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**CDXC COMMITTEE 2002/2003**

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	<b>G3NUG</b> Neville Cheadle Further Felden, Longcroft Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead HP3 0BN	Tel 01442-262929 E-mail: <a href="mailto:president@cdxc.org.uk">president@cdxc.org.uk</a>
<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>G3LAS</b> John Butcher Westlands, Westland Green, Little Hadham, Herts. SG11 2AJ	Tel: 01279 842 515 E-mail: <a href="mailto:chairman@cdxc.org.uk">chairman@cdxc.org.uk</a>
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>M0BJL</b> Shaun Jarvis 11 Charnwood Way, Langley, Southampton, Hants SO45 1ZL	Tel: 023 80893391 E-mail: <a href="mailto:secretary@cdxc.org.uk">secretary@cdxc.org.uk</a>
<b>TREASURER:</b>	<b>G3TXF</b> Nigel Cawthorne Falcons, St.George's Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0BS	Tel: 01932 851414 E-mail: <a href="mailto:treasurer@cdxc.org.uk">treasurer@cdxc.org.uk</a>
<b>DIGEST EDITOR</b>	<b>G3RFX</b> Martyn Phillips 17 Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1BA	Tel: 0117 973 6419 E-mail: <a href="mailto:g3rfx@btinternet.com">g3rfx@btinternet.com</a>
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</b>	<b>G3RTE</b> Jim Kellaway 55 Ladbrooke Drive, Potters Bar, EN6 1QW, Herts	Tel: 01707 657309 E-mail: <a href="mailto:awards@cdxc.org.uk">awards@cdxc.org.uk</a>
	<b>M0DXR</b> Mark Haynes 34 Pear Tree Mead, Harlow, Essex, CM18 7BY	Tel: 01279 430609 E-mail: <a href="mailto:mark@haynes6.fsworld.co.uk">mark@haynes6.fsworld.co.uk</a>

**CDXC OFFICERS 2002/2003**

<b>CONTEST CO-ORD:</b>	<b>G4VXE</b> Tim Kirby 11A Vansittart Rd, Windsor Berks, SL4 5BZ	Tel: 01753 857816 E-mail: <a href="mailto:contests@cdxc.org.uk">contests@cdxc.org.uk</a>
<b>AWARDS MANAGER:</b>	<b>G3RTE</b> Jim Kellaway (as above)	Tel: 0707 657309
<b>WEB MASTER:</b>	<b>G3PMR</b> Alan Jubb 30 West St, Gt Gransden, Sandy, SG19 3AU	Tel: 01767 677913 E-mail: <a href="mailto:webmaster@cdxc.org.uk">webmaster@cdxc.org.uk</a>

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 20 OCTOBER****CHILTERN DX CLUB - The UK DX Foundation - Aims and Objectives**

*"The aims of the Club are 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 of membership are available from the Club Secretary (address above).

**Subscriptions:** The annual subscription is currently set at £15.00 for UK members, and £20.00 for overseas members (\$30 or 30 Euros). The subscription for new members joining between 1st January and 30th June is 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions become due on July 1st in each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer (address above).

**Digest:** This Digest is published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Digest Editor (address above) by the published deadline. *Please note that opinions expressed in the Digest are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee.*

**CDXC Web site:** <http://www.cdxc.org.uk>

# CLUB NEWS AND VIEWS

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## EDITORIAL

*Don Field, G3XTT*

Time to emerge from under the onslaught of something like 1,000 IOTA contest logs and turn my attention to the CDXC Digest. But, on this occasion, it's for the last time, as I hand over the baton to Martyn G3RFX.

A good time, then, to thank all of you who have supported me over the past five years, with articles, letters to the editor, bouquets and brickbats. The role is not always an easy one. The Digest fulfils many functions - to educate, entertain and to act as a conduit for the exchange of information between members. Its tenor has changed over the years as the Club has expanded both geographically and in numbers, and as each editor has added his own ingredients to the mix. I am sure Martyn will add some new flavours of his own, and I encourage each and every one of you to give him your full support.

For my own part I will, at Martyn's request, be continuing to make some contributions from time to time, and have also been asked by the new Committee to take on the running of the IOTA 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary awards programme, of which you will find more details within. I continue to manage the IOTA Contest on behalf of the RSGB's HF Contests Committee, write my regular RadCom column and, of course, will be heavily involved in the organisation of the next Five Star expedition. Maybe I'll also get to work DX and operate some contests occasionally (I will be joining the Voodoo gang in West Africa once again in November).

### ***Dennis Mueller***

In the last Digest we carried a request from a gentleman by the name of Dennis Mueller for old QSL cards, which he said were being

collected by members of his family. We inserted this in good faith, but it was subsequently drawn to our attention that the gentleman concerned actually trades QSL cards on eBay, so this request appears to have been disingenuous, to say the least. Despite two e-mails to Dennis giving him the opportunity to explain his side of the story, he has failed to respond, so I must warn CDXC members to ignore the request which appeared and steer clear of this gentleman. Our apologies for having misled you.

### ***Nigel, Roger & Andy***

Didn't they do well? When Roger G3SXW sent me their press release for V6, I responded that this was one I still needed on 10, 30, 40 and LF. With well over 300 countries on both 10 and 40, it's surprising I still needed V6, but it does seem that many of the expeditions to the Pacific really don't make a big impact here in Western Europe. But with Roger and Nigel G3TXF only planning to run barefoot, I thought my chances for 30 and 40 were pretty slim (10m and LF were obviously a no, no in any case, given current propagation). Imagine my delight, then, to work the guys on both those bands during their first day of operation. They weren't loud, but it really wasn't too hard. Which just goes to show what can be achieved with the right approach and experience. Good on you both!

As a postscript, a couple of days later Roger was spotted on 14023, with Andy VK9XAB (G3AB) on 14017. I switched on the linear, and within two minutes had them both in the log. Way to go guys!

73 Don G3XTT

## Chairman's Chat

*John Butcher, G3LAS*

The HF bands seem to be well entrenched in the summer doldrums at the moment with just a few expeditions to keep us all interested. As I write this, the TZ6RD group is doing a great job from Mali, enabling me to fill in one or two band/mode slots. This is a good example of pile-up management and efficient operating.

As trailed in my last CC, the AGM and Summer Social were duly held at President Neville's QTH on July 19. Yet another attendance record was set with over 80 members, families and friends enjoying the sunshine and good company. In fact it was so hot that I really regretted not taking a hat. Consequently I spent the next week or so scraping the dead skin from a rather roasted forehead – ugh!

The minutes of the AGM are to be found elsewhere in this issue, from which you will see that the Club is still going from strength to strength, having now officially passed the 600 members mark. Maybe we should have a raffle on when we will make the 700. Talking of raffles, this year's prizes at the social were as good and numerous as ever – thanks to all the donors who included most of the major equipment suppliers, another mark of the esteem in which CDXC is held. The star prize this year was an FT817 transceiver donated by Yaesu UK. This was won by John Kennedy, G3MCX, who was very grateful because it will enable him to get active again on many more bands than at present. Watch out for him in the future pileups!

You will see also from the minutes that your Committee has decided to make this year's Local Heroes Award to "Tex" Izumo, 9M2TO. There can't be many members who have not at least one, and probably several, of his cards in their collection. We felt Tex was a very good example of the kind of operator for whom the LH Award was intended. He keeps a fairly low profile but is very active on all bands from 160 to 6m and

never fails to QSL promptly. 9M2 is not exactly rare but getting it confirmed on up to 20 band-mode slots would be very difficult, if not impossible without Tex' efforts in recent years.

Don't forget that nominations for the 2004 Local Heroes Award can be made at any time from now on.

Another recent decision has been to organise an activity/award programme in 2004 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of IOTA. This will be very similar in concept to the IOTA Millennium competition which CDXC ran so successfully a few years ago. Look out for more details very shortly and get cracking from January 1.

By the time you read this, the HF and IOTA Convention will be only a few weeks away. If you haven't done so already, make sure of your booking for Manchester via the RSGB web site. A free pint awaits the first CDXC member to claim it from me in the bar on the Friday after 6pm.

