs than any other band. We made a particular effort to check for General Class licensees, both on SSB and CW, although it is impossible to know how successful this proved (simply because licence class cannot be deduced from callsigns). Antennas were two 3-element monobanders at 40ft, separated by some 300m.

17m

This band proved second only to 20m for putting QSOs in the log and stayed open well into our evening on most days, with good propagation across much of the USA. A good example was when we were able to work KF7E/M (AZ), running 100W into a Hustler mobile whip. The antenna was a 4-element monobander at 40ft. At times, when signals were strong, we were able to run a

low-power second station into a vertical dipole, but interactions prevented this when signals were weak.

15m

Propagation on 15 was patchy, as was only to be expected at this stage of the cycle, and the North American QSO total is well below what we achieved on 17. The antenna was a 4-element monobander at 40ft and, again, we were able to run a second station on a vertical dipole when signals were strong.

12m

Great signals into Europe and Japan when the band was open, but only a handful of North American QSOs. The antenna was a 4-element monobander at 40ft.

10m

We had expected very little from 10, but enjoyed a few great openings to Europe and Japan. Amazingly, we also experienced some brief openings to North America, especially to VE, perhaps aided by E-skip, but very much along a greyline path. The antenna was a 6-element monobander at 40ft.

6m

This band was our greatest disappointment, with no QSOs despite running the beacon 24 hours a day and attempting some skeds with nearby stations (such as VQ9LA). As we had been uniquely licensed for the band (6m is not normally authorised from the 3B entities) we had hoped to achieve at least some 'firsts'. But it was not to be. The antenna was a 7-element long-boom Yagi at 40ft.

RTTY/PSK

We made a conscious decision not to run RTTY for the first few days, partly because the pile-ups were so huge on the other modes. Once we started on RTTY the demand exceeded our wildest expectations and despite making over 6,500 QSOs on the mode (not too far short of the N8S record) we were constantly getting requests for RTTY right up to closedown. As previously announced, because of this demand we felt it was inappropriate to offer PSK, as this would almost certainly result in making datamode 'dupes' with those who had already worked us on RTTY, while others were still wanting an RTTY QSO.

Website

We have already received many favourable comments on our website, especially the various innovations regarding QSO look-up and propagation data. The band-slot game generated a lot of interest and there are some high totals. All these features seem to have been very popular. We will be posting DXpedition photographs on the site very soon. We also note that there are already many write-ups on other websites as well as a number of videos on YouTube showing QSOs with the expedition.

What now?

The first 3B7C presentation was at the RSGB HF Convention in October. We expect to feature at other events during the coming year such as Visalia, Dayton and Friedrichshafen. Various magazine articles are in preparation and we will also be producing a video in due course, details to follow.

QSLs

We expect QSLs to start going out soon, once the design has been finalised and the huge number of cards printed (with thanks to Yaesu, who are sponsoring the cards). As with 3B9C, QSLing will be handled by a team, to speed up the process, so we should quickly catch up with the backlog. The log will be uploaded to LoTW in due course, as with previous FSDXA expeditions.

The numbers

Total QSOs: 137,500

	CW	SSB	RTTY	Total
160:	2646	276	-	2922
80:	8215	5050	-	13267
40:	12891	6321	694	19906
30:	12695	-	765	13460
20:	16381	13445	1751	31577
17:	9787	9887	1378	21052
15:	7686	10099	1102	18887
12:	4445	3828	578	8851
10:	4493	2826	279	7958
Total:	79217	51754	6549	137520

(Note: these add up to 137,520 but we are aware that there are a handful of void QSOs in the log)

So you want to work that rare DXpedition on RTTY?

Reflections on an RTTY pile-up

Don Beattie, G3BJ *g3ozf@btinternet.com*

In the RTTY pile-ups for 3B7C it became very clear to me that there were some habits of RTTYers that were not helping to maximise the QSO rate for the DXpedition, nor to help the calling operator make QSOs. Here are a few pointers about what I saw and learned.

First, it's important to think about what the DXpedition operator is having to cope with. Most expeditions today use some version of MMTTY as the RTTY engine and, on a rare DXpedition, the operator will see a waterfall crammed so full with signals that it is impossible to distinguish any one pair of tones. He will then, most likely, tune to the edge of pile-up in the hope of finding a lone caller whose call can easily be decoded. Simply calling and calling will not help this situation if you are in the middle of the pile-up – it will just make matters worse.

The operator may or may not be trying to use the mouse to click on tones. Personally, I prefer to tune stations in by ear, using the outgoing tone from the transmitter (in the monitor) as reference. This seems to allow quicker 'lock-on' to a calling station. But after a QSO is completed there seems to be a habit of calling directly on that last frequency. This may be fine when there is only one station 'tail-ending', but when there are 100 on the same frequency it is futile.

Also, remember that the operator of the DXpedition is really not interested in your name or QTH ! He is trying to keep a rate of

140+/hour, which leaves no time for frills in the exchange.

So here are a few pointers to make it easier for you to work DXpeditions and to allow more stations overall to make an RTTY QSO.

Do NOT transmit unless either the DX has called QRZ or has called you

RTTY is a machine mode and simply cannot handle an enormous pile-up. Too many callers seem simply to hit the transmit key with insufficient time for listening. A waterfall so full of stations that no single tones are discernable is really tough.

Do not try to tail-end a QSO

Stations who do this regularly stop the current QSO being completed. Be patient. And don't pile in on the last QSO frequency. Whilst this might be smart if you are tail-ending under normal (non-DXpedition) circumstances, it simply makes it impossible for a DXpedition station to continue to use that frequency. The one thing you can almost guarantee is that if you try to call on the frequency of the last QSO, you will not make the QSO.

Listen more

Think about what the DXpedition operator is having to cope with. Rarely will a complete callsign become visible on his screen. He will be assessing what he sees and making up a complete call from fragments. Give him time to do this and to type the call into the computer. Often stations call again, just as the DX is ready to reply. Give a good five seconds between your calling transmissions.

Don't send a string of carriage returns

at the end of your transmission. The DX operator is trying to assemble your callsign and occasionally may even be lucky enough to have your full call on the screen. He would then try to click on it and immediately respond, but won't be able to do this if the callsign is moving rapidly up the screen as a result of your gratuitous carriage returns.

Think about where you transmit!

The DX operator will have his waterfall packed full of signals and almost certainly will tune to the very edge of the pile-up in the hope of finding a station in the clear.

Keep your exchange to a minimum

If the DX has called you with your your complete call, the following is enough:

599 599 TU [CALL] - no need for the DX call (you're not calling anyone else !) nor your name, nor your QTH nor 73 nor GL, nor a string of dots, nor any carriage returns Compare this with the often used (as heard at 3B7C):

3B7C 3B7C DE [CALL] [CALL] R R TU UR RST 599 599 TU GL ES 73 DE [CALL] [CALL] ….C/R C/R C/R C/R

Compare the time of each of the above: the brief version is five seconds, the long version is 19 seconds. Allowing for 10 seconds search time and two 5-second transmissions from 3B7C, this makes the difference between a maximum rate of 144/hour and a maximum rate of 92/hour. And this does not allow for those who choose to send their name and QTH!

Above all – be patient

sing these guidelines will help you and others make a QSO with that rare one.

Round the world in 34 days

Bob Whelan, G3PJT E51PJT

A round-the-world ticket from Air New Zealand seemed a good buy – out via VR2, stay in ZL, home via W6 with a stopover in E5 just coinciding with the BERU contest weekend! A quick look on the cluster showed that there doesn't seem to be much activity from E5. Jim, E51JD, is active from time to time, but most of the other spots seem to be visitors, either for vacation DXing or for contests.

A bit of planning

After a bit of surfing I decided to try and use the well-known site on Rarotonga at the Kii Kii Motel. This is on the north shore of the island with a clear 180+ degree take-off West – North – East. E5 is a long way from anywhere, 3,500 km to ZL, 8,000km to VE7 and a wopping 16,000 km to the UK. Signals are going to be somewhat weak over that distance from the UK, but probably very strong from the countries round the Pacific rim. On the other hand Bill, N7OU, told me that the Kii Kii was very quiet - electrically that is (see later).

I totted up the weight of the K2/100 + PSU + ATU + Butternut + 50m of low-loss coax + Libretto PC and it all came to 21 kgs. I rang up Air New Zealand and asked if we would be allowed luggage by 'piece' as we were returning through the USA – and after a bit of humming and hawing they said yes. This doubles the checked baggage allowance at a stroke. However, I felt that to add in another umpteen kgs for a linear was just not going to be feasible, I was going to hear more than I could work.

