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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

It's thought by some that Milton Keynes was originally named after the place where the famous poet John Milton (*Paradise Lost*) and economist John Maynard Keynes used to meet up to discuss their respective projects. These days, of course, Milton Keynes is perhaps best known as a town which can only be approached in a very roundabout way.

Horwood House, this year's RSGB Conference venue, is an old country house located some 35 roundabouts to the south-west of Milton Keynes Central. It's a veritable rabbit warren of a place, but then rabbiting is what many of us like to do on such occasions, Yours Truly included, so this fitted the bill perfectly.

This new venue also generated some interesting reviews. On the one hand, for example, the fairly steep bar prices ("£7 for a glass of wine!") and lack of snack lunches ("Only the six quid jobbie!"). Others, though, commented that "Overall it was a great venue" and that "the food was very good".

Yes, you win some, you lose some. However, what nobody was in any doubt about was – once again - the excellent quality of the talks and lectures themselves.

Anyway, it's a 48-page *Digest* this time round, four pages up on last time. By January of next year, with a bit of luck, we'll then be back to as near normal as possible with a 60-pager crammed full of DXpedition reports, all of them hopefully written in excellent English right from the start (says he, making the sign of the cross...).

At which point our hard-working Treasurer, Gordon/G3USR, aye, has just chipped in from 9M6 (as one does...) to say that "Surely CDXC members only write excellent English? Or Scottish?" Gordon goes on to say that he'll also be writing an article for the January *Digest* about 'our recent OC-295 Sebatik Island DXpedition and adventure'. And that this will include 'features such as speedboat rides, walking the plank, illegal immigrants and a postscript about running aground on Labuan island!' Exciting stuff.

Of course our regular UK columnists, those unsung heroes, always write in impeccable English. Don, G3XTT, is no exception. He tells us that some of this month's 'DX an' all that' came to him while he was out walking the dog. As he says, "A case of inspiration from Dog X-ray, I suppose. Well, she's not actually called 'X-ray', but the Dog bit is certainly valid!" I like it, Don.

Otherwise: recently I came across a lengthy article on the IARU Region 1 website all about the new Russian callsign system as of mid-2010. Yes, if you thought the old system was complicated enough, you want to see this new one!

Says he, thinking back to the good old days ("Arr!") when you liked to think you knew where everybody was out that way. The days when the Ukraine was UB5 and not... whatever it is now. Indeed these days you need a PhD in Applied Callsign Management to be able to work it all out. Or so it seems. Anyway, Merry Christmas an' all that!

73 Martyn, G3RFX

www.btinternet.com/~g3rfx

Chairman's Chat

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

It would seem that the DXpedition season restarted with a real bang in October. First were the four new Netherland Antilles entities – and what a scramble that was. You would think that for such easily workable countries we could all be patient; after all they will be around for a long time and will be rare only on the edge bands a year from now. I would expect USA contesters will activate them every year in CQ WW – but nevertheless we all, and I include myself here, sit for hours trying to bust a pile-up. What a great hobby to motivate us like this – and what a good sign for band activity.

The PJs were just the start. 5V7TT has been consistently strong here and will have given a few a new one, and last weekend ZS8M was standing by for UK stations for about 20 minutes (but I was out!). Coming up before the end of October are the 9U / 9X and the CYØ DXpeditions. Then in November we have 9L, C5 and the Nuie / Norfolk DXpeditions, followed at the end of November by the ZL8X Kermadec DXpedition - and a 9Q activation in December to finish the year off.

I'm pleased to report that three CDXC members, Steve, 9M6DXX; John, 9M6XRO, and Gordon, G3USR, had a successful trip to Sebatik, and I'm also pleased to report that CDXC member Clive, GM3POI, will be on the DXØDX Spratly team in January 2011 – a good omen for all who need it on 160m!

You will see elsewhere in this edition the first press release for the forthcoming 2011 Five Star DX Association (FSDXA) trip. I had the immense pleasure of going on their 2007 DXpedition to St Brandon (3B7C) and, not having blotted my copy book that time, I will be on the T32 DXpedition. This

time I am heavily involved with the logistics of corralling all of the kit into a 20 ft container and getting it to the island in time for next September. It promises to be a great DXpedition - and fun too.

Like many of us, my local QRM level is steadily increasing - and I doubt things are going to improve as our neighbours purchase more and more electrical goodies. The RSGB's Spectrum and EMC Committees work hard on these issues and in November I will represent CDXC at the annual Spectrum Committee meeting. Last year I put PLT and DQRM as our top concerns and I suspect it will be the same this year. Some progress has been made on DQRM – although you'd probably argue that point, listening to the PJ pile-ups – but we must do more and must try to educate those who cause the problem. I remain convinced that working the DX is what many DQRMers are trying to do, so education is a positive step – and a quiet word can help.

I dropped an e-mail to one of the contributors to the September *Digest* to say how much I enjoyed his article. He thanked me and said I was the first to offer any feedback. So if you liked an article, please take the trouble to tell the author – it may encourage them to keep writing for us!

To conclude, and even though it's a little on the early side, may I wish all members and their families Seasons Greetings and a Happy and Prosperous 2011 – hopefully with some regular sunspots.

73 Chris, G3SVL

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

The CDXC teams had a great time at Newark and at the RSGB Convention, recruiting quite a few new members and enhancing our profile. At Newark, as at the RSGB Convention, Martin Lynch allowed us to perch on his stand and this gave us a very valuable and visible spot. Thanks, Martin.

We recruited seven more members at Newark and 65 members signed in. John, G3LAS, donated a large number of books, which we sold for £75. Thanks, John. The show was very busy on the Friday, but very slow on the Saturday when we packed up early, but the lousy weather could not have helped the outside stands and car booters. My thanks to the Committee members and to Derek, G3RAU, who helped on our stand.

We had a great time at the RSGB Convention too, recruiting eleven more members; 129 members signed in. We were amazed as we saw numbers of the new Yaesu FT-5000s flying off Martin's stand – by all reports this is an outstanding radio.

Several commented that our new posters were most impressive. Thanks to Mike, G3SED, and Alex of Nevada Radio for their help with these. They can now be downloaded from our website.

At the two events we also sold ten copies of *DXpeditioning Behind the Scenes* – these funds go to FXDSA to support the Pacific 2011 DXpedition that I was pleased to announce at the DX Dinner. I was delighted to receive at the Dinner a 'big' cheque (27 cms x 56 cms) from Martin Lynch in respect of his sponsorship of the DXpedition.

The first Press Release for our forthcoming DXpedition to T32 is shown elsewhere in this *Digest*. There are three matters that I

would like to draw to the attention of members:

1. We have been offered sponsorship for a young amateur to join the DXpedition. Our sponsor, who would like to remain anonymous, will pay for the flights from Honolulu to Kiritimati and return and for the hotel costs and food on the island. He/she or we will have to fund the costs of the flights to and from home to Honolulu. We are looking for a competent operator in the 18-25 age bracket and are keeping a slot open in the second half of the DXpedition from 9 to 27 October. If anyone knows of a youngster who may be interested, please e-mail me asap.
2. We are also looking for someone to make a DVD of our trip who is also a competent operator. Our DVD person needs to be able to edit the DVD, add a sound track etc. The DVDs and videos from our past four DXpeditions have proved to be very popular and we would like to have one about our T32 trip.
3. On our new web pages at www.t32c.com there is a survey that shows the 30 band-mode slots that will be available. Please could members complete this survey as the results will be very helpful to us in determining our priorities.

The RSGB Convention seems to have been enjoyed by many with excellent lecture streams. The food was fine, but the service was very slow on occasions. Having a Sat Nav made it easier to find the loos and bedrooms in this rabbit warren of a place! It was a great pity that we did not have

exclusive use of Horwood House as promised by the RSGB. This meant that we could not use the large lounge and bar that were used by a wedding party. We were all squeezed into two small rooms in the breaks where there was not enough seating. Horwood House would have probably been fine if we had had exclusive use. However, I realise it's very difficult to find accommodation for a Convention of this size.

Our plans are working out well for our DXpedition to the Pacific next year. The main thrust of our current activities is logistics. We are also getting all the antennas built and tested. We have built a four-square for 40m SSB here at LWB and it works like a dream. We have also just purchased six miles of radial wire, so we will have at least 32 radials under every vertical element. We plan to ship our container next February. It's important to meet this date as shipping from Tarawa in West Kiribati to Kiritimati can be very slow and is somewhat irregular.

As I write, this Christmas seems a long way off, but I wish all members a very happy Christmas and New Year.

73 Neville

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

<i>Call</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
AD5A	Mike Crownover	Texas
G0EDT	Ian Hopwood	Stratford-upon-Avon
G0RPM	Nigel Williams	Winchmore Hill
G3PHO	Peter Day	Sheffield
G3REP	Bob Parkes	Steyning
G3RPV	Tom Venn	Huntingdon
G4DYC	Michael Cooke	Dereham
G4HNF	D. Waterworth	Reading
G4HSO	Peter Baker	Hitchin
G4MFX	Graham Davis	Gt Yarmouth
G8JMS	Stuart Miller	Brixham
G8LUV	Graham Fairbrass	Barwell, Leics
GD6IA	Alex Gartshore	Peel
KC0VKN	Joe Hetrick	Iowa City
M0BOX	Simon Wilson	Cambridge
M0BPQ	Steve Bunting	Palmers Green
M0IJZ	Russell Meech	Tonbridge
M0RAV	Andre Ravary	Littlehampton
M0WTG	Duncan Cooper	North Walsham
MM0CCC	John MacLean	Tranent
MW0RLJ	Rob Jones	Fishguard

Nearly new Pramac P11000S diesel generator for sale

The FSDXA team will be taking two large 10.6 KVA super-silenced electric start diesel generators to Kiritimati (T32) next year instead of the smaller petrol generators previously advertised.

These can be seen at:

www.generators.co.uk/Product/Silent/Diesel_Pramac/P11000

They cost £4,177 each (incl. VAT) with a fitted wheel kit. One generator has already been sold to a T32C team member, but CDXC members may be interested in purchasing the second generator, which is ideal for home use. FSDXA will sell this to a member for 66% of the purchase price (£2,757) on the condition that it is paid for before the end of 2010 as this helps our cash flow. Shipping from Portsmouth will be extra. The generators will be fully serviced on their return to the UK in early 2012. Please write to Gordon, FSDXA Treasurer, at g3usr@btinternet.com if you are interested.

Five Star DXers looking forward to Christmas

The Five Star DXers Association (FSDXA) is pleased to announce its next DXpedition, to Kiritimati (also known as Christmas Island, T32) to take place in September/October 2011. FSDXA, closely linked to CDXC (Chiltern DX Club), the UK DX Foundation, is the group which brought you the 1998 9MØC Spratly Islands DXpedition, the record-breaking 2001 D68C DXpedition to the Comoros and, subsequently the 2004 3B9C Rodrigues and 2007 3B7C St Brandon DXpeditions. Once again, Yaesu have kindly agreed to be Global Sponsor, and will be providing sixteen FT-5000 transceivers along with a similar number of Quadra VL-1000 linears. UK amateur radio retailers Martyn Lynch & Sons and Nevada are also committed to sponsoring the operation.

It is hoped that the callsign T32C will be allocated. The 'C' in the callsign stands for 'CDXC', the club from which the Five Star DXers Association was formed, and is also a reminder of the group's previous successful operations.

As with previous FSDXA expeditions, this will be a major effort, with a target of more than 150,000 QSOs. There will be up to sixteen stations on the air, using amplifiers along with monoband beams and vertical dipole arrays, 24 hours a day, for almost four weeks, including four weekends, around the autumn equinox when DX propagation on all bands is typically at its best.

Our primary objective is to activate Christmas Island, T32, with a view to giving as many DXers as possible a first contact with this rare DXCC entity and, as a secondary objective, to give as many band-slots as possible. While many experienced DXers have one or two contacts with Christmas Island, our focus, in addition to making Christmas Island available to less well-equipped DXers, especially in Europe

and the US East Coast, both of which are tough paths from the mid-Pacific, will be to help fill those missing band and mode slots, especially on LF and on RTTY.

Club Log shows Kiritimati as 36th most wanted DXCC entity by European operators and 61st most wanted worldwide. It is even more sought after on the LF bands.

A large number of amateurs from 13 different DXCC entities have already signed up for T32C, some for half the overall period, some for the whole operation. There will be 30 operators on site at any one time. Operator numbers have been determined to ensure that a full complement of stations can be manned whenever bands are open. Many of these operators have been with us before. All bring experience not only of operating (usually multiple modes, often with a contesting background) but in terms of other essential skills. For example, we will have two medical specialists, antenna, RF and software specialists, and a range of other skills which will be essential in mounting a major operation so far from logistical support.

At the time of writing, the team is expected to consist of 40 operators including: Falk DK7YY, Jens DL7AKC, Paul EI5DI, Dave EI9FBB, Gerard F2JD, Ian F5VKT/G3YBY, Michel FM5CD, Vincent GØLMX, Tony GØOPB, Nobby GØVJG, Don G3BJ, Neville G3NUG, Chris G3SVL, David G3UNA, Gordon G3USR, John G3WGV, Mike G3WPH, Don G3XTT, Mark G4AXX, John G4DRS, Nick G4FAL, Mike G4IUF, Justin G4TSH, Michael G7VJR, Clive GM3POI, Bob GU4YOX, Kazu JA1RJU, Jim KF7E, Bob MDØCCE, Bill N2WB, Arnie N6HC, Bob N6OX, Ronald PA3EWP, Pete SM5GMZ, Maury W3EF, Paul WF5T and Jay WXØB. It is also planned to take a young amateur, to gain valuable DXpedition experience, and

sponsorship is already on hand to make this possible.

