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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

Visitors to the RSGB Convention at Wyboston can be forgiven for thinking that CDXC had become part of Martin Lynch & Sons. After all, we were on his stand. At least that's what it looked like. But of course the opposite was true. Martin needed to make the odd saving or two, so he'd asked us if we could let him use part of our CDXC stand – and of course we immediately agreed. Well, something like that anyway.

Be that as it may, this is the November 2009 edition of the *Digest*. I can hardly believe that I've been the Editor now since November 2003, when I took over from Don, G3XTT. So this is my 37th *Digest*. During that time I've had very little in the way of negative feedback, so I can only assume that most of you are happy with the way things are.

In fact this time I was hoping to include a short reader satisfaction survey (we haven't done one of those before), but we didn't quite get round to it. So next time round. In fact my wife, Jane (I call her 'XYL' at my peril...), who has a lot to do with this sort of thing professionally, has promised to oversee this little questionnaire.

Oh, and did I say that so far I've had very little in the way of negative comments in connection with the *Digest*? Yes, that's true. Although recently this did change somewhat when one of our regular contributors put his foot down and said in an e-mail that "I really think I should refuse to send you anything more until I get a signed photo of the Mini-skirted Maidens". Well, turn to p. 44 of this *Digest* ('Not the GB2RS News') and you'll find that a solution to this one is at hand.

And once again my thanks go to all our regular contributors, without whom... Although it doesn't apply to me, of course, as a fully paid-up member of Masochists Anonymous, you can reach the point where you decide that it's probably time for somebody else to take over. I know that Lee, GØMTN, is still looking for somebody else to take on his excellent 'Contest' column, although he says he's still happy to continue writing it for a while. Although Phil, GUØSUP, has said that reluctantly this month's 'RTTY' column will be his last. Thanks, Phil. You've done an equally sterling job. Meanwhile Roger, G3LDI, has kindly agreed to take over the 'RTTY' column as of January 2010.

Otherwise you will see that in this issue we have plenty of feedback in response to Roger/G3SXW's article in the September 2009 *Digest* ('Questionable Tactics Again') on the subject of DXpedition funding. Needless to say, it's only fair that we hear and publish 'the other side of the coin', in this case in the shape of responses from the K4M team, K4UEE and also KC4AA. These appear in the order they were received – and in their entirety.

Having said which, I think it's now time that we closed this debate on DXpedition funding. Nor will I be publishing any more e-mails on the subject. I would also like to remind you of an important sentence in our 'Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives', on p. 8 of this *Digest*:

'Please note that the views expressed in the *Digest* are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.'

73 Martyn, G3RFX

Chairman's Chat

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

It's been a very busy couple of months since the last *Digest* – both for the Committee and, I suspect, DX-chasing members. As I write this the K4M Midway DXpedition has just finished and surprised many of us by their consistent signals into UK. Indeed Clive, GM3POI, was copying them well into daylight on 160m on some days. There were the usual criticisms on the Cluster and various reflectors, but these appear to be less offensive in nature than those we saw for the FT5 DXpedition a few weeks earlier. However, deliberate QRM was a problem affecting both operations.

We can soon look forward to a team which includes three CDXC members G3KHZ, G3USR and MØVTG activating IOTAs in P29. Then we have Easter Island with a 30m emphasis - and Vietnam and Christmas Island all coming up in November, so make sure the antenna maintenance is completed before it gets too cold!

I'm pleased to report that Gordon, G3USR, has volunteered to take on the role of CDXC Secretary until the 2010 AGM. Thanks, Gordon.

On the social front we had 65 members sign in at the Newark Hamfest and 117 at the RSGB Convention at Wyboston. The CDXC stand at Wyboston was busy throughout the whole Convention and it was great to have the time to meet and chat with so many members. I want to thank all of you who gave us so much positive feedback about the Club and told us about the things they were doing and worrying about in the hobby. Roll on the Annual Dinner for another ragchew. While on that subject, we have booked Wyboston again and the date for the Annual Dinner is Saturday, 20 March 2010. Full details will appear in the

January *Digest* and we have lined up a cracking after-dinner talk.

CDXC has a seat at the RSGB Spectrum Committee meeting and I have taken this over from John, G3LAS. In my report to the Spectrum Committee I highlighted two concerns to us as DXers: the growing problem of deliberate QRM and the spread of PLT technology (and Ofcom's response to the RSGB input). There is agreement that DQRM is a growing problem, but we need to work out how to get the legislators mobilised. As for PLT: you will have seen that the RSGB are briefing lawyers to assess the possibility of making a legal challenge to Ofcom. Interesting stuff.

Another hot topic for the Committee has been the QSLing habits of DXpeditions. We have for some time required the DXpeditions we sponsor to honour QSL requests from all routes - and we emphasise the need to respond to Bureau cards for those who either cannot or do not want to afford the cost of a direct QSL. Following articles and letters in the *Digest* on the topic of LoTW uploads, we have been testing the water with members and other DX clubs on the subject. While some would like 'instant' LoTW uploads, many accept that DXpeditions budget for the voluntary donations received via direct QSLs and would not want to jeopardise that source of income. However, there is a general feeling, which your Committee supports, that partial uploads to LoTW, decided on the basis of a donation, are a step too far. We could negotiate special treatment for CDXC members as some other clubs do, but this would be an administrative workload that seems to treat the symptom not the cause. We have thus amended our requirements for future sponsorship to encourage DXpeditions to get to a full LoTW upload

within six months of a DX-pedition. You can read the full guidelines on the CDXC webpages and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Finally, I was asked recently by a new member whether he could use the CDXC logo on his QSL cards. The answer is most emphatically yes – please do! You can

download the logo from our website and are free to use it in appropriate contexts. If you use it on your website, then please provide a link to our site.

73 and good DX Chris, G3SVL

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

It's been a good two months for CDXC with a substantial number of new members who are very welcome. The National Hamfest at Newark was very busy with over 2,500 visitors. Many members signed in, our thanks to Martin, G4HKS, for letting us have space on the ML & S stand.

The Luso tower was a centrepiece of the show - what a fantastic piece of engineering. The RSGB bought the mast for use at Bletchley, but that's another story! We welcome Luso as an advertiser. With this *Digest* UK members will find two Luso flyers. Members who wish to buy a Luso mast will be able to purchase it at exhibition prices by producing the flyer. I understand three Luso masts were sold at Newark.

The RSGB Convention was also very busy; in fact space is getting very tight at Wyboston. Again, we perched on the ML & S stand, many members signed in and more were recruited. It was great to see so many members with badges. CDXC is now a strong brand.

At a personal level I was delighted to receive the CQ DX Hall of Fame plaque at the DX Dinner and I thanked Dave Wilson, M0OBW, RSGB President-Elect, Chairman Chris, G3SVL, and Bob Allphin, K4UEE, for their kind words. The sponsors were

CDXC and the Southeastern DX Club of Atlanta of which Bob is President. In my response I mentioned the next FSDXA DXpedition to the Pacific in October 2011. We expect to announce the location next May, invitations to team members will go out in April and, in the meantime, we will undertake a site survey. We are already working on the detailed plans. Clive, GM3POI, has designed a four-element vertical array for 17m. We plan to set this up on a beach and fire it at the UK. It has a 14 dB gain at a 7° angle so it should be a real killer. We will attempt to work 1,000 – 2,000 different UK stations - this will be a real challenge - and we will be very disciplined in exploiting every opening to the UK and Europe on every band and mode.

Yaesu has already agreed to be our Principal Sponsor - and ML & S and Nevada will be major corporate sponsors. This will be the fifth time that this group has supported us and we are very grateful for this. Such support makes these major DXpeditions feasible. Our sincere thanks go to Paul, G3WYW; Mike, G3SED, and Martin, G4HKS.

Congratulations to Don, G3BJ, former CDXC President, on winning the ROTAB trophy. Don is a worthy recipient.

Please excuse a short commercial. Our book 'DXpeditioning Behind the Scenes' continues to sell well, with 18 copies being sold at Newark and Wyboston. If any member would like a signed copy, please contact me. The cost is £10.00 plus £2.00 P&P. These books were originally sold for £17.95 + P&P. All funds go to offset the costs of our Pacific 2011 venture.

Working the recent FT5GA DXpedition to Glorioso was an interesting experience, but I did feel that some of the criticism on the Cluster was very unfair. It's true that their splits were too wide and the operators did not seem to have a good tuning pattern or much rhythm. But they were a small number of operators subject to military discipline and local regulations. They had worked very hard for well over four years to set up this operation to one of the rarest countries in the world and will have given a new one to many. Some Gs managed to work them on 16 band-slots, one without a beam, so with a bit of patience and skill contacts were possible, particularly in the last few days. I suggested to several guys at Newark who were critical of the FT5GA operation that perhaps they should go to a rare spot and find out what it's like at the other end!

G3NUG's Antenna Set-up - Part 2: The Legalities and Starting Work

I have received some interesting queries from members about Part 1.

In order to overcome the Council statement 'It is most unlikely that masts and aerials of the size you envisage would be permitted in Herefordshire' I thought it best to identify all the Versatowers and similar masts in the locality. I rang around a large number of local amateurs and found 15 masts in the area of which 12 had planning permission. I sent details of these 12 to the Council.

Apart from receiving letters of support from the Parish Council and several locals, I also received letters of support from CDXC and the RSGB.

My planning application included details of five different and large antennas which I described as 'typical', explaining that one of my interests was in experimenting with different types of antenna. This was why I needed two masts so that I could make comparisons. These antennas included a five-band, four-element quad, a 205BA 20m five-element Yagi and a Force 12 C31XR. Also included was a note explaining the benefits of amateur radio.

The next stage was to sort out the legalities. The coax and control cables would cross one neighbour's field, the masts were to be located beyond this in the next field owned by a local farmer. We all agreed that some form of lease or licence would be sensible, so this was drafted by my solicitor and after the usual negotiations was signed by all three parties.

Now work could begin. The first challenge was to see whether we could mole under the tarmac drive which we share with our neighbour. We were anxious not to dig up the drive that had recently been tarmacked. The ground around here is very stony and there are many solid rocks around, so we needed to be sure that we could get the cables under the drive at some point as this would be the starting point for the cable run across the two fields.

I found a local man with a 50mm mole, a vibrating torpedo-like device which is driven by a huge hydraulic power unit. The mole operator dug holes about one metre deep each side of the drive and pointed the beast in the right direction. It seemed to me to be a bit hit or miss, but the mole disappeared in the right direction, chuntering away, and 30 minutes later appeared in exactly the right place across the drive. What a beast! 50 mm ducting was used to line the hole and then a second hole was drilled about 20 cms. away from the first. And lo and behold, the mole appeared close to the first duct.

We then built manholes at each end of the duct so that we could pull cables through and inspect them in the future. Between the manhole on our side of the farm drive and our property there is a high brick wall so we had to bore through its foundations. This was another significant task, as the concrete base was extremely tough, but we eventually broke through using a very powerful drill with diamond tips. So far, so good! The next task was slightly easier. This was to drill the stone wall of the radio room. This is about 40 cms thick, but the drill tackled the wall without difficulty. So by now I was able to get a cable from the shack and into the first field. We were

making progress. More next time, as we hit solid rock in the field, come across a soakaway for a septic tank that our neighbours were not aware of (what a stink!) and then we cross under a stream.

Best wishes to all our members. I'd better get on with some more planning.

73

Neville

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
2EØCTT	Mark Ward	Holt
2EØJOF	Jonathan Miles	Newbury
EA5ARC	John Saunders	Alicante
GØGMS	Tony Read	Hixon
GØWKL	Richard Martin	West Harting
G3SQH	Andrew Reffold	North Ferriby
G3YPE	Michael Greenwood	Holmbridge
G4ERW	David Lurcook	Woodchurch
G4EZT	Andy Brown	Temple Grafton
G4GSA	Pete Milsom	Bradley Stoke
G4PEO	John Pitty	Horsham
G4UFU	Brian Steen	Alsager
G7SQW	Andrew Woods	Thorpe Marriott
G8CGZ	David Moore	Old Tupton
G8DX	Jack White	Neston
GW4SKA	John Barber	Bryncethin
LA5HE	Ragnar Otterstad	Flåbygd
MØBZH	Malcolm Wilkinson	Darfield
MØMJH	Mark Hickford	Clare
MØTTB	Andrew Bright	Watford
MØXIK	Josh Hurley	West Bridgford
MØZAF	Robert Barter	Plumpton Green
M1DDD	Nicholas Garbett	Quarnford
M1MST	Clive Walker	Brimfield Cross
M3INL	Ian Lockyer	Ramsgate
M5IAN	Alistair Hunt	Derby
MI5JYK	Peter Lowrie	Mossley
N5ET	Bob Walworth	Texas

CDXC at the National Hamfest

CDXC was well represented with a stand at the recent National Hamfest at Newark Showground in Nottinghamshire organised in association with the RSGB and the Lincoln Short Wave Club.

Neville, G3NUG together with Derek, G3RAU, and Gordon, G3USR, manned the stand on the Friday and they were joined by Michael, G7VJR, on the Saturday. We showed Michael's new posters on the stand; they are really smart. Over the two days, nine new UK members and one new overseas member were signed up and 18 new CDXC membership badges were ordered. A total of 64 CDXC members visited the stand and signed in and most had an interesting and often fun conversation with us.

We were much busier on the Friday than on Saturday. We were fortunate to have stand space provided by Martin Lynch & Sons and as an indication of our gratitude, President Neville presented Martin, G4HKS, with his CDXC member's badge (Martin is a long-time member of CDXC). When not on the stand, we wandered around the hall. Between the traders inside and outdoors, exhibits were numerous with booths taken up by a number of organisations and special interest groups.

These included a large RSGB membership and bookstall, the RSGB Propagation Studies Committee (who later provided a detailed propagation forecast for the upcoming CDXC-sponsored P29 DXpedition), the RSGB QSL Bureau, the RSGB Planning Committee and the usual manufacturers including Yaesu, Icom and Kenwood.

A key centre piece of the show was a massive (yes, really massive...) tower being touted by Luso Tower from Japan. This was reputed to have an RRP in excess of £20,000. However, the Japanese supplier clearly did not wish to have to re-export it from the UK and apparently settled for a substantial offer from an interested UK customer. There are a couple of representative photographs in the centre of this *Digest* - I told you it was big! Watch this space to learn the lucky purchaser. Yes, it's a secret ... there's a clue there!

Altogether a very successful Hamfest for CDXC and enjoyed, I'm sure, by all CDXC members who attended.

Gordon, G3USR

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

Subscription £18.00 for UK members, £24.00 for overseas members (US\$48 or 40 Euros). New members joining between 1 January and 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions are due on 1 July of each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer.

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

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

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

There are months when I find it hard to pen something for the *Digest* that is significantly different to what I put together for my RadCom column. But this month is different. While I can reflect briefly in RadCom about the recent glut of DXpeditions, I do not have the space to comment to the extent that they probably deserve. Here I am less constrained (editor notwithstanding!).