E-mails to Cook Islands Telecom enabled me to reserve the call E51PJT, but I failed to be able to set this up in advance by snail mail as my letter and its $20NZ vanished into the postal system – but later on it only took 15 mins to organise when we went to their office - and the licence runs to 2008. We planned the trip with two- day stopovers in VR2 and W6, with two weeks in ZL1 and two weeks in E5.

New Zealand

A great holiday in the Bay of Islands and the Coramendel enabled us to visit Mike, ZL1MH, and to have dinner with John, ZL1BHQ, in Auckland before departing on the 4th of March and arriving in Rarotonga on the 3rd!

Kia Orana to Rarotonga

3rd March

A blast of hot humid air greeted us as we stepped off the plane, just emphasising that E5 is a lot nearer the equator than ZL. Our flight arrived in daylight – many arrive at night when it might be a bit cooler. The locals say they arrive at night so that visitors can't see how short the runway is! The island looks very green – it must rain a lot, every day it seems, some days more than others.

We take a taxi over to the Kii Kii and find our room is right on the edge of the lagoon. But gosh, it is hot and the fan doesn't work, but luckily the management find one that does or I think we will collapse in the heat. The reef is about 100m away and the roar of the waves breaking is pretty loud – noise cancelling headphones are a good idea.. We hope that we will be able to adapt to this environment. I check out the equipment and it all seems to have survived the trip, but I decide to put off erecting the Butternut as it is already getting dark. We are on mozzie alert – more on this later.

4th March

Antenna work is a priority today. I assemble the Butternut and tune it up with the MFJ. I have a good length of coax (about 20m would have been plenty), so I can position the antenna right at the high-tide mark. The set up of the elevated radials is along the beach about 1-2 ft above the pebbles – more or less as Dean, N6BV, described for their 6Y operation. I use the Butternut multiband radials covering 40-10m as they seem to work for all HF quite well. Being right at the lagoon edge the antenna should be well placed for very low angle take-off.

A quick tune around shows the bands are very quiet. The first of many rain squalls passes through and knocks the Butternut over. After waiting for a dry period I dig a much deeper hole for the base post and fix on four guys just above the matching section. I put out a call on the FOC watering hole on 14.025 MHz and Alan AC2K gives me a real report, which indicates things are probably now working.

To get a few more reports I call some of the US ARRL SSB contest stations. (KH6 tells me 'no DX'; I forgot that KH6 isn't part of the US!). Funnily enough, although all these contest stations said 'thanks for the mult' not one asked for a QSY - perhaps mults only count once. I even managed a QSO with a K5 on 28 MHz . Hey, this might all just work out! So that evening after dinner I try the 40m 0630-0730Z slot: a nice pile-up which dies at 0730 for some reason.

5th March

The antenna is still up! It's very quiet on all the bands, so after a few CQs I decide to monitor the beacons as well. The pattern looks a bit like this:

Morning in E5 (UTC – 10)

20m W1UN(?)/W6WX/KH6/ZL6 + 5W and ZL7/KH0
15m W6WX/ZL6
10m nil

Afternoon

20m nil
15m W6WX/KH6/ZL6/JA
10m nil

Evening

20m JA/RA9/VR2/W6/KH6/ZL
15m ZL/JA/RA9/VR2
10m nil

6th March

All the resonances of the Butternut seem to have shifted; it must be flexing in the wind. There are quite a lot of activity/carriers on 28 MHz – probably fishermen.

7th March

A heavy storm overnight with a good deal of rain, but the guys seem to have held. However, I have a premonition that the weather is deteriorating. We always seem to have bad weather for the BERU weekend – in 8P, 3B8, 9H, VP9 and even rain in VK! Just to fill in between the showers the BY (?) radar makes an unwelcome appearance.

8th March

Great pile-up on 40m to the USA, but a storm forces a shut down. What seems to happen is that the auto ATU tries to re match the changing antenna impedance, but sometimes the SWR during tuning trips the K2. The Butternut is now having a serious stress test.

9th March

Around midnight the real storm starts. At midday the seaward guy breaks and I can't go down onto the exposed beach to fix it as the wind is too strong. A continuous mist of sea spray and rain soaks everything. We decide to go out to lunch. Later in the afternoon, he upstairs issues the command

to the wind generator to 'throttle up', the patio floods, the pool fills with chairs and debris. The MFJ now says the antenna is non-resonant on 80m and broadband on 40m and it's taking a real bashing. Will it survive? I had strengthened the jointing tube on the Butternut (it joins E1 and E2 – I made the sleeve 30cm long) and had replaced all the worn screws etc. A good job I did: the old Butternut would not have survived this beating.

BERU -8 hours and it starts at midnight local time.

BERU

The contest starts with plenty of activity on 80 and 40 from VK/ZL and VE. Some outstanding signals from VE7 and even VE3s are putting in signals over S9 on 80m. Working them, however, is a bit more tricky – I guess their noise floor is a lot higher than mine. At this stage despite the weather my noise level is low. VA3RAC later reported that I was 579 over on the east coast on 80m. VP8NO is a great signal on 40m at 1014z - as is Nigel, V25XF. During the first period on 80/40m the QSOs run along quite nicely. The first G heard is Chris, G3SJJ, on 20m at 1126z – I am surprised when he comes back to the call! Not much else on 20m and despite a search no other Gs – weird propagation. Later I hear Alan, P3J, on 20m 599+ and we also manage a QSO on 40m. Still a few ZLs on 80m, but after a very quiet period from 1400-1600 20m opens up a bit. This period is most frustrating. I call a number of G stations but I can only raise Dave, G4BUO, and Ian, GM3SEK.

After local sunrise 80 and 40m virtually close and I hunt around on HF for a bit – a few VEs on 15m and later VE7CC and VE7VF on 10m, but despite a lot of checking: nothing more. The gaps between QSOs start to open up significantly. The bands pick up a bit at sunset with 40m yielding G4BUO, VP8KF, VK9NS, J88DR and later GMØGAV. I get the impression that I am no longer getting out on LF as I had at the start. There doesn't seem to be any real long-path opening to G at all. The antenna now has no resonance on 40 as well as 80m and the high SWR warnings are becoming more frequent. Added to which, a series of power line insulator leakages are occurring during the heavy rain squalls and are wiping out everything.

After struggling with this I finally close at 0819 because I can't hear anything to work. Final QSO is with Mavis, VK3KS. Very fitting.

Claimed score

E51PJT R 24

80	40	20	15	10	Q/B
32	88	42	28	2	192/130

Score 3560

Weather totally dominated this entry. The tropical storm lasted the whole contest, with winds strong enough to bowl a palm tree over - but not a Butternut, as it turned out, but watch out for flying coconuts. The rain turned the Pacific brown with run-off water and to say there was QRN really doesn't describe the static crashes later on, with electrical power insulator leakage and arcing during the heaviest rain and the strategic bursts of BY (?) radar to fill in the gaps.

In the end I only work a few UK stations: G3SJJ, G4BUO (2), GMØGAV, GM3SEK but hear and call repeatedly G3BJ, GØIVZ, G4FAL, G3GLL, G4BJM, GW3NJW, 2EØKOP.

Other bonuses I call and can't work include 9M4SDX, ZC4LI, ZS6AAA, VU2UR. Some I expect to hear, but don't, include ZS3/G3LZQ, GB5CC, GM3POI and 9J2BO.

The 'unwanted caller' approach seems to work better this year. I send slowly SRI OC BERU ONLI CU TMRW.

Sunday, 11th March

You guessed it: the storm has gone and the weather is getting back to normal. The Butternut - or should it be 'Batternut' - now has intermittents on 80/40m and the K2 is most unhappy with 40m. I find that most of the matching section fittings are loose and quite corroded - and after repair it now resonates normally, of course. We decide to go to church (great singing) and then out for Sunday lunch for a low-key end to the day.

Rest of the week

After trying to repair the Butternut by cleaning as many of the connections I can reach - and re-tightening various screws and clamps – it's pretty clear that it has survived rather well. I had greased and taped most of the tube joints and these seemed clean and well made. Post-contest, most operating was on 20 and 40m either at local sunrise or after sunset.