At this time we are seeking contributions from sponsors to help defray the very significant logistics costs of this DXpedition. For example, there is limited electricity on the island, so generators will have to be shipped. Most equipment has to be shipped by container via Tarawa. The team will then fly out to Christmas via Honolulu. All team members will be covering their own travel costs and accommodation on the island, and making a contribution to other (mainly logistics) costs, but there will still be a significant shortfall.

Details of how to donate appear on our website (www.t32c.com) which is now live. PayPal donations may be made directly via the site.

All donations will be acknowledged.

The logos of all DX clubs etc. which have helped to sponsor the DXpedition will be shown on the QSL card, as will the names and call signs of those who make an individual contribution in advance of the DXpedition (subject, in each case, to a certain minimum amount).

This first Bulletin is intended mainly to alert you to our upcoming DXpedition. More information will be forthcoming in due course and will be posted on our website (www.t32c.com) as it becomes available.

Don Field G3XTT,

(don.field@gmail.com)

10 October 2010

(FSDXA Publicity Officer)

RSGB launches major Amateur Radio survey

On the 1 October at the National Hamfest in Newark the RSGB launched a major survey of UK Amateur Radio, SWLs and those interested in other aspects of radio communication. We want to know how you pursue your hobby, your interests from QRP to 'Moon Bounce', what bands you work on, are you a contester? All this information that is necessary to see which way the hobby is moving in the 21st century. The survey is web-based, takes between 10-30 minutes to complete and is open to all, RSGB members, lapsed members, non-members, Short Wave Listeners, etc. At the end of the first week over 1,000 radio amateurs across the UK had completed the survey, which is very encouraging. You still have plenty of time to go online at www.rsgb.org/survey/ to complete the survey as it runs until the 31 December. Early completion would be appreciated because we want to start the data collection and keep you posted on the findings as the information comes in.

Although the survey is designed for the individual radio amateur, there is a second group of questions designed for local club participation so that club members can discuss at length their collective views. This is also available on the same link as the Questionnaire.

Please encourage all your fellow amateurs to participate in either or both of these activities, helping where necessary those who find it difficult to use computers, etc. This is an important moment in amateur radio history and the results of the survey are sure to influence the direction and strategy the hobby will take over the next 20-25 years.

CDXC HF Challenge - 2010 Results

Last year saw the first HF Challenge, the brainchild of Gary, ZL2IFB. Gary had hoped that if 2009 was successful, CDXC would integrate the Challenge into its Awards Programme and manage future events. It was successful, and we did! Of course this would have been a much bigger task had it not been for Michael/G7VJR's excellent Club Log system.

There were no rule changes for 2010, but encouragement was given to use Club Log and to upload regularly. Furthermore, as for the LF Challenge, this was a 'positive opt-in' event in Club Log which ensured that we counted only QSOs made by those who were participating.

106 DXers entered and a total of 205 unique DXCCs were worked. The overall winner, for the second year running, was Alan, 5B4AHJ, with 174 DXCCs. Only six DXCCs behind in second place was Gary, GØFWX, followed by Bob, G3PJT, in third place. It's interesting to note that the

winner's score in 2009 would not have made the Top Ten leader board in 2010 – sunspots? Band leaders were 5B4AHJ on 15m and 12m; GØFWX on 10m; six callsigns tied for the 6m honours – although they only worked one DXCC each; and no QSOs were made on 4m.

Congratulations to all of the entrants and particularly to those at the top of a hard-fought table. The results for the Top Ten are shown below, and full details can be found at www.clublog.org/hfchallenge.

The CDXC Committee is in the process of finalising awards for the leaders and an announcement will be made soon. We most certainly plan to run the HF Challenge in 2011 and would welcome your views on any rule changes we might consider. Address comments to the CDXC Awards Manager Jim, MØZAK, whose contact information is at the front of the *Digest*.

[See also article by G3PJT on p. 24. Ed.]

Rank	Callsign	DXCCs	15	12	10	6	4	QSOs
1	5B4AHJ	174	170	86	37	-	-	1395
2	GØFWX	168	164	26	43	-	-	480
3	G3PJT	150	149	-	5	-	-	265
4	G5LP	146	143	7	8	-	-	408
5	MD0CCE	139	133	42	18	-	-	1094
6	G3SVD	137	128	16	12	-	-	259
7	MW0CRI	127	123	9	14	-	-	459
8	ZL1BYZ	108	106	28	0	-	-	2193
9	K0XB	108	107	15	5	-	-	262
10	ZL2IFB	108	107	8	1	-	-	841

The following uniques were recorded by band:

	15m	12m	10m	6m	4m	Uniques
DXCCs	204	127	104	6	-	205

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT *don@g3xtt.com*

I suppose the big event has been the emergence of four new DXCC entities, which I mentioned in my last piece and which has been covered extensively elsewhere. Actually, we didn't know exactly how the ARRL would deal with the new political reality in the Netherlands Antilles until the formal announcement but, in the event, it turned out exactly as the experts such as W3UR had predicted. So we now have PJ2 (Curaçao), PJ4 (Bonaire), PJ5/6 (Saba/St Eustatius) and PJ7 (Sint Maarten).

At the time of writing, PJ2 has been notable by being somewhat thin on the ground, although no doubt that will be made good around the CQ WW Phone and CW contests. The others have been pretty well activated, with UK stations working them on all HF bands, although 10m openings have been few and far between and you had to be there at the right time. Mind you, I don't actually see the need to rush. They aren't going to go away! I avoided the early days (partly through necessity, as our daughter got married on 15 October and there was lots to do in the preceding days), but the result was that when I started the chase it really wasn't too hard. On 19 October, for example, I added nine new slots which, considering there are just 36 in all, wasn't too bad.

The main effect of the new ones, I suppose, will be to weed out the Silent Keys and no-longer-active from the top of the Honour Roll. Those who remain active will have no trouble getting these new ones worked and credited. Then we wait for the next one(s). Who knows what that might be. Maybe Kosovo (finally), maybe Southern Sudan, or maybe the West Riding of Yorkshire (which, I might suggest, has a far longer and more prestigious history than some of these other new ones!). Actually, it seems strange

working places we have worked many times before, but this time for a new DXCC (and, in one case, new IOTA). I suppose it is inevitable. Pretty much every rock and piece of soil has been activated at one time or another, so there isn't anything that is truly 'new', just something that already existed, but in a new guise, whether politically or administratively.

Other than the obvious piece above, about the new entities, I was a bit short of ideas for this issue's column. Too much focus on the wedding, I guess. But while walking the dog this morning, I was able to come up with a few more topics which, hopefully, will be of interest. A case of inspiration from Dog X-ray, I suppose. Well, she's not actually called 'X-ray', but the Dog bit is certainly valid!

T32

The word is out – Christmas Island. A year away, but some of us have already been beavering away, as the kit has to be shipped early in 2011. This time I have been seconded to the antenna team, which is quite a demanding role, as working from the middle of the Pacific poses new challenges. In particular, we need to be able to generate very low radiation angles on all bands, so our traditional monoband Yagis may not cut the mustard. We will take them, of course, but are also building vertical arrays for all bands. It's impossible to check their performance from a typical English garden as they really only do their stuff from within a wavelength or so of the sea, so we are having to rely largely on modelling. Most of the design effort is going into the physical construction so that they can be erected easily on T32 and withstand the constant battering of wind and salt spray. Time will tell whether we have got it right. Planning

receive antennas is quite a challenge too – there are lots of designs around these days, from K9AY to Flag to phased vertical arrays. But the design problems are immense, as most require pre-amplifiers and switching, and don't like operating where there are up to fifteen high-power stations transmitting away. Almost certainly we will settle on tried and tested Beverages, but even these require some complex switching and feed arrangements (and long feeder lengths) to be usable on a combination of bands and available at two operating locations.

Radios

Apropos of which, you will also be aware that we will be taking Yaesu FT-5000s as the prime movers. Several found their way into team members' hands at the recent RSGB Convention, thanks to a "never to be repeated" offer from Martin Lynch (well, Martin always says that, doesn't he!), so at least some expedition members will have prior experience of what is very much a new generation of radio. It got me thinking about what is different about the latest transceivers, from whichever of the manufacturers. I presume all are using the latest RF devices, which have improved front-end performance immeasurably, helped also by the decision from some manufacturers (Elecraft and Yaesu, for example) to revert to a lower first IF, making it easier (and cheaper) to offer good first-stage filtering (not really 'roofing filters' in the strict sense of the term) and minimise image rejection. The adoption of high first IFs came about some 25 years or so back now, when the punters started to expect general coverage capabilities. Yaesu get round this in the 5000 by providing general coverage only on the second receiver.

The other area in which major improvements have come about is in DSP. I get the impression that it is only in the very latest transceivers that DSP has come of age in amateur equipment. It has been

implemented in a big way in professional (largely military) gear for some years now, but at a cost that would have ruled it out in amateur equipment. But the DSP capabilities of the latest amateur rigs does seem to be very sophisticated nowadays. The other big change is the ability to watch a whole band (or several) by way of maybe an external SDR receiver or an inbuilt panoramic display (something which Icom have featured for some years now, but is a more recent feature of the high-end Yaesu radios).

But there's generally a price to be paid for all this technology and those high-end radios, from whichever manufacturer, don't come cheap. It will be interesting to see, therefore, how the new Kenwood TS-590 shapes up. At the expected price point, it could be a real winner and bring Kenwood back with a vengeance as a serious supplier of HF amateur rigs. For my own part, for the next few weeks I am expecting to have an opportunity to run an FT-5000 and an IC-7800 alongside each other in my shack, which will allow me to check out two quite different but high-class radios in a 'live' environment, which is quite different to reading the specs or performance reviews. I just hope there is some propagation so that I have some real signals to listen to and work!

Logging

Those of us who attended Michael/G7VJR's ClubLog talk at the Convention were in for a treat. This is turning out to be such a useful tool, with more facilities coming along almost by the day. The whole concept of computer logging has come a very long way since the early days in, I suppose, the late-80s. Our PC-based logging software does much more; it really is station management in the broadest sense, and normally comes with full interface facilities to the outside world, whether Logbook of the World, QRZ.com, or other online resources (not to mention the Cluster system, of course). And it is this global networking that will drive the next

generations of logging, whether real-time contest scoring or real-time DXpedition uploads (which at least one of the recent PJ efforts was managing to achieve). It will be interesting to see where it all goes – it doesn't just depend on what we, the punters, think would be useful, or what is technically feasible. It also needs a champion to move things forward, something which G7VJR has achieved in spades with ClubLog.

Operating manual

All of the above brings me nicely to the new edition of the RSGB Operating Manual (plug!). I rewrote this pretty much cover-to-cover six years ago, because the previous editions had become very dated indeed (there wasn't even talk of computer logging, despite its having been around at that stage for something like 15 years – readers were urged to ensure plenty of space on the operating desk for a logbook).

This time round, working with Steve, 9M6DXX (G4JVG), I had thought that little of significance had happened in the intervening six years, but we were both surprised as we looked around. Not only has the UK licensing regime changed significantly but, as discussed above, technology continues to evolve in a variety of ways (not least in new datamodes, which seem to pop up with monotonous regularity). Unfortunately, as far as actual operating is concerned, it does seem that standards have continued to decline. I won't dwell on that, as it has been discussed in these pages on a number of occasions.

The other aspect over which neither Steve nor I nor any of you has any control, is the imminence or otherwise of the next sunspot peak. In this we need to turn to others (the Palos Verdes Sundancers come to mind, for those of you who have been around long enough to remember Cass and the West Coast DX Bulletin).

Anyway, enough ramblings. Don't look to me for actual information, it's all available

on the Internet! Well, as I write this, Jarvis is postponed for a year and Sable has been put on hold due to a dodgy aircraft. But there are still some nice ones coming up, such as Niue, Kermadec and Spratly to name but a few. Good DXing!

Silent Key

Before closing, and in case you didn't spot this announcement, F6FNU, Antoine Baldeck, is reported as a Silent Key. He passed away on 8 October. I mention this because he was very active for many years as a (sometimes controversial) QSL manager for a large number of (mainly Francophone) DX stations.

73 Don, G3XTT

G3SWH OQRS Service

I am pleased to announce the launch of my Online QSL Request System (OQRS). In addition to the long-established ability to request bureau cards via e-mail, you can now request QSL cards for any of the 100+ callsigns that I manage to be mailed to you direct and to pay for the postage etc. via PayPal. Why bother with mailing direct? The OQRS is easy and reasonable.

Any queries or unforeseen issues will be handled via e-mail. Please visit my website at www.g3swh.org.uk for further information and instructions.

Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH

DXpedition to the island of Annobón 2010

Javier Dominguez Ferrer, EA5KM, and Elmo Bernabe Coll, EA5BYP

We started preparing for the expedition to the island of Annobón in early October 2009 and concurrently started discussions with the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Our goal was to reach the island during April 2010, and knowing the interest that 3C0C had, and has, for the low bands and CW mode, our focus would be on these band-modes.

We contacted Javi, EC4DX, and asked him if he would be our webmaster. We also talked to Fran, EA7FTR, as we needed a QSL manager. I remember our conversation and his answer clearly, “Yes, of course! I’ll be the QSL manager for Annobón 2010.” Our pilot would be Vic, EA5YN, and later Paul, VK4MA, joined the group as a second pilot.