It really has been a time of plenty, often with multiple operations running in parallel (Glorioso, Conway, Fiji, Australs, for example). The big problem, for most of us at least, has been where to focus our efforts. This has been especially true for those who still have proper jobs to go to.

The CDXC, Top Band and other reflectors have been buzzing with comment on the various operations. It seems that the majority of DXers nowadays will find fault with anything that falls short of the levels of competence shown by the VP6DX team (and, dare I say, our FSDXA efforts). Not that even those are considered sufficient by some – after starting up on nine bands simultaneously, it usually takes no more than 15 minutes before messages start appearing on the Cluster along the lines of “When 40m RTTY?” or “Why not listening for PY?”

Let's start with FT5GA. This was an operation that looked set never to happen at all. It was postponed multiple times, for reasons outside the control of the would-be DXpeditioners. They finally got the go-ahead, but with significant restrictions on the sort of activity they could undertake. The question they must have asked themselves was, “Do we want to go ahead, given these restrictions?” Thankfully they did. If you didn't work them on 160 (for

example), at least be thankful that they were there and you got some slots. If they hadn't gone, you would still be needing even those. It became apparent once they were on the island that they would not be allowed to site their antennas on or near the beach, for environmental protection reasons. They would also be expected to perform military duties for a significant part of their time and, if they didn't eat at official ‘mess time’, would be left to starve. But still they were criticised, quite vehemently in many cases. And as for the deliberate QRM, it beggared belief at times (though my 12, 15 and 17m QSOs were all made easily on a seemingly quiet band – the benefit of skip which passed straight over southern Europe, I guess).

Then there was Midway. This was a very different operation. It was very clearly a DXpedition, albeit under the watchful eyes of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The list of operators was a veritable ‘Who's Who’ of DXpedition veterans. The team had some initial problems, but settled into an efficient routine, generally being aware of the major openings. The website was excellent and the daily log uploads (thanks to G7VJR and ClubLog) were invaluable. Much of the controversy (at least here in the UK) centred on their Top Band efforts. For most of you this is probably academic, as you weren't expecting to work K4M on 160. But several mornings on the trot they were audible in at least some of the UK (particularly GM), but failed to take the hint when they worked the occasional European station and simply carried on running the USA (which would enjoy several more hours of common darkness, to our 30 minutes or so). That said, even across the UK propagation varied enormously. I believe that G3SED on the south coast (no shrinking violet where Top Band is concerned) never even heard a sniff

from them. I was staying overnight at G3BJ's (for an FSDXA planning meeting) and Don and I listened (and Don called) for a whole hour with them S5 and quite strong at times, but working just two Europeans during that run. Clive, GM3POI, significantly further north still, was hearing them the same day almost until midday. So propagation certainly featured strongly in the equation, but even a ten-minute standby for Western Europe would surely have paid dividends in goodwill (Scandinavia and Eastern Europe were able to work them at European sunset).

The Poles, just two of them, put on quite a show from the Australs and Marquesas, but do remember that this path is actually quite a favoured one from the UK. They were worked from the Australs on 160 (by the usual suspects), but in the Marquesas were unable to find anywhere suitable for a Top Band antenna. You have only to read their website to understand the hardships they were under from these locations – bad weather, unpleasant bugs, etc. French Polynesia has a reputation for sun, sea and dancing girls, but don't be under any illusions about these particular spots. Five Star it is not!

Conway Reef is a tough (and expensive) location to reach. The team seems to have done a competent job even though I failed to catch them on some of the slots I wanted. Frankly, I put that down to my own lack of determination rather than any weaknesses on their part. Of course, the ongoing absence of anything resembling a new solar cycle doesn't help either.

ZYØT (Trindade) was always destined to be a fairly low-key operation. This is another island that is under military jurisdiction and transport is at the beck and call of the military, which is why the operation was of very limited duration. I didn't even try to work them as I only needed 160m (where I believe they did appear, albeit briefly), but hopefully some of you were able to fill some missing slots.

There have been several other nice ones on too, and more to come (some will have happened by the time you read this). Papua New Guinea, Chesterfield, etc. Truly, we have a real feast set before us, although the gluttons may never be satisfied.

But all of this, surely, is what the DX game is about. It's not there to be handed to each and every one of us on a plate. If there is no challenge, then surely there is no commensurate sense of achievement. This is what too many folk seem to forget. I generally feel a little sorry for those right at the top of the DXCC Challenge or the IOTA Honour Roll listings, for example. They must be (a) very old and probably on their last sunspot cycle, (b) very sad and never take a holiday or put anything back by going on a DXpedition themselves or (c) very lonely because they must live in the middle of nowhere in order to put up big enough antennas!

Expedition Info

In a recent note from GW4BKG, Steve mentioned that one of the big changes that he had noticed when he came back into DXing after a prolonged absence was with respect to sources of information. Nowadays everything is available via the web. This trend started quite a long time ago. When the RSGB's DX News Sheet finally ceased publication I recall an irate phone call from a Scottish subscriber (I was on the RSGB Management Committee at the time, so had a hand in the decision to cease publication). This subscriber castigated us for, once again, allowing the Internet to take over from amateur radio. That wasn't the case, of course – rather it was the Internet taking the place of the postal service. Over half the DXNS subscribers were outside the UK and were finding that Internet sources were much more timely than the week or so that DXNS typically took to reach them in Italy, Australia or wherever. So the number of subscriptions dropped very quickly and DXNS ceased to be viable. Nowadays free DX information is available from many

sources, either by heading to one of the various DX-related websites (there are lots) or subscribing to one of the e-mail bulletins – the 425 and OPDX bulletins are probably the best, in English at least (there are very good ones in Spanish, French, etc. too), although ARRL members can get the free DX news which they mail out each week. If you are prepared to pay money, then there is nothing to compare with W3UR's excellent Daily DX, which I have taken more or less from day one. And these bulletins also cross-reference other sources such as the websites set up specifically for and by DXpedition groups.

The various FSDXA websites are typical examples and show the sort of progression which has taken place. Back in 1998 (9MØC) we had a very basic site, largely carrying pre-DXpedition information. Three years later (D68C) we were able to interact with our expedition 'Pilot', receiving feedback and asking him to update the site with news as the expedition progressed. Three years after that (3B9C) the site had more sophisticated log look-up and we were updating it directly from the island (although, it has to be said, with some difficulty as Internet speeds on Rodrigues were very limited). But we had facilities to request QSL cards and interact with the expedition in other ways. By the time 3B7C came along, we had Marios's excellent league tables, propagation information generated from the actual log, and much more. By the way, as well as the newsletters, there are some great websites with DX information, too. DX World of Ham Radio (<http://dx-hamspirit.com>) run by MMØNDX is an excellent example and well worth bookmarking.

All this makes the job of the expeditions much easier. For Spratly we prepared a series of press releases which could be sent by e-mail to some DX editors, but many were still only reachable by snail mail. Three years later most could be e-mailed, but there was still quite a long list of folk that I, as publicity officer for the team, had

to include in my address list. In comparison, nowadays a DXpedition can send a press release to, say, the Daily DX and within a matter of hours it will have been picked up by all the other bulletins and websites. It never ceases to amaze me, therefore, when I see postings on the Cluster such as "Where are K4M and ZYØT?" some days into the respective operations. Don't these folk have access to Google or one of the other resources I have mentioned? Or are they just lazy?

Anyway, it looks like being a good season, at least on the low bands. KH6, ZL and JA are already being worked almost daily on 160 from the UK (mid-October) so events like CQ WW CW and CQ WW 160 should prove quite fruitful. But it may be too soon to start planning that big 10m single-band effort! The latest predictions seem to be putting the next peak around 2013, which sounds like a long way off. 11 years ago (1998) we were in Spratly and, while still shy of the peak (which we enjoyed in the Comoros in 2001), we had lots of 12m propagation and 10m wasn't bad either, although I do vividly recall a clear line down through the UK beyond which we were unable to reach – the south-east was workable, but northern England, GW, GI, GD, GM were notable by their absence.

And as I write this the bands are full of semi-rare operations from the Caribbean and elsewhere in readiness for the CQ WW Phone contest. There will be a repeat in late November before (and in some cases after) the CQ WW CW event. The Voodoo guys, for example, will be moving on to Sierra Leone this time round; sadly I won't be with them this year, but we wish them every success. The best list of contest operations is to be found, as most of you will be well aware, on the NG3K website.

Finally, it was good to meet many of you at the Convention this year. I thought it was one of the best, although I did have to dash down to Hampshire on the Saturday evening for a family function, so seemed to spend

much of the weekend on the road. I only got to a couple of the talks, but particularly enjoyed K4UEE's Desecheo presentation. Would you like to go on a DXpedition where the first commitment, even before setting foot on the island, is to attend a UXB briefing? (unexploded bombs, in case you were wondering!) The other one I went to was Jim/G3YLA's presentation on Sporadic E. I was particularly interested, having last year written a book for the RSGB on 6m operation, as Sporadic E is one of the most reliable propagation modes on 6m. But Sporadic E affects HF propagation too and

Jim's presentation was extremely well researched (in case you don't know, Jim is a professional weatherman who has, over the years, been on Anglia TV, Radio 2, etc.). His slides about Atmospheric Gravity Waves (look them up!) were fascinating because AGWs have not only been linked with Sporadic E, but have also been postulated recently as having an impact on 160m propagation. Truly, we are all still learning.

73 Don G3XTT

Borneo Bulletin

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX

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Although I claimed it wasn't a whinge, the last 'Borneo Bulletin' could have been read as a complaint about the poor infrastructure here in Sabah. In fact, after I wrote about the 11-hour and the 15-hour power cuts, things have been much better, although not before we experienced a 23.5-hour power failure, just after e-mailing the previous 'Borneo Bulletin'. Thank goodness we have a generator, because not only does it get unbearably hot in the house without electric fans to keep the air circulating, but the entire contents of our freezer would have been ruined.

I am convinced that the intermittent nature of our Internet connection is associated with the reliability of the mains electricity, as the two certainly seem to go hand in hand. The Internet too has been much more reliable in the last month or so. HF band conditions have also been much better. The only thing that has not improved is the noise level from the overhead power cables, which stubbornly remains at S9+5dB on 20m when beaming in most directions. If I beam due north it drops by about 10dB but is still S7 or S8 and by the time the beam is in a

useful direction (320° for Europe or 30° for Japan / USA) the noise level is back up to S9 again.

Propagation and DXpeditions

At the end of September and beginning of October a few sunspots made an appearance and, wow!, coupled with the expected improvement in propagation due to the equinox, what a difference they made to conditions. For once signals were stronger than the noise, so I could actually hear stations calling me! I had a couple of good 'runs' on 20m SSB with big pile-ups of Europeans and a few North Americans who are normally buried in the QRN. If this is what propagation is like with the solar flux around 72, what will it be like when it eventually gets above 100? Surely it cannot now be *too* much longer before we start to see that long-awaited increase in sunspots?

The improvement in conditions coincided with the FT5GA Glorioso, XV3RRC Vietnam and 3D2ØCR Conway Reef DXpeditions. The operators at FT5GA got a lot of stick from some of the 'deserving' (or

perhaps not so deserving?), but I worked them easily enough on 15, 17 and 20m, so there are no complaints from me. Given that conditions were not too bad for at least some of their operation, I was surprised at how weak their signals were most of the time, as the Indian Ocean is not a difficult path from here. However, on one occasion, which is when I worked them on 15m, their signal was a genuine S9+, so why it was so weak every other time I heard them, I don't know. Surely not just the variability of propagation? Perhaps the DXpedition had some power issues and were using low power for much of the time?

XV3RRC is even more local to me, and the Russian operators were dodging the typhoons that were plaguing that area of Asia just then. To me, this operation was an object lesson in how a DXpedition should be run. The operating was first class, really efficient and 'snappy', and they made a lot of IOTA enthusiasts, as well as DXers simply looking for a QSO with Vietnam, very happy.

3D2ØCR too had good operators, including CDXC member and frequent RSGB Convention visitor Jan, DJ8NK, who is also the QSL manager for this expedition. In the end I only worked them on two bands, 20m and 40m: propagation was just not good enough for 17 and 15m and although I heard them on 80m I could not get through the JA 'wall' on that band.

Unfortunately the Polish group who were active from the Australs were a 'gotaway'. Their operation was heavily biased towards CW and I only heard them at workable strength on SSB once, on 40m when, once again, the JA wall proved impenetrable. Again, I can't complain as I was away in Singapore for almost a week during the operation and no doubt had I been at home for the duration of their operation I would have eventually been able to get through. At the time of writing they have moved on to the Marquesas, another 'needed' Entity here, but so far have remained unheard.

I have had more luck with K4M on Midway Island, who were easy enough to work on both 15 and 17m, but it took a lot of calling on 20m to eventually get through and both 40m and 80m have so far proved to be fruitless.

DXing from South East Asia

DXing is very different in this part of the world compared with the UK, or Europe in general. All of the DXpeditions I have mentioned have been exclusively of European operators or, in the case of K4M, have had European operators as members of the team. They have all therefore targeted Europe and - because that's where most of the activity (and, dare I say it? sponsorship) is - also North America. Some of them have taken a stand-by for JAs, but as I have indicated, getting through the JA wall can be tough - especially if the DXpedition has a beam and is pointing it towards Japan, the azimuth of which might be tens of degrees away from Borneo.

Of course, there are relatively few amateurs, and fewer still DXers, in the South-East Asia area - in the case of DXers who are likely to call a DXpedition there is probably no more than a handful in each of East Malaysia, West Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand; fewer still in places like Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and probably not more than a couple of dozen in the whole of Indonesia. So there is little point in DXpeditions specifically targeting South-East Asia; we have to take our chance when they're also working JA, HL, and the ever-increasing numbers in BY and BV. There's no arguing with that, but what it does mean is that signals are generally weaker than you would expect, as they're not beaming in the right direction, and there is a lot of competition from stations in the direction where they *are* beaming. It must be the same problem for a DXer in Africa trying to make a QSO with a DXpedition that is working Europeans.

On the positive side, we do not have to cope with deliberate QRM, which seems to be the bane of DXing in Europe these days. Thankfully, it is virtually non-existent in this part of the world. The nearest thing is what I would call 'ignorance interference', rather than deliberate. This happens all the time on 40m, which is used by hundreds or perhaps thousands of Indonesian stations daily for local natter nets. Giving them the benefit of the doubt, signals are invariably S9+ so (presumably) they turn their RF gain controls down so much that they cannot hear anything other than very strong signals. Thinking the frequency is clear, they then just start operating, even if there is a weak DX station on the same frequency. There are Indonesian nets taking place almost constantly on nearly every multiple of 5kHz from 7.030 (the bottom of the phone band in the IARU Region 3 band plan) to 7.100 MHz. Anyone planning a DXpedition to this part of the world (or expecting to work stations in South-East Asia) should therefore plan to operate on frequencies ending in 8 or 7 (e.g. 7.078, 7.087 etc.) and definitely not on 7.055, 7.060 etc.