Later in the week we have a great lunch through the generous hospitality of Jim Ditchburn, E51JD. Jim is active most days for a few hours in the early evening, but he prefers ragchewing and dislikes pile-ups. We leave for LA on the 17th March and have a very pleasant dinner with Chip and Janet Margelli and hear all about Chip's new job at Heil.

QSO Summary (CW QSOs)

80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10
33	542	8	501	5	162	0	2

Split by continent:

Continent	Percentage
NA	46
AS	24
OC	11
EU	17
SA	1
AF	1
	100

UK stations

40m

GØCGL, GØKBL, G2AA, G3MLM, G3NSM, G3VMK, G3XRJ, G4AMT, G4BUO, GMØGAV, GM3JKS, GM3POI, GM3SEK

20m G3SJJ, G4BUO, GM3SEK, M7GO(?)

Propagation

Over the two weeks the most interesting propagation occurred at local sunrise and sunset. During the day there was very little to work, a few USA or Japan on 15m, but short searchlight propagation mostly. On 40/20m the pattern was that a few S5/SVs would break through the US/JA pile-up and as the opening slowly worked westwards OK/DL/I/EA would be heard. The openings didn't seem to spread very far north. The antipodal point for E5 is about 15°E 20°N. Towards the end of these openings the EAs were quite strong. Conditions varied quite a bit from day to day according to the feedback which IK5MEJ sent me by e-mail each day. Operations on 160/30/17m were impossible despite a lot of requests as I didn't have time to erect more antennas in the lousy weather.

Several times I wondered if people realised that the short path to E5 is the same bearing as VE7 (330) rather then ZL (14) or VK (60). That is why there was little LP since 40m LP to KH6/VE7/W7 occurs in November rather than March. In any case the hills in the centre of Rarotonga probably block LP to the Kii Kii location on the north shore.

Final Thoughts

Rarotonga

Rarotonga is only populated around the circumference - the interior is mountainous extinct volcano plugs, thick jungle and not populated. Telecoms seem good, but you have to buy a new SIM card and a Pay-As-You-Go, so I used e-mail for most communications back home. In fact some of

the feedback I was given by e-mail on signals was very helpful.

Also to hire a car or scooter you have to get a new driving licence – the Cook Islands don't recognise your home driving licence, but New Zealand does.

Rarotonga is relatively well developed from the point of view of infrastructure and could be a good base from which to do a DXpedition to the North Cooks or some of the other islands.

Kii Kii Motel

The motel is easily the best QTH on the island. Not only are the rooms close to the sea, but the beach is rocky and composed of coral rubble, so there is no beach traffic to get entangled in antennas. However, the reef is quite close to the shore and the noise of the surf is very loud for most of the time. The rooms are screened against insects, but are not air-conditioned. This means that they are very hot, even with the fan on.

There is a 24-hour shop, 'Super Brown'(!), about 400m away, so there is small problem with groceries and drink. If you have transport there are plenty of restaurants, but Tamarind House is the only top quality one of those we tried.

Kii Kii also has a lot of charity aid workers staying there and it was very interesting to chat with them in the pool and get their view of the island – a bit different to the tourist propaganda.

I think that the Kii Kii is fine as a 'radio shack you can sleep in', but we would have done much better to take a room in a resort hotel and just use the Kii Kii for operating. However, the management are very helpful and the room rate is really good. Added to which, it is a fantastic location from which to exploit ultra-low-angle effects using verticals.

Nuisances

Stray dogs seem to be everywhere and can quite take the edge of a stroll around. Also, there is a lot of Denge Fever being reported. This is passed by day-biting mossies, so plenty of repellent is a must and a very careful check of the room every day to keep them at bay. At least there aren't any snakes and the cockroaches, although big, are not common.

Conclusion

Not one of the best trips we have done. As far as BERU was concerned, we might have done as well from ZL3 or VK1, but I do seem to have found a radio set-up that is robust and quite effective. Yes, an amplifier would have been helpful, but most of the problems were caused by the weather.

Rarotonga will be a great location when the sunspots show up.

Thanks to the management at the Kii Kii Motel, to Air New Zealand for baggage rules, and to Bill N7OU, Mike ZL1MH, John ZL1BQH, Jim E51JD and the DX Holiday website.

Operating from Gibraltar

A reminder that Gibraltar, ZB2, is not part of CEPT, so you will need a reciprocal licence issued by the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA). However, please note that this ZB2/ reciprocal licence is now restricted to operation on 6m/50 MHz and 2m/144 MHz only.

G3RFX

Ramblings on a trip to Barbados

Richard Limebear, G3RWL 8P6DR *g3rwl@amsat.org*

I lived in Barbados (8P6) for two and a half years in the early 1970s and fell in love with the place and the people. I had a proper QTH, proper aerials, a proper rig and a proper 8P6 callsign. I was active on 160 to 10m and on amateur satellites. Then my contract ran out and I had to come back to G-land. I go back as often as I can afford to; this works out to about once every two to three years. I kept paying for the licence too, that's why I'm an 8P6 rather than an 8P9.

This trip was from 28 September to 13 October 2007. We have travelled cattle-class in the past, but this time we went one grade higher: highly recommended for the extra leg room/comfort if you can afford it.

This trip started with an unusual event: British Airways had to reboot their Boeing 777 while it was on the ground with everyone still in it because of something to do with a fuel pump – I didn't know they used Windoze on aircraft.

Some years ago I discovered an apartment hotel on the south coast that didn't mind folks slinging wires between the blocks, within reason. The handyman came in the following day and the wires were up within about 90 minutes – you have to be careful not to strangle tourists around the pool while you do this. Someone once mentioned to me some other ham-friendly holiday accommodation in 8P6, but I can't remember who it was; if that was you, please remind me of the hotel name.

This was a *holiday* DXpedition. In other words the holiday has some priority over the operating, but my lady Sylvia is fairly co-operative and lets me 'play' quite a lot while she passes the time in other ways - but she can get rather insistent at meal times etc. I had to tolerate some tourism too, but this often fitted around poor band conditions in the mornings.

Before the trip I took a look to see what contests were happening while I was away and saw that CQ WW RTTY was happening on the first weekend – my first full-blooded RTTY contest and worth an entry.

The wires were a full-size G5RV and a quarter-size G5RV. The ¼-size one was a late addition for the contest because the full-sized one is less than optimal on the higher bands. It turned out to be excellent for 10 MHz and upwards. I used a slim Toshiba laptop with SDX software for CW and MixW for data. The rig was my trusty K2/100 with an extra fan and a winkeyer. I prefer the K2 to the newer K3 because it fits nicely in a shoulder bag.

So it was that I started on RTTY and didn't go on to CW until after the weekend. The wires and 100W don't make a big hole in the band, but the callsign helps some. The tourists around the pool were somewhat perplexed by the sounds of RTTY too. I made just under 450 QSOs in the contest. The highlight was being asked by HC8N for a QSY to 80m. I'm amazed how far up the band the RTTY extends in a big contest: on 20m there were QSO's going on higher than 14.120 MHz.

After that I was mainly on CW, with the occasional foray onto data when I got fed up with the European zoo. I ended up with a total of 2,150 QSOs and 74 DXCC entities for the whole trip. No VKs this time, but I managed a few JAs on 20m at about grey-line time. Conditions were fairly good during the contest, but degraded afterwards and didn't get better for at least a week, so I didn't get much on 21 MHz and higher. Note for next time: QRN bad in the summer

months on 80/40m, so go at some other time of year.

Did you ever hear of pile-ups bumping into each other? It happened to me. One evening I was working 80m and 9UØA came up on my QSX frequency. Confusion reigned there for some time (I didn't have a cluster capability) until some Big Gun told me what was happening and I moved. On the higher bands it was sometimes hard to find a clear frequency with a corresponding clear frequency upwards for split working. At one time on 18 MHz there was J6/DL7AFS, 5L2MS, PY1/DL-something, 9UØA and me - and all wanting to be in the low part of the band. And did you know how far up some people go when the DX says 'up'? Some of their callers went up over 5 KHz even though the DX was only listening 1-2 up.

Another problem in the pile-ups is people only giving their callsign once. Many times, if someone had sent 'callsign (listen 2 seconds) and callsign *again'* they would have gotten into the log sooner. More education needed out there.