Before the Convention we hope to put in an appearance at the Donnington (Leicester) Show in September. All being well you will find us sharing the Martin Lynch & Sons stand, so we look forward to seeing you there.

I can't close this CC without a reference to the departure of our Digest Editor, Don Field, G3XTT. You probably know that Don is taking a breather after five years of editorship – and that for his third term in the job! There is no doubt that the Digest is very highly regarded, not only by CDXC members but also by many other DXers all over the world. The high standard of our journal is widely recognised and is due very largely to Don's efforts. We have been fortunate in obtaining the services of another renowned literary figure as a replacement. Martyn Phillips, G3RFX/ZB2FX, is already well known as the sparkling comper of the HF Convention

DX Dinner in recent years. Not only is he endowed with oral wit (that sounds rather like a dental affliction, doesn't it?) but he claims to be able to write as well. Don will be a hard act to follow but I am sure Martyn will bring his own brand of journalism to the task and take the Digest to even greater levels of excellence in future.

That's all for now, folks. See you at Donnington and Didsbury, but don't forget Annobon and Kermadec coming up this autumn.

73 es gud DX  
John, G3LAS

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## **Presidents Patter**

### ***Neville Cheadle, G3NUG***

I hope everyone enjoyed the Summer Social as much as Trish and I did. We both enjoyed hosting this year's social and were blessed with excellent weather. And what a turnout! I think we had 85 people here, including children; the AGM passed smoothly and was again well attended; the draft notes are published elsewhere. Thanks to those who sent in apologies, probably a record number, indicating the high level of interest that members have in the club.

My thanks to all those who helped to organise the social and in particular to Shaun MOBJL who had to deal with the ever increasing numbers. Thanks also to Mark Mann for organising the food and the barbeque. Mark was certainly kept very busy this year and, as usual, came up trumps. Thanks Mark. Thanks to Trish too.

It was great to see so many old friends and new faces at the social. Many of you commented that you wished you had been before. The next event will be the Annual Dinner in Spring 2004. Let's hope for another good turnout.

The raffle was a real success this year and we raised around £700 compared with around £450 last year. The main raffle prize was an FT-817 transceiver donated by Yaesu, a most generous gift. This was won by John G3MCX. Many members also contributed prizes as did the RSGB and all our advertisers - Kenwood, Martin Lynch & Sons, Nevada and Walters & Stanton. Sincere thanks to everyone. Let's support

those who support the club.

2004 is IOTA's 40th Anniversary and we have been asked by the RSGB IOTA Committee whether we would be willing to re-run a programme similar to the IOTA 2000 Programme. We have agreed to do this on a similar basis to IOTA 2000 and Don G3XTT will be taking the lead role. Hopefully, with virtually everyone having access to the Internet, it should be possible to run the entire programme by e-mail as no QSL cards will be required. We will probably be designing an Excel spreadsheet for all applications; this should make processing the awards somewhat easier than in 2000. We are also thinking about publishing monthly scores on our web site. This will change the tone of the programme slightly but will, on the other hand, enhance the club's profile significantly. More news later. Let's hope the IOTA Committee does not decide to introduce a large number of new counters in the middle of the programme as they did in 2000!

Switching hats to my Five Star DXers Association role. Plans are now well underway to put on a major DXpedition in March/April 2004. The team is being assembled, a suitable hotel in a reasonably remote location has been booked and we will be shipping a 20 foot container full of equipment at the end of the year. We have looked very carefully at the propagation projections and, despite the decline in the sunspot index, we estimate that we can keep a team of 24 very busy indeed. This will be

a similar number to the D68C team but we shall be placing more emphasis on LF given that 10m and 12m will be closed for considerable periods. We will be assembling a large antenna farm so that we can exploit every opening. Two of us are undertaking a site survey in September.

We will be going public in early October but in the meantime we are seeking 3 to 4 operators to stay for the entire 4 week period. Operators do not need to be experienced DXpeditioners but they need to be first-class operators. They will be expected to follow the FSDXA operating standards. For example, we will:

- Identify ourselves at least every two QSOs,
- Confirm full calls,
- Work limited split frequency until the pile-ups die down,
- Regularly announce our listening frequencies,
- Adjust our sending speeds to that of the stations calling us.

If any member is interested in participating would he or she please contact Don G3BJ ([g3ozf@btinternet.com](mailto:g3ozf@btinternet.com)) who is co-ordinating team logistics, or myself ([g3nug@btinternet.com](mailto:g3nug@btinternet.com)). The cost of the four week package including accommodation and food is £2,050 and economy travel from London costs a further £590. We look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in joining us. Several of us are taking partners.

CDXC is taking a stand at the Leicester Amateur Radio Show at Castle Donnington where we hope to repeat the success of Elvaston. The dates are Friday 19 and Saturday 20 September. Do come and see us.

A reminder that the RSGB International HF & IOTA Convention takes place over the weekend of 31 October to 2 November at Didsbury near Manchester. The programme looks good and CDXC will be there of

course. We look forward to meeting many members.

I'm sure many of you are being flooded by spam on the Internet. I have found that a program called MailWasher does a good job, it's worth a try and it's free! To quote from the documentation:

“MailWasher is a powerful e-mail checker with effective spam elimination. Discover the safe way to stop unwanted viruses and e-mails before they get to your computer. No gimmicks here, it is so easy to set up and use that you'll be managing your email like a pro in seconds. It can even be used as an effective privacy tool. I think you will find this to be the easiest, most effective way to manage your incoming e-mails. You will be amazed at how quickly you will like using MailWasher.”

Go to <http://www.mailwasher.net/index.php>. The basic system is free; the full system costs \$20 and is, in my view, excellent value. Even 'NUG could set it up without difficulty! I particularly like the way MailWasher bounces spam back to the originating server rather than just deleting it. This gives the impression that your e-mail address is no longer active. Since I set this up my volume of spam has decreased very substantially. Give it a go!

Finally, subscriptions. Thanks to all those members who renewed promptly and to those who completed standing orders. There are however, still quite a few members who have not yet renewed. Please help us by doing so without further delay. This saves us time and cash in sending out reminders.

See you at Donnington and/or Didsbury.

73



Neville G3NUG

## Secretary's Update

*Shaun Jarvis, M0BJL*

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Call	Worked	Name	Location
G3BXS	100+	Aleck Stacey	Berks
G3LDI	All-P5	Roger Cooke	Norfolk
G3SEK	180	Ian White	Oxon
G3TKK	223	Peter Doughty	Lancs.
G3VGR	178	Dave Aldridge	Essex
G3XLW	143	David Powell	Devon
G4VFG	172	Peter Lewis	Devon
G3VZT	300+	Rick Johnson	Norwich
G4CUS	322	Antony Turnbull	East Sussex
G8PW	275	Doug Manson	Lancs.
GW0MJ	284	Gerald Williams	Gwent
KC5LK	320	John Bergman	Brandon, Mississippi
M0CMH	218	Martin Hemmings	Essex

### THE CDXC LF CHALLENGE 2004

**Aim:** The aim of the competition is to work as many DXCC Entities during the month of January 2004. Each DXCC Entity is counted once only.

**When:** 0000 UTC 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2004 to 2400 UTC 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2004.

**Bands:** Only the 1.8, 3.5 and 7MHz bands may be used.

**Modes:** No restrictions.

**Logs:** Send a list either by email or post but the list must contain the following headings in this order please. DXCC Entity, Callsign, Date, Time, Band and mode. Entries which are not submitted in this format may be disqualified from the Challenge. QSL cards are not required but in the event of a dispute the CDXC committee may request a photocopy or print-out of applicants' logs.

Logs to be sent to [awards@cdxc.org.uk](mailto:awards@cdxc.org.uk) or by post to [Jim Kellaway, G3RTE](#), 55 LADBROOKE DRIVE, POTTERS BAR, HERTS, EN6 1QW, UK to be received no later than the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2004

**Awards:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place - The winner will receive the Penaltt Trophy (Returnable) plus a small engraved plaque which is retained.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - The runner-up will receive the Tindle Cup (Returnable) plus a small engraved plaque which is retained

3<sup>rd</sup> Place - For the person in third place a small engraved plaque which is retained.

For all entrants who work more than half the winner's total entities will receive a certificate.