Singapore

Eva and I enjoyed our week in Singapore, one of our favourite cities. We met James, 9V1YC, one of the operators at K4M the day before he left for Hawaii and then Midway Island. It was good to see James again after almost three years and we had a long and fascinating discussion over lunch.

No trip to Singapore by a radio amateur is complete without a visit to Sim Lim Tower so, whilst Eva went shopping on Orchard Road, I took the MRT (underground train) to Little India and walked to Sim Lim. This is a multi-storey tower block stuffed full of electronic equipment, plugs, cables, high voltage meters and switches. In the basement is a small number of amateur radio retailers. None of them have nice comfortable showrooms like ML & S or Waters & Stanton, and they do not keep a large stock of the latest equipment. They are

tiny, cramped stores packed full of marine radio equipment, Japanese-made VHF collinears and with just a few amateur rigs – and mainly VHF / UHF handhelds at that.

If you want to buy the latest FT-9000 or IC-7700 you will need to order it in advance and pay a large deposit (most ask for 50%) well in advance, and the rig will be despatched from the factory in Japan to the retailer. The three stores I visited did have some HF equipment, though, including an IC-706MkIIG at £615, an IC-7000 at £725, an IC-756ProIII at £1,470, and a TS-2000 at £1,025. While new and unused, some of the stock is quite old – the IC-756ProIII has already been replaced for quite a while, but one store had a IC-756 (the original model) available (at £1.055). Another store even had a Yaesu FT-840, which is a Japanese version of the FT-890 that was a new model ca 1990! (This one, still wrapped in its cellophane, was going for £350.) The very weak pound makes these prices much less competitive than they were up to mid-2008, and anyone tempted to make a trip to Singapore to buy a rig should bear in mind that they either come with no warranty at all, or you would have to return the radio to Singapore for any repairs to be done under guarantee.

I still miss my TS-930S, so I was quite tempted by the TS-2000, but did not succumb and left Sim Lim Tower with only an Imperial 100-yard drum of RG-58 (RF coax is unobtainable in Sabah) and a handful of PL-259 plugs.

Christmas

One of my pastimes here has been to compile the questions for a 'pub quiz' evening held two or three times a year by a group of British ex-pats in Kota Kinabalu. As I have not had to do one for a while, I thought instead I would compile a Christmas DX quiz for the *Digest* which, our good Editor permitting, can be found elsewhere in this issue.

It seems strange to be thinking of Christmas in mid-October, especially in temperatures of 32°C, but the next *CDXC Digest* will be the January 2010 issue, so allow me to take this opportunity to wish all CDXC members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2010!

CQ Contests

Roger Western, G3SXW

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(Disclaimer: the views presented here are entirely those of the author. They do not necessarily represent those of CQ Magazine or CQ World-Wide Committee).

CQ Magazine sponsors some of the biggest contests in the world, particularly CQ World Wide DX contests. It might be of interest to some folks to hear a little more about how they function and an update on the latest news.

The ‘CQ WW Contest Committee’, CQWWCC, is responsible only for CQ WW SSB and CQ WW CW. All other CQ contests, eg CQ WW RTTY, CQ 160, CQ VHF etc. are managed by other contest co-ordinators. CQWWCC currently consists of 26 accomplished American contesters who do the hard work. Director is Bob, K3EST, on whose shoulders fall many difficult decisions; Ken, K1EA, does the bulk of the IT work, processing automated log checks of over 10,000 logs every year; Barry, W5GN, issues some 3,000 certificates each year; John, K1AR, manages the wooden plaques etc. But we should also note that CQWWCC has several sub-committees with different purposes, for example investigating ‘problem logs’ where Doug, KR2Q, plays a big role.

There are also currently 13 ‘International Advisers’ who provide an interface in countries with the biggest contester populations. They offer a two-way comms

flow and this is where SXW comes in, to represent UK. International Advisors play a support role: we see e-mails on the CQWWCC reflector and are free to express opinions about anything, so we do influence decision making. I am happy to forward the views of UK participants and take up any individual queries. As with any such reflector Committee traffic ebbs and flows, but it seldom goes quiet for more than a day or two. The big issues of the day at present are the new Xtreme category; catching cheats and Multi-Single abuses; Visitations; increasing Transparency.

Cheating

Often people say: “I don’t believe that score”, but offer no supporting evidence. Dubious practices and a few claims of cheating have always happened and are investigated. But this came to the fore in the 2008 contests and it involved several leading logs. The Committee attitude firstly is that this is a hobby, not a court of law, so cheats should only be penalised when there is good evidence to support the case AND after the individuals have been approached for their side of the story.

Some of the usual ways of trying to cheat include:

- using DX Cluster while claiming Non-Assisted Single Operator

- using more power output than allowed for the claimed category
- transmitting with more than one signal at the same time (single-op)
- using other operators when claiming Single Operator
- rubber-clocking to circumvent the 10-minute rule in Multi-Single
- contravening the 500-metre distance rule

The Problem Log Sub-Committee has seen it all and can spot many instances of cheating by simply running automated statistical analyses. Benchmarks have been created from previous studies to establish a normal range so they can then home in on the outliers, those logs which stand out as very different to the normal pattern. This is then followed by scrutiny of those individual logs, a time-consuming business which therefore means that mostly only leading logs can be put under the spotlight in this way, for instance, those who are in line for a top score or all-time record. True, if you use Cluster when you shouldn't just to work one extra multiplier or rubber-clock one QSO by two minutes in multi-single you are unlikely to be caught: it is the persistent cheats that make themselves vulnerable. After all, the prime objective of CQWWCC is to assure the order of finish, not to deduct 3 points from a 1 million point entry: this happens at the automated level (UBN reports) but is not catered for at this human cross-checking stage.

Every year some logs are re-classified: "Were you really Unassisted?" - "Oops, my mistake, please re-classify me as Assisted". Other logs are converted to Check-Log or are just withdrawn by the competitor when he is approached. In the 2008 contests five multi-single stations were disqualified from the SSB contest and three single-operator logs from the CW contest. 'Disqualified' means that they are ineligible for CQ WW awards and their WRTC applications are barred. Loss of reputation, especially locally, may be an even greater penalty.

Unfortunately most contesters hear very little of what goes on behind the CQ WW scenes, but this is hopefully changing, with a more open approach. It may add to credibility if contesters know, for example, about the voluntary re-categorisations which are prompted by Committee every year. Most of them are genuine errors.

Most of the cheating methods can be investigated from the logs themselves. Committee has become skilled at building 'Reverse Logs', that is re-creating the logs of those who have not sent in an entry by combining the loggings for that station which have been submitted by all other entrants. Some 75% of all participants send in their log, around 98% of whom do so electronically, and a big proportion nowadays define the frequency for each QSO. (This is recommended in the rules, but is not yet a requirement). A further stage involves 'reverse log of the reverse log' where recorded frequencies can be checked. These methods are especially efficient at identifying use of Cluster and multi-operators and can readily differentiate from efficient use of SO2R (Single Op with 2 Radios).

The rules on power output are hardest to check. Peer pressure helps to curtail some of the worst offenders: usually local friends know what is going on and they need to convey their disapproval. Again, CQWWCC approaches those suspected, who sometimes say (for example): "Oops, sorry, I meant to enter as Low Power, not QRP". The new Visitation rule may also help in this regard, see below.

Another important initiative is the setting up of spectrum monitoring for the whole duration of the contest, with SDRs. This has already been tested at several sites on one band. It is conceptually feasible and now needs to be implemented in practice (not a trivial task!), hopefully at several locations around the world. This will provide powerful diagnostic data to investigate

allegations of cheating, for example two signals at the same time.

In summary, surely as in most of society the big majority abide by the rules and it is only the few bad apples who besmirch their own reputations and risk damaging the reputation of contesting. It seems clear that the problem emanates mostly from Europe, so it is up to Europeans to clean up their act. Surely (just my personal opinion) locals who 'know' of cheating must take them to task and then consider reporting them to Committee (with a LOT of supporting data!). But for the big majority of testers this whole issue is irrelevant.

Disqualifications in 2008 were:

SSB: (all Multi-Single) **D4C:** I4YSS, I4UFH, IZ4DPV, CT1ESV; **E7DX:** 9A1TT, E7ØT, E74AW, E76C, E77DX, E77E, T9ØR, YT7WM; **9A1P:** 9A1UN, 9A2RD, 9A2CW, 9A5CW, 9A9SF, 9A6XX, S55M, S59KW, 9A2NA, 9A1ZZ; **9A7A:** 9A2X, 9A3TR, 9A3OS, 9A5X, 9A7V; **UU7J:** UT5UGR, UU1AZ, UU4JDD, UU5MAF, UU8JK, UUØJM

CW: (all Single-Op), **EF8M:** RD3AF; **RG3K:** UA3QDX; **YU2A.**

UBN

A UBN report (file.name 'yourcall.rpt') is produced for every submitted log. This summarises the findings of automated log-checking. The three main categories are:

U – Unique. This is a listing of callsigns which appear ONLY in your log and not in the logs of anyone else. Many folks believe these days that most Uniques are in fact Busted calls but if the system cannot determine any evidence to support converting these Us into Bs then the points are not deducted. A list of U calls is provided only for interest.

B – Busted (or Broken). This is usually when the software has determined that a

different but very similar call has reported a QSO with you with the same band/mode/time, usually within one or two characters of what you logged. It is noticeable that on CW these mostly consist of one dot or one dash wrong, for example G3IXW may be a Busted G3SXW. These confirmed B calls are deducted plus a penalty of three times the point value of the claimed QSO.

N – Not in Log. This is where your callsign is simply not in the log of the station that you claimed (if his log is available for checking). As with B contacts this will be deducted and penalised with three times the points of the same value that you claimed. If he has logged you, but with a Busted call of 1-2 characters different to your call, then he will be penalised for a Busted call but you will not suffer.

While all submitted logs are now open to the public, these UBN reports are confidential to the participant, so are password protected.

As always with automated systems it is not 100% accurate, so to find a QSO or two that have been wrongly penalised is certainly possible. We have to allow that in the grand scheme of things these are very small in number and the big majority of penalised QSOs are correctly deducted.

The three times penalty is intended to act as a deterrent to logging wrong callsigns caused by sloppy operating. Or perhaps if there were no penalty then testers might try to gain advantage by logging all 'possible but unconfirmed' QSOs in the knowledge that at worst they will be deducted from the score. The 'three times' is an arbitrary number, but it has been shown in numerous analyses that only approximately a quarter of contacts which should be deducted are eventually penalised, so it all comes out in the wash. In practice the software only penalises where there is clear evidence that it is right to do so.

Broadly, for each 1% of QSOs that are removed from your log (B plus N QSOs) you lose 4% of QSO points, but commonly a small number of multipliers are also lost, so this expands to 5%. But sticking with the number of B+N contacts deducted:

less than 0.5% is almost unheard of
0.5 – 1% is impressive
1 – 2% is good
2 – 3% is worrying
over 3% needs your serious attention!

Remember that these numbers have to be multiplied by about five: 2% B+N could lead to roughly 10% loss of final score. The first thing that any semi-serious contesteer might do is to compare his own Claimed score with his Final score and calculate the percentage deduction.

Xtreme Category

At present category rules place restrictions on what is allowed, but this seems wrong: surely new technology is to be ENCouraged, not DIScouraged. From 2009 a new category has been added which encourages experimentation with all forms of new technologies. However, to maintain the level playing field on which we all prefer to compete, these experimenters should move away from the traditional categories into this new Xtreme category.

New technologies are emerging all the time. Any attempt to list them will quickly be overtaken by events, so instead it has been decided that this category is completely Unlimited – except that Remotely operated stations shall transmit within the current rules. To check the full detail of this new category please read:

www.cq-amateur-radio.com/WDXContestRules%20200973109.pdf
or just follow the link from the home page. Note that 50% of the final score will be awarded by Committee who will judge the

innovativeness of the entry. This is an entirely new concept in contesting.

Visitations

A new rule introduced for the 2009 contests is that contesters may be 'Visited'. This is a bit like NFD inspections conducted in UK, to check that all rules are being followed. There has been much discussion about how this may be enacted, but no details have yet been published. Of course, this is likely to involve only leading contesters and hopefully will work mostly as a deterrent.

True, this is an acknowledgement by Committee that not all forms of cheating can be detected or proven by log-checking. Only someone on the spot can definitely confirm that power output is within the category limit or that a Single-Op is not being helped by other operators. Only time will tell what impact this new approach may have on controlling the nefarious activities of those who would seek to win at any cost. Meantime, if a station is selected for a Visit it should be taken as a positive: this is directed at confirming compliance with rules, not at securing evidence of cheating.

Publication Dates

In recent years the biggest complaint about CQ WW, quite justified, was that certificates were badly delayed. This has finally been overcome by one individual stepping up to the plate to take on this massive task: Barry, W5GN, has done a superb job. When volunteers are needed it takes one individual to step forward, but often an appropriate person does not bubble to the surface.

Perhaps the next big area of concerns are cheating and transparency. This is being addressed with recent initiatives which will hopefully go a long way to correcting these concerns. With increased transparency contesters may come to realise that a vast amount of work goes on behind the scenes, especially to deter and to catch cheats.

Which then leads us to the next complaint: late reporting of results. A minimum of eight months goes by before final CQ WW results are officially published. In years gone by this was considered normal, but with the advent of electronic submissions, shorter dead-lines and clever log-checking software the time delay between the contest and reporting of the final results can be dramatically reduced. Nowadays many domestic contests are reported within days; even mid-size events like European Field Day are published within just 6-8 weeks and the IOTA contest with 2,000 logs is reported within three months. And these events are properly log-checked, not just processed through a flawed computer program. It is entirely clear from tester feedback that this fast reporting of results generates increased enthusiasm. Testers who take part in many events each year can barely remember the last CQ WW when they hear the results of their efforts, some 8-9 months later.

CQ Magazine's stance is that publication of results adds to enthusiasm for the following year's event, an advantage which would be lost if results were published soon after the event. You win some, you lose some. Most testers, I believe, understand that early reporting dramatically increases excitement and, by the way, promotes serious planning for the following year.

A major problem with which CQ must grapple is the publication schedule of all their contests, both rules and results. To change one contest is to disrupt the rest. Maybe a full-scale readjustment of reporting dates for all contests is needed, but this would be difficult to implement all at once.

Of course, many results can be divined from studying the Claimed Scores and watching websites, but there is nothing like having the final results confirmed in black and white. However, there seems to be little likelihood of CQ publishing results significantly earlier in the immediate future.

The Magazine

The monthly magazine 'Amateur Radio' of course covers all the CQ family of contest rules and results as individual features. The monthly columns on Contesting (K1AR), DX (N4AA) and Propagation (NW7US) are excellent, and the Editorials (W2VU) are often thought-provoking. As with most amateur radio magazines the articles are of a high standard and cover a wide range of subjects, only some of which may interest you personally.