I had a major problem with RF in the shack on 80/40m because the wire passed quite close to the shack. This problem has reared its ugly head in the past, so next time I'll be taking some earth spikes as well as the other stuff. The RF got into the SEC-1223 power supply and pushed the voltage sensing down - so sometimes, to keep the voltage above 12v, I was only running about 50W on those bands. I also regularly have problems with QRN from the laptop's power supply, so this time I often ran the laptop from the main PSU until I noticed that the PSU was running hotter than usual; then it was down to laptop batteries - and I don't get a low-voltage warning until after about 2½ hours of operating.

Another problem was with resolving the pile-ups – in the past the K2 has handled these well, but this time a heavy pile-up was harder to hear through. The difference here is that I now use the K2's DSP filtering rather than the original filters. I wonder if anyone else has experienced this; the audio was almost blurred.

One hot sunny day whilst operating, there was a flash and a bang and a lightning strike came down less than 100m away, forcing an immediate QRT. Life as a DX station isn't all beer and pile-ups. Also global warming doesn't just hit the temperate climes; it was about 10-15°C hotter than usual and rather uncomfortable sometimes.

We played the tourist from time to time too. We had some beach time, but the highlight on this trip was Barbados' Concorde exhibition. I'm afraid I got a bit emotional, seeing it again. They have the aircraft (G-BOAE) and an exhibition site close to the airport, but they wouldn't let me play with the controls.

We never want to come home, but finally we had to - enduring a baby crying throughout the 7-hour night flight. What joy! When we got home there was a pile of 20+ QSLs on the doormat and e-mails for another 40. I guess the big boys get MUCH more than that. But for now its back to DXing the hard way. Roll on next time!

Innit nice…

Dear Friend

I did QSO happily.
Thanks for the nice QSO.

Thank you your kindness.
Prease exchange QSL-Card.

I appreciate your labor.
I am praying your happiness.

Thank you

[Received recently from JA3MHA, together with his QSL card. Ed.]

A Weekend in Iceland

Roger Western, G3SXW *g3sxw@btinternet.com*

No, not shopping for frozen fish fingers: this was a quick trip to Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, to play radio. John, TF/G4IRN and Roger, TF/G3SXW, made some 2,000 CW QSOs during a weekend visit in late September 2007.

Why Iceland? Because it's there, of course! Anyone who has been there says that it is a fascinating and beautiful place. Actually, the fact that we were able to buy cheap tickets and that it's a CEPT country also had something to do with it! Some months earlier we had found that British Airways would take us there and back for a little over £100, which seemed a good deal.

Where to Stay?

With travel booked and no need to do anything about transmitting licences, the only remaining question was where to stay. This is a tourist location with many hotels to choose from. Firstly, should we stay in the capital, Reykjavik - or Keflavik, the airport town some 40 minutes drive away? Checking Google Earth we found that Keflavik was very flat and beside the sea, but Reykjavik (also beside the sea) had high mountains nearby, to the East. We decided on Reykjavik with a wider selection of hotels and restaurants etc. nearby. As it turned out, those mountains were distant enough, the blockage being only about five degrees elevation, so we needn't have worried.

Searching on the Internet we found a place called 'Room with a View'. This is a self-catering apartment block bang in the middle of town which had been used by visiting radio amateurs before, with easy access to the roof to install antennas. This proved very suitable, although like everything else in Iceland it was rather expensive: a little over £200 per night. The sea is close, on three sides, as can be seen on Google Earth at 64° 08' 44.42" North, 21° 55' 50.96" West.

Stations

With all the logistics in place, next was the question of stations and antennas. We both use the Elecraft K2/100 as an ideal DXpedition transceiver, delivering 100W with a superb receiver and set-up for CW, all for less than 3 kg weight. We would both log with Win-Test and use Win-Key for sending computerised CW. We swapped draft packing lists, listing all connecting cables, tools and so forth, just to be sure that nothing crucial was forgotten.

There were then still two critical issues: antennas and airline luggage restrictions. We knew that the antennas would need to be lightweight, but firstly which bands would we each operate? The formula on trips with Nigel/G3TXF works very well: he operates the WARC bands and I operate the 'traditional' bands. Each having our own bands has advantages: less confusion amongst callers, more chance for the Little Pistols to get through the reducing pile-up, and especially the reduced risk of inter-station interference because we each use antennas which are NOT resonant on the other bands. So, again we decided to follow this model: TF/G4IRN on 30, 17 and 12m, TF/G3SXW on 40, 20 and 15m. These were the bands most likely to be open at this high latitude and at this stage of the sunspot cycle. W6ELProp propagation predictions confirmed that there would be almost no signals above 17m.

We then set about preparing antennas specifically for these bands. John took a trapped dipole to cover the three WARC bands. SXW built a 40/20m trapped dipole and added wires for 15m. Add some string

and hope that we can find somewhere to hang them up. John decided to take a 12m Spiderbeam pole and hang his dipole vertically. I would hang my dipoles from his second fishing-pole, as an inverted-V.

The final piece of the jigsaw was airline luggage restrictions. They all have different rules these days and keep changing them, so you really do need to check before flying. British Airways now allows one free checked bag of maximum 23 kgs plus one carry-on of any weight, but with specified maximum dimensions. A second checked bag costs £60 each way to Europe. We decided that a ski-bag would contain the antennas, two fishing poles, coax, string, tools etc. One suitcase would contain whatever parts of the station could not fit into our carry-on bags, plus personal items for each of us. In the end we had two checked pieces: ski-bag 17 kgs and suitcase 23 kgs. Adding a carry-on bag each made four pieces of luggage. We packed the critical (and costly) items in carry-on: transceiver, laptop, keyer.

Arrival

The journey was uneventful, albeit requiring a horribly early start, leaving the house at 4.30 am. But this did have the advantage that we were at our hotel, after a taxi ride from Keflavik airport, at 11 am. We were let into the rented apartment early (it had not been occupied the night before) and could immediately start investigating antenna possibilities. The apartment was perfect: a large lounge with kitchenette, two bedrooms, bathroom, free wireless Internet, all nicely appointed and furnished with everything you might need.

There were two possibilities for installing the antennas: the flat roof would require climbing ladders and it had no safety wall. Or there was a balcony, some 70 ft long on the top floor (one floor up from our apartment) which looked very suitable, with a stout restraining wall which would be perfect for attaching the fishing poles. Problem: to get onto that balcony required passing through one of two large apartments. Were they occupied? They were not, so this was OK. Would they remain unoccupied for the whole weekend in case we needed to fix anything and for dismantling? Not known, but there were no reservations. As it turned out, one of them remained unoccupied so this was only a worry, not a problem.

The location was right in the middle of the town, on the main shopping street. Would this mean high man-made noise? It did not – the location was electrically very quiet. Would we be hemmed in by other buildings? There is only so much investigation that can be done on the Internet before travelling; you then make a decision and hope that it will work out alright on the day. This it did: our six-storey building was one of the taller ones in that locale.

Antennas

Having gained access to the balcony, we were impressed. We could see the sea almost all the way around, but at some 400 yards distance, and realised that our antennas could be mounted up in the clear. We would tie the two fishing poles to the balcony wall with tie-wraps, at each end of the balcony. At my end there were three wooden poles sticking up which at first I thought would interfere with installing the fishing pole, until we noticed that these were in fact flag poles with halyards. Bliss! Heaven! Ready-made! They were about 25 feet tall, with working halyard and pulley. Talk about falling off a log!

So we set to work. John raised his fishing pole (taping each telescopic joint to stop it slipping down) with the WARC trapped dipole tied to the very top. This was unguyed and did blow about in the wind but came to no harm. I simply uncoiled the wires of my dipole, connected the coax and pulled it to the top of the flag-pole with the halyard. We were finished up there within

half an hour. Then the acid test: would the antennas resonate? We had installed these antennas at home before travelling of course, an essential step, and tweaked them to resonate on the CW end of the bands. John's WARC antenna gave near perfect SWR straight away, max 1.2:1 on all three bands. My dipoles were a little short on all three bands and were around 1.8:1 SWR, meaning a second visit to the balcony to lengthen them a little. In another few minutes all was well.

QRV

On Friday, 21 September 2007, we were both ready to QRV just a couple of hours after arriving in Iceland. We decided that before starting operating we would get something to eat and do some shopping: we would self-cater with cheese, baked beans, fruit, cereals and so forth and then go out for one meal each day.