Everything was going well, albeit with caution, but this was no easy task as the site is restricted. The DXpedition operators would be Javier, EA5KM, and Elmo, EA5BYP. Some might wonder why we did not have more operators. Although we received enquiries from operators to join the group, these came too late in the day as all the permits and authorisations were prepared and modifying them was just about impossible.

So Javier and Elmo worked hard. We started to apply for sponsorship, since the project was very expensive for the two operators. The Northern California DX Foundation, Lynx DX Group, Lone Star DX Assoc and Chiltern DX Club, responded to our request for help, and then other groups and individual support started to appear. Communications-related companies also came through with help for the expedition.

We want to thank too: INDEXA, GDXF, SWODA, URE, EUDXF, UKSMG, CLIPERTON DX, SDXF, SPIDERBEAM,

GMDX, DANISH DX, EA8URA, URE BENIDORM, ASTEC, PROYECTO4, STEPPIR, ASTEC, URE SAN VICENTE, URE CASTELLON, URE GANDIA, IDXG, NIPPON DX, IZ7AUH, GRUPO H.G, TANGO DELTA, W5BXX, EA8AK and EA5BZ

We wanted to take good antennas, equipment and amplifiers so we could give hams the opportunity to work Annobón, especially all those who needed this as a new country. My dream has always been to work 160m from 3C0 so to achieve this desire and my dreams everything had to be managed well.

During the project we had the idea of working from two locations – on the island of Bioko-Malabo and Annobón. There has been no activity from Malabo for several years and the Communications Ministry liked our idea - of course our operators loved the idea. So we would activate two good DXCC entities and our licenses were granted: 3C9B for Bioko and 3C0C for Annobón.

In January 2010 we announced our expedition. There are DXCC entities that advertise their expeditions too far in advance, but we had to wait until we got the authorisation from the country of Equatorial Guinea. However, things then got worse as in April we still did not have our travel plans fixed. We were told that the runway on Annobón was scheduled to have repairs and would be closed. The alternative was a three day trip on a barge, which would not, from my past experience, be a pleasant experience. We decided to wait and see what developed.

We received the notice to travel in late May and in a week had everything ready. We would fly from Alicante to Madrid, then

from Madrid to Malabo, operate from Bioko as 3C9B and then fly via Bata to Annobón for 3C0C operations.

We arrived in Malabo at midnight on Thursday the 3rd of June 2010, but did not arrive at our destination until dawn as we had to get through customs which took some time. But finally we were in what would be our shack for 3C9B.

On Friday morning, the 4th of June we started the installation of the vertical Steppir and some dipoles. We initially activated a single station thinking we would operate in relay in order to spend as much time as possible on the radio while also working to collect all the necessary provisions for survival on the island for 14 days. All the logistics in Malabo would be Elmo's as he knows the country very well.

Bioko was rainy, and occasionally a tornado could be seen in the city. While mounting the vertical, Javier could taste the strength of this phenomenon, but finally without problems all the antennas were installed. Normally in Malabo electric power is continuous, but we had the bad luck of having our shack in the wrong location and we were left without power for nearly a day because of an accident in the building. We found that propagation was poor during the mornings and on some bands we could not hear anything. Nevertheless, we installed our second station. We felt we had to seize the moments when the two operators could be on the air.

On the afternoon of Sunday the 6th of June we dismantled the antennas and returned to pick up all our packaging. The following day at 0700 UTC we moved to Bata, the old Guinean capital, where a small propeller plane was to take us to Annobón. Our boxes and baggage were bulky because apart from our radio kit and personal belongings we had to take a few boxes of supplies. Currently on the island of Annobón one cannot find the basics to live on - even fish, a staple, was in short supply. The island has

seen huge changes - new buildings, some roads and more vehicles; also, possibly, a new port will appear within a few years. The island will be completely changed, for Annoboneses as well as for us visitors.

We arrived in Annobón mid-afternoon on the 7th of June. After carrying all our stuff to our 3C0C shack, we went to introduce ourselves to the authorities of the island, presenting all of our credentials, passports etc. and explaining our reason for being on the island. Later that day we installed the Steppir vertical antenna and the 80m coil.

Due to the time and being tired from travelling, we left the rest of the installation for the next day. On the morning of the 8th of June we set up more antennas: a 2-element Steppir, a 5-element yagi antenna for 6m and by the afternoon we had everything ready to go on the air. We left the 160m vertical to install over the following days as we needed to find a good place for its location.

Unlike Malabo, Annobón was in its dry season. The humidity was high, and we thought the worst that could happen would be the emergence of some unexpected serious damage. And unfortunately on the fifth day, Friday the 11th of June, it did. Following a storm, we realized two elements of the Steppir antenna had failed, suggesting severe damage. The antenna was unusable - we were desolate. Even with the Yagi pointing to the USA the signals were very low. We tried everything and were aware that many US hams were watching us, and it was sad that we could not stop the European pile-up so the signals did not reach USA. And now the Yagi was out control, we had to improvise and use the vertical dipole parts that we had.

Our antenna for 50 MHz was installed and we always had an open transceiver on this band. We even announced by SSB that we were continuously on 6m - but still no 6m signal from any Continent came to Annobón.

On the third day we found the ideal site to place the 160m antenna. The site was very good, near the beach. We tried, but here again we heard no signal. The was terrible QRM.

Then on the 16th day came an unpleasant surprise - we were told that we would have to leave the island immediately. We would have to take the last flight now or wait several months while repairs were made to the runway. So we had several choices: expect a barge next month to pick us up; wait until October for the next flight; or leave the next morning for Bata – Malabo. We chose to leave the next day.

Sadly, we had not finished our 3C0C effort, but we had to leave. Back to Bioko, reorganise and resume operating as 3C9B. On 20th June we ended the trip, collected our gear on the Sunday and packed all the

equipment left behind days before. It was a lot of hard work and we were exhausted. The DX-pedition may not have been as we would have liked, but we are happy with our work. We thank all who helped us bring the DXpedition to this small island in the Atlantic, 3C0C.

Final Statistics:

	3C9B	3C0C
Total QSO's	7,310	11,680
Unique Callsigns	4,358	5,605
Total Operating	58 hrs	83 hrs

A log check and more information is online at www.3c0c-annobon.com.

Team 3C0C & 3C9B 2010

The FOC Straight Key Weekend: 1 – 2 January 2011

The FOC Straight Key Weekend was well supported last year by both members and non-members alike and the FOC Committee has agreed it can be part of the CW calendar again. The idea is not to have a contest, but to be active using any mechanical keys such as the semi-automatic bug, the side swiper or the pump straight key across all bands 25 Khz up. Whilst many operators use an electronic keyer, there are still a sizeable number who are proficient on the older-style keys and FOC recognises the value of preserving these old yet valuable skills.

The weekend of the 1st and 2nd of January 2011 has been suggested as fairly free again, with no major contests on the bands, and your club operators are invited to join FOC on all bands with your straight key, bug key or any other mechanical keying device. (We leave it up to you!) The timing will follow the FOC BWQP event timing and start at 0000z and finish at 2359z over the Saturday and Sunday weekend. There are no prescribed operating bands or times - just be active as band conditions permit. It would be helpful if CW club editors could put this information on club reflectors.

Please send your comments on contacts and working conditions to G3VTT by e-mail at g3vtt@aol.com or post to them (QTHR) before the end of January. A log is not needed, but comments about the types of keys heard and the best 'fist' would make interesting reading. The FOC Public Website is at www.g4foc.org.

E4X – Palestine 2010

Antonio Gonzalez, EA5RM

Shortly after we finished 9X0R, our DXpedition to Rwanda, I began to pay attention to the Tifariti Gang's next project. After speaking to Fabrizio, IN3ZNR, on our possible targets, we agreed to try Palestine, which due to its complicated sociopolitical situation was very rare on the bands and stood high on the most needed countries list.

As we began our first steps at the end of 2008, we found that an Italian group had been working on an E4 project for a year already and was going to deploy an operation from Bethlehem at the beginning of 2009. We decided to postpone our plans until after this event. In September 2009 and with the help of Giorgio, IZ4AKS, I travelled to Italy to meet Mr Shoby, a Palestinian who would support us within the West Bank and be the key man in the organisation of our plans. After the interview with Mr Shoby our project really started.

Due to the difficult situation in that part of the world there were many problems to overcome. I decided to make a trip to Palestine and Israel in October 2009 to get the ham licence and to set up the necessary logistics and support. On the 19th of October I arrived in Tel Aviv. I soon became familiar with the Israeli checkpoints along the Palestinian border. Promptly on the first morning I proceeded to the Ministry of Telecommunications in Ramallah, the administrative capital of the Palestinian National Authority. Arriving at the Ministry, after passing the Palestinian security due to the proximity of the Prime Minister's residence, I was interviewed by the officer in charge of radio authorisations. He was very friendly and promised to help in every way he could. Once I had learnt the procedure to obtain the licence, the next step was to find

a good location to operate from, free of the heavy electrical noise that had been a pain during for the last two operations from the West Bank. It took several days in Beit Jala and Bethlehem to locate what was going to be the site of our station, situated just five minutes walk from the Nativity Church in Bethlehem.

When all the field work in Palestine had been concluded I travelled to Tel Aviv to meet 4Z4MU, 4Z4LA and 4X6HP. They gave me invaluable help, and an invitation to their weekly ham meeting, where we got the support for our project from the Israel Amateur Radio Club.

With E4X's papers in my pocket and the mission fulfilled, I returned to Spain, but not before having the experience of boarding at Ben Gurion international airport. There I underwent two unexpected interrogations while waiting for check-in, followed by a third interview at the counter lasting one hour and forty five minutes, whilst all my personal belongings were passed through explosives and other scanners, as well as a comprehensive manual inspection. More than luckily I passed all the examinations, and with my suitcase boarded I managed to carry on my two HF radios and a PSU as hand luggage.

In spite of nobody asking anything about the rigs, for months I had bad dreams about that Tel Aviv boarding, since it was by no means clear what would happen when boarding a group of ten people loaded with 'sensitive stuff'.

In Madrid, with the help of EA4ATA and EC4JD of *Proyecto4*, we sorted and packed all the equipment, including the antennas. On May 26th the team members comprising EA2RY, EA5FX, EA7AJR,

EA7KW, F5CWU, F6ENO, F9IE, IN3ZNR and EA5RM gathered in Madrid and were briefed with travelling instructions and operating procedure.

One of our main targets was to work North America, and more specifically the West Coast, from where our pilots K6GNX and W6ENZ would advise us of the best times of propagation to our area, as well as any unexpected openings. Another priority was the 6 metre band, which previously had seen almost no activity from Palestine. We hoped that with the help of band specialist EA7KW we would make many contacts. We had chosen operating dates as a compromise to fit inside the best of the Sporadic E season and to exploit our chances on the low bands.

At dusk on May 27th we arrived in Tel Aviv. 4Z5LA and 4X6HP were at the airport waiting for us. After greeting our Israeli friends and checking that our entire luggage had arrived safely, we headed for Bethlehem, passing through one of the main checkpoints. Foreigners are not now allowed to enter the West Bank through secondary checkpoints. "The rules have changed, they do every week!" shouted our Palestinian driver. These changes produced some problems for us a few days later.

When we reached our hotel, the Pilgrim Residence, we split into two working groups, one to set up the stations, and the other to work on the roof - building the 30m vertical with elevated radials and assembling the three HF beams. The antenna work was in the dark with strong winds. At 2000 hours UTC on the 27th F9IE sent the first 'CQ de E4X'. At last our nine month's work was paying off! The first night F9IE, F6ENO and EA5FX kept the 30m station running until dawn. The next morning all the crew except the 30m operator raised, in record time, the three HF Yagis (Spiderbeam, HexBeam and BBHexBeam), the vertical for 40m and the seven-element 6m Yagi. A little later we put up the 80m and 160m dipoles.

When the antennas were put up we organised the operating shifts. Two hours in daylight and three hours at night. Immediately things started and everything ran like clockwork. Whilst EA7KW was in charge of the 6m band, if the Magic Band was dead he would relieve the HF ops. EA5FX, EA7AJR, F6ENO and F9IE kept the CW pile-ups busy, while EA2RY filled the gaps in the RTTY segments and F5CWU, IN3ZNR and I worked SSB. The shack was installed in one of the hotel rooms, strategically located to minimise annoyance to the other guests, and to minimise the length of the cables feeding our antennas. Inside the shack we had four stations with linear amplifiers. One was for CW, another SSB, the third for RTTY and the fourth was the 6m station. We also set up a fifth station, running 100W with an Elecraft K3. This radio impressed us all with its high yield and performance, making us think about using it in the future to replace the Icom IC-7000, which had previously given us some headaches. Another happy surprise was to find very little interaction between stations, even though all the antennas were very close to each other.

During the first days of the operation HF propagation was only fair. In fact we did not have any openings to the West Coast of the United States until the third dawn, when our pilots phoned me, excited because our signal was starting to pop up in Nevada and California. Right away F9IE at the CW station started to call "West Coast only" and shortly after we had the first W6s and W7s logged. Every morning after this we were happy to log more 'Far West' stations on all modes.