I am often surprised to learn that serious CQWW testers do not subscribe to the magazine. It is not costly: delivery outside North America by airmail is \$62 per annum, equivalent to just over £3 per issue, one pint of beer a month! (Note: I have no commercial interest here whatsoever; I just love CQ WW contests!).

Meantime, for those who do not subscribe or those whose magazine is delayed in the post, I usually report a summary of UK results to the uk-contesting reflector.

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

G3ASQ Peter Ives
G3EZZ John Eaton
G3TLG John Robley

The Death of the DX Cluster?

Roger Western, G3SXW

Some dyed-in-the-wool DXers are giving up DX chasing. The Terrorists, Deliberate QRMers, Frequency Cops and Incompetent Operators are killing the fun of the chase. In Europe especially it has now become a major problem which affects all DXpeditions, no matter their own operating skill, judicious use of small split frequency ranges, frequent identifying and so forth.

More recently we have begun to conjecture that one of the major sources of these problems is the DX Cluster: maybe QRMers simply click on a spot and hit the transmit button to continuously send their call sign. These are the Incompetent Operators who seem not to have the necessary skills. The true Terrorists click on the DX Cluster spot and start transmitting Deliberate QRM, anonymously of course.

The Future of DX Cluster?

One of the lessons learned during a corporate career is that unless there is change over time, things decay. The DX Cluster has barely changed its concept since it was first invented, so maybe the time has arrived for a review. We don't want to see the whole system shut down, but surely there are ways in which to eliminate or at least reduce abuse of the system which damages DXpeditions. Some have already been suggested on the CDXC reflector:

- Make DX Cluster password-protected. This could possibly persuade some of the Terrorists to think twice as there is a chance of being identified. Sysops would need to track IP numbers (eg K1TTT). But this only tackles Spotters, leaving the silent Abusers to react on-air to incoming spots. A deterrent?

- Convert spots from frequency into band + mode only. I imagine that the software development to achieve this would be doable as the band segments are already in place for mode filtering. It might only need an extra filter by the sysop to identify the call signs of those stations which require this kind of protection. This could be fed from the NG3K DXpedition webpage and at first could be developed just with one major DXpedition.
- Use only club private Clusters. Michael, G7VJR, already provides this system for CDXC members. A certain critical mass needs to be reached so that the DX is spotted quickly (ie enough users tuning the bands at any one time), but not so many that Terrorists are let loose.

Surely other part-solutions could be developed. Maybe each solution needs to be considered as partial, just chipping away at the problem. I doubt that anyone can come up with a silver bullet.

Other Actions

There are other steps that can and maybe should be taken, especially DF. The location of three FT5GA pirates has recently been identified with professional DF systems: south IT9, Latvia and VE2. We need to follow up on this information and hope that some local peer pressure can be brought to bear.

But for the moment let's restrict this article to the damage being wrought by the DX Cluster. We have heard the comment: "I wish it had never been invented". All DXpedition operators have their own

anecdotes of suffering at the hands of Terrorists. Certainly I have frequently suffered what I judge to be Cluster-generated Deliberate QRM. You feel helpless, the only option being to QSY, but Cluster alerts them each time to the new frequency, giving a QRM-free window of only a few minutes.

And surely we are at the stage where psychological analysis to divine WHY these folks do what they do is pointless. There is no doubt a range of reasons. Also there's little point in bemoaning the loss of the old

days, reminiscing over how good it used to be. So let's instead debate what positive steps could be taken. Maybe there is an international Sysop Forum or at least informal note-swapping. The major providers need to get their heads together.

And quickly!

WAWA Annual Pilgrimage

Roger Western, G3SXW

The definition given in the Concise VooDude English Dictionary for 'WAWA' is 'West Africa Wins Always'. Put simply, you must do things THEIR way and at their pace. That's fair enough really - when in Rome etc.

Our contest group has visited West Africa for the CQ WW CW contest every November for the past 16 years, with a team of anything up to ten operators. We mount seven 1KW stations and a dozen or so antennas to enter the Multi-Multi section, achieving 1st or 2nd place in the world almost every year. November 2009 will be no exception!

"Where do they find the energy and motivation to keep going like this year after year?", I hear you ask. It's mainly because we move country every other year with all the new challenges which this presents. Also we usually have a rookie or two on the team each year, so this provides fresh blood and impetus. In this order we have been 9G5AA Ghana, TY5A Benin, 5V7A Togo, 9G5AA Ghana again, XT2DX Burkina Faso, 5U5Z Niger, TZ5A Mali, 3X5A

Guinea, mostly for two years each. The modus operandi is to leave the stockpile of equipment in storage locally to be taken out and dusted off each November. To this we add any needed bits and pieces and/or repaired gear now being returned, taken as airline luggage. We each travel with Elecraft transceiver, laptop, keyer and headphones.

New Country

Having done 3X5A Guinea for two years it is time to move on, this time to Sierra Leone. It is just 200 miles from Conakry, Guinea, to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Ah-Ha, but there is almost no communication between these two places: no boats, no flights and the roads are almost impassable after the devastations of the rainy season which ends in October each year. As we found during our recce visit last year, this is a REAL problem for moving our gear between the two cities. We discovered two possibilities. One involves a truck, hired in Conakry, which would meander through back roads and bribe its way across the border, taking 2-3 days to make the journey.

This seemed distinctly risky to us and we would clearly not accompany the truck. The second was to charter a helicopter to fly in from Freetown and return with our gear. We chose this as the lesser of two evils.

Enter onto the stage Zbig, SP7BTB, and 9L1BTB. We met this fine fellow in Freetown during our recce. He is responsible for the UN fleet of helicopters. Hmmm, very interesting! He arranged a charter of a MiG 25-seater with plenty of space for our equipment. The cost will be \$2,800 (about £1,600) – this sounds a lot, but it will be split between eight operators, about £200 each. Anyway, we have no choice but to bite this bullet if we want to make this move. Besides, we could not face a third year in Conakry where corruption is a real problem, nothing works and the political situation is fragile.

Schedule – Nov 2009

Fri 20 Nov: fly to Conakry/Freetown
Sat 21: helicopter transfers equipment to Freetown
Sun 22 – Fri 27: set up
Sat 28 – Sun 29: CQ WW CW contest
Mon 30: tear-down
Tue 1 Dec: fly home

Tickets were purchased in September. British Midland charge £790 for London-Freetown return and nearly as much for a one-way ticket (madness!). Three of the team will fly to Conakry, five of us straight to Freetown. The CKY team will arrive late evening, then early morning will transfer the stuff in a truck to the airport and TRY to arrange customs clearance, ready to load onto the helicopter. They need one-way tickets Paris to Conakry and then Freetown to London. The Freetown team will be on hand to greet the helicopter. Thank goodness for mobile phones on that day!

Licences

The transmitting licences are rather straightforward, but previous DXpeditions

have found that it is very slow. We met the licensing manager on our recce trip and established a rapport with him when we discovered that he had been educated in the Birmingham area. The time, effort and cost of these recce trips really are an excellent investment when personal relationships can be put in place. So, all documents were e-mailed to him: two-page application form, home licence and passport for each operator.

At the time of writing (mid September) we are told that the applications are approved and that the invoice will be with us shortly. This will be \$125 (£78) each. When this is paid the licences will be issued. Until that moment we will not know for sure that our requested callsigns have been issued, but fingers are crossed. So we hope to be:

9L1FB	Gary ZL2iFB
9L1NH	Nick G3RWF
9L1WP	Fred GBWP
9L5A	Roger G3SXW (contest call)
9L5VT	Vince K5VT
9L7CW	Bud N7CW
9L7NS	Ned AA7A

Hotel

Again, the recce trip was invaluable, during which we uncovered the two ideal locations, both in the suburb of Aberdeen. These two hotels are on a promontory, surrounded by the sea. However, the Cape Sierra Hotel is now closed for 1-2 years for refurbishment, so we will use the Bintumani Hotel. These hotels were government-owned but badly in need of modernising, so they have been sold to investors who pay in kind, ie they will invest the refurbishment cost. Our hotel was bought by a large Chinese company. The local managers are Chinese and very efficient to deal with.

The Bintumani Hotel occupies a circular 150 ft flat-top hill. The ground slopes down steeply to the sea, some hundreds of feet away in all directions. The only connection to the land is to the south, so the take-off is

entirely clear in all the important directions. The maximum distance to the sea is 300 yards all the way from SW through N to SE. Unfortunately there is no way to locate vertical antennas immediately beside the salt water as the beach is ringed by private residences.

Creature comforts will be, according to our recce experience, about 1-2 star but this, after all, is not a main priority for us! If the bands are totally dead then there is always the on-site casino: this is a Chinese hotel after all!

We're Off!

We are now making final preparations: visas, yellow fever vaccinations, buying malaria tablets, stocking up on cash dollars. There are also, of course, many details concerning stations and antennas, but much of this is pretty much pre-ordained these days, like a well-oiled machine. An Alpha amplifier has been repaired (thanks, Ned) and a spare one provided (thanks, Vince).

As always there are discussions about 160 and 80 m antennas.

This year unfortunately John, G4IRN, cannot join us, so Gary, ZL2iFB (G4iFB), will take over the IT department and all compoota things. Nick, G3RWF, will be a valuable asset, bringing to bear his recent experiences operating in Sierra Leone as 9LØW only last year. Bud, N7CW, from Phoenix has offered to take over the position of Treasurer, mostly a matter of cash-flow, but it can get horribly complicated with several currencies. Ned, AA7A, is our RF king, as usual, with Fred, G4BWP, and Vince, K5VT, being in charge of antennas. The author of this article is just along for the ride, oh and he will be QSL manager.

Wish us luck, particularly with that helicopter transfer. We look forward to working everyone on six bands, 28-29 November.

CDXC Reflector Guidelines

This Reflector is intended for the exchange of information on DX-related topics, QSL information, award schemes, DXpeditions and other news between CDXC Members. Our aim is to keep the information content high and noise low. Please keep to DX-related topics, within reason.

Feel free to ask questions. The Reflector is a place where we can obtain advice and develop our DXing skills. There is plenty of opportunity for the more experienced of our members to help the less experienced ones. The Reflector is a place where we can express opinions to the Committee, but attacks or criticism of individuals, the CDXC Committee, the RSGB, or any other groups, is not acceptable.

Do not post messages to individuals. Keep personal replies off-Reflector. There are many of us who probably don't find such posts relevant.

This is a Club with enormous resources and skill. We are all very privileged to be members. Treat each other with respect, and behave with good manners.

Doctorate in Dxing – a DX Christmas Quiz

Prof. DX Steve, 9M6DXX

We already have the Contest University in the UK. Now CDXC is offering Degrees in the art of DXing. Are you a Prof. DX, a PhDX, an MA (DX), a BA (DX) – or should you still be at school? Take our Doctorate in DXing and see how much you know about DX people, places and prefixes.

1.

Put names (first name *and* surname) to the following callsigns:

E51CG, EAØJC, OH2BH, ON4UN,
SMØAGD, VK9NS, VP2VB, VP2VI,
W4BPD, W6KG.

2.

Which British radio amateur, now SK, was the *first* operator of AC4YN? Give his name *and* UK callsign.

3.

Which famous DXpeditioner now holds the callsign AE6IY?

4.

Give the name *and* callsign of the inventor of the cubical quad antenna. For a bonus point what was the callsign of the broadcast station where he was working at the time?

5.

Give the name *and* callsign of the current ITU Secretary-General.

6.

In 1977-1978 Belgian sailor Willy de Roos became the first person to circumnavigate the Americas. While doing so he operated Maritime Mobile. What was his callsign and the name of his yacht?

7.

Give the name *and* home call of the licensee who operated, quite legally, on the amateur bands with the non-Amateur Service callsign TYA11.

8.

What are the *nationalities* of the following resident licensees?

5R8FU, 9M2TO, 9V1YC, CN2DX,
DL1BDF, H44MD, HSØZIN, LAØHK,
PZ5RA, TI7WGI, TLØA, VK9NL, VP5JM,
XU7TZG, XW1A.

9.

VU7, formerly the Laccadive Islands, is now called the Lakshadweep Islands. Why might that name be considered both exaggerated and tautological?

10.

VK9. One VK9 island has exactly the same name as the main island of another DXCC Entity. Another VK9 island has *almost* the same name as another DXCC Entity. What are the *prefixes* of the two other Entities?

11.

List all the current (not deleted) DXCC Entities that have ‘Reef’ in their official name on the ARRL DXCC List.

12.

Name the capital cities of all Australian States (not Territories), *in their prefix numerical order*.

13.

What do the words *ko, koh, ö, øy, jima* and *do* have in common?

14.

Not DXCC Entities. The following did not make it as separate DXCC counters. Which Entities *do* they count as:

Hutt River Province, Pribilof Islands, Redonda, Seborga, Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus?

15.

Timor-Leste or East Timor has taken over the prefix of which former DXCC Entity?

16.

Prefixes that don't map to DXCC Entities. How many DXCC Entities could, theoretically at least, use the following prefixes?

9M4, E5, GB, SY, VP8.

17.

Which is the only ITU prefix block that is shared between two countries' licensing administrations?

18.

'Funny' prefixes. Which countries use the following special prefixes (all have been used on the amateur bands in recent years):

4A, 4F, 4M, AO, AT, AX, AY, D8, XO, XQ?

19.

Many former VHF-only or Novice licensees are now permitted to use some or all of the HF bands. Some of these have unusual prefixes. What countries are these:

9W, E2, SA?

20.

Unofficial prefixes. Which territories or regions have used these unofficial prefixes:

1A, 1B, 1C, 1M, 1P, 1S, 1SL, 1Z, H5, S0, X5, V9?

[Answers on p 47. Ed.]

VK9X/G6AY

Phil, G3SWH, and Jim, G3RTE, will be active from Christmas Island (VK9X) between 20-27 February 2010. Christmas Island counts as OC-002 for IOTA. The 2008 .Most Wanted. survey by *DX Magazine* shows Christmas Island at #66 worldwide for DXCC. We will both use the single callsign VK9X/G6AY. Our activity will be on CW only on all bands 80-10m. There will be no 160m activity. Propagation permitting we plan to have two stations on the air for as many hours per day as possible. Our main objective is to work as many European, North American and ROTW stations on as many bands as possible. QSL via G3SWH, either direct with SAE and adequate return postage (recommended), via Phil's website www.g3swh.org.uk for a bureau reply or via the bureau. There is more information at www.g3swh.org.uk/christmas-island.html.

G3SWH

K4M's Response to G3SXW and the Chiltern DX Club

Recently an article by a member of the Chiltern DX Club, G3SXW, appeared in the Chiltern DX Club bulletin alleging that "questionable tactics" were being used by the K4M DXpedition "in an attempt to squeeze more cash out of DXers to pay for their DXpedition". References were also made to the successful groups that put on the K5D, VP6DX and recent VK9 DXpeditions. Since G3SXW also refers to the RSGB and GMDX they are being provided a copy of this response. We would like to address this issue from numerous fronts.