We got back to the shack, fired up Win-Test and started to check the bands. My favourite frequency, 14.023 MHz, was already covered with a sizeable pile-up which of course was for 3B7C on 14.022 MHz. Their signal was huge, a good 589, so I called them and Clive/GM3POI, the 3B7C operator at the time, came back the third time I sent my callsign. Magic - what a great way to start a mini-DXpedition to log 3B7C as the very first contact!

Preferring to use frequencies ending in '3' I then QSYed down the band to 14.013 MHz and called CQ. I was instantly called by Europeans and Ws. The first UK station was Ian, G4IIY. Conditions seemed fairly good; the W6s were loud but rather fluttery, suggesting that there might be some aurora.

John meantime got busy on 30m, with good sized pile-ups. We understood that TF is not DXCC-rare and therefore the pile-ups might not be large, or might not last very long. So we had planned only a 2-3 day operation. As it turned out the pile-ups remained large throughout the weekend, restricted only by propagation (see below).

After dinner I checked the bottom end of 40m and had déjà vu: 3B7C had a pile-up down there and was the loudest signal on the band. They came back to me first time, although the operator had a bit of trouble with my unusual callsign! We then stayed on the air most of the time whenever the bands were open until late evening Sunday.

Propagation

It is amazing, but true: every single trip over the years we learn something new, every time. This time it was about the effects of aurora. When aurora is active the HF bands take on a mushy sound, like listening through cotton wool. There's an extra level of atmospheric noise and all signals sound a little 'dirty' and suffer significant QSB. When there is no aurora the signals are steady and sound much more pure T9 note.

In UK we live at mid-latitudes, around 50-55 degrees North of the equator. We know when there is a large auroral event, but perhaps do not really notice minor events. The further north you go, the closer you get to the auroral zone: Iceland is just on the edge of the auroral oval, at 64° N. The extent of disturbance is indicated by the K index, reported every three hours. This ranges from 1 to 9. A reading of 1 or 2 is fine, but 3 is disturbed, 4 is worrying, 5 is damaging. Anything from 6 to 9 means you may as well read a book or watch TV! During our stay in TF we had these K reports:

	21/9	22/9	23/9
GMT			
00		3	3
03		3	3
06		4	5
09		4	3
12		3	1
15		2	3
18	3	1	2
21	3	1	3

Most of the weekend we suffered a K of 3 or 4. On the Saturday evening we both commented on how good the bands sounded, whereas around sunrise there were practically no signals to be heard. It seemed that we were highly sensitised to movements in the K figure; even from 3 to 4 made a difference.

In practice there were no signals from midnight until about 0900, good for getting beauty sleep! The best times were late afternoon and the evening hours.

Another new experience was watching how the MUF (Maximum Usable Frequency) and LUF (Lowest) moved. At home we always have a choice of two or three open bands. As the MUF increases after sunrise the lower bands drop out and the HF bands open. On our trips Nigel (WARC bands) and I (traditional bands) would leap-frog each other, going up through the spectrum as the day progresses. When close to the equator this happens very quickly, moving from LF bands before sunrise right up to ten metres in just a couple of hours.

On this occasion we found that mostly there was only one band open at a time, and the MUF increased only slowly. John would have a good run on 30 mtrs for an hour or two whilst I had no signals because 40 had dropped out but propagation had not yet reached 20m. Then John would throw his headphones on the desk in disgust because the signals on 30m had become too weak to copy and 17m was dead. Meantime, I was smiling because 20m was opening nicely. There was some overlap, when both 30 and 20m had weak signals, for maybe a half-hour. The next leap-frog up to 17 mtrs provided short openings for John, on both days in the afternoon: a nice coincidence with the MUF increasing and the K index at minimum. His brief openings on 17m only provided lengthy skip, with no signals from West Europe.

One happy experience: we had no inter-station interference, even without plugging in the bandpass filters. Antennas were only a few feet apart, but they had different polarisation (one vertical, one inverted V) and were not resonant on the other chap's bands. Mostly, though, I attribute this lack of interference to the fact that the Elecraft K2 is a very clean transceiver. The overall operating experience was a little frustrating with long periods when only one of us could operate. This, naturally, dented our QSO totals, but we were not complaining. This was not a serious DXpedition to a rare country: it was a fun, relaxed weekend.

Results

The result of these propagation difficulties was a deflated logbook. We normally expect an average of around 1,000 QSOs per operator per day. We were two operators QRV for 2.5 days, suggesting a potential of 4-5,000 QSOs. We made less than half of that number.

Mtrs	QSOs
40	313
30	724
20	860
17	121
ALL	2,018

These were all on CW of course. Propagation never allowed 15m to open. Any time I was in the shack in daytime, but not operating, I left the RX on 21.150 MHz to monitor the NCDXF beacons. I never heard a single peep on that frequency. Needless to say it would have been completely pointless for John to check 12m. From that location the path to North America is good. But long-haul DX was generally poor (except for 3B7C who broke all the rules!).

Mtrs	EU	NA
40	94%	5%
30	94%	3%
20	75%	22%
17	99%	1%

We ran skeds with John/VK4OQ which failed. We never heard any VK/ZL signals and did not log ANY QSOs with South America. Indeed only a few JAs were worked, although this should have been a good path as it avoids the auroral oval.

Iceland

Yes, it's all that it is cracked up to be: spectacular scenery, volcanic, no trees. Windy and cold, even in late September.

And it is expensive. Not everything, but on average prices were around double those in the UK. It felt as if the exchange rate needs a 50% adjustment! A normal Chinese meal cost us nearly £40 each, a snack lunch was £20 for a small plate and one beer. Alcohol is still tightly controlled and heavily taxed. This seems not to prevent all-night revellers who create an almighty racket every night, until dawn.

The standard of living is high. The economy is very strong: the 5th highest GDP per capita in the world and the 2nd highest on the UN Human Development Index. Industry is based on fishing, aluminium and finance. There is an abundant supply of hot geothermal water: this is piped some 30kms into the city with the loss of only 1° C, retaining up to 80° C.

The only touristing that we did was a short walk to the Hallgrimskirkja, a massive cathedral. The 250ft tall tower provides marvellous views of the whole city.

Iceland has a population of only 300,000, of whom nearly half live in the Reykjavik area. Their language is based on Old Norse, but everyone we met spoke fluent English. Contrary to popular belief a lot of them are NOT blonde! Clock-time is GMT. Iceland is 21° W, suggesting 1.5 hours behind GMT (360° divided by 24 hours = 15° per hour). This explains why sunrise + sunset were at 0720/1920 instead of 0600/1800 as it should be at the equinox.

TF3IRA

We were lucky enough to visit the TF3IRA club station, a permanent set-up right beside the sea, on flat land. Their SteppIR 3-ele and LF vertical obviously work very well. We then went for coffee at Perlan, a magnificent viewpoint high up above the city.

Here we saw the aurora borealis, another life-time achievement ticked off the list! The lights were ghostly green and appeared like slowly shifting patches of clouds, forming and then dissipating. The locals told us that in an average year they are visible on one half of nights.

We met the Club President, Keli/TF3HR, and were kindly transported by Sele/ TF3AO. We also met well-known CW operators Yngvi/TF3YH and Oskar/TF3DC; - also Hal/TF3GC and Halli/TF3HP. It is always fascinating and really enjoyable to meet some locals. We are always warmly welcomed as members of the worldwide club of radio amateurs.

Finale

We will do the usual for QSLing. The cards will be printed within 2-3 weeks. For those wanting a bureau reply we encourage e-mail request, to save half of the delay and cost for the bureaux. Just e-mail both callsigns, date, time, band. QSL via home call.

In summary, propagation conditions were disappointing, but our expectations were not high, so this was OK. In a way ('always look on the bright side of life') this allowed us to do a little touristing and socialising without feeling too guilty about leaving the pile-ups.

This was a terrific weekend, lots of fun, a great mix of CW pile-ups, seeing new places, meeting new friends. Iceland is indeed an unusual place, well worth adding to your 'must see' list.