## UK Stations on DXCC Honor Roll

(Compiled by Jim G3RTE, with thanks to Bill Moore NC1L of the DXCC desk for providing the information. Figure after callsign is all-time score, including deleted entities.)

<b>Mixed</b>					
<b>335</b>	G4IUF/343	G3VXJ/341	GW4BLE/346	<b>330</b>	<b>327</b>
G0DQS/341	G4ZCG/341	G4DDS/344		G0OIL/331	G0JHC/333
G3GIQ/368	GM3BQA/365	G4EDG/341	<b>332</b>	G3AAE/381	G3KDB/351
G3HCT/379	GM3ITN/375	G4ELZ/341	G0WAZ/337	G3KMQ/353	G3LNS/350
G3HTA/363	GM3WIL/344	G4OBK/340	G3IFB/363	G3TJW/353	G4DYO/341
G3JAG/363	GW3CDP/347	GJ3LFJ/340	G3TMA/343		G4WФЗ/333
G3KMA/370		GM0AXY/341	GM3AWW/357	<b>329</b>	GW3AHN/378
G3LQP/360	<b>334</b>	GM3YTS/341	GM4YMM/337	G3KLL/353	
G3MXJ/360	G0CGL/340		GW3JXN/332	G4DXW/335	<b>326</b>
G3NDC/350	G0DBE/339	<b>333</b>		G4YVV/332	G3ALI/351
G3NLY/367	G3AEZ/351	G3COJ/359	<b>331</b>		G3OAG/334
G3OCA/340	G3NSY/356	G3KYF/356	G3KWK/346	<b>328</b>	G3PMR/331
G3RTE/347	G3PJT/338	G3SNN/344	G3MIR/341	G3ZAY/348	G4OWT/328
G3RUV/357	G3PLP/343	G3ZBA/356	G3RZP/338	G4AFJ/333	G4SOF/332
G3UML/366	G3SЈX/343	G4GED/339	G4YRR/337	G4CЈY/331	G5LP/350
G3XTT/344	G3TXF/353	G4LVQ/339	GM3CIX/365	G4SQA/334	GI0TЈЈ/327
G4BUE/351	G3VKW/349	G4PTJ/339	GM4UZY/332	GM4FDM/331	GM3PPE/333
G4BWP/344	G3VMW/344	GW3ARS/345		GM4KLO/334	
<b>Phone</b>					
<b>335</b>	<b>334</b>	G4GED/339	<b>331</b>	G4OBK/334	<b>327</b>
G3NDC/348	G0CGL/340	G4PTJ/339	G3VOF/341	G4YRR/335	G3UAS/334
G3NLY/367	G0DQS/340		GM4UZY/332	GM0AXY/336	G4DYO/341
G3UML/366	G3KMA/359	<b>332</b>			G4WФЗ/333
G4BWP/344	G3LQP/359	G3VKW/347	<b>330</b>	<b>328</b>	GW3AHN/375
GM3BQA/365	G3XTT/343	G3ZBA/355	G3KYF/349	G3KLL/352	
GM3WIL/344		G4LVQ/338	G4NXG/336	G3MCN/346	<b>326</b>
GW3CDP/347	<b>333</b>	GW3ARS/344		G3TXF/345	G0KXL/331
	G0DBE/337		<b>329</b>	G4SQA/334	G0OIL/327
	G3SNN/342		G3TJW/352	GM3CIX/353	G3ZAY/346
					G4DXW/332
<b>CW</b>					
<b>335</b>	G3RTE/340	G4ELZ/340	<b>331</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>327</b>
None	G3VMW/341	GM3YTS/340	G3VXJ/337	None	None
	G4BWP/342				
<b>334</b>	G4EDG/341	<b>332</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>326</b>
G3GIQ/343		G3XTT/339	G3SNN/337	G3MIR/334	None
G3KMA/345	<b>333</b>	G4BUE/342		G4OBK/333	
G3MXJ/342	G3TXF/343				

### K8T & K8O Video Available

I am very pleased to inform CDXC members that the K8T/K8O is now ready for shipping. It is a full 50 minutes' long adventure. If you send me a £15 cheque (payable to Mr G.O.Jones) I will mail it to you first class.

Address is "Nirvana", Castle Precinct, Llandough, Cowbridge, Wales, CF71 7LX

Any surplus funds will be used in our next DXpedition.

Best 73 Glyn GW0ANA

# Annual General Meeting: 19th July 2003 at 12:00

**Venue: Further Felden, Longcroft Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts**

## Minutes

John, G3LAS, CDXC Chairman, welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked members for making it a record turnout. He remarked on the number of members who had taken the trouble to send their apologies, indicating their interest in the club.

**Present:** (51 members)

BRS32525, G0CZB, G0MTN, G0OPB, G0TRD, G0VJG, G3AB, G3BJ, G3KMA, G3KWK, G3LAS, G3LQP, G3LZQ, G3MCX, G3NOH, G3NUG, G3OLY, G3PEM, G3PMR, G3PSM, G3RFX, G3RTE, G3SXW, G3TXF, G3UAS, G3VKW, G3WGV, G3XTT, G3ZAY, G4BUO, G4CJY, G4FKH, G4FVK, G4HZV, G4IDL, G4IUF, G4JKS, G4KIU, G4OWT, G4TSH, G4VXT, G8MM, M0AXP, M0BBB, M0DXR, M0GMT, M0KCM, M0MRW, M3CVN, M3SDE, RS102891

**Apologies:** (54 members)

5B4AGX, G0HXN, G0MSM, G0PHY, G0PSE, G0SBQ, G0UKX, G0VOK, G0VYS, G2BJK, G3ALI, G3CWW, G3GHS, G3JNB, G3KKQ, G3LHJ, G3NKS, G3RZP, G3SED, G3SWH, G3TTJ, G3UEG, G3URA, G3WKL, G3WNI, G3ZBE, G4IRN, G4JVG, G4KHM, G4OCO, G4RKO, G4VXE, G8JM, G10TJJ, G14TSK, GM3WUX, GU0SUP, GU4YOX, GW0IWD, GW0VSW, GW3KFA, GW3KJN, I1JQJ, M0BJL, M0BKV, M0BWY, M0RNR, M0ZZO, MM0BQI, N7CQQ, OZ7SM, W2LO, W3EF/G0UHK, W3WL

**Previous Minutes:**

John, G3LAS, reviewed the minutes from the 2002 AGM. There were no corrections and the approval of the minutes was proposed by G3RFX, seconded by G3BJ and passed unanimously.

**Chairman's Report:**

John, G3LAS, reported as follows:

### Membership

The upward trend in numbers was continuing and the current figure was 604, although the exact number varied slightly from day to day. Thanks were due to Neville, G3NUG, for his efforts in recruitment. The Club had already welcomed some M3 members and looked forward to more in the near future. Members were reminded of the CDXC Challenge project whereby the member who achieved most new recruits in the year would be awarded two free tickets for the annual dinner.

### DXpedition Funding

The Club had supported 84 expeditions since 1992 and 17 in the past year at an average level of £163. A donation had also been made to IREF in recognition of the interest in IOTA activities.

### Finances

The Club's finances were in a healthy state, thanks to the efforts of treasurers Nigel, G4KIU, and Nigel, G3TXF. The subscription increase agreed at last year's AGM had been accepted by the wider

membership with no dissenting voices heard. The recent inconvenience caused by the decision to change the Club's bank had been largely overcome.

### Social Events

This year's dinner again attracted about 50 members and guests to the Boxmoor Lodge Hotel. We had an excellent meal and a very good speaker in G3ZAY. We plan to hold next year's Annual Dinner at the same location.

The Club had taken a stand at the Elvaston Park Rally near Derby. This was very successful, with over 30 members visiting the stand and at least 14 new members being enrolled. Thanks were due to Ken, G3OCA, and the local club for their help and hospitality. It was planned also to attend the Donington Show in September.

Taking place again in a new venue in Manchester on 1 and 2 November, the RSGB HF and IOTA Convention was again to be sponsored in part by CDXC.

This afternoon's Summer Social was expected to break an attendance record with over 80 members, their families and guests expected. Again, thanks are due to Neville, G3NUG, and especially his wife, Trish, for their hospitality which had been enjoyed so often over many years.