First, approximately 74% of the K4M DXpedition is being funded personally by the 18 operators who are actually going to Midway. With a budget of approximately \$130,000, other sources are being sought to make up the shortfall. This is not unusual these days in large full-scale operations. So, his mindset and accusation that DXers will be paying "for their DXpedition" is untrue, but most of all insulting.

Unlike the majority of DX locations out there, there is no commercial airline service to Midway or hotels to utilize. Because your member only travels to convenient and established locations with scheduled transportation and lodging facilities he overlooks these circumstances that create increased costs. Could it be he has no clue as to what it takes – financially and operationally - to assemble and successfully activate these types of locations?

The only approved method of travel to Midway is by chartered air from Hawaii, resulting in approximately \$60,000 of the budget. In addition to that cost, no lodging components and/or bulk food items are allowed to be brought in and we are required to lodge and eat at their facility at a cost of some \$45,000. In addition to the team contribution, each operator must pay their way from their home QTH to Honolulu

(this amount is in addition to the individual contribution).

Another portion of the budget is for shipping the two tons of equipment by sea to and from Midway (no equipment is carried on the aircraft - only the team). We were also faced with the unusual requirement to upgrade the specific electrical service we will be using. This improvement will be left in place for what we hope will be yearly DXpeditions to this rare location. Attempting to put something in place for the future is quite different than flying in on vacation to operate a DXpedition.

The article further states budgets are kept secret. Again this is unfounded. A budget is provided with any formal request for support when asked. If your club did not ask, it was not provided. Does the author suggest we are running this operation for a profit? There is simply no analogy between a remote operation like the K5K, 3B9C, K4M, K5D or VP6DX DXpeditions and some lone individual and/or his friend visiting a semi-rare DX entity served by scheduled airlines with hotel accommodations. We all know even this type of operation generates income and it too most likely is used to offset the cost.

It takes a large-scale operation to successfully activate hard-to-get to places like Midway, K5D, VP6DX, BS7H, K5K, VKØIR, etc. **They are rare for a reason!**

Secondly, Roger expounds on the QSLing procedures. Historically it has taken six months to get a QSL from a major DXpedition making 100,000 QSOs. Needless to say, the QSL manager cannot instantly verify and respond to all of the incoming QSL requests simultaneously. K4M is drawing upon recent innovations by VP6DX and K5D to provide an online QSL request page. This software automatically

checks your request with what is in the computer logs and immediately prints labels. Moreover, it frees up the QSL manager to check for mismatches due to busted calls or time errors. And, it allows for periodic updates to LOTW as the software is doing previous manual tasks. New software also allows us to parse the logs to allow us to thank our donors with immediate LOTW uploads. Shouldn't those who help make this happen deserve a thank you for their support? Roger seems to feel this is "extortion". He has also referenced in other circles whatever happened to the \$5 bill being put into the SASE when you mail it? What's the difference? It's only been automated now and to the point no SASE is needed and you won't be waiting 4 - 6 months. His logic does not make sense. The article further accuses those who operate from other DX locations of purposely delaying in one way or another the QSL process in an effort to gather more support. That too is hogwash and again insulting.

So what is the problem? Apparently your member feels that everyone should receive their confirmation immediately and at no cost. Our cost for immediacy is a voluntary contribution to the DXpedition, either directly or via a club of which they are a member. After operations on Midway are completed, every club that makes a contribution is free to send a list of its members who have worked K4M to the QSL manager. From this list an LOTW upload will take place giving immediate credit where a valid QSO was made. The individual members of the club are not and have not been asked to make any additional contribution beyond the contribution already made by their club. There is no minimum amount that a club must contribute in order to take advantage of this "first in line" system. He makes accusations like this is a new process when in fact the process was first offered by the BS7H DXpedition several years ago and was welcomed without any known problems. Where was he then?

So, if one is not in a club that makes a contribution and makes no personal contribution, that individual will still get their QSL card at no cost if an SASE is forwarded - period. You just won't get your card before the automated system. If you don't want to make any sort of financial contribution, then don't, and rest assured that within a few months you will receive your QSL card and LOTW upload, free of charge. This is hardly "extortion".

So, with all that said, we ask if your organization agrees with the accusations as stated by G3SXW. If so, we will return your donations with no further discussion. If, however, the position of your club is not that of the article we would like to hear that too. What do the majority of your members think? We take these charges seriously. Moreover, being accused in print of "**extortion, questionable tactics, arm twisting, shabby tactics, slippery slopes, immoral ways** and lastly, **money grubbing**" is highly inflammatory and scurrilous. He expresses "this is a HOBBY". How can he even think that and slander others at the same time? In the eyes of many - he is no gentleman. Since the accusations appeared in open print we request this response be published as well. There are always two sides to a situation and our side needs to be heard.

And finally, but without hesitation, we do want to say that as always, we value the support of CDXC, RSGB and the GMDX. Each club has provided support without hesitation for many years and those who make these DXpeditions sincerely appreciate that and hope to have some clarification from your club.

The Midway 2009 Team

[See 'Chiltern DX Club – Aims and Objectives' on p. 8, ie 'Please note that views expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee'. Ed.]

Setting the Record Straight

Bob Allphin, K4UEE

In the last issue of the *CDXC Digest* an article appeared written by Roger Western, G3SXW, entitled “More Questionable Tactics”. Because the allegations and implications made in the article are so off-base and inconsistent with the facts, the record must be set straight.

The article was riddled with terms including **extortion, questionable tactics, arm-twisting, shabby tactics, slippery slopes, moral ways and money grubbing**. Despite the inflammatory nature of these words I shall ignore them, and respond in a calm and reasonable manner. I do not intend to rebut each paragraph, charge, allegation or opinion offered in his article. It is far better to just state the facts and let the readers draw their own conclusions. The methodology and reasoning for how we are handling the K5D QSLs also apply to 3YØX. Both were very expensive DXpeditions and both ranked in the top ten “most wanted” DXCC entities. Therefore, the need for support from the DX community was essential. The need for outside support does dictate our QSL strategy. If these DXpeditions were in common locations with air service and hotels and with costs within the means of the typical DXpeditioner, a different QSL strategy might have been employed.

First, for any DXpedition that I have been associated with, there has *never* been a requirement whereby a contribution toward DXpedition expenses was a prerequisite for a QSL card OR other confirmation method such as LoTW. Never, ever!

I have just spent five days traveling with Roger and our long friendship is unaffected by this difference of opinion. I am very glad about that! When we discussed this topic at length, he told me the basic issue is fairness

and morality and it is not about money. He feels that a non-contributor to a DXpedition is being “punished” because they will not have their QSOs confirmed until after all the contributors’ QSOs are confirmed. He feels that the non-contributor is, in effect, being blackmailed into making a contribution. His solution to this “unfairness” is to upload the logs to LoTW shortly after the DXpedition is concluded. He believes that most DXers, being fair-minded individuals, would understand the financial sacrifices made by the team members, their time spent away from home, work and family, and the physical dangers involved in transportation on chartered vessels and helicopters and would willingly make a financial contribution to the DXpedition. This, despite the fact that they may already have their QSOs confirmed via LoTW. My view is that some will contribute, most will not. And when a DXpedition is tens of thousands of dollars in the red, it is no time to experiment with theories about the fairness in people's minds and hearts.

Therefore, contrary to what the Roger says; it is about money! Major DXpedition organizers couldn't go where they go, do what they do, and make tens of thousands of QSOs without money to supplement the DX team members’ contributions.

You might ask: do contributors get their money's worth? Well, in my view, they usually do. For example, K5D made 116,000 QSOs, 3YØX made 88,000 QSOs. Speaking from my own experience only, DXpeditions that I have participated in over the last ten years have made 650,000 QSOs. Pretty good bang for the buck!

Let me provide some insights. You may wonder how we get the money to pay for a mega-DXpedition that requires the charter of an ocean-going vessel, helicopters or

both, often for weeks at a time? First, the team members kick in. This usually amounts to about 50-70% of the total budgeted cost. Then, we publicly ask for support from DX Foundations, DX Clubs and individual DXers. We ask that donations be sent in advance of the DXpedition because so many of the costs are upfront and must be paid in advance to secure expensive transportation or to ship thousands of pounds of equipment in order to set up 6-10 stations with the necessary antennas to provide QSOs on all modes and bands. In exchange, these early donors are listed as sponsors on the DXpedition website, and/or perhaps on the DXpedition QSL card. Some buy mugs and T-shirts from the DXpedition online store to show their support and make a further contribution. They do it voluntarily and seem PROUD to help!

In exchange for their support, they are often told they will get confirmation of their QSOs first. Now I ask you, is that fair? Roger says no. I say yes, absolutely! Just in case you are having trouble understanding the logic of this, just reverse the roles. For example, assume that you are a contributor and your buddy is not. He gets his card or an LoTW confirmation before you do. Hmmm... is that fair? I certainly don't think so and you wouldn't either.

It is very simple; all we are doing is saying "THANK YOU" to those who included something extra with their QSL card or better yet, made an early contribution when it was most needed! I've been doing that for 30 years. This is NOT something new. Fair is fair!

Let's talk about LoTW. For K5D, LoTW uploads are done in batches that parallel the confirmations being made via direct QSL requests. These include QSL card requests, with or without donations, bureau cards, OQRS submissions (see next paragraph) and even some e-mail requests. (We did *not* run the pre-DXpedition donors into LoTW first, although we are considering this

approach in the future.) So with this system, the only people who do not get an LoTW confirmation until the very end of the QSL process are those who did not ask for a confirmation in the first place! Fair? Yes, indeed!

Do you know about the new Online QSL Request System (OQRS)? This is a new system where DXers request their QSL online and don't have to spend the time and money to mail a QSL to the DXpedition QSL manager. We ask for a minimum \$5.00 (or 4 Euros) contribution to avail themselves of this service AND they move to the head of the line. This minimum amount easily covers the expense of providing a QSL card, an envelope, postage and an address label. In exchange for providing this unique special service, an extra couple of dollars goes into the kitty. Remember too that OQRS also provides the ability to donate other amounts, all the way up to \$200.00 if desired. Many K5D contributors gave more than the minimum amount. OQRS also provides a way to request a bureau QSL at no cost. Just fill in the request form with your QSO information and push "send". These requests will be first in line when bureau cards are processed near the end. This is at no charge! Is this fair? Absolutely!

In summary, by utilizing OQRS, the contributor, with as little as \$5.00, moves to the head of the line. Ahead of those who contribute nothing! Is that fair? Absolutely! Is the cost fair? Absolutely! For obvious OQRS was very, very popular with those seeking a K5D QSL.

Roger raises the question of members of DX Clubs that make contributions to a DXpedition and use their membership dues to do it. Aren't they entitled to some preference? Yes, they are. For the K5D DXpedition, we batched QSLs for the EUDXF, GDXF and the JA Desecheo Support Group. The groups collected all the QSO information from their members who wanted to avail themselves of the system.

They then sent that information to our QSL manager and he confirmed the QSOs and sent the QSLs back in a batch. Our QSL manager personally delivered hundreds of cards for JA contributors at Dayton. They were hand-carried back to Japan and distributed by the donor organization. Works well for everybody. Is that fair? Yes, we think so!

Lastly, one unspoken accusation that was clearly implied was that the DXpedition organizers were trying to make a profit. Why else would they incorporate these despicable, unfair, blackmailing tactics? I can only speak from my experience. No DXpedition that I am aware of has *ever* received more in contributions than was spent. But, you might ask, what if the DXpedition *does* receive more in contributions than it requires? Good question. In the case of K5D and 3YØX we formed a non-profit organization to collect the contributions from team members, other contributors and pay the DXpedition expenses. It is against US Federal law for us to profit. Thus, any surplus must be used.

One way to do this is reimburse part of the expenses of the team members. Remember that team members are usually required to pay their own transportation expenses, including hotel, and meals prior to and after the DXpedition. And they make a contribution toward 50-70% of the overall DXpedition budget. So, let's use the 3YØX Peter I DXpedition as an example. Team members paid all their expenses to and from the DXpedition starting and ending point in Punta Arenas, Chile. And kicked in an additional \$16,000 each. We had a small surplus after it was all said and done and each team member got back \$500. Was that fair? They certainly thought so!

Another common method of using any excess funds is to return some of the contributions made by the largest contributors. For example, we have returned money to NCDXF and INDEXA as they are usually our largest contributors. In the case

of K5D, if there is a surplus, we have all the same options, but also the option of holding funds to see what happens with Navassa. The contributions were made to The KP1-5 Project and as you know, we are hoping to activate Navassa some day too.

One final comment about my favorite people who perform my least favorite chore... the QSL managers. These are volunteers who dedicate their free time to what can be an immense project. The process gets done when it gets done. Four months, eight months, whatever it takes. They don't punch a clock. To put a strict timeline on the QSLing would be offensive to those volunteers that do the QSLing for mega-DXpeditions. And, imagine what the expense would be if this was done by hired personnel?

In summary, my objective was to set the record straight. Most of us realize that there are always several ways to look at a situation and that reasonable men can differ. Roger and I are great friends and always will be, but I thought it was important that the readers of the CDXC *Digest* hear the other side of the story.

I wish you well.

73 Bob, K4UEE

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

From KC4AA

I was taken aback (disgusted) after reading the article entitled "Questionable Tactics Again" written by Roger Western (G3SXW) and published in the CDXC September 2009 *Digest*. What is G3SXW trying to prove to the DX community by writing his thoughtless article? To place remote islands and land locations on the air is a very costly and most times a very dangerous operation. Last time I checked there are no scheduled flights and hotel accommodations on KP1, KP5 and 3YØX for amateur radio DXpeditions. Also, does G3SXW think that you can fund a DXpedition to a remote location by the DXpedition team members alone? Do you compromise the safety of DXpedition team members with a low budget operation ie by not employing helicopter support when helicopter support is critical for a safe operation? The stated goals of most major DXpeditions is to provide the opportunity to the DX

community to make contact with that rare DX entity on the various modes and bands while operating 24 hours a day using multiple radios over a period of 10, 14 or 21 days. Who can predict when that rare DX entity will be activated again by a follow on DXpedition to keep that rare DX entity out of the worldwide "Top 100 Most Wanted List". Request for funding support to DX societies and clubs as well as individual DXers should be encouraged by the large high-budget DXpeditions.

This is my retort to G3SXW's article. My prescription for Roger Western (G3SXW) is a good "dose" of reality!

As you see fit, please pass my comments to the DX community.

73 Bill, KC4AA

Give a CDXC Gift Membership!

Give the gift of a CDXC Membership to the radio amateur of your choice. At your request and on receipt of your payment, the Club will:

- Send a New Member's Pack with a covering note to the nominee of your choice, advising them of your generous gift of CDXC membership and
- On request pass on any special message wishing the recipient a 'Happy Birthday', 'Thank You' or a similar good wish.