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2007 Edition)

New IOTA reference numbers issued (two not confirmed)

NA-243	OX	Greenland's Coastal Islands North East (Greenland)
OC-283P	P2	Tauu Islands (aka Takuu Islands) (Papua New Guinea)
OC-284P	P2	Nukumanu Islands (Papua New Guinea)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

EU-102	RA1QKI/1	Dolgiy Island (August 2007)
EU-102	UA1QV/1	Dolgiy Island (August 2007)
EU-160	RA1QKI/1	Chaichiy Island (August 2007)
EU-160	UA1PBU/P	Chaichiy Island (August 2007)
EU-160	UA1QV/1	Chaichiy Island (August 2007)
NA-243	OX/PA3EXX/P	Rathbone Island (August 2007)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA RSGB IOTA Manager 21 October 2007

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Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

Subscription £15.00 for UK members, £20.00 for overseas members (US$40 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

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

Last time round I mentioned Sporadic-E and 10m. Despite solar figures being very low, 10m has continued to open at odd times. Most of the time anyone having a quick listen to 10m will find the band 'dead', but that is not always the case.

During CQ WW RTTY I had been working on 20m and decided to have a quick look at 15m around 1900 UTC - and found WP2/AK2P with a huge signal. Then it was back to 20m for some more runs. A bit later on I thought I should check 15m again, but accidentally hit the button for 10m. This was around 1930 UTC. Odd, but I could actually hear RTTY tones, so tuned the signal properly, only to see CQ HC8N on screen. One call, and they were in the log! Now, how do you explain the propagation for HC8N on 10m at 1930 UTC? I even got an e-mail from the op at the time of this QSO, who said he almost fell out of his chair when I called!

Just before sitting down to write this, I was in the shack and saw a spot from 5L2MS about trying 10m RTTY. I listened for a while, but could only see very slight evidence of them, but after about 10 minutes, they came right up to S8 – S9 and I worked them first call. After that there were suddenly loads of quite strong - and easily workable - signals on 10m. So, from a dead band, there was suddenly 10 kHz of solid RTTY signals, mainly EU, but also including EA9, 4X and a few others.

I also mentioned last time that I was wondering if I would ever see the card from R1FJT. Surprise surprise, but it finally did arrive, and then a few days later, the contacts were also confirmed on LoTW. Odd then that my call has never appeared on the UA4RC website for cards received and sent.

Another card that arrived recently was J5UAP for 17m and 15m RTTY. Another new entity for me, and a nice card too.

Over the past week or so ZL7/SPs have appeared on 40 and 30m RTTY during our daylight hours, and it would seem that quite a few Gs have worked them. I saw some GMs calling them on 30m, but so far I have had no copy on them at all. A pity they haven't (yet!) appeared on 20m. Were you one of the lucky ones?

For those of you who experiment with the newer digital modes, WSJT now has two new narrow-band digital modes called JT2 and JT4. As yet I have not tried them, but I see that many are giving them a go, and the top end of 30m seems to be awash with various stations beaconing with these modes. They are trying out very low power and seeing what sort of reports they get. As yet these two new modes are in their infancy and Joe, W1JT, is still making changes based on some of the findings.

The past six or so weeks have seen the bands almost awash with DXpeditions, leaving you wondering which way to point the beam, and which band to be on at any one time.

3B7C seemed to start the ball rolling, but then we have had 3C7Y, 7Q7CE, 5L2MS, plus the SPs on from ZL7. I failed to work 3B7C on RTTY, but as I worked 3B7SP on 40 to 17m RTTY, I only tried on 15, 12 and 10m. Sadly they were just too weak for me, and with my mini-beam and only 100W it wasn't to be. Still, I have bagged 7Q7CE on 15m, plus 5L2MS on 10m and 20m, both of which are new countries for me. I missed out on 3C7Y, and although they were very strong here, the pile-ups were just too large to break through. I did manage 9UØA on 30m and 17m RTTY too. Not a new one,

but two new bands, which was pleasing. At one time 3C7Y was on 14.080 and 18.098 MHz, 5L2MS was on 14.085 and 7Q7CE was on 21.080. And I needed them all at that point!

In case you haven't yet noticed, BARTG now has a new website URL. We have moved away from the Demon site, and the URL is now www.bartg.org.uk. Please bookmark this site and check for news, updates, contest info and the like. BARTG has dropped subs, but does welcome donations, and all are welcome to 'join'.

Elsewhere in this magazine you will find an article from Don, G3BJ, about working a DXpedition on RTTY. This article gives you some good advice when working in a split operation.

Having watched some of the recent DXpeditions, I can vouch for the fact that many folk seem to call when the DX is calling, or even working someone else. It really doesn't help anyone to call over an existing QSO, as that leads to repeats, which leads to frustration.

With many modern rigs it is easy enough to listen to your transmit frequency, so you can readily check whether you are on a clear frequency. And if they say UP 3, many will not just listen up 3! Try moving away from the pack and you may just stand a better chance of getting through!

And don't forget, your standard RTTY macro's are not the best way to work either. The DX knows his own call and if he is working UP, then he will assume anyone calling will in fact be calling him, so there is no need to send his call twice, followed by DE and your callsign. Just send DE CALL CALL CALL, and that is usually sufficient. Whether you send the DE is up to you. It can be a waste of time, but it can depend on what software the DX is using, and whether they are using callsign master files to aid them. If they are, then the DE can help.

Above all, do NOT try calling on HIS frequency! DXpeditions rarely work simplex, and if there is a pile-up that attracted you to it in the first place, this will give you a clue about operating split! I know we have all forgotten to press the SPLIT button from time to time, and although not a good idea, it does happen. However, it does pay to listen for a while before contemplating hitting the send button, and 10 – 15 minutes listening can pay dividends in actually working them.

Try to see if there is a pattern, how far up they work, whether they work two or more stations on the same frequency first, etc. Don advises against tail-ending, and whilst this is true in many cases, it can work if you only send your callsign ONCE after the caller has stopped. This only really works with louder stations, and ones that are likely to know your callsign, but it can work from time to time and is worth a try on occasions.

So, with that I will wish you good DX until next time.

73 de Phil GUØSUP

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

Contest Education

I was pleased to receive a phone call a few weeks ago from Paul, 2EØOSE, from Salisbury, who was looking for some advice for starting out in contesting. I started talking about some domestic UK events and relaxed European-based events which I thought might be suitable for him, when I realised I wasn't really giving Paul the sort of information that he was looking for. Paul was looking for a source of fundamental information about contesting. Who runs them? Can anyone join in? What are the rules? What bands are they on? How do I know what to send?

After trying to explain things as best I could, I pointed Paul in the direction of a couple of websites where he could digest more information at his leisure. Starting from scratch, there's quite a lot to talk about, and quite a lot to take in, if we want to explain how contests are organised, and then how to take part and submit your first entry.

Even if a person really doesn't get on with computers, I'd still recommend the Internet as an information resource, as I'm sure a friend or family member would have one and access to the Internet, or there would be a local library suitably equipped. Hidden amongst the many websites detailing stations, equipment, software and strategy, and the discussion forum sites which see year-long tirades or public squabbles about unfair rules, there are also some sites which explain what contesting is about from a newcomer's perspective. In terms of public relations, similar to other competitive events or hobbies, sometimes we really do ourselves a disservice.

The lack of beginners' help was only noticed relatively recently for one of the most popular websites at www.contesting.com. This site now has at the top of its first page a list of links to other articles explaining what contesting is all about. One of the links is to an article about contesting at the on-line encyclopaedia Wikipedia, which was originally written by Gerry G(I)ØRTN.

I normally suggest to people if they are sat at their radio listening to a contest, but not in a position to find a contest calendar in a magazine or online, then simply call a station who is calling CQ and ask them. It will only take a second to say if you can't be counted for points, or if you are a valid contest contact, what other information is required in the exchange. If the contest station is not making many (or any!) QSOs, calling in this way isn't going to be taking up valuable time. If, on the other hand, the other station *is* running a high rate, then you will get a good idea if he/she is looking for a specific area from those who call. Are they all from South America, or all from Germany, for example? You'll also get a good idea of the information required in the exchange too.

I've heard from quite a few people who say they will not call contest stations because they don't know what information will be required from them, or that 'they're not taking part in the contest.' Certainly in high-rate events contesters might give the impression that they have not even seconds to spare. But if we're truly scaring people off from putting in a tentative call, then we're missing out on contacts and points, and denying contesting newcomers from making some contacts and feeling like a welcomed participant to radiosport. Maybe that should be a reminder for us all to sound upbeat when calling on phone, or keeping Morse speed proportional to rate – perhaps there's little need for 32 wpm if you're only

being called every 2 minutes. We always say that a good contester will slow down if called by a slow-speed station, but maybe the high speed of the CQ call was off-putting to begin with.