Due to the time of year the low bands were only as would be expected. On the other hand, 6m was outstanding. We posted on our website that a beacon would be running on 50.103 MHz whenever the band was silent or the operator was busy, also a cellphone number to text us with signal report and the station's grid locator. This

system turned out to be very effective, especially to know when our 6m signal was audible in Japan or the most difficult parts of Europe. We had a few such openings to Asia and in most of them we suffered from a pulse noise covering the whole band, always from the same direction. On the evening of the 31st a US station came in, out of the blue, mixed with the 50 MHz EU pile-up. Jose Ramon jumped out of his chair, but doubted it was genuine. But quickly a massive pile-up of North American stations was packing the DX segment. 72 stations from the East Coast added a 'new one' on Six. A 4X4 operator said: "I've been for fifteen years on SIX waiting for an US run - you arrive here and do it!" Openings with different parts of Europe were, however, on a daily basis, and very strong, making it possible to establish a world record of QSOs for a DXpedition on 50 MHz, a total of 6,545 contacts.

As the days passed our goals were reached, in spite of the increasing indiscipline of the Southern Europe stations, which created unnecessary QRM for us at any time of the

day, even when we called 'only JA' or 'only NA'. Since all the E4X operators had very explicit instructions not to work a single station in Europe whilst looking outside of it, not one of those stations calling out of turn was ever logged. Sincerely, I believe that there must be something that we can do to solve this problem. After ten years going on expeditions all over the world, I can say that the problem has increased during the last few years, and is making some DX stations change their usual operating technique. As we feared this situation, instructions given to the operators in Madrid before our departure to the Holy Land reduced the consequences of this bad practice. But undoubtedly the QSO rate we were able to reach would have been greater if we hadn't had the continuous stress and loss of time repeating 'only North America' or 'outside of Europe please' after every QSO.

At last, after ten days that we will never forget, at dawn on June 7th the last QSO of the 80,267 was made.

	CW	SSB	RTTY	BAND
6M	3.408	2.882	255	6.545
10M	2.608	3.255	478	6.341
12M	3.354	2.686	499	6.539
15M	4.105	4.547	2.145	10.797
17M	7.838	4.979	1.921	14.738
20M	7.913	7.607	2.853	18.373
30M	7.296		1.482	8.778
40M	3.564	1.629	535	5.728
80M	1.562	690	0	2.252
160M	176	0	0	176
TOTAL	41.824	28.275	10.168	80.267

Once all the stations had been torn down we began our journey back to Spain. Straightaway we faced our first checkpoint, in Bethlehem. After almost two hours of inspections and conversation we were allowed into Israeli territory to head to the airport.

We arrived at Ben Gurion three hours in advance of our flight, time enough to pass customs clearances and check in. Inside the airport facility Israeli security picked me out of the group, as team leader, to proceed with the well-known interrogation. Twenty minutes of questions and answers followed,

then a close inspection of our luggage and all the radio stuff. They denied the boarding of two HF transceivers and our four amps. We left about \$20,000 worth of gear behind - not before a long discussion with the security supervisor. We finally boarded with only a paper barcode sticker for each piece of gear held.

Fortunately, a few days later we recovered everything, without any damage. This episode ended the E4X story.

We've been ramping up our efforts this year, and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of all the volunteers, individuals, clubs and associations who had confidence in us and supported our mission. The E4X operators would like to thank all of them, especially EB5BBM, EA5BZ, EA5RD,

EA4TD, EA4ATA, EC4JD, EA7EU, EA7MK, IZ4AKS, 4Z5MU, 4Z5LA, 4X6HP, K6GNX, W6ENZ, NCDXF, INDEXA, URE, Carolina Dx Association, SWODXA, Proyecto4, UKSMG, Clipperton DXC, GDXF, TCDXA, Eurotours Trips, URE Benidorm, Lynx DX Group, Spiderbeam, CDXC, Dxcffee, UFT, LZ3HY QSL print, Western Washington DXC, GM DX Group, Tecatel, URE Manises, URE San Vicente of the Raspeig, Northeast Wisconsin DXA, Tokyo 610 DXG, Greater Milwaukee DXA, Mile - Hi DXA, URE Burriana, Tango Delta, Nippon DXA, BARTG, GDGDXC and F6KOP.

Antonio Gonzalez EA5RM – E4X

Translated into English by J. Ramon Hierro EA7KW

G3SWH and G3RTE off to Cocos (Keeling)

Phil, G3SWH, and Jim, G3RTE, will be active from West Island in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands between the 22nd of February and the 5th of March 2011.

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands count as OC-003 for IOTA. The 2009 'Most Wanted' survey by DX Magazine shows the Cocos (Keeling) Islands at #75 worldwide for DXCC purposes.

We will both use the single callsign VK9C/G6AY. Our activity will be on CW only on all bands 80-10m. There will be no 160m, 6m or EME activity.

Propagation permitting, we plan to have two stations on the air for as many hours every day as possible. Our main objective is to work as many European, North American and ROTW stations on as many different bands as possible – and we plan to make at least 15,000 QSOs.

QSL via G3SWH, either direct with SAE and adequate return postage (recommended), via Phil's website for a bureau reply - or via the bureau.

This will be a very expensive DXpedition. We are happy to meet the costs of transport to and from the islands, but are seeking sponsorship and donations from individuals, DX clubs and organisations towards our living expenses on the island, printing QSLs and the like. There is more information at www.g3swh.org.uk/vk9c-g6ay.html.

73 Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH and AD5YS

www.g3swh.org.uk

Theo QSYs

Roger Western, G3SXW

Well, Theo didn't actually emigrate very far. A successful career took him away from his Bristol upbringing to nearer London. Big news! Could he find a place to live with enough room for antennas? Moving to a more congested part of the country might not help. He quickly learned that estate agents don't really know where North is nor where the land slopes upwards nor what the soil structure is – they're actually only interested in the price. Thank God for the Internet so some of these things could be checked out in advance, thus saving wasted time driving around the countryside in the long hunt which might satisfy all requirements: close to shops and railway stations for 'er and with a big enough garden for 'im.

They eventually settled on a good compromise location where they both had only minor grievances and then came the day for the big move. Highly stressful, as all house moves always are.

Planning Permission?

A few weeks after moving in Theo had DX-withdrawal symptoms, so threw up a 20m inverted Vee in a 35ft-high tree. This worked surprisingly well, but nothing like his previous installation. So he started on the long road to secure planning permission for a modest tower and antennas. As luck would have it his new local council was one of the more favourably inclined and, after some months and effort and costs for architects drawings, planning permission was forthcoming for a 40 ft mast and beam. He never could quite work out why some councils are horribly strict and others are less so. The strict ones could do with some local lobbying to educate them about the advantages of amateur radio. Anyway, Theo was now back in business.

The DXCC chase was back on. Our true-blue DXer ruefully counted up the ones which had 'got away' whilst moving: ZL8, Kermadec, had been on for a few days, also JW, Svalbard, which he still needed on 160 and 80m. Never mind, career and family comes first. He kept reminding himself that this is only a hobby, not an income earner, nor an obsession! (So some say!).

DXing settled back into the routine: check Daily DX and the daily propagation numbers. The odd new band-slot started to enter his log and LoTW, good progress. He nabbed 5X1NH in Uganda, good ol' Nick G3RWF, on 80m. Plus good ol' Brian, 9J2BO, on 40m which he had still needed, even though Brian had been bashing away from Zambia for some decades. Then 1AØKM, Sovereign Military Knights of Malta, showed up with big signals from Rome on several bands at once. That filled in some band-mode slots in a couple of days. Easy-peasy.

Local Clubs?

During his formative years in Bristol Theo had benefited greatly from the friendly local radio club, attending meetings and get-togethers whenever he could and had learned loads during their Field Day outings. He had also laughed a lot and quaffed the odd beer or three with his buddies. Over the years he had even joined the Committee as Social Secretary and helped to build attendance at meetings and enthusiasm - so that he left the club stronger than when he joined. Monthly meetings attracted on average 30 attendees - not bad - and a couple of times a year he was able to organise well-known speakers to come and divulge all.

After some months in his new QTH Theo decided it was about time he joined a local

club. First stop was the Clubs column in the back of RadCom. Most clubs list their activities there, although a number are silent for a few months, so this should not be the only source of information. Being in a more congested area these days, Theo found three or four clubs within a half-hour drive, so decided to check them out.

A couple of them seemed to have good HF support, just judging by their listings in NFD, AFS and the 80m CC. One wet and windy Thursday night he just showed up at the required address of one of them at the required time and found a dozen chaps nattering. What somewhat surprised him was that he was totally ignored. Here was a strange face who nobody seemed to want to speak to. Yukk! It has to be said that the incumbents were somewhat older, mostly 60+, so perhaps they had lost the cocktail-party ability to speak to strangers. Never mind, Theo persevered and found a couple of chaps to chat to. A week or two later he found another club who were rather more friendly and he started to attend whenever he could.

With nearly three decades of amateur radio under his belt and a reasonably successful career, Theo was able to offer some personal skills to his new club and he soon joined the Committee, later becoming Treasurer. What a shame the first club that he had visited had not been more welcoming, as they evidently lost out on a valuable new member. It gave Theo pause for some thought: maybe we have too many local clubs these days. After all, there is a certain critical mass: if a local club has only 20 members then only a handful will show up at any one meeting and vibrancy is lost. In the olden days we needed a lot of clubs so everyone was within cycling or bus-riding distance. But in this modern age we are all happy to drive our cars a half-hour or so to attend functions. Maybe some of these small (failing?) clubs should amalgamate.

Onwards + Upwards

Now we see that Theo is progressing in life: career in high gear, family on the way, radio (obsession?) advancing, all is sweet. Where next? Does Theo have enough social motivation to get involved with trying to advance the hobby? Or is he, like most folks, somewhat hesitant when it comes to the Committee, civil service mentality – is he more interested in getting things done quickly in his own back yard rather than attending endless, uninspiring meetings? To climb the RSGB organisational ladder is a long-term commitment requiring lots of time investment and patience with bureaucratic procedures. And/or he could find alternative ways to put things back into the hobby by helping to train newcomers or to manage a DX club or to help stimulate thrills for DX seekers by DXpeditioning. Hmm, now there's a thought!

All will be revealed about Theo's future in his next thrilling instalment!

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

G3ECS Ken Ottrey
G4SLE Keith Lambert

Central America Whirlwind Tour

Roger Western, G3SXW

Bob/K4UEE, Rob/GM3YTS and Roger/G3SXW visited (SIX) Central American countries in seven days during September 2010 and operated pile-ups in two of them. Here is the brief diary of events:

Sep 13: Rob and Roger flew with Delta Airlines from London Heathrow to Atlanta, Georgia, USA; stayed one night with Bob, K4UEE, and XYL Mary, met Chaz, W4GKF, great merriment, great food, great company!

Sep 14: Bob, Rob and Roger flew Delta from Atlanta to San Jose, Costa Rica (ONE), three-hour flight, stayed with Keko, TI5KD (TI5N in contests), big antennas; operated during two days or so: TI5/G3SXW, TI5/GM3YTS, TI5/K4UEE.

Sep 15: took a side-trip to Golfito in Southern Costa Rica, walked across the border, with no formalities, into Panama (TWO). By chance it was Costa Rican independence day. We met Leo, TI8NY, who lives at Paso de Canoas ('Crossing by canoes') on the border. He hosted us superbly and explained that this was the big family day, bigger even than Christmas. We enjoyed a mile-long parade of school bands, mostly rhythmic drums, just so exciting (plus the odd beer or three!). A great day out, notwithstanding massive thunderstorms. Marvellous to join in major family celebrations in a faraway country, to experience the colour and enthusiasm of folks in celebratory mood.

Sep 16: back to San Jose early morning in our 15-seater airplane (I just love those small planes). Keko then drove us up the mountain to see the earthquake devastation (January 2009, Richter 7.2), lots of coffee

plantations on the way. Then back for more time on the radio with Keko's big antennas.

Sep 17: flew Taca Airlines from San Jose, Costa Rica, to Guatemala City, (THREE), 40-minute transit at the airport; flew to San Salvador (FOUR), another 40-minute transit; flew to Managua, Nicaragua, (FIVE), drove one hour to Granada, home of Octavio and Martha, YN2N, another set of big antennas, stayed for three nights: YN2SXW, YN2GM, YN2EE.

Sep 18: after some time on the radio we drove a mile or so to mount the Mombacho volcano, some 4,400 ft high, in a big East German truck; walked the trail of a wildlife preserve, steaming holes, howling monkeys, great experience. More radio operating in the evening.

Sep 19: drove three hours north to the Honduras border at Guasaule (SIX), bribed (USD \$10) our way across the border for a quick Honduran beer then back to Granada. More radio operating and Martha's great cuisine.

Sep 20: flew back to Atlanta; transit to London, arrived home Sep 21 afternoon.

Why?

Such trips offer just such a marvellous combination: we are confessed Travel-oholics; we love to experience strange, new lands and meet new friends; we love to laugh till it hurts in the company of good pals with the same sense of humour. Add to all this getting on the air, albeit far more briefly than a full-scale DXpedition, from strange countries with strange propagation of signals and we're in heaven!

I made 200 contacts from Costa Rica signing TI5/G3SXW and 300 contacts from

Nicaragua signing YN2SXW. In total the three of us made around 1,500 contacts, with our six different callsigns. All QSLs go to home calls. The rented accommodation at both TI5KD and YN2N was just what we needed for a marvellous holiday, combining all these factors.

Pile-Ups

Of course, we just love to get on the bands from somewhat exotic parts of the world and run pile-ups. There's nothing like a horde of callers to get the adrenalin rushing. From Central America Europe and Eastern North America are North-East, so there's little need to rotate the beams. Just call CQ with a semi-rare callsign and pile-ups are guaranteed within seconds.

Best openings, as we found, were late evenings local time. On 40 m signals from Europe and W/VE were loud. Daytime depends on solar activity: with low sunspots signals were weaker and there was not much action above 15 m.