To make a gift of a membership you should download the 'Gift Membership Application Form' available in the Members Pages Area of the CDXC website and complete the required details. Then send the form, together with your cheque for the appropriate amount, to the CDXC Treasurer, Nigel/G3TXF at the address shown on the form.

As with all memberships, if your gift is made in the period from July until December then the amount payable is £18. The rate applicable from January through to June is £9. So consider gifting a CDXC membership. In gifting a membership you will not only be giving something which you know to be great value, but also be helping CDXC and the DXpeditions which our Club supports.

Return to Agios Georgios Island, Cyprus (IOTA AS-120)

Mike Potter, 5B4AGX

On 28-29 July 2001 George Beasley, 5B4AGC / G3LNS, with a group of Cypriot hams, activated Agios Georgios Island (St. George's Island) off the coast of Cyprus near the port of Latchi (Latsi) using the call C4MG for the IOTA Contest.

George, with his XYL Barbara, lived in Cyprus for over 10 years. In 2008 they decided to return to UK, making the long overland journey through Europe to their new home in Redditch.

Sadly in February 2009 George became a Silent Key. Many tributes have since been paid to George for his activities in both UK and Cyprus.

Barbara was able to come to the CDXC Summer Social at the home of Neville, G3NUG, and Trish in July 2009. During the day Barbara asked about bringing George's ashes back to Cyprus, but was unsure of a suitable resting place for them. Why not return to Agios Georgios? No more appropriate place could be suggested.

So Agios Georgios it was to be – and it was planned to take place on what would have been George's birthday, 24 September 2009.

Due to various administrative and landing problems it would not be possible to visit the island, but at least a location just offshore should be suitable.

On the morning of 24 September Barbara, along with George's daughter Juliette, met up at Latchi with David, 5B4AJT, who had kindly offered the use of his boat 'Little Star' for the journey.

Happily the seas were calm with only a gentle swell, much to the relief of Barbara, who has a strong fear of boats and the sea. In fact the wind was so slight that the trip had to be made both ways under engine power.

On arriving at the island Barbara and Juliette laid George's ashes on the sea along with red roses and rose petals. It was a moving scene and one we will never forget as the roses drifted slowly away on the current.

David recited 'The Signalman's Prayer' in memory of George having served with The Royal Signals.

So George now has a final resting place near an island with his name and where he had the opportunity to operate from, on the island of Cyprus. A country dear to his heart from both his Army days and in retirement.

On returning to Latchi Harbour a group of George and Barbara's friends joined Barbara and Juliette for lunch.

At lunch were:

Barbara & Juliette
Alf, 5B4AFB and Doreen
Don, 5B4AGQ and Marlies
Mike, 5B4AGX and Teresa
Alan, 5B4AHJ and Beryl
John, 5B4AHK and Jaye
David, 5B4AJT and Chris

Mike Potter, 5B4AGX

24 September 2009

Swiss radio amateurs receive official license, start detailed planning for DXpedition to Côn Cỏ Island

LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND, 15 September 2009 – Scheduling their activities for April 2010, an international group of amateur radio operators plans to conduct a DXpedition to a remote island off the coast of Vietnam. During their 2-week stay, they will make radio contacts with as many ham radio operators as possible around the globe. Running four stations 24 hours a day, they hope to reach 60,000 hams in that period.

In addition, the Vietnam telecom authorities have issued an official amateur radio license as required for any such activity; in this case, the callsign under which all radio communications will take place is 3W6C.

The multinational project, being coordinated by Swiss ham radio operators, consists of roughly 20 individuals including one woman with members not only from Switzerland but also from Vietnam, Germany, USA and Japan.

The team members are starting to make the extensive preparations necessary for such a DXpedition. Côn Cỏ Island, with a land surface of just 2 square kilometers, is 32 km off the central coast of Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin. The island has a population of approximately 400 people. For many years it was a restricted military zone, but today the Vietnamese government is working to turn this idyllic location into a tourist and vacation destination.

What is of special interest to ham operators is that this island has rarely seen any radio activity. Because it belongs to the popular Islands of the Air program (designation: AS-185), and the fact that Vietnam itself is high in the list of most-wanted countries for radio contacts, the DXpedition expects very high interest from the amateur radio community around the world.

The goal is to make contacts on as many different frequencies as possible, even in the 80 meter and 160 meter bands, which makes this DXpedition very special. But this goal also means that the group must transfer considerable amounts of equipment – including radios, antennas, power generators, computers, and various ancillary supplies – with them to the island.

The need for sponsors

In order to conduct such an extensive operation requires considerable financial resources. And while the team members are all making personal financial sacrifices to make this DXpedition possible, they are also dependent upon donations from many sources, whether individuals, ham radio clubs or commercial sponsors. They would be most grateful for any financial support, in any amount; information for making donations is available on the DXpedition website at www.3w6c.qrv.ch.

IOTA News

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2009 edition)

New IOTA reference numbers issued

NA-230	VYØ	Nunavut (Ottawa Islands) group (Canada)
NA-236	KL	Sanak Islands (Alaska)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

NA-087	K7A	Popof Island, Shumagin Islands (September 2009)
NA-169	N7RO/P	Tatoosh Island (August 2009)
NA-222	K7A	Wosnesenski Island, Pavlof Islands (October 2009)
NA-230	VYØO	Gilmour Island, Ottawa Islands (September 2009)
NA-236	K7A	Sanak Island, Sanak Islands (September/October 2009)
OC-127	H44MY	Rennell Island (August/September 2009)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

17 October 2009

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CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP pcooper@guernsey.net

After doing this column for the *Digest* for a few years now, I think it is time for a change. I have been finding it more and more difficult to come up with something new to write in each edition, and I have decided that this will be my last RTTY Column for the *Digest*. But, all is not lost, as I have managed to persuade Roger, G3LDI, to step in and write about RTTY and the datamodes from next year. It has been a difficult decision to make, but I felt that the column was becoming a little stagnant, and it has been more and more difficult to bring fresh new ideas and thoughts to the magazine. I think all of you for your comments, good and not quite so good, as these have helped me a great deal.

So, how can I finish in style? I thought it best to point out a few things you can do to help yourself, and to get that bit more from RTTY, either when chasing DX, playing in contests, or just having fun on the bands.

So, a few basic guidelines:

The first is **READ THE RULES** when entering a contest. This may sound obvious, but when you see exchanges that are wrong, it makes you wonder. As I am writing this I have just finished participating in the JARTS contest, where you send your age, (99 for multi ops, and 00 for YL ops), and a few asked if 99 was their real age, missing the point about multi-op stations. I even had a couple that sent TU 599 005 005, which was obviously left over from CQ WW. Reading the rules will also tell you what the multipliers are, and these are important!

Take a look at the 3,830 summaries some time, and you will see folk who regularly make a large number of QSOs, but have relatively poor scores. This is often because they don't know what the mults are and fail to chase them.

My second point would be to sort out your software well before the contest, not the evening before, and perhaps just as important, not to make upgrades the day before either! Whilst most of agree that MMTTY is an excellent piece of software for RTTY, it was not designed for contesting. OK, it has some basics for contesting, but these are really basic, and make your life harder, not easier. You wouldn't believe the number of e-mails I had after CQ WW and the Makrothen, asking about how you get Cabrillo files from the log, and how you calculate a score. The simple answer is that MMTTY cannot calculate your score, and while it does produce a Cabrillo file of sorts, it probably won't be acceptable to the contest robots when you submit it.

Third would be that if you do decide to get some 'proper' contest software, don't install it and try to use it the day before a major contest. Have a go in a contest that you don't care about, or one that is perhaps not as 'major' as others. This way, if you make a mess, you haven't lost everything. When I first used Writelog, I entered the Mexican (FMRE) contest, just to get a feel for it. I had a hard time, but the fact that I wasn't too bothered about my score helped make it easier. A surprising number of folk appear to have installed Writelog or N1MM the day before CQ WW RTTY, and were then asking all sorts of questions about how to do various things.

OK, so now you have your contest software installed, and you are getting used to how it works. What next? Learn how to play with the macros, and change them to suit conditions. Both Writelog and N1MM have steep learning curves, and there is no shortcut to learning the basics. I would guess WinTest also has a similar learning curve, but I have never used that software,

so cannot comment. Find a comfortable screen layout, so that you know where things are. Most contest software needs a lot of screen space, so two monitors are useful if you want to contest in a serious way.

My fourth piece of advice would be to work out which category you want to participate in. As I do not possess a linear, I usually enter the SOABLP category, if there is one. But not all contests have low power sections. In that case I sometimes choose a single band entry, as that will allow me to maximise my score for a period of time. I like my bed too much to go for an 80m SB entry, so I would tend to choose 15m, as 20m will be too hotly competed, and would require a very good score. In CQ WW I sometimes choose the SOAB Assisted category, not because I can use the Cluster, but because there are often fewer entrants, and I can place much higher in that section than the non-assisted section.

The next bit of advice? Read the rules again! Better still, print them out, and keep them to hand.

So those are the basics, and will help you maximise your score. What about operating?

We all have our own way of constructing macros, and I guess most of us choose a format that works for us. In contests, if I am in 'search and pounce' mode, I will usually use G1ABC TU 599 001 001 001 GU0SUP, but if I am in Run mode, then I change it to be G1ABC TU 599 001 001 001 G1ABC DE GU0SUP. This means you get two chances to see your call, and can help, especially if I have a good rate going.

I am less happy about using G1ABC TU 599 001 001 001 G1ABC, as you cannot be sure it came from me. Maybe that is something to do with operating from GU, where pile-ups can get a little unruly at times, but it is also to do with personal preference. I want YOU to know the report

was meant for YOU, not someone else, and more importantly, not FROM someone else! Chasing DX is a little different, as he knows your call now, so you only need to reply with TU 599 GU0SUP and leave it at that. So long as you see GU0SUP TU come back, you can be happy.

How many times have you seen the likes of FT5GA FT5GA FT5GA DE G1ABC G1ABC G1ABC MNI TNX, UR ALSO 599 599 599 NAME IS FRED FRED QTH IS LONDON LONDON LOC JN01AA TU FT5GA DE G1ABC PSE KN.

The '3 X 3' type of call is a standard macro that comes with many RTTY programs, MMTTY included, and to me, is a complete waste of time. I often get GU0SUP GU0SUP GU0SUP DE G1ABC G1ABC G1ABC PSE KN when CQing in contests, or just on the bands in general. Sadly, QSB steps in just at the point where your call starts, and I have to ask AGN?

Assuming you are actually on my frequency when you call, and not 100 Hz higher up the band, then I will guess that you are calling me! Once I have sent my report, if you don't get it, ask for a repeat BEFORE you send your exchange, as by that time, I will be sending TU QRZ? and you will have lost the rhythm.

By the same token, wait till you see a TU or QSL from me before you QSY, as I may just send RPRT AGN?? If you don't respond, I will ask again, and if that elicits no response, you won't get logged! And that leads nicely into what to send when you are CQing, and have completed the QSO.

If I called you, and we have exchanged reports, what I want to see you come back with is TU (or QSL) GU0SUP NOW QRZ? DE G1ABC G1ABC CQ (or something along those lines). The important part is to see TU or QSL, then I know I can QSY and work the next station. What is bad is when I see GU0SUP GU0SUP MNI TNX PSE

REPEAT REPORT, or worse is GU0SUP
TU PSE NR AGN?

Let's assume that the exchange was OK, and you are CQing. Whatever you send, please make it clear that it is YOU that is calling and ready for the next caller. If I hear an exchange, I want to know who it is that is calling CQ. So make it clear by sending GU0SUP TU, NOW QRZ? DE G1ABC QRZ? (or CQ).

I do not like a simple TU G1ABC QRZ?, as this is just too ambiguous. For a start, you cannot be sure that you actually worked him as he did not send your call, and you also can't be sure that G1ABC wasn't the call for the previous call, and he has just sent QRZ? In the JARTS contest, one OH station repeatedly only sent TU QRZ? after each contact, and in many cases, he never once exchanged call signs. I just don't have the patience to sit and wait for an ident, so if I can't readily see who it is, I move on and work the next one.

Timing is also important. If I see a station I want to call, I will often send DE GU0SUP GU0SUP GU0SUP and leave it at that. If he comes back with QRZ?, I will assume either more than one called him at the same time, or he didn't hear me. Next time, wait before you hit the TX key, and see if you can hear others calling. If there are, it can pay to wait till they have sent, and then send your own call just ONCE.

Some folk will work the last station that calls, some will call the first, but try and remember who else called them. This is pot luck as far as most are concerned, but as an 'almost DX' station I can often rely on folk coming back to me, rather than a DL or IK or SP. If you are not DX, you need to maximise your chances, and being able to send your call once, and once only, can be very useful. It may be a friend of yours who is in an exotic location for a contest, so if you hear his pile-up, don't assume it is OK for you to go back with a verbose macro, or worse, use very slow typing! If he has a

pile-up, the last thing he wants is a mate who thinks he can take advantage. And never ask him to move bands either!

Contest exchanges are another area where consideration should be given to conditions. If I ask you for a repeat, I think it is fairly clear that it is the exchange report, whether it is serial number, locator, zone, or something else, that I want. What I do not mean is for you to repeat the whole exchange again. If there is QSB, there is a good chance that the over will fade at exactly the same place, and I will have to ask again. Make sure you have a macro that contains JUST the meat of the report. Mine sends the report once, which means I can send it 5 or 6 times quite easily. Be prepared to modify your macros during the contest too, as conditions can and will change, and you need to adapt things all the time.

Thanks for all your input over the years, it has been appreciated, and I have enjoyed inciting one or two of you to explore the 'dark side' of the RTTY world.

I will take this opportunity to wish you all Seasons Greetings, and I hope to meet you on the bands in 2010.

Very best 73

Phil GU0SUP

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

RSGB Convention

It was great to see so many CDXC contesters at the RSGB Convention in Wyboston. There appeared to be good attendance overall, and certainly it would have been difficult to squeeze many more people in at the evening gala dinner. There didn't seem to be much disquiet from the 'contesting public' during the (HF) Contest Forum either. There were no difficult questions raised to new RSGB Contest Committee Chairman Ed, G3SQX, who is taking over from Don, G3XTT, next January, or the new RadCom Sport Radio columnist Steve, G3ZVW. As Don mentioned, the combination of speedy adjudication turnaround thanks to GØGJV's software, and the web robot log submission system designed by Pete, G4CLA, which has brought about an end to the 'lost log' syndrome, have won lots of support from the UK contest community. Many thanks to Don as he steps down after a successful tenure as the Contest Committee Chairman, most notably being the driving force combining the previous VHF and HF committees, which has resulted in a number of beneficial skills and ideas crossovers.

The advanced publication of the SSB Field Day and IOTA Contest results were well appreciated, considering the amount of work required in a short space of time to complete the adjudication. SSB Field Day saw a change in places of the top two Open section teams after adjudication, and the IOTA multi-operator Island section had literally just a multiplier's worth of points separating the top teams. It's these kind of results that generate excitement, and certainly those teams settling for second place this year will know that the podium position is their's for the taking next year.