### Local Heroes Award

Following its successful introduction last year, this year's award was being offered to "Tex", 9M2TO, for years of valuable service to DXers world wide.

### Digest

The Club's Digest was recognised widely as one of the best publications of its kind anywhere. The Editor, Don, G3XTT, was largely responsible for this success. Sadly, Don had decided that he wished to take a rest from this responsibility after five years (in a third term of office). In recognition of his contributions to the Club and to DXers everywhere, the Committee had decided to make him an Award of Merit in the form of an engraved plaque. The Chairman presented the plaque to Don with the thanks of the Club.

### **Secretary's Report**

The Chairman read a message from Shaun, M0BJL, as follows:

*I must apologise for being unable to attend this year's AGM/Summer Social. Both Gina and I really hoped we would be there but due to work commitments it has not been possible.*

*Due to regular mail shots, the last 12 months as always, have been very busy with a huge amount of new membership applications being received, helping us reach record membership levels.*

*I'd like to thank those of you who returned their booking slips for the DX Dinner so quickly as it helped both me and the Boxmoor Lodge staff to coordinate the dinner to great effect. Although I was unable to attend, I believe all went very well.*

*Have a great day and enjoy the Summer Social.*

*Best 73, Shaun.*

The chairman reminded members of the valuable work done by the secretary, in spite of his having a very high work load and thanked him for his efforts.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Nigel, G3TXF, explained that the meeting needed formally to consider accounts for both 2001-2 and 2002-3 due to the fact that the final figures had not been ready for last year's meeting. He reported that

the membership total was now 604 and that the subscriptions for the new membership year were being received at a satisfactory rate. Overall, the club was in a healthy financial position.

The accounts for 2001-2 were approved nem con, following a proposal by G3BJ, seconded by G4IUF. The accounts for 2002-3 were approved nem con, following a proposal by G3PMR, seconded by G4JKS.

A proposal to maintain the subscription for 2003-4 at the present level was made by G8MM, seconded by G3OLY and passed, nem con.

In conclusion, the treasurer thanked the auditor, G3WGV, for his work on the Club's behalf.

### **Election of Officers**

At this point, the entire Committee resigned, as required by the constitution. John, G3WGV, took the chair for the election of a new committee. He thanked the retiring committee on behalf of the members, explaining that G3XTT, G3SED and G4KIU did not wish to stand for re-election. G3PMR proposed and G4KIU seconded that the remaining members be re-elected. This was passed nem con.

Nigel, G3TXF, was elected nem con as Treasurer, proposed G3NUG, seconded G3LAS.

Martyn, G3RFX, was elected nem con as Digest Editor, proposed G4IUF, seconded G3VKW.

The new committee is therefore:

<b>President</b>	<b>G3NUG</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>G3LAS</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>M0BJL</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>G3TXF</b>
<b>Digest Editor</b>	<b>G3RFX</b>
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>G3RTE</b>
<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>M0DXR</b>

Following the election of the Committee for 2002/2003 John, G3LAS, as re-elected Chairman, took the Chair

### **Election of Auditor**

John, G3LAS, reported that John, G3WGV, was willing to continue as Auditor for a further year. This was proposed by G3BJ, seconded by G3OLY and agreed unanimously.

### **AOB**

There were no items of business formally notified.

The Chairman presented a bouquet to Trish, thanking her for her support and hospitality.

The Chairman thanked all those who had donated prizes for the afternoon's raffle, including the major equipment retailers: Yaesu (the star prize was an FT817 transceiver), Nevada, Kenwood and Waters & Stanton.

**The meeting closed at 12:30**

## POSTBAG

*From Yannick, F6FYD:* The Clipperton DX Club came into existence following a multinational radio expedition to Clipperton Island in March 1978. Clipperton Island is a tiny, uninhabited atoll (a French possession) in the Pacific, about 1500km from the coast of Mexico. In just one week, more than 29,000 contacts were made with other amateur stations.

The members of this expedition became the founder members of the Clipperton DX Club: Over the years the Club has grown to include over 300 members from many different countries.

The objective of CDXC is to promote and support amateur radio expeditions throughout the world. The purpose of these expeditions is to make radio contact with as many different operators throughout the world as possible from the host nation. The goal can also be to help establish or support amateur radio in the host country by material or technical advice.

The CDXC has supported many amateur radio expeditions over the years, by means of financial assistance, loan of equipment, or printing of QSL cards.

The Club is based in France, and is affiliated to REF-Union, the French national association. The CDXC includes the majority of top French DXers, and has members from many other countries. Many CDXC members hold prestigious awards such as the DXCC Honor Roll. CDXC members themselves regularly organise or take part in radio expeditions to many different parts of the world.

The annual International Convention takes place, usually in September, in a different location in France or neighbouring countries, with the participation of many prominent DXers.

This year, our annual convention will take place at Lille on the September 20th. This is our Jubilee convention (25 years). So many French DXers as well as so many

international DXers will be present. I am glad to invite you to this Convention. If you need any information on it, please don't forget to ask me and/or visit our web site.

*(Several of our own "CDXC" members have already indicated they will be going; Lille is easily reached by Eurostar – ed.)*

*From David M0CNP:* I shall be visiting Bermuda, this time with 100+ watts (all bands inc. WARC with FT101) between 14th and 28th October. Callsign will be M0CNP/VP9 as last time. So will be operational for the CQ WW DX contest I think, which could be interesting. Please visit my website at [www.qls.net/m0cnp](http://www.qls.net/m0cnp)

*From Peter, G3RZP:* Don, Following on from your piece in the CDXC Digest, I thought everybody knew how to make a small fortune from DXpeditioning. It's easy - you start with a large fortune!

*From Gwyn, G4FKH:* I will be signing 3B8/G4FKH from January 3rd 2004 until January 23rd 2004. My predictions indicate that the best time will be around 1600 GMT on 14 or 18MHz, CW only. I'm taking a vertical aerial which I've already proved to be working well, also QSL via my home call.

*From Phil, G3SWH:* Jan and I will arrive in Madagascar on 13th September and will be travelling extensively on the mainland until 22nd, when we will fly to Ile Sainte Marie (IOTA AF-090) and relax for a few days until 27th. I hope to activate my 5R8HA call from the mainland (IOTA AF-013) whenever I can get on and will use 5R8HA/P from AF-090, where I should be more active. CW only on all bands 40 to 10 metres. Please remember that this will be a "holiday" type operation, not a DXpedition.

## NICE TO KNOW

*(Most of the items in this section come from the Internet, so are already in the public domain. However, I include those which I think may be of interest, or useful to refer back to in the future. Due to space constraints, several items have been held over until the next issue. – ed.)*

### **LOTW Latest**

The ARRL Logbook of the World (LOTW) beta test is still ongoing. If you haven't yet given it a spin, Don AA5AU has written a "step-by-step tutorial on how to download the software, install the software, create the certificate request, load the certificate, create a signed log, submit your log and accessing the LOTW website. It's not brain surgery, but it's involved enough that seeing the steps displayed could be of some help. The URL for the tutorial is [http://www.aa5au.com/lotw\\_beta.htm](http://www.aa5au.com/lotw_beta.htm)."

*(I think this may have been overtaken by events as the live version is imminent, but the tutorial is almost certainly still relevant – ed.)*

### **PEI Rental Station**

Robby VY2SS and Ken K6LA / VY2TT have announced that they are opening the Prince Edward Island DX Lodge and Rental Superstation. Judging from the contest scores, VY2 is the new hot spot for making big scores. Not too heavy on the palm trees and snorkelling, but you can almost see the Eiffel tower from there and quite a bit of fun stuff is located nearby. More details are available at <http://www.peidxlodge.com>.

### **W2VJN Filters**

*(from ARRL Contest Rate Sheet)* W2VJN's "Managing Interstation Interference - Coaxial Stubs and Filters" is a definitive reference on the ever-mysterious stub by a guy that knows the theory and has put it into practice. George starts with the basics and works right through two-radio, all-band stations. If you're interested in using stubs as filters even a little bit - you need this book - available from International Radio at [www.qth.com/inrad](http://www.qth.com/inrad).