Antennas

At both TI5KD and YN2N there are really super antennas on high towers, including HF beams and 40m fixed wire cubicle quads. These generated instant pile-ups even with barefoot, 100W. With high temperatures and high humidity, maintenance must be a major challenge. Both Keko and Octavio invest considerably of their time and money to assure effective working stations. Their performances in world-wide contests attest to the effectiveness of their antenna arrays.

Web Search:

DXFC: www.dxfc.org/index.php

TI5KD: www.yantis.us/ti5kd/

YN2N: www.dxzone.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump2.cgi?ID=16932

YDXA: www.arrl.org/news/youth-hamradio-fun-a-2010-youth-dx-adventure

TACA Airlines: www.taca.com/eng/pyr/ibe/ibeonedes.asp?id=15

Delta Airlines: www.delta.com/

Mombacho Volcano: www.vianica.com/activity/5/hiking-on-the-mombacho-volcano

YDXA

Keko, TI5KD, ran a programme in July this year for youngsters to experience operating ham radio from Costa Rica. After this success he is developing further programmes under the umbrella of the 'Youth DX Association' (YDXA).

The idea is that parents bring their licensed youngsters to Costa Rica for a ham holiday. Keko organises everything from airport pick-up to accommodation, meals and of course the radio station and antennas. The first such event was attended by eight father plus teenager teams who made several thousand contacts. What a great way to enthuse newcomers to the hobby and to running pile-ups!

DXFC

Finally, it must be added that DXFC is a significant motivation for us to make these crazy, whirlwind tours. This is when you count DXCC countries visited. The rules are simple: there are none! Just step foot in the DXCC entity. These six countries were mostly new for us, so between us we scored 15 new 'Feet' points (average five each) AND each scored two new QRV points, TI and YN, for getting active on the radio. Rich reward indeed for the limited time invested.

They say that travel broadens the mind - we certainly agree. We learn SO much during these short visits about how other people live and it doesn't have to cost a fortune if you know how to secure good airline deals. Great fun – try it!

Reflections on the HF Challenge

Bob Whelan, G3PJT

This was not how September was planned to be. September is a rather quiet month spent sorting out antennas for the winter. But in the way of DXers on the 2nd of September I called CQ on 21 MHz CW and 3B8DB called and I had a very nice little chat with Taher.

But as soon as I had finished G5LP called him! Huh, what's this all about then? OK its the new Optibeam I helped Lionel put up and he is just checking that it works. But no, "Was I going to enter the HF Challenge?", he said. I have to say I hadn't thought too much about it. The trouble is if you are competitive you can't resist a challenge. And its true: September is a great month on the marginal HF bands with the propagation changing quite a lot as the month runs on.

OK, so I had better read the rules first. And it looks like an open season event, if you find it, bag it...quickly, any mode, any spotting system, just bag it!. And it's also the idea of a good mate, Gary/ZL2IFB. Enough said.

On the other hand its a great chance to try some of the more marginal paths like the ZL-G in the late evening on 21 MHz, knowing that the ZLs are going to be around. And as it happened these long path QSOs with Gary and the other ZLs turned out to be the highlight of the month for me personally.

Although the other participants like Alan, 5B4AHJ, and Bob, MDØCCE, could call CQ and raise all sorts of DX, I thought that this approach would not work for a G3 and would result in a lot of UAs in the morning and Ws/PYs in the afternoon and evening, so back to good old search and pounce aided by the DX cluster.

So I cruised around 21 and 28 MHz looking for likely victims. And after a bit I had a few in the log . I realised it was going to be tough to get the close-in Europeans in the log and so it transpired. But the SSB field day conditions were short-skip so I managed GM/GW/OZ - sot too bad.

Lesson 1: Work all the contests

Some countries appeared on 24.9 MHz and 28MHz and might well have been easier to work there. I can't operate 24.9 MHz, so I have a bit of a handicap.

Lesson 2: Make sure you can operate all the higher HF bands

And then I saw that some DX actually likes such modes as PSK and RTTY. So I'd better get them sorted out too, especially as there is CQ WW RTTY on the last weekend of the month.

Lesson 3: Be prepared to operate all modes and go hunting in those parts of the bands too

But back to the long-path QSOs with ZL. As the flux perked up you might expect an opening to occur, but it didn't – well, at least not at first. The key seemed to be that the opening to W4 should stay open until well into the evening. Then by crooked path the G-ZL path will open. So at 2116z on the 13th Gary heard my CQ and of course after Gary, you guessed it, I heard and worked Cliff, ZL4AS, and later the other ZLs on later evenings. As I said earlier, these QSOs were the highlight of the month.

Of course you can't live for a month on the bands. There is another life, so you have to be rather selective. So I tried to look round early in the morning as 21 MHz just opened and later in the afternoon to the west.

It was, however, interesting to hear what didn't get spotted. XT5DKR was just quietly calling CQ and was happy to have a nice normal QSO. I think he worked two or three others and then went QRT. I thought he was a slim but no, he had been spotted earlier this year and the US station who worked him thought he was OK. And indeed he was active the following evening too.

As I was searching the bands very heavily it was clear that many DX operators have a set operating pattern. So if you don't get them this time they will probably be back tomorrow or next weekend, same frequency, same time.

Lesson 4 Search the bands very intensively indeed

At the end of the month I had 152 DXCCs with some notable gotaways. Roughly by

mode I had 45% CW, 35% on SSB and 20% on digi/RTTY.

At the end of it I think I much prefer CW DXing (I don't like to shout!) and so in the words of Lionel, G5LP, I shall retreat to the 'shallow end'. Well yes, until the next DX pile-up comes along!

All in all good fun, so thanks to Michael, G7VJR, for Club Log and of course to Gary, ZL2IFB, for the idea in the first place - and to Lionel, G5LP, for making it a great month.

W9DXCC

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

What, you may ask, is W9DXCC? It is the DX Convention for the W9 area, sponsored by the Northern Illinois DX Association, and is held in the Chicago area. 2010 was the 58th year and photos were on display of the 1953 band 1958 dinners: the comment was made that Joe, W9JUV, who is bald, didn't have any hair in 1958 either! Joe said that he should have been in the 1953 photograph too. The first meeting in December 1953 was in downtown Chicago and was founded by W9NN, who went SK at the age of 96 just before the 50th anniversary event in 2002.

In one of the hospitality suites at Dayton this year I got my arm twisted by Bruce, N9BX, to do a lecture – a repeat of my ATU lecture at the 2009 RSGB Convention. The event was on September 11, with informal events the night before. The snag here was

that the weekend was that of the 27th wedding anniversary, so I had to talk with Lynne, G4FNC, about it, and as she didn't have any Girl Guide events scheduled, she was able to accompany me. The next thing was to look at air tickets. It proved impossible to get BA World Traveller Plus and upgrade to Club World using frequent flyer miles: similarly Club World just using miles wasn't available. This only left First Class and 300,000 miles as an option. Maybe all the flying I do has hidden advantages.

Lynne said that “it was a long way for a weekend”, so the trip expanded into a holiday. At this stage the accusation appeared that this shouldn't be allowed – other people's wives would expect them to be taken First Class to the US for a wedding anniversary!

The trip looked practical, Bruce was pleased and booked the hotel, and Lisa, K1UQT, e-mailed that she and her OM Mike, W1YM, would be coming just so she could meet a woman who could put up with G3RZP! We had an afternoon flight out of Heathrow on the Thursday afternoon, preceded by lunch in the Concorde Room to set the scene. The arrival at the plane then leads to none of this “Aisle over there on your left”, but “May I show you to your seat, sir? Would you like a glass of champagne before we take off?” Definitely not Ryanair or EasyJet!

On the Friday we then took a waterfront cruise along the lake front, followed by a cruise up the Chicago rivers. For a limited-time visit, these proved a good way to see something of Chicago – neither of us had ever seen much of downtown Chicago and in Lynne’s case, never more than O’Hare airport! Public transport is incredibly cheap and the city is very clean, so in both matters much better than London!

Friday evening saw a mass visit of mainly SMCers (Society of Midwestern Contesters) to a pizza place, where the food was excellent, but the portions were large enough to serve at least two people. Returning to the hotel saw the hospitality suite open and the usual ragchewing took place. I retired early because of the jetlag.

Saturday saw the weather meeting the forecast ie dull, overcast and wet. Being a speaker, I was wearing a suit. K9PG couldn’t believe it, as it was the first time in 16 years that he’d seen me in anything other than shirt sleeves!

Master of Ceremonies Jim O’Connell, W9WU, started the day rolling. It was his task to introduce the speakers and to run the spot prize draws which included some IOTA T-shirts, or as Jim deliberately put it, ‘Italians On The Air’! The first talk of the day was by Molly Hardman, WØMOM, Marketing and Sales manager of Alpha amplifiers, on the development of Alpha amplifiers over the years. Bruce Butler,

W6OSP, of the Northern California DX Foundation followed. At the evening banquet, NIDXA handed the NCalDXF a cheque for \$2,000, being part of the raffle profits. An ARRL Forum followed, with several questions about what the DXAC will decide about the Netherlands Antilles, and, surprisingly, little about PLT. That well known DXer Bob Locher, W9KNI, talked about his year of DX. Lunch saw us go out in company with Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, and his wife, as well as K1UQT and W1YM.

After the 2009 RSGB Convention a complaint was made about me drinking beer while lecturing. At W9DXCC they made sure that I had beer while lecturing! (Draft Sam Adams) The lecture went well. As the zip code of the hotel was 60007, and the class A4 steam locomotive ‘Sir Nigel Gresley’ is 60007, I used a picture of it for illustrating POWER – obtained from the Chairman of the preservation trust, who ‘just happens’ to be the well known VHF Contester, G4VVZ. The final lecture was K9LA on propagation, and what may happen. Then the raffle prize drawing – an IC-7000. Other prizes, including spot prize draws through the day, included discount certificates for Acom amplifiers, a Begali key, 250 ft of Belden 9913 low-loss coax, a Bird 43 watt meter, a bencher paddle, and many more.

Finally the banquet. All the speakers were on the top table, and unlike the RSGB event, dinner was free to speakers and their accompanying partners. The Banquet speaker was Bernie McClenny, W3UR, the Editor of the Daily DX and ‘How’s DX’ in QST. Prior to that we had the ‘sit down’ DXCC. This starts with everyone who has DXCC standing up, and as the country score called out rises, you sit down – deleted countries count. The last one standing was Joe, W9JUV, with 389 countries worked. K9AJ received the ‘Golden Hog’ award for his DXpedition activities.

Finally, the Grand Draw: a Yaesu FT-2000 transceiver, and then the Hospitality Suite until midnight, courtesy of the Greater Milwaukee DX Association.

After that event the Sunday was quiet. We took a cab to the Union station in downtown Chicago, and the Amtrak 'South West Chief' to Albuquerque, New Mexico, leaving at 1515 local. One gets an idea of the vastness of the country. We saw dusk fall as we entered Kansas, and dawn rise while we were still in Kansas, having averaged 60mph through the night. Plans to meet local hams in Albuquerque didn't materialise, but the rental car was as arranged. The rest of the trip was very enjoyable. The Mesa Verde Indian dwellings of the period up to around 1200, the Durango and Silverton 3 ft gauge steam railway – highly recommended - the petrified forest and Painted Desert, the Meteor Crater, the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, and the Grand Canyon

Railway. There, the train was partially steam hauled by a 1923 Baldwin 2-8-2 locomotive, built for the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad, and fired with recovered vegetable oil. It smelt like a burning chip pan! In case you're wondering, Lynne is interested in steam engines too, so she wasn't being dragged around unwillingly.

We finished with the flight home (after a wrestle with an American self-service petrol pump – far too complex compared with the UK!), on BA from Phoenix. As usual with BA the 'Priority' and 'First Class' tags have very little effect at Heathrow on when your bags arrive.

Anyone likely to be in Chicago during the second weekend in September is recommended to go to W9DXCC. They're a friendly crowd, although it's far enough from the UK that you need a bit more of an excuse to go than just that event!

RSGB Amateur Radio Survey

A reminder by John Gould, G3WKL, RSGB Board Member

I would like to remind CDXC members who are not members of the RSGB that the Society is conducting a far-reaching survey of Amateur Radio within the UK [*See page 8. Ed.*]. The aim is to gather an accurate picture of the hobby, the role that the RSGB is playing and the best way that it can support people's aspirations and ideas as to how the hobby might be developed over the next 10 years. Two critical aspects are firstly how to attract newcomers and secondly how to retain the interest of those already in the hobby.

Everyone who has an interest in radio communication is invited to participate in an online Questionnaire – whether RSGB member, lapsed member or someone who has not yet joined. Although the expectation is that most answering the Questionnaire will be amateurs who live in the UK, it does cater for input from people who live overseas and who feel that they can contribute to the survey. CDXC members are a very active group within the hobby, so I am keen that they are aware of the opportunity to contribute.

You can complete the Questionnaire anonymously, although there is an option to leave your name and e-mail contact information. Completing the Questionnaire generally takes between 15 and 30 minutes to complete – it depends on your circumstances and the extent to which you want to express your ideas, concerns, etc. Please spare a little of your time to do this, perhaps whilst you tune around waiting for signals from your next DXCC country, IOTA, etc, to peak at your QTH! The link for the Questionnaire can be found at www.rsgb.org/survey/.