I took part in the CW Pile-Up challenge, and from the results already on the board, looked destined for another final position in the bottom third of the table. I thought this year's challenge was even harder than last year. Having being on the sharp end of some pile-ups in contests, for example with the VooDoo Contest Group, I've found the real life pile-ups to be easier to deal with. It's understandable that during contests, there will be dozens of sought-after stations on the air at once, so spreading the amount of callers to a particular station. The DXpedition operator may have more to deal with in terms of simultaneous callers than a contester – listening to K4M and the like makes that sound obvious. So I either need to book myself on a trip to the Pacific, or keep practising with MorseRunner.

CTU UK

I was very pleased to be able to take part in Contest University UK. The programme included traditional presentations, but also short groups which enabled more round table discussions and interaction with the participants. I gave a 'Contesting for Beginners' presentation in the morning, and had a short group with the same subject in the afternoon. I think I was expecting most of the afternoon attendees to have attended the morning presentation, but it was a real mix. Hopefully those who had attended the earlier session were not bored by some repetition, and those that attended only the one session didn't feel left behind. I attended several of the other presentations, and was glad to see good participation and interaction throughout. What was most interesting about the interactive session was that newcomers to contesting were happy to talk about their stations, and their challenges and aspirations. "I'm most interested in QRP portable / mobile working due to

limitations at home – what do you suggest?” “How can I improve my results operating QRP SSB?” Several participants listed learning CW as one of their ambitions for the coming year. Some were using CWGET, and treating CW as a datamode, at least until such time as they can read code themselves.

One participant asked how could he find out what number to send, and that he was apprehensive about responding to a station calling “CQ Contest” because the contest station seemed too busy, or angry for being disturbed. This is what the ‘beginners’ presentations are all about – it highlights that our on-air exchanges are not obvious to everyone, and that finding the rules may be non-trivial. It also shows how on-air operating style can be seen negatively – although I assume no CDXC members would fall into this category. It was pleasing that the rest of the group were encouraging this chap to persevere and call other contest stations. I tried to convey that most contesters will be very happy to explain the exchange, as most of the time rate isn’t so high that there’s not time to slow down for a moment. For the older hands reading this, we must remember to sound approachable on air, or keep CW speeds only as fast as rate demands, and be ready to QRS on demand.

CTU UK Director Mark, MØDXR, has some plans to take CTU ‘on the road’, so that more people can participate in the range of beginners and advanced classes, and hopefully some new contesters will be inspired as a result. New RSGB Contest Committee Chairman Ed, G3SQX, also has some thoughts about contesting promotion and education. Of course everyone reading this can help spread best practice and enthusiasm with their local radio clubs in the meantime.

Happy Birthday WWYC

The Worldwide Young Contesters group have just reached a milestone 10th birthday.

The unofficial club was conceived when some of the original members contacted each other during the JARTS RTTY DX Contest in October, where the operator’s age is the exchange, and they realised there were a number of younger contesters on the air. There was a flurry of e-mails after the contest, and within a month the WWYC was formed.

Mainly through use of Internet e-mail lists and a website, interest in the club grew and there are now over 800 members. For several years European summertime meetings were held in Croatia, Poland, Serbia and Germany, usually combining a summertime contest like IOTA with a number of presentations and social activities. The meetings were not exactly reminiscent of the RSGB Convention, being arranged on minimal budget, but were always good fun.

Some of the group have gone on to operate at WRTCs, and WWYC members N6MJ and N2NL won the silver medal in Brazil. Others like DJ1YFK, YT7AW and LZ4UU have excelled at the High Speed Telegraphy championships, where Rufz and Morserunner are used in a competitive environment. It’s interesting to note that many of the younger contesters around Europe hone their skills and gain experience at multi-operator events from well-equipped club stations. Although the UK has hundreds of clubs from where new amateurs can receive tuition and elmering, it’s quite rare to find one which has a reasonably competitive station available for use. Perhaps in the UK ‘field day’-style club contesting is more of the norm.

WWYC have an Internet chatroom which is occupied 24 hours a day which is the main source of live interaction. Membership is open to any contester under the age of 30. As members reach their 30th birthday, they enter the ‘Hall of Fame.’ Look at www.wwyc.net for more details.

As a postscript, it was pleasing to read that David, KY1V, and Krassy, K1LZ, have

expanded their Young Ham Contest Programme and are able to sponsor four young hams on an expenses paid trip to the 6Y1V superstation. Several CDXC members have operated from 6Y1V, and will attest to the fun that will be had.

UN DX Contest results

The UN DX Contest was a new HF competition run for the first time last year. The recent publishing of the results has however caused some eyebrows to be raised. The depth of any contest adjudication varies from event to event, or perhaps more strictly between different contest organisers. The number of entrants, the number of participants (note the difference between the two!), and the technical design of any adjudication processes software will have an impact. The CQ WW Committee obviously face different sorts of challenges to the RoPoCo adjudicator.

The UN DX organisers appear to have taken the decision to only credit contest QSOs that they could verify ie only QSOs where both stations submitted logs would count. Whilst this is a credible approach for some reasons, such as it guarantees that counted QSOs will be accurate, there are also problems. For a new contest in the calendar it is logical to assume that support for it may be quite low. Hence it's common for many of the contest QSOs that the entrants make to be with 'casual testers', those happy to work more serious entrants for points, but where a log is unlikely to be sent in.

I hurt my own score even more by only operating on 80m, so my chances of working the serious entrants on multiple bands for 'good QSOs. was reduced further. And to add insult to injury, the UN Contest coincided with the Baltic Contest, so I included my Baltic test QSOs with the UN DX log. I guess few of the Baltic entrants also entered the UN contest, and my pool of verifiable QSOs dropped even further. I was eventually credited with some 12% of my

original claimed score. A decision to adjudicate in this way I think has probably harmed the contest, as many entrants may think twice before entering again in future. Of course, there may be a re-think about the adjudication policy for next time.

Perhaps more contest sponsors should publicise at least some details of how they intend to adjudicate their contest, and especially so if an established event has a change of policy. For example, I wouldn't be quite so keen to pick out West Coast USA stations on 20m in the evening of SSB Field Day, and instead dive straight into working more DLs on 40m and 80m if a similar rule applied. Likewise, whether legitimate 'unique' QSOs are stripped from logs is another factor that is often not common knowledge to entrants, but could shape tactics and strategy if known.

To be fair, for the UN DX Contest I'm aware that some logging software was not producing all of the exchanged info in the submitted contest log, so some of the low final scores were at least in part down to the entrants. This is another reminder to double-check your logs before you send them off. (I made a silly mistake like that recently with an RSGB Sprint log, and the adjudicator picked up on it within the hour before I'd spotted the error myself. I should try harder to practice what I preach!)

WRTC – team captains announced

The deadline for receiving WRTC Team Leader deadlines was October 1st, and within a few weeks the list of Team Captains, and the first of the nominated team mates, were announced. Congratulations to the UK team, led by Andy, G4PIQ, and his nominated team mate Dave, G4BUO. Although Andy had a free choice of team mate, Dave was the second-highest placed UK station in the Europe #1 area qualifying scores, according to the radiosport.net tables. Also, CDXC's own Marios, 5B4WN (GØWWW), was successful in qualifying for a Team Leader

slot in the Asia Area 3 group. After planning their campaigns and spending many weekends operating in order to qualify, the WRTC teams will now need to shift their focus to next July's contest. Determining what equipment to take, and perhaps some practice contests with their team mate, will likely take place. Before previous WRTCs many reports of contests operated in 'WRTC style' were commonplace. Overall success in the particular trial event would be unlikely, as not many contests cater for low-power multi-operator operations, but the experience learned can be vital in the run up to the Moscow area field-day style WRTC.

On the Air

The contest calendar has been as full as ever over the last couple of months. Sadly I managed to miss more of the RSGB Sprint events, the most recent event when I was travelling back from a business trip to Helsinki. Ironically the (Nokia) office building I was working in had a full-size 3-element 40m beam on the top, as part of the OH2V club station. Typically Finnish in terms of scale!

Please give the next EUSprint contests some support if you can. Admittedly the autumn CW contest clashed with the RSGB Convention, which caused one mainland EU contester to ask me where the UK had got to. Sprint contests are great fun, but there needs to be a certain level of activity to permit a constant run of QSOs on frequency, without needing lengthy spells of CQing. The EUSprint SSB event, and also the RSGB Sprints, would benefit from a few more people taking part.

CQ WW RTTY was a blast, and I managed 1300+ QSOs with 100W over the weekend, which was a personal best. I felt activity was up again, even if I struggled to work as many USA / VE multipliers this year compared with last. Good to see a number of strong UK stations in the running, notably Serge, UT5UDX/MØSDX

operating from G6PZ, and also Chris, MIØLLL operating as GI5K, who looks to have taken the Single Op European record.

The following RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest was understandably lower in QSO volume, although for those stations that stuck with it throughout the day, and had a reasonable signal, there was certainly 21 MHz propagation to most parts of the planet. The predicament is that the UK stations do not appear to be there in big enough numbers to attract sufficient worldwide entrants. There have often been calls to change the event to be an all-band, or different band contest, or perhaps a rule change to allow all stations to work each other, with a points / multiplier preferential for the UK stations. But does the calendar really need another contest of this type? The same weekend usually also hosts the California QSO party, Oceania DX, EUSprint, and an ON 80m contest on HF (with a major UHF contest too), so there are plenty of other distractions to water down the participation for each single event. On the flip side, in the sunspot-challenged years, the contest was an enabler to many 21 MHz contacts, and a reminder that the band is open for business, and people may be surprised at the results if they gave it a try. If/when sunspot activity returns, the success of the event should also improve. So it's not a clear-cut decision if there should be changes to this event in the future.

Endpiece

This *Digest* should reach you between the CQ WW SSB and CW contests. All stories will be gratefully received, whether it's a superstation activity, or the exciting first time operation from some CTU graduates. Why not tell everyone about activity in the LZ DX contest, the 2nd 1.8 MHz contest or Club Calls – there are many great events that often go completely unreported. Finally, please get thinking about AFS 2010 and if you'd like to be part of a CDXC team.

73 de Lee GØMTN

E-mails to the Editor

From G7VJR

Dear Editor,

I've been interested recently by the styles and techniques used by eager DXers to work FT5GA. It was a very tough one, with large split ranges, limited openings and intermittent availability of the newly-enlisted DX operators due to military commitments. Fingers crossed that deserving CDXCers had good fortune and skill on their side. The signals from the island were not loud, and Glorioso is so rare that the demand for a QSO was enormous.

Given these sort of starting conditions, certain things always seem to come off the rails. For example, I've noticed that the loudest signals will tend to call constantly when the DX is weak or the rate has fallen off. That step change (down) in rate can be triggered by just one teasing "QRL?" sent over the DX, or more specifically by the ensuing policemen. At all times, though, the constant calling seems to be because the louder DXers are confident they will be heard above other callers pretty soon, and feel they have nothing to lose while the QRM is going on.

This is a problematic trend. On 20m and below FT5GA was usually being jammed, and their split frequency was also overwhelmed with continuous callers. It's difficult to find the QSX in those conditions. Should you really submit to calling randomly, or relying mostly on the Cluster? Meanwhile the DX station struggles to pin down a QSO. They send partials, and the entire shouting hoard replies.

It must be tempting to buy a bigger amp and park it under the table for cracking pile-ups like that. If so, then the vicious circle is complete! DXCC chasing is highly competitive; big stations have big amplifiers, and will call upon them to win

RF turf wars and get in the log. High power seems to be becoming more prevalent with the low solar activity too. Plausible Top Band amplifiers do tend to extend all the way to 28 MHz.

If this arms race were about listening - about antennas - things would be completely different. Taking just HF, I assume you'd agree with me that if you wanted to work (say) a resident ham in French Polynesia, 400W into a 20m 1/4 vertical would be pretty dire, compared to a 3-element beam and just 100W. You'd be heard in the Pacific on either set-up, but you'd never get a QSO on the quarter-wave because the signals from our friend in Tahiti would be inaudible to you. Unlike amplifiers, investing in antennas is a virtuous circle, because with directional gain you can hear more of the DX, cut out more of the QRM, cause less QRM yourself, and be louder at the DX for the same power in. It's a shame that obtaining planning for antennas in the UK has become so hard as it makes good antennas less accessible.

I'm sure we'll continue to try and hone our operating skills to work DX without joining the vicious circle. It seems to me that as UK hams vigorously complain about PLT to Ofcom, we shouldn't forget how much spectrum pollution the European amateur community - us included - already inflicts upon itself. Presumably trends in our hobby affect how we are perceived as worthy spectrum users, or otherwise. I imagine that large amps cause complaints in urban areas, so it seems to me that how we conduct our DXing, and what example we set, is one part of a bigger puzzle over the future of the hobby.

73

Michael G7VJR

From GM4FDM

Dear Editor,

I read Nigel/G3TXF's piece [September 2009 *Digest*) with interest as I am both an LoTW uploader and an LoTW user. I'm not sure I agree with Nigel's conclusions despite his graph of previous expeditions. Some of the callsigns with lower levels of 'directs' are entities which are not particularly sought after and therefore I would expect a lower level of direct requests. Indeed there have been several expeditions to some of them and I humbly suggest that the direct requests are being diluted accordingly.

My own experience from my last three expeditions has been a little different. My third last I did not submit my logs to LoTW for about one year and had a pile of direct cards which would have choked an elephant.

My second last expedition I uploaded my logs to LoTW after three months and still received a pile of direct cards which would have choked another elephant.

My last and even smaller expedition to Jersey (yes, Jersey), I indicated on the radio from Day 1 that I would submit my logs to LoTW immediately I got home. This is did the very day. Yes, you've guessed it: I still received a pile of directs.

My conclusion is that LoTW has made little difference to the number of paper cards required after a trip. When I came back from ZB2 and submitted my logs, I thought that 2,000 paper cards would be enough - I have had to get a reprint done. The demand for paper cards is insatiable, although I suspect that many amateurs are still QSLing every QSO as a matter of course because of some perceived tradition.

Tom, GM4FDM

From 9V1FJ

I miss your reviews of various rigs. There are matters I would like to raise.

Firstly, as in all reviews, there are few comparisons between rigs, perhaps because the differences in performance are so marginal. Or perhaps not saying X is better than Y. Here in 9V-land there is not much QRN or QRM and frankly I am not active on CW. I am not technically inclined and I have difficulty in understanding what all the new additions and gadgets really achieve. Do they mainly help CW?

I have been told that in Europe these additions help. Such as roofing filters etc. Under what conditions do they help? I have in a small way run a number of DXpeditions and have always managed. My rigs are basic such as TS-50s (still a great little rig), IC-706 Mk2G, and my main rig for many years in my IC-775DSP. I would still like to know how I can improve on the 775, by buying one of the newest and finest.