If there are multiple events running at the same time, or your 'CQ Contest' call is targeted at a particular area, then it's beneficial to indicate this when calling. A recent example was the EU Sprints, which were running alongside the Oceania contests. Stations in Europe were calling 'CQ TEST OC', for example, to indicate which event they were in, which benefits the Sprint participants and the casual callers alike.

Coincidentally to all of this, I was asked by Mark, MØDXR, if I might present a 'Contesting for Beginners' lecture at this year's RSGB HF Convention. A dilemma appeared similar to when speaking with Paul, 2EØOSE – that of finding the correct entry point to begin the presentation so I wouldn't be assuming too much previous knowledge, but hopefully also still providing new ideas for those that have some idea of the fundamentals.

Mark had been involved with the Contest University (CTU) project which was held one day before the main Dayton Hamfest activities began this year in Ohio. CTU ran for a full 10 hours, covering 22 topics, with over 150 students taking part. A wide variety of newcomers and experienced contesters took part, and it was a great success. After this achievement, there is now an intent to run something similar in the UK. Mark described CTU when introducing both my talk, and the one following - which was a presentation on 'antennas for contesting' by Dave, G4BUO. What sort of demand is there for a Contest University in the UK? With a full day's programme, there would be time to explore topics like station design and automation, strategy and rules, datamodes, two-radio contesting, more aspects of antennas and also DXpeditions etc. Would you prefer to have this as a separate day to the HF Convention programme, similar to what was done at Dayton, or have it as a stream and integral to the usual HF Convention programme? Any comments or feedback will be useful to help plan for 2008.

I became slightly nervous when a number of experienced contesters arrived for my talk at the HFC, but I assured myself they were here for support and not for heckling. All went well, apart from only finding out how to switch the air conditioning on after the presentation was over. Dave/G4BUO's presentation which followed, like many others over the HFC weekend, was given to a packed lecture room. Whereas the US version of a 'contest antennas' presentation focussed on finding the optimum stacking distances for large HF yagis, Dave realised a UK-centric version would give most benefit and useful information by concentrating on how to fit resonant and efficient antennas into typical postage-stamp garden plots. It gave me some new ideas for home, and also for some Field Day antennas, now that the secret of some killer antenna designs (and importantly, their positioning) is finally out of the bag…

Sprints

It was fun helping to plan a new contest over the last month or two. I'm referring to the RSGB Sprint contests held in October. I've taken part in over 30 EU Sprint events in the last 10 years and certainly they've been memorable. That's because they required a different technique to most other contests, with each operator usually alternating between calling CQ and looking for other stations with each QSO made. The NA Sprints have a legendary status for high rates and impressive operating, with some USA hams listing these events as providing the 'ultimate' test of contesting skills. With the above in mind, asking the question "Could we try a UK sprint?" get the ball rolling for some more discussion and planning.

Two other key things prompted the experiment to try a domestic UK Sprint. Firstly was the success of the 80m CC contests. When they finished in the summer, the start of the next season seemed far away. Many entrants' comments echoed this. A similarly timed midweek event in the autumn might be popular. Also, the growth in popularity of the events had started to result in, for the SSB event at least, entrants coming on air for ragchews and tests over an hour before the contest begins. This is very similar to what we see in the 80m SSB AFS contest each January. I even had an instance this year where I swear I couldn't find anywhere to call "QRL?" on 80m CW before a particular session without being told to try somewhere else. With the growth in participation the 80m CC contests are almost a victim of their own success. There are no plans to change or replace the 80m CC events, by the way.

Some attempt at providing a domestic contest where 'frequency ownership' was not so vital to success would be interesting. There is probably a magic ratio of contest participants to available bandwidth we could calculate. It was a concern about potential high activity with a relatively small available bandwidth that resulted in the Sprints only being held on SSB and CW, and not RTTY. There is a popular NA RTTY Sprint contest, but with effectively just 17 or 18 kHz available for us on RTTY on 80m there was scope for disaster if everyone needed to constantly QSY!

How long should a new contest run for? The present 90 minutes for the 80m CCs seems just right for that contest, given the number of participants. But how many would try the Sprints? As it turned out, 90 minutes was a little too long and 60 minutes (or even less) may have improved the overall experience for the entrants. With hindsight it's much easier to judge the best time to allow enough stations the opportunity to work most of the other participants, without letting activity drop too low. Imagine what a 30-minute AFS would be like, or an 8-hour RoPoCo! One trait that has been noticed is that the club element of the 80m CCs would often see a local club contest chairman reminding their club members about each event, and to 'add a few points for the club total.' Maybe this club involvement is the key element to the high participation of the 80m CC that could be similarly exploited for any future sprint-type events next year.

The rules selected were an amalgam of the NA and EU Sprint ones – essentially because these contests have a known history of working well, without too much confusion or misunderstanding, either when reading the rules before the contest, or trying to operate in the middle of it. Being able to use contest software set up for the EU Sprint was a bonus – it guaranteed that lots of different packages already supported the event, and wouldn't require any selfish requests for development from software authors to support an event 99% of the world's contesters would never participate in.

Going back to the earlier topic about newcomer contesters, the SSB Sprint event saw quite a few casual entrants call stations, when they weren't aware of the Sprint concept. Thanks to all entrants who took a few seconds to explain the rules to them before QSYing, and otherwise leaving the station who called bewildered by either a suddenly quiet frequency, or even worse, a mini-pile-up of other stations calling, all of whom are keen to get serial number 002 from them.

Endpiece

The next *Digest* will reach you in the New Year, which means that now is the time to start thinking about the 80m AFS contests. In recent years most of the CDXC faithful have been supporting their local radio clubs and societies (which is a good thing!) and there hasn't been a significant CDXC team presence. If you have no team commitments already, please get in touch.

Also that means that millions of QSOs will have been made during CQ WW Phone and CW. There will be several single and multi-op activities made by CDXC members, so please let us know how you got on. Will 10m finally show more signs of life? Will the antenna destroying gales of recent years return again? Read all about it here next time!

73 Lee, GØMTN

3XY5D

The VooDoo Contest Group previously announced that its project for CQ WW CW 2007 will be in 3X, Guinea. This is our 14th straight year operating from various countries in West Africa in the Multi-Multi category of the contest.

We will mount seven 1KW stations with monoband antennas for all six bands right beside the Atlantic ocean in Conakry, the capital of Guinea.

The callsign we have been allocated is 3XY5D. We still hope to secure a shorter call, but this is now the most likely to be used in the contest.

We also have a VHF licence for 2m EME: 3XT1 (3X Tango One with no suffix).

QSL 3XY5D via G3SXW.

CQ WW CW contest is on 24-25 November. We will also be QRV a few days before and after the contest. All logs will be uploaded to LotW soon after our return home.

More information at: www.voodoocontestgroup.com/.

This is one of our more daring DXpeditions. We face the possible risk of civil unrest, washed-out roads and banditry, not to mention zero sunspots!

We hope to CU in the contest!

73 de Roger/G3SXW.

- Germany tightens up the QSL regulations
- No Deliberate QRM during 3B7C operation
- Over-optimistic CQ calls come under scrutiny

New amateur radio legislation has been approved in Germany. On working a DL club station you are now officially required to immediately confirm the contact by QSL card to every single member of that club, even if these other club members had nothing whatsoever to do with the contact or were nowhere near the club station shack at ze time of ze QSO, jawoll!

It was very surprising that 3B7C suffered little or no Deliberate QRM, which had been fully expected. Why should this be? Of course their excellent operating might have helped, keeping the pile-ups tight, not polluting the bands, giving their callsign at every QSO, etc. But there's another explanation: all the Deliberate Jammers were away on a trip to 3B7.

Once again over-optimistic CQ calls have come under scrutiny. Heard recently on 20m SSB: an IK8 station saying that he was 'beaming to North Dakota'. Needless to say, he ended up working no such thing and had to make do with a W2 in New York instead. Also: an OE6 calling 'CQ Arctic or northern Siberia'. Obviously there weren't too many of those around either - and he had to make do with talking to a DL. But at least they speak roughly the same language.

Recent on-the-air highlights from Gibraltar included a French station who called me in a sizeable pile-up on 20 SSB. I duly typed the callsign into the computer log and saw that I'd worked him several times before. Yes, his name was Jean and he was in Paris.

"Hallo, Jean in Paris!" I replied somewhat rashly, immediately realising that I'd made a terrible mistake. I knew what was coming next.