Rebuilding the Shack Computer

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

About six or seven years ago my son found a source of second-hand Dell Optiplex GX150 computers that were being sold off by a company in Hampshire. These were 1 GHz Pentium III machines with a mouse, keyboard and CRT monitor, They came loaded with Windows 98 and cost the princely sum of £99 plus VAT. As I was using an old 386 computer at the time, I decided this was worth investigating. Ham radio programs are not particularly processor hungry and provided you don't need things like Microsoft Office and the like, then memory and hard drive capacity requirements are moderate. The real bonus with the Optiplex range is that they are small (34 x 32 x 9 cms) and take up very little room in the shack.

I decided to buy one - and as I was passing the place a week or so later I collected it and saved the postage. On powering it up everything worked and the 30-day warranty was not needed. I already had an LCD monitor, so I put the CRT monitor (Dell, black, 17-inch) in the local small ads and sold it for £25 - this really was turning out to be a good deal.

The Optiplex served me well as my shack computer, running all the usual programs without trouble, until earlier this year when the Firewall no longer supported Win98. Then the Antivirus did the same and it was clear I needed at least an update to the operating system. I set about deciding what I needed from a shack computer and browsing websites and all of those brochures that fall through the letter box.

As mentioned earlier, the big plus of the Optiplex is its small size. Dell still make them, but they are significantly more expensive than a normal base unit - and the brochure headline prices are rather like £0.99 airfares - they never end up that way

when you get to the Check Out button. I looked at second-hand Optiplexes on the Web and then re-evaluated what I had. There were two key things I wanted: Windows XP or Windows 7 and a second monitor capability. Upgrading the operating system would also present a problem for hard disk space as my Optiplex only had a 20 GB capacity. In the end the solution was pretty straight forward and cost around £60 excluding the software.

The first step was to buy a larger hard drive: not entirely straightforward as the computer was old enough to still have an ATA hard drive interface, whereas newer hard drives have the SATA interface. There were two options here - buy a SATA drive and an adaptor or find an ATA drive. Although SATA drives now cost less per bit than ATA drives, I still managed to find a brand new 320 GB Western Digital hard drive for less than £30 - I'm sure the supply will soon dry up, though. Fitting it took all of 15 minutes. I put the old disk to one side as a fallback if everything went disastrously wrong.

The operating system was easy because I remembered that I had a retail copy of an XP upgrade that I had bought some years back, but not used. If you don't have that, then take a look at eBay, where there are usually half a dozen on auction at any given time. Prices are dropping as dealers sell off their old stock in favour of Windows 7. Loading an old version - mine was XP Service Pack 1 - is a slow process because once you have loaded it from CD and connected to the Web, there are literally hundreds of upgrades to load, along with half a dozen restarts, before it gets you up to date. Much of the time this is like watching paint dry, so keep the rig on and do some SWLing while you wait! Once all of this was completed I reloaded all of the radio

software (yes, I had backed the old Win98 system up before I started!) and was back in business.

All that was left now was to organise the second monitor. One of the disadvantages of a low-profile case is that the plug-in cards are half-height and either difficult to find or expensive relative to normal full-height plug-in cards. This meant the usual process of just adding a video card to an empty slot was not really viable. A quick web search revealed a range of USB monitor adaptors for around the £25 mark. You plug the adaptor into a spare USB socket and the monitor into the other end and load the software. It worked right out of the box.

I did a few other things while I was about it. Changing the BIOS battery is a sensible

precaution and hoovering out the dust from the insides and around the processor fan was a task worth doing.

In the end this project was partly a desire to keep the machine rather than take it to the local dump – the fate of many of my main computers – and also a bit of fun to see how much longer I can keep the old computer going. If you have any doubts about doing this, there are plenty of Web-based tutorials to assist. Remember to use the standard safety approach of disconnecting all power and other interface leads while working on it. The result met all of my requirements and was more satisfying than shelling out for another computer.

Workshop Tips and Techniques

1. Getting the antenna installation ready for winter

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

Winter is coming and, by the time this is published, may even be on us. It's a time of year hard on antennas and supports, and it may not be too late to go round doing a maintenance check.

Dealing firstly with supports – masts, towers, trees etc. The actual requirements will differ. A Versatower, for example, could benefit from a close inspection and maybe a galvanising spray used on places where the galvanising is running thin or rust can be seen. The ropes should be inspected: broken strands or rust are not good news, and it's probably best to replace the ropes. One suggestion with new steel ropes is to put them in a plastic bag with old engine oil for a few days. That will certainly make restringing the ropes a VERY messy business, and I prefer to use a proprietary

wire rope dressing. I get mine from Farnell, but there are many suppliers. The cost of stainless steel ropes is, as far as the UK is concerned, pretty prohibitive, and not really justified.

The attachment of pulleys for halliards needs checking. If attached by D shackles, are the pins wired and the shackles free from rust? Does the pulley run freely, and does it need oiling?

You should also check the bolts securing the rotator. I had a lot of problems with the bolts coming out of the bottom of the T2X, even when I'd used single-coil spring washers and Loctite. These days I use some grease to minimise corrosion between stainless steel bolts and the aluminium

casting, and have a plate bolted on under the bolt heads to stop them coming out.

Guy ropes should similarly be checked, wire ones in the same way as hoisting cables. I use pre-stretched, 12mm diameter polyester ropes, which are UV resistant. The ends should be terminated with spliced-in thimbles, and the attachment to the guy anchors can be done in a number of ways.

One is the use of turnbuckles, although the range of adjustment is limited, and although pre-stretched guy ropes don't stretch that much, they can still stretch more than the turnbuckle can stand. In any case, turnbuckles need wiring to prevent them unscrewing, and wiring across the hook to prevent the thimble coming off the hook.

D shackles similarly need wiring to prevent the pin coming out: galvanised ones may also benefit from a touch of galvanising spray. Wire for wiring shackles should be preferably galvanised for galvanised shackles – certainly not copper, because of electrolytic action. Plastic-coated garden wire is probably the best. Easier is to use a thinner (4mm) rope attached to the thimble and passed several times between the thimble at the end of the guy and the thimble on the guy anchor, in the same way as blocks on Napoleonic era warships – after all, it was good enough for Nelson! Guys should not be too tight: with a heavy guy rope, some sag will be seen unless the rope is very tight, and tighter ropes actually put more strain on the tower or mast..

Guy anchors need checking, especially if they are stakes in the ground. These are best 'backed up' by using two of them with a tie between them. My favourite guy anchor is a 4 ft-long reinforced concrete fence post, with a loop of 7mm stainless steel wire round its middle, buried about 2ft down. Multiple 'Bulldog' grips can be used to form another loop in the wire to attach the guy to, and such anchors are hard to move. Even so, inspection of the visible portion is worthwhile.

Pole masts can benefit from similar inspections

Trees as supports can have rope 'strops' around them to hold halliards: the strops can be metal or again, pre-stretched polyester. Either way, some protective padding (strips of thin wood) round the tree is a good idea, and the strops should not be tight as the tree will grow. Halliards running over tree branches need checking for fraying, as well as being free running – if taught, the tree will grow around them, jamming them solid.

Antennas themselves need slightly different treatment, depending on what form they take. Wire antennas with joints soldered with tin-lead solder need examining: after exposure to the weather and flexing, the solder tends to oxidise and crystallise and the joint becomes loose, or at least have the resistance become variable. Re-soldering works very well, although my preference is to use 'hard' silver solder. This requires a blow torch and red heat, together with a suitable flux, although powdered borax mixed with a little water to consistency of very thick cream may be used.

The correct flux is best, however. Cadmium bearing solders, such as Johnson-Matthey 'Easyflow2' are being phased out, and it is said that the non-cadmium solders do not flow as well. Silver solders like a small gap – around .001 to .002 of an inch - to fill.

However, anything soldered with soft solder must NOT be re-soldered with hard solder – the two do NOT mix! The joints between coax and antenna wire either need to be a solid physical joint such that the weather can't get into it, and oxidation of it is not possible, or soft soldered. Even if the joint is covered with something such as 'Coax Seal', eventually there will be some degradation.

Coax feeders need inspecting to look for nicks and cuts in the outer jacket. In general, such an event requires replacement of the cable run, and anywhere the braid is seen to

be oxidised, the cable needs replacing. Note that many of the cheap cables have very minimal braid coverage. Check any connectors for tightness and waterproofing. I have a belt and braces approach – first a layer of PTFE plumbers tape to make it easy to eventually retrieve the connector. Then follows a layer of coax seal, and secondly a heatshrink tube. After heating the tube with a hot air gun, a layer of self-amalgamating tape follows, and finally, a layer of black electrical tape. PL 259 connectors joined this way have been found in pristine condition five years later.

Cable runs up towers are best done with a messenger rope to carry the weight of the cables, rather than let them hang on from the top.

Earth leads and rods, as well as radial wires and their connections should not be forgotten either. Electrolytic considerations mean that copper leads and galvanised steel should not be in contact: I use some cheap mast 3-piece guy clamps for masts on the tower legs, and attach the leads from the earth rods to that. The RF ground lead to the ATU shed is 6-inch-wide aluminium: that is attached to the galvanised tower base with some 2-inch diameter steel washers between the two metals. Incidentally, aluminium in clay soil corrodes away very quickly. So

avoid where possible aluminium and galvanised steel contact.

Beams with bent elements can be a problem. Unless it's badly bent, I would leave it alone, as straightening can lead to fractures, especially on aluminium tube that has oxidised and has been flexed a lot, as happens to beam elements. If really necessary, some heat treatment helps. Put some liquid soap on the element and gently heat until the soap turns brown. Some aluminium alloys will harden on their own time – duralumin is especially noted for this.

Trees can be a problem as they grow and get in the way of beams turning and so on. Unless you have the proper equipment and experience, it's best to get a professional tree surgeon to trim them back.

All of this work may not be necessary, but certainly many of the points will help to make sure that you aren't going to be off the air because of antenna failure when some choice DX comes on. Of course, there are always unexpected events such as the 1987 hurricane, but a well engineered and maintained antenna system can even ride out that sort of event.

Peter Chadwick, G3RZP

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

E-mails to the Editor

From EA5ARC

Re: the HF Challenge

I did not plan to enter the HF Challenge in September, but towards the end of the month I was in contact with Alan, 5B4AHJ, regarding some queries on my log that had been highlighted by Club Log. When I saw an appeal towards the end of the month for logs to be submitted for the HF Challenge, I mentioned in an e-mail to Alan that my log queries meant I was not going to enter this year.

In a reply from Alan on 28 September he urged me to send in my log for the HF Challenge as the queries raised on my Club Log report involved contacts prior to September. So some intensive operation time was put in before the end of the month before I submitted my entry. On 29 September I was working a 4X4 station in Tel Aviv and during the QSO another station was calling me. I did not get his call, but finished with the 4X4 station and (after checking) asked the other station to move up 3 kHz. I put out a call which was immediately replied to by EP3SMH!

We had a good contact and my card is now in the post to him. (I am hoping he will respond as he apparently works for the telecoms authority in Iran)

Having installed a new tower and 5-band cubical quad over the summer I found the last week of the HF Challenge helped a great deal in filling in many empty band slots and giving me a feel for the new antenna, so many thanks to Gary, ZL2IFB, for the encouragement to get involved.

I uploaded my log and was very surprised to finish in 23rd place from 104 entries.

73 John EA5ARC

From KCØVKN

(in a message to Secretary Tony, G4LDL)

Re: the CDXC Digest

So nice to hear from you. I had requested the membership packet, which Nevile sent out very quickly. I've known about CDXC for quite some time, I've just been slow to get signed up (funny how it was pretty simple and fast!).

I was going to send out a more formal letter praising you guys for the excellent publication. The DX Association in my area (EIDXA) puts out a quarterly newsletter that I've had to arrange and edit for the last few issues, and I can appreciate how much effort goes into putting out such a fine publication.

From just reading the stories and member contributions I knew that CDXC seemed like an excellent organization. Folks seem to not only to be contributing, but talking about real topics (eg G3SXW's discussion of QSL tactics by super-expeditions). It's refreshing to see people putting up opinions on the current state of things.

Thanks for the reply; Hope to bump into you on the bands or in person some day.

73, Joe KCØVKN

From GW4BLE

(in a message to Neville, G3NUG)

It was good to meet with you at Horwood House [RSGB Convention] on the weekend.

I wanted to take time out to thank CDXC for sponsorship of the trophy for the leading UK single operator in the CQWW Phone Contest.

Since its inception in 1999 I have been honoured to be the recipient of this award several times over the last decade and it was a privilege to be presented with it again at the weekend.

CDXC have always been very supportive of HF Contesting in the UK and we contesters are most grateful of that.

After some twenty years of all-band entries in CQ WW it is by way of a change that I

will be concentrating efforts into some single entries over the next few years.

Good luck to whosoever the recipient for the 2010 CDXC Cup may be.

With best 73 Steve GW4BLE

IOTA News

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2009 edition)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

EU-062	LA/SP7IDX	Engeloya Island (June 2010)
NA-197	K9YNF/KL7	Fox Island (August 2010)
NA-208	VYØX	Ulituqisalik Island (August 2010)
OC-177	YEØA	Ayer Island, Seribu Islands (July 2010)
OC-295	9M6DXX/P	Sebatik Island (September 2010)
OC-295	9M6XRO/P	Sebatik Island (September 2010)

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

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA, RSGB IOTA Manager

20 October 2010

E-mail: IOTA_HQ@rsgb.org.uk

Personal website: www.g3kma.dsl.pipex.com

RSGB IOTA website: www.rsgbiota.org

The RTTY Column

Roger Cooke, G3LDI

The PJ situation

Since the split of the Netherlands Antilles into several new entities, the bands have been humming. I have worked several on CW and SSB, but as yet have not worked any on RTTY. The pile-ups are horrendous, with the usual ignoring of directions from the DX station. I have far too much to do in the garden at this time to spend fruitless hours calling in the mess. If I don't succeed in 15 minutes I go away. I guess I am not as keen as I used to be. Either that or I have become wiser with age and am prepared to wait. At the time of writing there has been some RTTY activity, so the spread over the modes is not too bad. These new entities are not going away and will not be exactly rare, so patience is the name of the game.