### **On-line Maps**

Tim Makins, EI8IC reports that a demo of his extensive collection of computer image maps - Global Mapper - is now available at <http://www.qsl.net/ei8ic>. There are continental and sub-continental maps, country outlines, zone maps, relief maps, grid and lat/long meshes, plus hundred of city and region names, IOTA info and flags, too. The nice thing is that you can turn the layers on and off to control the amount of detail.

### **Super Contest Keyer**

ZS4TX has just completed an upgrade to his "Super Contest Keyer" (available from Array Solutions, [www.arrayolutions.com](http://www.arrayolutions.com), in September). The SCK is a powerful package, combining a voice and CW keyer, audio processing, dual-rig control, PC interface, and more. The upgrade adds PC control via a COM port, "Early PTT" to prevent amp hot-switching, beacon functions, and RTTY using a PC soundcard. All this at a considerable savings over standalone devices to accomplish the same set of functions. For that first hour of Sweepstakes, you can even crank up the keyer to 990 wpm! The complete manual is available at <http://www.zs4tx.co.za/sck>.

### **Worldwide Young Contester's Club**

The Worldwide Young Contester's Club has been busy, releasing a new newsletter. This group is very active in trying to spread the word and make things happen on the radio! Definitely worth a visit. The newsletter can be downloaded from the left-hand toolbar on <http://www.wwyc.net>. There are high and low-resolution versions.

# GENERAL TOPICS

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## Trouble is my specialty – DXpedition to Tonga

*Janusz A35WE (SP9FIH)*

During long flight from Warsaw to Tonga I was trying to predict all the unexpected things that could happen, but in even my worst scenarios I did not expect so many varied problems.

When I came to an immigration officer on Nuku Alofa airport he told me that I cannot enter Tonga – I have not the visa. (In my Lonely Planet guidebook is written that visa is not necessary and when I bought the airline ticket nobody told me that I need a visa). Rules have to be observed – I was sent back to the same airplane I came into Tonga and immigration told me that I will get the visa in New Zealand.

After nearly two hours we arrived in Auckland and....the immigration officer told me that I do need a visa for New Zealand and I cannot leave the airport! I could not find a person from the airline staff who wanted to help me and it was the airline agent's fault that I was not informed that the visa is necessary for Polish citizens. A little desperate (airlines in Auckland changed my flight reservation for going back to Poland the same evening) I tried to solve the problem. I made more than 20 telephone calls to various institutions: from airline main offices to Polish consulate and finally I have found a helpful person in the Tonga Tourist Promotion Board office. They sent a visa application form to me by fax to the airport, I filled the form and faxed back and then they faxed it to Tonga and I received by fax visa promise one hour before I had to fly back to Poland. Luckily I was back in Tonga, late at night instead of early in the morning as planned, but I was there.

Nothing was lost not counting my nerves and 18 hours of operation time. Oh! I forgot. Customs in Tonga insisted on me depositing my antenna pack at the airport until I

received a written Tongan licence. One more journey by taxi to the airport plus \$15 plus 3 more hours not on the air.

The licence was really not a problem – quick and professional person in the Prime Minister's office. After collecting my antenna pack from the airport, A35WE was on the air with reasonable pile-up. Location is not bad – little bungalow in the north-west corner of Tongatapu island. My HF9V is only 30m from clear Pacific waters; at my operating position I can see sunset over the ocean, the restaurant with cold local IKALE beer is 2 minutes' walk. First day (and night) there were more than 1400 QSOs in the log.

### ***The "Heavy Mob" arrive***

On the second day I have visitors: 2 men dressed in typical Tongan civil dress – "tupenu". They showed police identity cards and kindly ask for interview. They were very polite but after a one hour discussion they promised to return next day with an officer. Next day they visited me again with person issuing licences.... I imagine that someone was anxious what that foreigner does on such nice beach with his aluminium tubes and wires.... What is most important, I can make contacts again.

Even with this HF9V multiband vertical to my surprise I made 270 QSOs on 6m. Most of them with JAs but also some KH6 and one ZL4. During 25 days there were four openings on 6m (the longest not more than 2 hours).

The constant wind with small parts of salt water after few days caused my Butternut to lose its tuning, especially on 15m. I had to make a new wire antenna – a sloper dedicated to the 15m band. To hang it on a 10m palm tree I came to an agreement with

a young local farm worker – he climbed the tree and put my wires there and I bought some IKALE. Same agreement we used three times as once I changed palm for better one and once the wire was too weak when strong wind had blown.

The WPX SSB Contest was harder work than I expected. Nobody wanted to call A35 and other low power stations from the Pacific area. Working European stations was difficult – some of them did not receive weak low power signals from Pacific, some answered with big problems after 30-40 minutes of calling them. Nevertheless I made 649 QSOs for a total of 627,000 points.

### **Visits with A35XM**

At the same time in Tonga was German DXpedition A35XM. They operated from the same island but their QTH was about 17km from mine and closer to the country's capital. I visited them and they visited my location - we had a few pleasant meetings: discussions, taking photos, beer drinking. I think we shared band activity quite well – I concentrated on SSB and higher bands including 6m and my friends from Germany operated mostly CW and lower bands. They left Tonga 10 days earlier than me.

Several evenings and mornings I spent on skeds with those who needed A35 on 80 or 40m. Most skeds were successful in spite of my low power and modest antenna but a few failed. SP9QMP tried to call me on 40m SSB. He has a 3 element monoband Yagi. I heard him every time for at least one hour calling and listening for me. And I called him every time and no answer, no slightest sign of my 100W in Europe!! The reason is probably high noise level in some locations in EU – even more during contest time when many amateurs connect their kW.

To my surprise there were very good conditions to Middle Europe on 15m. I made many contacts with “small pistols”. They were using 50W and G5RV or inverted-V hanging only 10m above ground or multiband vertical similar to mine or 5W

and tribander. I worked F6BFH when he was using only 1W! Those were the most enjoyable QSOs! The joy of contacting the other side of the globe is much bigger when you have 100W and dipole then if you have 2kW+ and a 6-el monobander.

The propagation allowed me to contact EU even on 12m, but not on 10m. We tried a few times with different stations but Nature taught us that there is a certain period of time when the higher bands will rest from shouting amateurs.

The local electricity provider thought that I spent too much time by my radio in the shack. Therefore there were a few hours without electricity every week. It was difficult to plan operating times because electricity breaks were random. The best propagation to Europe was at evening and early night Tonga time – i.e. from 0600-1300 UTC.

After 25 days of operation A35WE finished work with 10, 350 QSOs in the log. It took me about four hours to dismantle the antennas and to pack everything.

The return was also a little nerve-racking. When I arrived in Los Angeles my flight to Frankfurt was just departing. There was not enough time to go through US immigration and customs and to change terminal. What was the reason? Airlines in the meantime, when I was on Tonga, changed schedule from 1900 to 1430. Once again nobody informed me about the change. Lucky again, there was a half-booked flight to Munich a little later and I got a seat on that one. After 48 hours in airplanes and various airports I arrived in Warsaw. Can you believe? – my friend who promised to take me back home was 1½ hours late at the airport. Ugh....!! I am really happy this DXpedition is over.

My sincere thanks go to the European DX Foundation and Chiltern DX Club for their financial sponsorship and to many persons who helped me to solve appearing DXpedition problems.

## XU7ACT AND XU7ACU, the 2003 Cambodian DXpedition

**Danny M0GMT ([m0gmt@postmaster.co.uk](mailto:m0gmt@postmaster.co.uk)) and Oliver DJ9AO**

I had the idea of an expedition to Cambodia about 6 month's before we actually carried out the DXpedition. It was around February time that I started to make enquiries into the possibility of carrying out a radio operation in Cambodia; my first enquiries were regarding the chances of getting a licence there. I found out from Internet pages and other operators that it was possible to get a licence in Cambodia relatively easily. As I found out later, it was certainly possible although it was definitely not easy.

Once I had ascertained that the licence would not be a problem, I then made enquiries into the possibility of an operating location. After some searching on the Internet I came across an advertisement for the rental of a DX shack. This was a guest house which had some of the needed equipment and some of the antenna equipment needed for a DXpedition. It was by no means enough to use for an expedition on its own, although it certainly would be helpful in reducing the amount of luggage I would need to take on the aircraft. After some enquiries to the manager of the DX shack I found that it would be possible to hire the room and also the equipment for around August-time 2003.