Barry, 9V1FJ (also G4MFW and ZS1FJ)

CDXC QSL card

The CDXC QSL card is available to all members by direct order from Hertfordshire Display PLC, 51 High Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9BA. Tel: (01920) 461191, Fax: (01920) 463212 www.hdprint.co.uk

HD Print have asked if we can update our order form to add a daytime telephone number as this is needed for verification of credit card details. We have updated the form on our website, but if you use an old form, please add your daytime contact number to avoid unnecessary processing delays.

Not the GB2RS News

- United Europe to bring countless benefits for radio amateurs
- Meet the Mini-skirted Maidens
- The 'FO' prefix to be banned

A leaked government memo indicates that a fully united Europe under a President Tony Blair, say, will bring countless benefits for amateur radio operators. Gone will be the complicated country prefixes and unnecessary callsign areas of the individual member states. Indeed Europe will in future count as one single country for DXCC, with one single prefix, EU. After all, by then Belarus won't need it any more.

Callsigns will also be slightly longer and allocated totally at random by a central computer in Brussels. So a venerable old G3 in Ashby de la Zouch, say, could end up with the exciting new callsign EU1ABCDEF, whereas a relative stripling and IW4 in Montelasagne di Spaghetti Bologna ("I spell-a: Mike-a, Mike-a, Oscar, Oscar...") could end up with EU1ABCDEG.

Following countless requests, the CDXC Digest's legendary Mini-skirted Maidens have agreed to make themselves widely available to Digest readers on 29 February 2010 at Bristol's luxurious Marriott Royal Hotel. There will, however, be an entrance fee of £300 per person (or 484 IRCs).

The French FO ('Foxtrot Oscar') prefix is to be banned. This is because it could be interpreted that the station with the FO prefix is trying to tell you something.

Belgian amateur ONION would like it to be known that he is not a vegetable and that, come to that, most other callsigns are not a patch on his. [*Yes, presumably 'Beetroot to yourself' is his motto. Ed.*]

Special event station news

Next Sunday the Midsomer Amateur Radio Society will be operating special event station GB1ØØØMM from the Midsomer Worthy village fete. This is to commemorate the area's 1,000th murder in recent years. The proceedings will be under the watchful eye of Detective Chief Inspector Tom Barnaby, but nevertheless the fate of any visitors to this fete cannot be guaranteed. Indeed it is expected that by the end of the day the special event callsign could well have changed to GB1ØØ5MM or more.

Not many people know that Sherpa Tenzing, of 1953 Mount Everest fame, was a keen radio amateur and CW operator, using an old Russian-built transmitter. As a result of which he was always known on the air as 'Chirper Tenzing'.

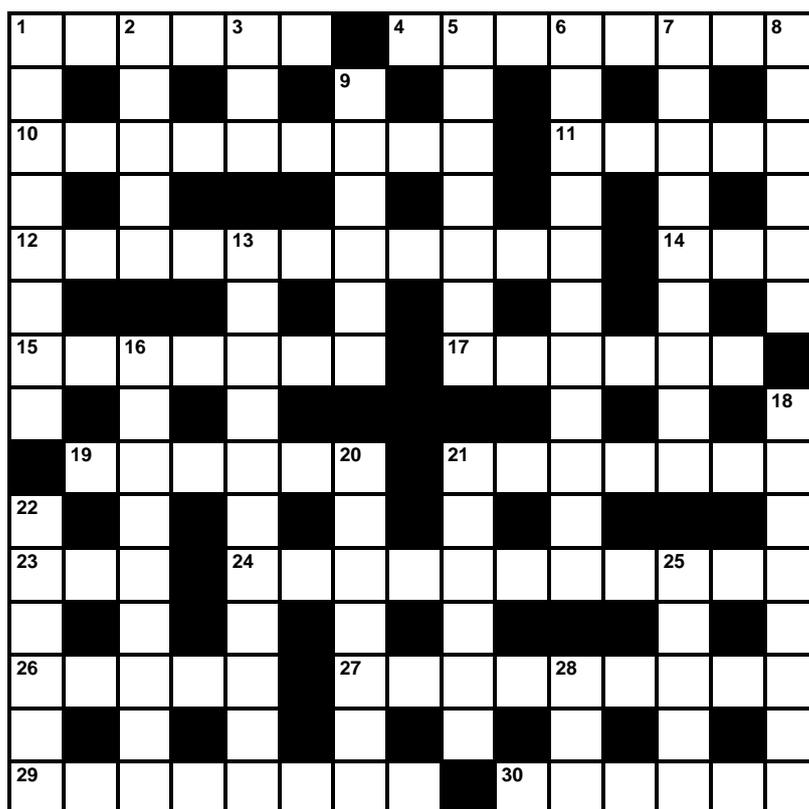
NEWS FOR NORN IRON

Next Monday the Enniskillen Amateur Radio Society (EARS) meet up for a talk by the Rev. Ian Paisley on loud speakers. Contact Seamus on 028 6638 8145.

Solution to Prize Crossword 36

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

Digest Prize Crossword 37 *by RFX*



The winner of Prize Crossword 36, September 2009: Phil Smith, G4LWB, Croxton Kerrial.

ACROSS

- 1 Recycled US foam is well-known (6)
- 4 Calculating, unlike Henry VIII (8)
- 10 Outside broadcast stint leads to a hang-up (9)
- 11 Fat porter (5)
- 12 Unusually alien styles, mainly. (11)
- 14 Tool making a comeback in E. Ohio (3)
- 15 Stupid blunder made by member of TV cartoon family (7)
- 17 Reportedly gazes at flight (6)
- 19 Captain Kirk's Beamer? (6)
- 21 Old source for writing resulting from popular measure involving a lot of power (7)
- 23 Clot found in hyena's stomach (3)
- 24 Hopeless ideas such as desserts? (3-8)
- 26 Policeman's favourite lake in Italy? (5)
- 27 The Rev. Spooner's piece of advice for dog owner is so long (6-3)
- 29 Joined more mature fellow after the end of exams (8)
- 30 Plaything set on fire, we hear, in 28 (6)

Deadline for entries: 20 December

DOWN

- 1, 13 Old health worker seen spending stormy hours of darkness in European city? (8,11)
- 2 Dreams there are nine of them (5)
- 3 Increases in ketchup sales (3)
- 5 Names of German composer, say (7)
- 6 Over-inquisitive vehicle leaver? (5,6)
- 7 Old engine used to flatten Arab, say (4,5)
- 8 One who removes the inside of a channel by the side of the road ? (6)
- 9 It's more risky when the German hangs around here in France (6)
- 13 See 1 down
- 16 Type of home found in Lancaster, possibly (9)
- 18 Putting up top shelf rearranged above for provider of lewd entertainment (8)
- 20 Get zany characters in a new setting to identify river (7)
- 21 Starts to interview new teachers, rejecting Old Sedberghians (6)
- 22 Dish old woman gets the soldiers (6)
- 25 Banish operating system adopted by slippery customer (5)
- 28 Gents game? (3)

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 30/11	2A, GA, MA: Scotland (special prefix)
till 30/11	SN40DVP: special callsign
till 30/11	VG7V: special callsign
till November	OD5/W5YFN: Lebanon
till 31/12	9A09P: special event station
till 31/12	9A48IFATCA: special event station
till 31/12	9A800VZ: special event callsign
till 31/12	GB250RB: special event call (Scotland)
till 31/12	GB40WAB: special callsign
till 31/12	HE8 and HB8: special prefixes (Switzerland)
till 31/12	HF35PEA: special event station (Poland)
till 31/12	IA3GM: special callsign
till 31/12	II2RAI: special callsign
till 31/12	IY7GM: special callsign
till 31/12	IY7NGM: special callsign
till 31/12	LZ50BNT: special event station
till 31/12	VR2009EAG: special event callsign
till 31/12	YL90AIR: special callsign
till 31/12	Z30MCWG: special callsign
till December	P29CW: Papua New Guinea (OC-034)
till December	T6YA: Afghansitan
till 31/01/10	IY2M: special event callsign
till 30/06/10	GB50ATG: special event callsign
till 12/07/10	ZS10WCS: special callsign
Oct-Nov	VP8DIF: South Georgia (AN-007)
01/11-28/11	GB4RN: England
13/11-27/11	9G5TT: Ghana
13/11-27/11	9G5XX: Abokwa Island (AF-084)
13/11-23/11	D68F: Comoro Islands (AF-007)
17/11-30/11	5W0KH: Samoa (OC-097)
21/11-05/12	VK9XX and VK9XW: Christmas Island (OC-002)
23/11-02/12	3V3S: Tunisia
24/11-06/12	V31PT: Ambergris Cay (NA-073)
26/11-01/12	V26K: Antigua (NA-100)
November	TX3A: Chesterfield Islands (OC-176)
01/12-31/01/10	VG7W: special callsign
29/12-04/01/10	VK6: Houtman Abrolhos (OC-211) by VK6YS and others

Doctorate in DXing – a DX Christmas Quiz

Answers

1.

E51CG Victor Rivera
EAØJC HM King Juan Carlos of Spain
OH2BH Martti Laine
ON4UN John Devoldere
SMØAGD Erik Sjolund
VK9NS Jim Smith
VP2VB Danny Weil
VP2VI Bob Denniston
W4BPD Gus Browning
W6KG Lloyd Colvin.

(10 points, 1 point for each full name, half a point for just a first name or surname)

2.

Sir Evan Nepean, G5YN (AC4YN), operated from the then independent state of Tibet in 1936 – 1937). (2 points, 1 for each of the name and the callsign)

3.

Don Miller (formerly W9WNV). (1 point)

4.

Clarence Moore, W9LZX. HCJB (in Quito, Ecuador). (3 points, 1 each for the name and both of the callsigns)

5.

Dr Hamadoun Toure, HB9EHT. (2 points, 1 for each of the name and the callsign)

6.

VK9XW/MM, *Williwaw*. (The callsign was reissued to DL2RMC for the November 2009 DXpedition). (2 points)

7.

Jim ‘Bull’ Bullington, N4HX (2 points, 1 for each of the name and the callsign. Half a point for naming Ghis Penny, ON5NT, who guest-operated as TYA11 using Jim’s station and callsign).

8.

5R8FU Swedish
9M2TO Japanese
9V1YC USA/British (1 point for each)
CN2DX Swiss
DL1BDF Tunisian
H44MD Solomon Islander (a trick question! Moffet is one of the very few nationals in the Solomons who are active amateurs)
HSØZIN British
LAØHK British
PZ5RA Dutch
TI7WGI German
TLØA French
VK9NL Norwegian
VP5JM USA
XU7TZG Belgian
XW1A USA.

(16 points)

9.

‘Lakshadweep’ itself means ‘100,000 islands’ - so there is no need to call them the ‘Lakshadweep Islands’. There are only 36 of them, so claiming 100,000 is a little excessive. (1 point)

10.

T32 and TI9 (Christmas Island and Cocos Island). (2 points)

11.

Conway Reef, Scarborough Reef, Kingman Reef, Market Reef, Mellish Reef. (5 points)

12.

Sydney (VK2), Melbourne (VK3), Brisbane (VK4), Adelaide (VK5), Perth (VK6), and Hobart (VK7). (VK1, VK8, VK9 and VKØ do not represent States). (6 points, but only if they're in the correct order!)

13.

All mean 'island(s)' (in Thai, Cambodian, Swedish, Norwegian, Japanese and Korean). (1 point)

14.

Australia, Alaska, Antigua & Barbuda, Italy (or nothing if not licensed by Italy), Nothing. (5 points)

15.

North Yemen. (1 point)

16.

3 (West Malaysia, East Malaysia, Spratly)
2 (North Cooks and South Cooks)
7 (G, GD, GI, GJ, GM, GU, GW)
4 (Greece, Dodecanese, Crete, Mt Athos)
6 (Falklands, South Georgia, South Sandwich, South Shetland, South Orkney, Antarctica)

(5 points)

17.

3DA–3DZ (shared between Fiji and Swaziland). (1 point for 3DA–3DZ, half point for just 3D: we did ask for the ITU prefix *block!*)

18.

4A: Mexico; 4F: Philippines; 4M: Venezuela; AO: Spain; AT: India; AX: Australia; AY: Argentina; D8: South Korea; XO: Canada; XQ: Chile (10 points)

19.

9W: Malaysia; E2: Thailand; SA: Sweden. (3 points)

20.

1A: Sovereign Military Order of Malta; 1B: Turkish Federated State of Northern Cyprus; 1C: Chechnya; 1M: Minerva Reef; 1P: Principality of Seborga (Italy); 1S: Spratly Islands; 1SL: Sealand; 1Z: Karen State (Burma); H5: Bophuthatswana (South Africa); S0: Western Sahara; X5: Republika Srpska (Serbian Republic in Bosnia-Herzegovina); V9: Vendaland (South Africa). (12 points)

Your score:

71–90	Professor of DXing – not just a Doctor, go straight to Prof!
51–70	Dr DX. Award yourself a Doctorate in DXing.
31–50	MA (DX). You're MAD about DX and have a Master Degree in DXing.
11–30	BA (DX). You're BAD at DX, but have a Bachelor Degree in DXing.
0–10	Sorry, GCSE level only – must try harder.

Merry Christmas!

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

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

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

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

1. starting with an **initial payment on 1st July 2010**
2. **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

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

Name(s) :

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :

.....

Postcode :

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

CDXC Clothing

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

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

ITEM		SIZE	PRICE
Sweatshirt	Polycotton raglan sleeve	S, M, L, XL	£21.00
		XXL, 3XL, 4XL	£22.00
Children's sweatshirts	Polycotton raglan sleeve	3, 5, 7, 9, 11 years	£16.00
Rugby shirts FR1	100% cotton	S, M, L	£25.00
		XL, XXL	£26.00
		3XL	£28.00
Rugby shirts FR2	Quartered 100% cotton	S, M, L	£29.00
		XL, XXL	£31.00
Polo shirts	100% cotton	S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL	£19.00
Polo shirts	Polycotton	S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL, 4XL, 5XL	£18.50
Children's polo shirt		3, 5, 7, 9, 11 years	£15.00
T-shirts	Heavyweight 100% cotton	S, M, L, XL, XXL, 3XL, 4XL	£16.00
V-neck pullover	Lambswool	36" to 50"	£31.00
V-neck pullover	50% wool / 50% acrylic	36" to 48"	£28.50
Crew neck pullover	Lambswool	36" to 50"	£31.00
Fleece jacket		XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL	£28.00
Children's fleece jacket		3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 years	£23.00
Tie			£14.25

Colours available: navy, black, royal, bottle green. Rugby shirts FR2 in navy/sky or navy/grey.

ORDER FORM:

ITEM(S)	QUANTITY	SIZE	COLOUR	PRICE
Additional text @ £3.00 per line				
Sub-Total				
P & P: £1.75 for first^t item, £1.50 additional items to a maximum of £10, £1 children's items, £3.00 fleece jackets				
Callsign				Total
Name/Address				

**AQUARIAN, Quarryhill Cottage, Justinhaugh, by Forfar, Angus, DD8 3TQ
Tel.: (01307) 860 350**