BARTG Sprint 75

This time the contest was open to all bands and was very well attended again. The times were changed too and the comments received were very encouraging. These two dates will now be a firm fixture in the BARTG contest calendar. Scores were increased, as was participation, so we will have to see what attendance is like in 2011. We could use some better propagation, though; the SFI seems to be stuck in a range of 68 – 89. It did reach the dizzy height of 93 on one day, but soon reverted to the norm again.

MMTTY and MMVARI

The following announcement was issued a while back and it is encouraging all MMTTY users to state their appreciation of a very well-used program.

“Celebrating one decade of the world's greatest ham software! Join in the 10th anniversary of MM Hamsoft and MMTTY.

We have created this special place where you can join in celebrating 10 years of the MM software and website. Please take the time to leave your comments and thanks to JE3HHT, Makoto (Mako) Mori, for this great software!”

I left a short message of appreciation. It is my main DX RTTY program and it has just been updated too. If you download the latest version, which is 1.68A, you will find that there are a few alterations, mainly in the filtering side and one is a copy of the twin peak filter in the Icom 7600 range of transceivers. This really helps copy on weaker signals and enhances the two tones. Programming has been taken over by Dave, AA6YQ, with help from a team, in a similar way to how N1MM is managed. This will take the pressure off the author, Makoto Mori, JE3HHT. There were a few bugs in the original issue, but these have now been ironed out and it performs flawlessly once again.

MMVARI has also been updated to version 0.45 and is available from the same place as MMTTY:

mmhamsoft.amateur-radio.ca/pages/mmvari.php

The updates for MMVARI are very recent and include the following from the last two updates.

BetaVer0.45 2010/OCT/05

- Added mfsk4, mfsk8, mfsk32, mfsk64, mfsk11, and mfsk22 modes
- Improved the decoder of the qpsk mode
- Added an option that restores the sub-channel window status on start-up

- Enhanced macro
- Applied minor updates

BetaVer0.44 2010/SEP/24

- Added QPSK mode
- Added a RTTY demodulator based on FFT
- Added the FSK support (TNX to JA7UDE). When a COM port is selected the MMVARI internally controls the FSK keying. When EXTFSK is selected, EXTFSK generates the FSK keying. MMVARI and EXTFSK use Windows multimedia timer so that they might have 1msec jitter
- Added the English web site URL
- Updated the JARTS web site URL
- Added the selection of COM8 to COM16
- Added the rig control menu.
- Updated the sound device selection.

MMVARI makes a very nice standard PSK stand-alone program to use and of course it is the default engine within N1MM.

Spectrum Forum

This November BARTG will be sending our Secretary, Ian Brothwell, G4EAN, to represent the data world at the Spectrum Forum meeting to be held near Sandy in Bedfordshire. We invited BARTG members and friends to post to the Forum their views as to what we should try to negotiate.

The main band with a problem is 40m, where the data section is causing a lot of problems for the QRP CW stations. To try to have compatibility with the other bands we would like to move the data sections up to 7.080 – 7.100 MHz, especially since the additional 100 kHz has been re-allocated to that band. It makes sense to have conformity with respect to the other bands, in other words to have the data section in roughly the same place with the same bandwidth.

We have had four e-mails saying it is a bad idea as it would upset a DX window in that region. Obviously if the data section is moved, then the DX window could move too. Nothing is set in stone, and unless there is a very good reason for not juggling frequencies around, I cannot see a problem.

The situation will be discussed at the meeting and we shall see what the outcome is. Nobody should lose out, whatever the solution. It would be nice to see a return to the allocation we had when I was first licenced, namely 7.000 to 7.300 MHz. Listening up above 7.200 I often wonder if anybody wastes their time listening to that junk anyway!

PSK Popularity

PSK seems to have taken the place of CW as the easy way to work DX. This is so in this area anyway. Lots of new Foundation licensees are finding that PSK31 is more attractive. Obviously they do not have to do any practice, as with CW, and with 10W they can work some nice DX. Finding a program that they can set up and master fairly quickly is not too difficult either and a simple interface can be built for about £8.00. I was impressed with the effort put in by Foundation licensee Steve, M6TZY. Steve is a member of NARC and he searched the Internet and found the website of Peter, G4KQU, at www.g4kqu.co.uk. He then printed out all the relevant details, circuit etc., went to Maplins and bought a piece of Vero board, all the components needed, took them home and built it.

It worked first time and the next week Steve brought two eQSL cards to the Club. He had printed these to prove he had done it. One contact was on PSK31 and the other on RTTY, both in the USA. Steve has now joined our Contest Workshops and hopefully will be taking part in the RSGB CC tests next year. Working with low power and a simple antenna it is surprising what can be worked on PSK31. However, it is fairly slow and is not really a contest mode

in my opinion. It is used in the RSGB CC tests just to provide a strategic twist to the data section. Be careful if you try to use a higher speed, such as PSK63, PSK125 and so on. It does speed things up, but remember that all PSK stations have to live within the bandwidth of an SSB signal and you may not be flavour of the month if you start grabbing bandwidth from that set space to run a higher speed.

Take a look at MMVARI, as described above, Digipan, MixW, MultiPSK and

Winwarbler. The latter is part of the DXLab suite of programs, which is free by the way. DXLab is written by Dave, AA6YQ. I am still trying to come to terms with DXKeeper and being a G3 it is testing my brain cell!

Good luck with the new entities.

73 de Roger, G3LDI

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

To paraphrase what is said at the beginning of many US television serial dramas, “Previously, on Contest”, you may recall from the last issue that I had completely failed to get on-air and was hoping for my work / life / radio balance to settle down. Even a while after the wedding there are still forms to fill, photos to organise and ‘thank you’ notes to write. Work has also stepped up a notch to fill any free-time gaps I may have had. This edition’s contest casualty, which I’m listening to now instead of entering, is the final RSGB 21/28 MHz contest. The rain is lashing down outside, so there’s a small part of me glad I didn’t have to go outside and put the antennas up.

Additionally with the wind today there’s always the chance they would come down of their own accord. Recent band conditions on 21 MHz have been quite inspiring, with many DX contacts being reported on the cluster and the CDXC reflector. Throw a popular contest into the mix, and the chances of a volume of QSOs being made increases as well. 28 MHz may still be a challenge for the moment, of course.

So let’s use this issue to discuss some generic HF contesting topics, which I’ve not

done for a while. The more experienced contesters may not draw very much from this, but there have been suggestions to make the column more educational and open to potential contesting newcomers, and not just report on recent events and the hotly debated topics and minutiae of the moment which the casual observer may not have a great interest in.

From start to finish

When do you start planning for a contest operation? At the one extreme, if you might plan to operate from another country, planning could start over a year before the event. Travel plans, visas, radio licences all take time to arrange. If you’re planning something like this, maybe take a look at ‘DXpeditioning: Behind the Scenes’ by G3NUG and G4JVG/9M6DXX as the ‘how-to’ guide.

On the other hand the most casual of contest entries may only be considered halfway through the contest itself. Turn the radio and computer on, check what the contest is, and start giving away points. Both activities of this type are vital to make contesting exciting. The first case provides the

opportunity for the entrant to be the 'rare DX', perhaps achieving a world record score, and also giving everyone else at home some elusive multipliers, or maybe an all-time new counter. Without the volume of QSOs from the more casual operators, especially in a contest's final hours, the DX trip wouldn't seem that exciting, and that record score would remain out of reach. With the correct balance, everyone is happy from what they achieve in the contest.

For an aspiring contester, the planning will likely be somewhere between these two extremes. Firstly, decide on what event appeals. The RSGB HF contest programme has its own website, and is well publicised in RadCom. The 80m Club Championship series sees more UK participation than just about any other contest at present. It's great to see lots of people taking part. However, there is a huge variety of other events that often seen to be overlooked, except by a relatively small group of contesters. From personal experience I know of people who now shy away from the 80m CC on SSB or Data because of the inability to call CQ when antenna systems are modest, or the likelihood of tuning across arguments or other highly strung on-air comments.

The RSGB programme has events throughout the year as good alternatives. Instead you could type 'WA7BNM' or 'SM3CER' into an Internet search engine and you will find worldwide contest calendars, featuring links to well-known favourites like the CQ WW, WPX or ARRL DX contests, as well as many other events like the Scandinavian Activity Contest, or the Oceania DX contest. The Internet really is your friend here, as you can quickly find the rules for each contest, and previous results, so you can see what the activity was like, and get an idea of how you may get on.

Hardware, Software, and Human Engineering

The next steps are to get you and your station ready. If you have a permanent shack

and antenna system, your station hardware may be "ready to go" to begin with. Contests run for a finite time, so it may be worth considering if a special, temporary antenna could be constructed. For example, if I'm in a contest and I can only work the USA and Canada, or Japanese stations, then any form of HF gain antenna would be an advantage, and it wouldn't need to be rotated.

Or if I'm entering a single band contest, or taking part in a single band entry in a multi-band contest, then it's easier to make an efficient antenna for a single band than considering five or six bands. More contacts will likely be made if entering an all-band category, but if a multi-band dipole or vertical is used, the lowered efficiency of the antennas will mean I won't do as well compared to other entrants who do have better antenna systems. This is a choice to make based on your personal preference – is it more fun for you to make more QSOs overall, or more fun to place higher in a single-band results table?

There is a variety of software available for logging, dupe checking and the like for PC and other platforms. This is another area where personal preference weighs heavily. I cannot tell you what is 'the best' because depending on your needs my opinion could be very wrong. The solution here is to try as many as possible. Several contest loggers are completely free, or allow trial use. Try them out with the radio switched off, and then try them again in whatever contest is running next weekend by giving away a few points – just like those folks I mentioned at the start of this article. After a while you'll form your own preferences. Before your chosen contest begins, check that your favourite logger supports it, you've updated any country databases, supercheck partial files, and your voice, CW or data messages have been updated as appropriate. (Having your PC call 'CQ Sprint' in CQ WW is not the best idea!)

So by now we should have the contest station hardware and software ready. What is often overlooked is the ‘human factor.’ The operators themselves need to find time to be rested before the contest. For a 48-hour contest, this could involve no late nights and minimal strenuous activity for at least the week before, and be mindful of your diet and caffeine intake. Also, if you have a family, arrange time with them so you can be as undisturbed as possible throughout the event. Forward planning can be very important here – book your favourite contest weekends well in advance. Even a 90-minute 80m Club Championship session would surely be hampered if you’d just returned home from a nightmare day at work, not had any dinner, and you’re trying to juggle looking after your partner and children whilst striving for a 200/hour contact rate?

The Contest itself

For a multi-band contest it will pay to study the propagation in the run-up to the contest, so you’ll know roughly what to expect. You will have set some rough mental targets, and if you’re brave, added 20% to them and have them on display at your operating position to keep you motivated. Of course, you need to expect the unexpected, and it’s the unpredictable nature of propagation, and who your competitors are on any given weekend which is part of the fun. It should then be a case of settling in and working as many stations as possible. I’ve said before that the mechanics of making QSOs should become automatic. Don’t get too focused on it – always be thinking about what your rate is, whether you should be calling or tuning, be on another band, or whether you may be making too many mistakes. Hopefully your station equipment will work flawlessly, and the weather and propagation will make the event wholly enjoyable. The entire time should pass like a blur. If it does not, you can only do your best given the circumstances and consider any problems as a good learning exercise for the next year.

Post-contest

Phew, you made it! If you have just gone for a night or two without sleep, perhaps getting some rest is the first order of the day. Depending on the situation, maybe take down any temporary antennas erected first. Then as soon as practical, produce a Cabrillo log and send off the entry to the organisers. Give it a cursory once over before pressing the send button. Did you choose the correct section, have you added your contact details, and is the log information correct and not any missing zones or serial numbers that were part of the exchange.

Finally, tell someone about what you’ve done. It wasn’t so long ago that more pages of the *Digest* were filled with exploits of contest operations. More recently it seems mainly just the DX trips for the Commonwealth Contest are written up. Whilst the travelogue and tales of fitting antenna poles on tiny aircraft and boats are exciting, even the exploits of a home-based contest can be rewarding reading. Reading about the choice of contest and the planning that went into it, and then how the contest unfolded and the decisions made might inspire someone to have a go next time, and there are more people likely to have a go from home than take a trip away. The Baltic Contest or the Stew Perry Topband Challenge may be completely new events to many aspiring testers, so the word needs to be spread.

There also seem to be fewer contest reports on the UK-Contest Reflector. Following no posts about the WPX CW contest earlier in the year, the CQ WW RTTY also went by without a single mention there, although the CDXC Reflector did carry a note about some activity. There is a semi-official home to score reporting in the 3830 e-mail reflector, but I feel that any personal message to CDXC or UK testers might be missed by only submitting a score entry there. Over recent years RadCom has also given fewer mentions of UK activity in non-

RSGB contests. With the 'upper HF band' element of the RSGB's own HF contest programme decreasing, I think it would make sense to show more support for the existing framework of popular worldwide HF contests, expanding upon the explanations of forthcoming events and dates presently given each month. What do you think?