Having found that the possibility of this trip would be high, my next thoughts were of a small team or of just one other operator to accompany me. My initial plans were to make this a one-man expedition, although being a CW-only operator I thought it would be unfair to be active without someone using SSB.

I wanted to find someone who was preferably around my own age, and also who was new to DXpeditioning. The purpose of the trip would be for us both to experience a DXpedition for the first time, in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. I decided to try and find a fellow member of the World Wide Young Contesters Club (WWYC) to accompany me on the

expedition. After some research and enquiries into possible people, I chose to invite Oliver DJ9AO. He seemed to be a very keen operator, also a good SSB operator in and out of contest. Also he operated both SSB and CW which was a bonus. Having approached Oliver about the trip, we agreed on a date and length of operation suitable to us both. We were pleased to see the date of our operation would allow us an entry into the WAE CW contest. We had confirmation of what our callsigns would be. XU7ACT was issued to me and XU7ACU was issued to Oliver. We decide to use XU7ACT for the DXpedition and XU7ACU as the contest call sign.

### ***Down to the serious planning***

This is when the serious planning and booking started to take place; I contacted the owner of the DX shack and booked the room for our selected dates. We both booked our flights, I flew from London Heathrow via Singapore to Phnom Penh airport and Oliver flew From Frankfurt via Singapore. We planned the flights so that we could meet each other at Singapore, we could then take the same connecting flight to Cambodia. This was to make it easier to explain why we had certain pieces of equipment if we encountered problems at any of the security checkpoints.

Having arranged all of these things, the next was to find a responsible QSL manager. I asked some of my CW friends who were also experienced DXpeditioners who they would recommend; almost every one of them said G3SWH. I contacted Phil G3SWH and, luckily for us, he said he would be happy to be our QSL manager. In the mean time I had designed and made a webpage to support our expedition, and I worked with Phil in order to include the necessary QSL guidelines and information. My brother and I also made an on-line QSL request form to Phil's specification; we also included an Online log checker which I

think is nice for those who have worked us to be able to check they are in the log. I chose an online log manager for the expedition; this was performed by Christoph DK9TN, who is also a WWYC member. During our time in Cambodia Christoph became more of a webpage manager as numerous problems were encountered with the server. I must thank him for the most excellent service possible.

The weeks leading up to our departure date were quite tense and stressful, and we had still not received our licences! The countdown had begun to the time for us to leave, and I started to become worried that the licences would not arrive. It was only two days till we were leaving for Cambodia and the licences were not here and, to make matters worse, no one at the telecommunications department was replying to my e-mails. I obtained the e-mail address for the manager of the whole department and, as a last resort, wrote to him explaining everything. Within a few hours I had the licences as scanned copies and had been told to collect the real ones from the office in Phnom Penh, I was very relieved.

At last it was here, the morning of my departure. Excited and nervous I boarded the Singapore airline flight for my 13 hour trip to Singapore. It would then be another 3 hour flight, and then a 3 hour car journey south bound in Cambodia. My luggage and hand luggage was well above the maximum 20kg and 8kg that the airline allowed. Somehow I managed to get aboard with no real problems; what a relief. Everything in my hand luggage was breakable and I would have had big problems if they had not allowed it onboard.

### ***Cambodia 03/08/2003***

We had arrived and had only minimal security problems at Singapore. We paid our \$20 for the tourist visas, and then went to collect our important luggage. As we walked towards the collection point Oliver asked me if I had a backup plan if any of the luggage was missing. I jokingly replied yes

plan B is we panic. Little did I know that plan B was only 15 minutes away. We arrived at the collection point; my suitcase was there, it had been damaged but at least it was there. We waited until all the bags had been collected but we did not see Oliver's bag arrive. We waited quite a while but it became clear that something had gone wrong. We visited the lost and found section at the airport. They had not got his luggage, we therefore gave them a report and contact details. They informed us that it may be anything between 1 and 5 days until the bag would reach the airport. The bag contained many essential parts and equipment for our operation and, understandably, Oliver was not feeling like operating.

We lost about 2 days of any serious operating due to this. I could get one station up and running with the equipment I had. It was a relief when Oliver's bag was found and returned 2 days after its loss. We were now able to start the operation properly, antenna designs were carried out and an assessment of the types of antennas we could erect was done. For about the first four days we just operated on the 3-element beam and wire dipoles. Our first UK station contacted was G4EDG Steve; I had met Steve in Friedrichshafen and told him about the expedition so it was a very nice surprise for me to contact him as the first UK station.

The fourth day of the expedition has been dubbed the problem day. It is funny how when one thing goes wrong, everything else seems to start going wrong at the same time. One of the power supplies broke, one SWR/power meter broke, and my laptop that I was using for logging would not work properly. After about 2 hours I found the problem with the power supply and fixed it; also we ascertained that the SWR/power meter was beyond repair. It looked also like we would now only be able to use one station at a time as my laptop would not work. However, I tried it again about 3 hours later and it worked fine and continued to work fine for the rest of the trip. We were both using CT by K1EA for logging in

both the DXpedition and the Contest.

### **09 to 10/08/2003 The WAE CW contest, using XU7ACU**

The contest started for us at 0700 local time. We decided to do 5-hour shifts for the duration. The contest was fun, and it was really interesting to be in a contest and at the other end of the pile-ups. Also it was nice to be giving out the QTC's rather than receiving them! We did not make as many contacts as hoped during the contest; this we attributed to quite poor propagation conditions over the weekend. But we were glad to active and give out some needed points to European stations.

### **11/08/2003 and onwards, using XU7ACT**

The days following the contest went well. We had many contacts on the DX bands, and also managed a lot of contacts on the WARC bands. 30m is a particular favourite of mine, so I was pleased when the conditions were good enough to be able to give out XU as a new one to certain people on 30m.

The LF bands were not going too well; it was a constant struggle against local QRM and bad conditions. For example, the local post office operated on 7.050 USB, and also many other buildings had dipoles that looked the correct size for LF operation. Using many of the amateur bands during our day time was near impossible with QRM levels at a constant high. Six metres seemed to be quiet as well; we were therefore left with no alternative than to be as active as possible during our night time and early morning, which luckily was Europe's evening. This seriously affected the amount of contacts that were possible, and also the multi-band operation that we had hoped for. We made the most of it whilst radio operation was good, and our day left us some spare time for sightseeing. We were able to work a lot of local stations like Japan and Korea during the day as their

strong signals overrode the QRM. Even so, we still were careful to keep the power low and operating time short, we did not want the people who were using the bands as pirates to complain and have us shut down completely.

Radio operation continued like this until 16/08/2003, this is the day on which we closed down operations. We thanked the guesthouse staff for such nice hospitality and friendliness and started our journey towards Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh. We spent 3 days there and visited the local sights. It was a nice break from the pile-ups and radio operating. It was nice to get a pleasant night's sleep as well; it is amazing how difficult it is to sleep after having been operating CW pile-ups for hours!

On 19/08/2003 we left Cambodia. Both our luggage was still very heavy although we had both left some of the cable etc. at the guest house. I suppose the souvenirs we had bought remade the weight that the cable had taken up previously. We were lucky again that the airline check in desk did not seem to be bothered by our extremely heavy bags.

The whole DXpedition was really interesting, from the initial plans to the actual operation. It has been something that I have wanted to do for a few years, and I am very pleased to have done my first trip at 19 years of age. We both learnt a lot about propagation, antennas, and Cambodia; and I am looking forward to my next DXpedition already.

We made over 6000 contacts; these were possible on the bands 40 to 10m. Our sponsors for the expedition were:

CDXC, RSGB, EUDXF, GMDX Group, GDXF

We thank them all for helping to make this expedition possible.

## **TX4PG - from Austral to Marquesas**

### **2002: Rurutu, one year after, Nuku Hiva**

When Silvano I2YSB and Adriano IK2GNW returned from the Austral islands in 2002 the promise was to come back soon to the Pacific. As usual the dilemma was where to go next.