"Oui, my name is Jean. I spell-a: Juliet-Echo-Alpha-Novembre. And yes, my QTH is Paris. I spell-a: Papa-Alpha-Romeo-India-Sierra."

But then I suppose we ought not to mock the afflicted. There again, it was probably my fault entirely for deviating from the recommended '59 report and straight on to the next one' in the first place.

Contest News:

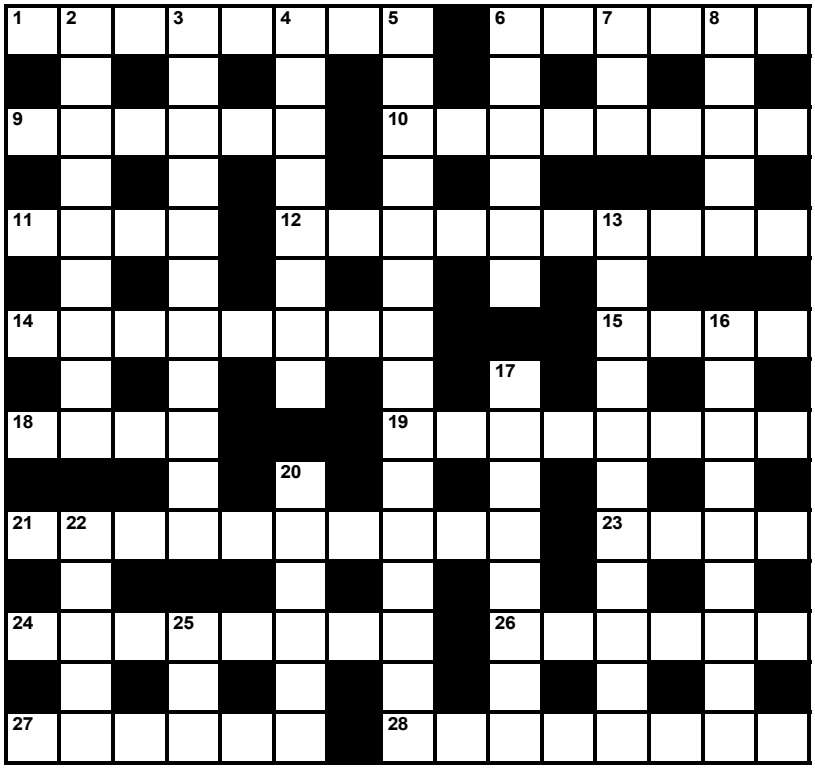
The Normal Prefixes Only Contest, scheduled for this coming weekend, has been cancelled due to lack of interest.

[with thanks to G3SXW for some additional inspiration. Ed.]

Solution to Prize Crossword 24

Digest Prize Crossword 25 *by RFX*

The winner of Prize Crossword 24, July 2007, and that brand-new tenner: Ian White, GM3SEK, Whithorn, Newton Stewart.



ACROSS

1 Sign medium, not small, fish confined here (8)
6 Amateur getting on in part of Lancashire once (6)
9 Appetiser where you only get a faint idea of the total cost? (3,3)
10 Light provided by a policeman on river in Germany (4,4)
11 Smell reported in European river (4)
12 Emergency money which helped win the day at Mafeking? (6,4)
14 Unconventional toccatas and how to play them? (8)
15 Music highly popular in Gibraltar? (4)
18 Girl volunteers to entertain the ambassador (4)
19 A blow from behind (8)
21 He has lots to deal with in his job (10)
23 Trotzky's city in Spain (4)
24 Train to soundly masticate twice (4-4)
26 Capital offering Bangkok rates, we hear? (6)
27 Quiet runner making a comeback in early part of competition (6)
28 Brother initially replaces son in Mercedes shake-up last month (8)

DOWN

2 Wizard game for those with a pound to lose? (9)
3 Somehow bars attract this sort of painting (8,3)
4 Going on for ever - although you say you won't! (8)
5 Mediocre vehicles shouldn't cross it (6-2-3-4)
6 Seafood offering endless possibilities? (6)
7 Pulse detected in injured alcoholic (3)
8 Capital fellow who's at his best before noon? (5)
13 What Harold did, some say, in Scottish town (4,7)
16 Type of Chinese spoken in Switzerland? (9)
17 I cured it somehow (it makes you go more...) (8)
20 Friend goes after unpleasant smell in German city (6)
22 Guide provided by you and me - and that woman (5)
25 Crude painting? (3)

Deadline for entries: 20 December

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 30/11	EW9Ø5B: special callsign (Belarus)
till 30/11	HF15ØTG: special event station
till 30/11	R45ØKB: special station
till 30/11	SU8BHI: Egypt
till Nov	8Q7IM: Maldives (AS-013)
till 06/12	IU2IPY: special callsign
till 09/12	AO, AN, AM: special prefixes (Spain)
till 31/12	6H1, 6I2, 6J3, 6E4: special prefixes (Mexico)
till 31/12	9A6ØK: special callsign
till 31/12	9AØ7P: special event station
till 31/12	DL1ØØDAN: special callsign
till 31/12	EM5ØARDF: special event station
till 31/12	GB6OTR: special callsign (England)
till 31/12	HF1ØØSK: special scout station (Poland)
till 31/12	LX2ØØ7L, LX2ØØ7G, LX2ØØ7D: special event stations
till 31/12	LZ17ØVL: special event callsign
till 31/12	LZ5ØDX: special callsign
till 31/12	ON5ØEU: special event callsign
till 31/12	SC3ØØVL: special callsign (Sweden)
till 31/12	SG6ØRK: Gotland Island (EU-020)
till 31/12	SX1ØØVAR: special event station (Greece)
till 31/12	YU6ØBCD and YT6ØW. special callsigns (Serbia)
till 31/12	YUØ7HST: special event callsign
till 31/12	Z36ØM: special call
till 31/12	ZY51ØØSCOUT: special callsign
till 15/01/08	FO5RU: French Polynesia
till 15/01/08	VP8CXV: Falkland Islands (SA-002)
till Feb 2008	DPØGVN: Neumayer Base (DL-03, AN-016)
till Apr 2008	6W/EA4ATI and 6W1EA: Senegal
till 30/06/08	VR1Ø: special prefix (Hong Kong)
till Aug 2008	C91R: Mozambique
till 30/09/08	9A73AA: special callsign
04/11-18/11	V8FWP, V8FWU and V8FDM: Brunei
08/11-26/11	VP2EDL and VP2EDM: Anguilla (NA-022)
15/11-28/11	C91KDJ: Mozambique
15/11-28/11	PJ7/DH1ND, PJ7/DG5XJ, PJ7/DJ5HD: Sint Maarten (NA-105
19/11-27/11	HKØ/K3WT and HKØ/NØSTL: San Andres (NA-033)

19/11-27/11	HKØ/WØOR and HKØ/NØAT: San Andres (NA-033)
20/11-02/12	VP2M: Montserrat (NA-103) by K9CS and others
21/11-26/11	V26K: Antigua (NA-100)
24/11-25/11	5JØA: San Andres (NA-033) (CQ WW CW)
30/11-07/12	C56JJ: The Gambia
06/12-11/12	VP5/KØOK and VP5E: Providenciales (NA-002)
06/12-11/12	VP5/KB7UB and VP5UB: Providenciales (NA-002)
12/12-16/12	YW6YL: Chimana Grande (SA-090)
15/12-20/01/08	3D2AG: Rotuma (OC-060)
16/12-22/12	VK2IAY/4: Great Keppel Island (OC-142)
26/12-01/01/08	T88RY: Koror (OC-009)
December	PF3ØFRG: special event station
07/01-11/01	VK2IAY/4: South Molle (OC-160)
10/01-21/01/08	J5C: Bubaque Island (AF-020)
27/01-28/02/08	VP8DIF: South Georgia (AN-007)
January	PZ5YV: Suriname
10/02-28/02/08	VP6DX: Ducie Island (OC-182)
March 2008	TX5C: Clipperton Atoll (NA-011)

Suspending CDXC Reflector e-mails if you go away on holiday

If you want to temporarily suspend e-mails to the CDXC Reflector while you're away, do this:

Sign in to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CDXC/ and click on 'My Groups' on the right.

Then click on 'Edit My Groups' on the left.

For CDXC under 'Message Delivery' select 'No email'.

When you return home, go back and select your 'Individual Emails' or 'Daily Digest'.

73

Mark Marsden G4AXX