CQ WW DX Contest – Entry Deadlines and New Awards

Roger, G3SXW, has sent a reminder that the rules for CQ WW contest have changed to shorten the deadline for submission of entries. These are now three weeks after the contest. The SSB contest deadline is 21 November 2010, and the CW contest deadline is now 21 December 2010. This is one week quicker than the previous deadline for SSB, and three weeks quicker for CW.

Also, the Assisted, Low Power and QRP categories are now fully recognised with trophies and certificates. World winners for Single Band Assisted entries can win trophies, as will the top European QRP and Assisted scorers.

Starting with the 2010 CQ WW contests, first-place certificates will also be awarded in the Assisted, Low Power and QRP categories in every participating country and in each call area of the United States, Canada, European Russia, Spain, Poland, and Japan. Assisted, Low Power and QRP entrants will be highlighted by a symbol to the left of their callsign in the final results.

WRTC 2014

With the Moscow WRTC 2010 still very fresh in our minds, the Organising Committee for the WRTC 2014 event to be held in New England have been very quick off the mark, announcing the Team Selection Criteria. In a nutshell, there will be 50 Team Leaders selected through qualifying events between October 2010 and March 2013, which includes the

forthcoming CQ WW events. There are 30 qualifying events for European contesters, and 12 of the best event scores will be used for qualifying.

Other changes and highlights include:

- New qualifying contests are All Asian DX, NAQP, and Oceania DX.
- The category weighting for several categories has been increased. Single operator Low Power is 0.9 (up from 0.7). Multi-single is 1.0 (up from 0.9).
- Single band scores will count for qualifying points.
- The selection areas have been adjusted based on level of contest participation in major contests over the past two years. The selection areas from Europe and Asia have been changed based on input received from those areas.
- In areas of the world with lower participation and large geographies, we have introduced split-score comparison areas. For example, there will be only 1 Africa team, but the score comparisons are done on Africa North/West vs. Africa South/East.

The defending champions of RW1AC/RA1AIP will receive the only automatic place in WRTC 2014. The organising committee has reserved several wild card slots to allow invitations to exceptional qualifiers who did not otherwise earn a place through the qualifying process.

Many more details can be found at

www.wrtc2014.org

The UK is in qualifying area EU #1, where 5 of the 26 European teams will be picked. Non-UK entities in the same group are: C3, CT, CU, EA, EA6, EI, F, ON, PA, TK, ZB.

Endpiece

The contests@cdxc.org.uk inbox has not been overflowing with e-mail, so please send any news or suggestions in for the next issue and I'll be very happy to include them. The next issue of the *Digest* will be with you in January 2011, so for now I'll send my best wishes for the Christmas period and have a Happy New Year. Get planning for what you want to get out of contesting in

2011. Is it time for a DX trip away, is it your year to claim a record, or finally time to replace that very old feeder? Also think about what you could put back in to contesting. Could you present to your local club, or invite a new M6, or re-invigorated G8 licensee to your shack and show them what contesting is all about?

73 Lee GØMTN

Countdown to The Spratlys

With 100 days to go before DXØDX hits the amateur bands, there is mounting interest in making contact with the DX Special Entity, the Spratlys, over three weeks from 6-24 January 2011.

DXpedition Team Leader, Chris Dimitrijevic, VK3FY and DU8/VK3FY, said "With equipment starting to arrive in the Philippines, including the Titanex V160E vertical, the excitement is mounting.

"Currently 31 operators are confirmed, while a number of positions are still available should any DX operator wish to join the team.

"The authority given to the DXpedition permits a maximum of 30 operators on the island at the same time. With the DXpeditioners assigned to three separate groups on the island for different durations, the total numbers can exceed 30."

While set to maximise the QSOs, the DXpedition includes medical doctors who are also making a humanitarian contribution to the island.

This is acknowledged in a 'Certificate of prior approval and consent' from the Municipality of Kalayaan, dated 14

September, setting out the duration and nature of the DXØDX operation.

It is signed by the Mayor Eugenio B. Biton Jr, who is very welcoming of the DXpedition and states on the Certificate "The Municipality of Kalayaan is also in favor of the humanitarian medical mission, to provide medical check-up of all the island's inhabitants".

In other news, Icom has announced that DXØDX will have the new IC-9100 available for the VHF/UHF station. It will be fitted with a UX-9100 23cm module. This transceiver is to be coupled to M2inc yagi's on 6m, 2m, 70cm and 23cm.

For the sought-after 6m band the antenna is the 6m7, while the 2m radiator is the 2m9ssb. These two bands will be supported by the OM2006 6m amplifier and 2m with a Commander 1kW amplifier.

There will also be Beverage complete systems supplied by HiZ Antennas, which Chris, VK3FY - DU8/VK3FY, said, "Should provide great ears for the low bands, which is an area DXØDX will be concentrating on."

An interesting development is that some of the DXpeditioners have been downsizing through weight loss. Their destination has also gotten smaller in recent years under the ravages of sea erosion.

The team, and in particular the DXØDX Station Layout Coordinator David Collingham, K3LP, is awaiting the results of a new photographic high-tide survey of the latest beach conditions where the various operating camps are to be relocated.

Chris, VK3FY - DU8/VK3FY, said a dozen operators are tasked as an advance crew with setting up four camps on the island to enable DXØDX to have a big presence on the bands.

The CW camp is at the northern edge of the island, while SSB operating will be in the south, with the other two being dedicated for RTTY/Digital and VHF/UHF.

The DXØDX.Net website online survey, after 4,600 votes, currently has 160m as the most desired band for this Top Forty wanted DX entity. A TITANEX V160E vertical with a minimum of 32 radials will be erected for that band right on the beach. The intended frequencies are 1.824 (CW) and 1.840 MHz (SSB).

The 80m band is also highly sought after and CW (3.504) and SSB (3.790 MHz) signals on that band will radiated from two independent 4-square antenna arrays.

The other HF bands, including the WARC '79 allocations, are fairly even in the online survey. The 6m band has a relatively strong demand and a 7-element beam is to be used for contacts on the Magic Band.

In relation to the preferred modes, the survey has CW remaining in the highest demand. This is of no surprise to the operators assigned to the CW camp. With 1,400 votes cast so far, SSB and RTTY a steady in second and third place respectively, with PSK31 attracting 7% of the votes – which, although low, will still yield thousands of contacts. The recently announced addition of moonbounce to DXØDX also has the EME exponents thinking about the possibilities.

Funding support and individual contributions towards this major DXpedition continue to arrive and are gratefully acknowledged on the website.

Jim Linton, VK3PC, Public Affair
DXØDX

www.dx0dx.net.au

The expected 8 September **T31 Central Kiribati** DXpedition, previously postponed from May, is encountering some problems. Says Alex, UT5UY: "Unfortunately we couldn't agree about a reasonable price with the owner of the vessel for our next expedition. We'll specify the terms of the expedition later." They are looking for an alternate boat. www.uz1hz.com/pacificodyssey.html

ZL8X Kermadec Island planners continue packing gear for shipment by sea cargo. Half the team met on the last weekend in July at the QTH of DR1A to collect all the material. The five monobanders for 20-10m arrived just in time to go into the load. Everything was checked out. DJ7EO, Markus, has cancelled his participation "due to private and business reasons." Added will be YL operator SV2KBS, Vicky. Licensed in 2005, she has been active in contests and from her home club, J42T, plus at German superstation DR1A, specializing in 40 SSB. She has previously operated from Svalbard, Lord Howe and Easter Island.

Not the GB2RS News

- British Airways in-flight tracker software criticised
- Another new DXCC country?
- Radio amateurs' partners protest

There have been complaints by some radio amateurs about the in-flight tracker software used on board British Airways aircraft. Indeed on some flights you can only stare in amazement at some of the highly obscure locations pinpointed by this strange system, some of which surely mean nothing at all to the less seasoned traveller.

For example, popping up as you overfly France you have Rodez and Saumur (never 'eard of 'em...) and over Spain that well-known town of Ciudadelo, allegedly somewhere in the Balearic Islands. As for the UK, highlighted here you have Chartwell in Kent. Well, at least it's roughly in the right place on the map. Unlike a little further to the east that well-known Kentish town and airport of Stansted, no longer in Essex at all.

If you point out these inconsistencies to the hard-working cabin crew they merely shrug their shoulders and say, "Yes, we know. The software's rubbish – but it would cost millions to replace it!" In which case you can't help wondering why British Airways placed an order for it in the first place.

Featuring in the last CDXC *Digest* we had that new island country of Maderia (yes...), located somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean within fairly easy flying time of both the Arozes and Lisnob.

This time round we have the new DXCC entity of Allergia, thought to be somewhere in North Africa between Macorro and New Tisia. Already many a DXpedition is straining at the leash to activate Allergia – as soon as they've found out exactly where it is. Meanwhile the medical profession strongly advise against any journeys at all to

Allergia, seeing as when you get there you could easily end up developing an Allergic reaction.

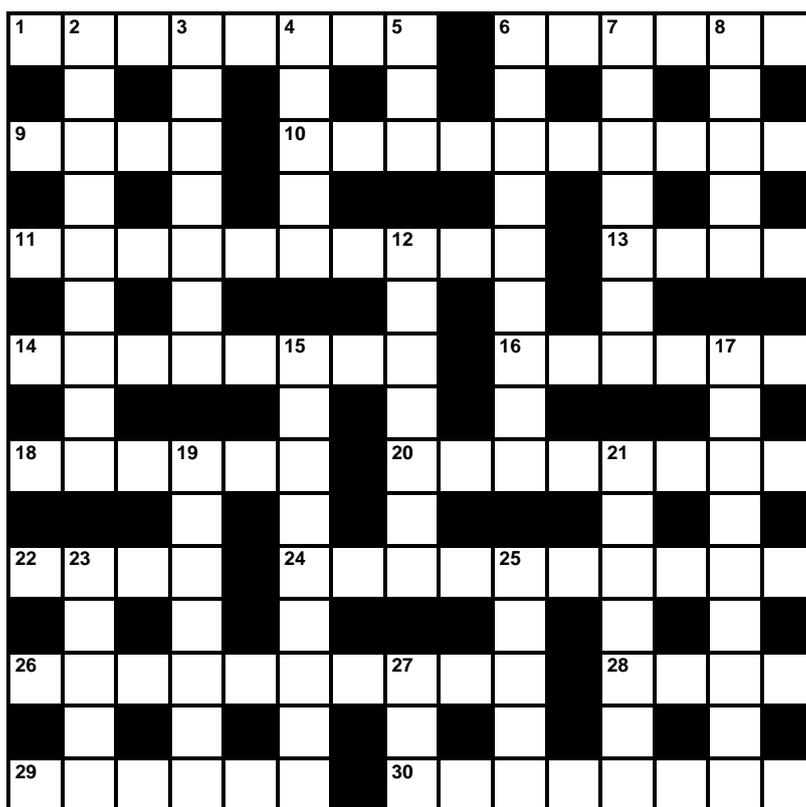
Recently many long-suffering partners of radio amateurs have got together in protest at their other half's frequent inability to actually listen to - or hear anything important - that might be said in the home. Indeed they say that their other halves have become highly proficient at blocking out any such domestic 'trivia'... whereas on the other hand they would appear to be perfectly capable of fine-tuning their hearing in order to decipher the weakest of amateur radio signals and callsigns.

Following on from a report in the last CDXC *Digest* about the Fjord Focus and the Fjord Transit being the Norwegian radio amateur's favourite cars, this week we hear about a new motor caravan and motorhome launched recently by the Japanese car company Nissan. Inspired by the famous Italian tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, and his unforgettable rendering of one of Puccini's most famous arias, it's called the Nissan Dormer.

Solution to Prize Crossword 42

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

Digest Prize Crossword 43 *by RFX*



The winner of Prize Crossword 42, September 2010: Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF, Weybridge (via e-mail).

ACROSS

- 1 Broadcaster putting on amusing adventures for high-fliers (8)
- 6 Agree to criminal having dog (6)
- 9 Railways oddly ignored, unfortunately (4)
- 10 Occasional publication (10)
- 11 Torturer pickled alien tarts (10)
- 13 River producing slimy mud, we hear (4)
- 14 Blameless pope? (8)
- 16 Dramatist from Gladstone, Illinois (6)
- 18 Hogwarts moaner's evergreen shrub (6)
- 20 Most unpleasant wine imbibed by Geordie holy man (8)
- 22 Obscure back massage captivates Labour leader (4)
- 24 Sign nothing in state capital (10)
- 26 Modern Christmas? (7-3)
- 28 Girl wins leather maker's heart (4)
- 29 My Manx cat's body (6)
- 30 Players off to find person on desert island (8)

DOWN

- 2 Murder the Governator, say, in Irish Town? (9)
- 3 Boozer initially hunted in lion country (7)
- 4 Hold off one to be avoided from the south (5)
- 5 Time to leave prison for gentleman's address (3)
- 6 Rich yobs somehow surrounding old singers (9)
- 7 Unpleasant report about old man (7)
- 8 The range of natural science (5)
- 12 Evil act - a sin, in a way (7)
- 15 Services flat numbers (9)
- 17 Liner *Italia Sun* broken up (9)
- 19 Beautifies prostitutes out of bed (5,2)
- 21 Japanese art making use of ladylike bananas (7)
- 23 Slow movement of large ship... (5)
- 25 ... a Chinese vessel exhibiting great depth (5)
- 27 Main dish served up for medic (3)

Deadline for entries: 20 October

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)

Starting with an immediate payment of **£18.00** (eighteen pounds) and then annually on **1 July** of each year.

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.