Among the islands on the Pacific the Marquesas immediately catch the attention since they are accessible by regular flights, they are big enough to assure the necessary facilities for foreign travellers and, last but not least, they are within the first fifty of the “most wanted”.

### **The land**

The Marquesas Islands lie between 600 and 900km south of the equator and approximately 1600km northeast of Tahiti. They fall naturally into two geographical divisions: the northern group centred on the large island of Nuka Hiva and the two smaller islands of Ua Pou and Ua Huka, and the southern group of Tahuata, Moho Tani and Fatu Hiva, clustered around the main island of Hiva Oa. With a combined area of some 2,000 square km the Marquesas are among the largest island groups of French Polynesia and were formerly a major centre of east Polynesian civilization.

The islands are of volcanic origin, the eroded and partially submerged peaks of extinct submarine volcanoes. Craggy mounts and peaks transverse the interior with jagged spurs and spines rising to over 1,200m. From these lofty central mountain ridges, deep valleys cut by mountain streams flanked by precipitous cliffs sweep down to the sea. Narrow strips of black volcanic sand beaches form at the valley mouths while on flanking sides, sheer ridges plunge steeply into the sea. The Marquesas coast has no fringing reef or coral-clad lagoons and the sea, although rich in resources, yields its bounty unwillingly.

### **The climate**

The climate of the Marquesas is subtropical

and much affected by the prevailing winds and vagaries of seasons. Moisture-laden clouds carried by the southeast winds water the coasts on the south and east sides of the islands, nurturing a dense mantle of exotic vegetation. The northwest coasts are relatively arid with scattered groves of stunted trees, dry grass and patches of struggling ferns.

### **The story**

The first European to visit the Marquesas was Alvaro de Mendana, who arrived in 1595, named the islands Las Islas de Marquesa de Mendoza and claimed them for Spain.

Nearly two centuries were to pass before the next white visitor, Captain James Cook, arrived in 1774.

Cook's expedition had the effect of opening the Marquesas to the outside world. Within a relatively short time, other exploring voyages were made and by the early nineteenth century merchants, whalers and missionaries came in numbers to the islands in search of adventure, wealth and/or destiny. With little respect or comprehension for the people upon whom they had intruded, the early European visitors had a dramatic and destructive effect on the Marquesans and their culture. The introduction of firearms, alcohol and a multitude of diseases decimated the local population and contributed to an element of self-destructive anarchy.

In their endeavours, the Catholic missions were enthusiastically supported by the French government, which had formally taken possession of the islands in 1842.

With neither side interested in compromise, conflict became a significant component of interaction between the Marquesans and the French. Gratuitous violence which occurred beyond the norms and controls of Marquesas culture engendered a legacy of fear and mistrust and this, coupled with disease, apathy and demoralization resulted

in a birth rate that was appallingly low. By 1872, fewer than 6,000 Marquesans were still living. The situation continued to deteriorate until in 1923 only an estimated 2,000 Marquesans remained. Thus, one hundred years of sustained contact had resulted in the almost complete destruction of the Marquesans and their culture.

### **Today**

Today, the Marquesas are still hauntingly beautiful. The great valleys are silent, but imbued with the presence of a once-powerful people. Everywhere the remains of great stone platforms, walled house sites and terraces provide silent testimony of a culture that no longer exists. Exquisite artifacts and tools of daily living (those that remain) are found only in European museums and collections, far from the homeland where they were created and used.

The French still maintain a presence in the Marquesas, although there is little left to govern. Dreams of a thriving commercial and trading centre proved illusionary, and although the local birth-rate is gradually increasing, the current population numbers are impacted by out-migration to Tahiti and France.

After the “low profile” 2003 Austral DXpedition, Adriano and Silvano decided to organise a more ambitious activity from Marquesas forming a seven element crew and Flaviano I2MOV, Carlo IK1AOD, Andrea IK1PMR, Marcello IK2DIA and Beppe IK2WXV joined them.

All of them are experienced DXers, a well rounded team with a wide knowledge of many ham fields such as antenna design and software development and with four of them CW fanatics and some other “frequent travellers”.

Having the target to activate two or three stations, a lot of stuff in terms of antennas, radios and accessories was necessary and a large group of fellows agreed to carry the weight and to share the expenses.

To summarise a two-week experience in such a far country is not an easy task, but below we try to share the experience of those exciting days with the DXers and island hunters.

To get the CEPT license (FO/ home call) is not complicated and it can be easily done by fax. So easy that Adriano decided to make it more complicated asking for a special call taking advantage of the centenary celebration of the famous French painter Paul Gauguin who died in the Marquesas on May 8th, 1903. The TX4PG special call was issued thanks to Sylvain FO5RF, a friend met during the Austral DXpedition a year ago.

After a few months of preparation on April 25 the team left Milan Malpensa airport, each of them carrying laptops and radios, about 12kg approx. and more than 160 kg stowed in the hold.

In Paris the security caught Flaviano and Carlo, the former for the Kent key, the latter for a 300W solid state amplifier. The metal quantity was too much for the sensors and only the captain could authorize its loading on the Boeing 747 to Los Angeles and Papeete.

After reassuring the captain that the radios cannot be used during the flight, we got permission to embark on the aircraft.

Papeete is already very hot at 6 am, as soon as we are with our feet on the ground; we are warmly welcomed with the traditional shell necklace and flowers.

As soon as we start collecting the luggage, we realise that Mr. Murphy is giving his peculiar welcome: a bag is missing, just the one which contains the SteppIR antenna motors as well as the cables for the radios and the power!

We are desperate and the time to embark on the next flight is short.

At the check-in counter, more bad news, Air Tahiti allows 3kg hand luggage only and we cannot accept the risk to stow our radios and laptop into the hold!

In the while a distracted traveller brings back the missing bag which he collected by mistake. In spite of all, we feel better now!

At 1.00 am (2000 GMT) the ATR42 takes off with all our stuff (a total of 245kg). Only our wallets were lighter: 490 Euros paid to Air Tahiti for 84kg excess baggage. It was useless arguing with Air Tahiti which has the monopoly of domestic flights in Polynesia.

The first island was Rangiroa where we stopped 30 minutes; then we landed in Nuku Hiva, the final destination of our long trip. At the airport a pick-up and a Land Rover were waiting for us.

The weather was really bad, heavy rain with the temperature over 30 C° and 100% humidity. We had to climb up to Takao mountain, 1220m above the sea, along a muddy road without parapets with the wheels of the cars skimming the sheer drops.

After a two hour drive in such a bad condition to cover 27km, we finally arrived at Toovii, a plateau at 800m asl. We planned to install a station there, to facilitate contacts with Europe since the other stations would be in Taiohae, the main city, down in front of the ocean and obstructed by a mountain peak.

It was Sunday, April 27th and the sun set early. At 1800 local time it was already dark. The rain, still heavy, and darkness made it impossible to install the beam antenna. But we were too excited to stay inactive waiting. The following day the first 30m vertical was erected under the rain and Beppe started to operate, announcing that TX4PG was on air.

Adriano and Carlo remained in Toovii together with Beppe for the next four days while the other operators left for Taiohae, another 45 minute drive in the dark, where Christiane and Claude, the owners of the Pension Pua, were waiting to accommodate them in two bungalows which were to be the second station.

The night was still long and the rain still strong but, in spite of that, the R7 multiband vertical was rapidly erected and the second station was ready to operate.

At sunrise we immediately started to erect the three element 6-band Yagi in order to complete the setup of the two stations close to the sea.

Then Silvano and Marcello left again for the station on the hill to complete the setup. This was the main station with a TS-440 and an IC-706, a TL-922 amplifier, the 2-element SteppIR (monoband beam from 20 to 6m), a vertical for 40/80m, another vertical for 30m, a beam and a vertical for 6m.

The weather was still horrible, there was 20cm of water on the soil and the 80m vertical refused to work because of the immersed radials. Unfortunately it was not possible to raise them out of the water since the horses were free to walk everywhere breaking all the wires. This was a really unexpected situation but in spite of that, some dozen QSOs were in the log before the antenna was definitively out of order on 80m.

Now we understood that Mr. Murphy was still with us since other bad news came during the day, a strong storm in the morning dropped the three element antenna on the ground and a couple of elements were definitely broken.

The repair was not an easy task without the tools and spare tubes, in the rain and under attack by a number of annoying mosquitoes (the local people call them “nono”), the only solution was to sacrifice one element, a hard job for Silvano.

At the end the two-element was ready, and in spite of the crooked tubes the antenna was working well on all the bands.

At Taiohae, a city at sea level, the two stations were equipped with an FT-847 and the 2 elements 6 bands, a TS-440 with 300W solid state amplifier and vertical R7.

Since the two stations were very close,

bandpass filters were used to avoid interference.

We had some VHF radios to keep in touch between the station on the hill and that by the sea but even with 50W the link was not possible because the mountain was in the middle. The only way was to arrange some daily skeds in HF.

Late afternoon a further problem occurred in that, at the station on the hill, i.e. the TS-440, modulation was horribly distorted and operation was not possible. We were forced to use the spare IC-706 which we had intended to dedicate to 6m. The magic band was monitored only during the most promising time.

The climate was really uncomfortable and even early in the morning, at sunrise, it was very hot and humid. Some of us went shopping which took a 3km walk under the scorching sun or under the rain. Furthermore, the tap water at the Marquesas was not drinkable and, when available, it was brown!

In addition to the technical and logistic problems, the propagation did not assist us, especially in the first phase. Late morning and early afternoon were the worst periods; we know the Europeans were disappointed because they couldn't hear us but we were there, calling CQ with two beams towards Europe (which was also the USA direction), often in CW, and with a TL-922.

**Thursday 29.** We learned from Taina, a girl in charge of the housekeeping, that the rainy season started in April and reached its peak in July. The best month was December, she said, with no rain and mosquitoes.

So we realised that the information we received from our correspondent did not correspond to the Marquesas reality!

Another problem was to update the logs on line. They are often only partial because of difficulty to travel to the group in Toovii, on the hill. In addition, the taxi fare was 50 Euros, (not to mention the risk!) Furthermore, the Internet connection was

unreliable and restricted, we could not connect to the net reliably and even when it was possible, just for half an hour.

**Wednesday 30.** Silvano and Andrea climbed up to Toovii to replace Beppe and Carlo who moved to Taiohae. The turnover was planned to allow everybody to operate four days from the hill since the station position by the sea was not so favourable for DX.

Down by the sea the receivers were dead during the day, no propagation at all; better to take a swim in the ocean (no coral reef and few small sharks swimming around us). Swimming in the ocean was a pleasure; our only concern was about the small sharks, were their parents somewhere close to us?

It was already May 1st. The static noise was so heavy at night-time that it was impossible to operate on 80m.

Even on 30 and 40m the static was strong but in CW we were able to put many Europeans in the log. The signals were very low there and it seemed it was even worse for them! We had no other alternative than to operate on 30 and 40m CW with the station by the sea and to operate on 20m all modes with the radio on the hill.

We had at last a short opening on 6m around noon (2200 UTC) covering a restricted area in South America only; ZP6CW was coming in very strong, he was in the log on SSB and CW, together with some other ZP and PY stations.

In the afternoon the pile-up was huge with the USA and Japan till sunset. The propagation phenomena with EA8 and CT area was impressive, the signals were strong enough to cover the USA pile-up on 17m. But as soon as we called "EU only" no further signal was coming from west, just like a solid wall built along the 6th meridian!

**Friday 2.** We still had rain and the R7 started showing a high SWR on 15 and 17m. A serious problem occurred in the TL-922 which we could fix.

At last we had a good opening with Europe for a couple of days during the weekend.

Signals were solid on 20m from 5 to 9 p.m. local time (03-07 UTC) and we could work Europe from the sea stations on 30 and 40m CW, in spite of the poor operational conditions. On the hill 20m was a very profitable band; we often received 59+ reports from many Italian stations.

The pile-up with Europe was huge, we were forced to work split calling by number and we were happy to say “hallo” to a number of friends, their signals were coming 59+!

On RTTY we decided to operate mainly on 20m to give as many stations as possible the new one on the digital mode, thus avoiding dupe QSOs. Even there the pile-up was unbelievable!

At night time, after 10 p.m. local time (08 UTC) the propagation on 20m dropped also on the hill and we often moved to CW, the mode in which QSOs were possible even with weak signals. We also could not disturb the other operators who were sleeping in the only room available.

The weekend gave us the chance of good opening at night-time on 15 and 17m. We operated CW for hours calling “EU only” at reduced speed because of the “pole echo” and a number of European DXers were in the log on 4 bands.

More difficulties on 12m, only a few calls from EA8, EA6, CT were in the log.

**Saturday 3.** Again a good opening with Europe on 20m. In spite of the ARI contest QRM, a number of new European calls were in the log, thanks to the weekend.

Also 17m kept open the full night and the station on the hill exploited the band with a huge pile-up to Europe, even from the north.

What a big difference from the first days!

**Sunday 4.** A new turnover, Flaviano and Marcello moved to the hill and Silvano and Andrea come back to the sea.

In the log there are more QSOs on CW than on phone; considering the set-up this can be

normal. Marcello and Adriano tried to balance the situation by working 12 and 17m SSB during the day, RTTY on 20m in the evening and Flaviano during the night on CW.

There was no choice for the station by the sea, only CW could assure a reasonable QSO rate with the rather poor antenna situation and barefoot.

**Monday 5.** Propagation was going down; all operators were making their best to keep the QSO rate high even if the signals were weaker and weaker.

An agent from the “Gendarmerie” came to check our licences, they were OK and he left us in peace.

**Thursday 6.** The propagation did not help us anymore, it was really bad.

In the morning we used the automatic call on CW and answers were very rare, even Australia and New Zealand were absent. Nobody was listening to us from this land 6,000 km away from the nearest continent.

We had enough time for a quiet breakfast. The QSO rate was too low, one every 10 – 12 minutes, only a few weak W6 or W7 stations appeared every now and then and we had enough time to rest in between QSOs!

Some of us took advantage of the poor propagation to go sightseeing, thanks to the courtesy of one of the other guests who drove us around the island.

**Wednesday 7.** It was time to pack our stuff for the journey back.

At 9.30 the last antenna, the SteppIR, was down and the team joined up on top of the hill after to being separated for so many days.

The former three-element beam, back from the two expeditions in Niger and some field days, was stored at Taiohae available for Jean Claude FO5LZ, the taxi driver, the sole resident radio ham in the Marquesas, hoping he could find the enthusiasm to be active from this wonderful place!

At the airport, as expected, we had to pay for the excess weight again despite having left some stuff on the island. We took off from Nuku Hiva and arrived in Papeete in three hours.

It was time to have a good meal all together and to sleep in a comfortable hotel. Even if it was not a five-star hotel it was a big improvement compared to the bungalow at the Marquesas with brown water from the tap!

A journalist came to the airport on Thursday morning to look for us. She was invited by Sylvain FO5RF and his wife Martine to interview us for a local newspaper and our group was of some interest since there was very little local news there! She promised to send us the article and the pictures.

We embarked on the aircraft wearing shell necklaces.

At 9.15 the Boeing 747 took off for Los Angeles and Paris and finally we landed at Milan Malpensa after a 27-hour trip.

Again we discovered that Mr. Murphy had not remained at the Marquesas but he had followed us to Milan; as soon Silvano opened his hand luggage, the anode was swinging inside a 3-500Z tube despite it being well packed.

For some reason the luggage was not sent on the same flight but finally we collected it the following day.

If you were so patient to read our story you can understand that it was not a relaxing vacation in a Mediterranean Island but a demanding trip from the physical, technical and economical point of view.

We would like to thank all friends who congratulated us for our efforts and were grateful for the "new one".

Thank you also for those who sent us constructive criticisms, comments and suggestions.

We cannot understand those who want to operate on the bands or as they like without knowing the problems we must face there

like technical problems, bad weather conditions and the vagaries caprice of propagation in south Pacific.

A special thank to all our sponsors who believe in us:

NCDXF, INDEXA, EUDXF, GDXF, CDXC, GMDX group, UKSMG, OKDX, Danish DX group, Nancyatte DXAIKOUKAI, SteppIR, Eco antenne, Elettroprima, Rizzieri elettronica, Maar telecomunicazioni, Edilfond, ARI Casale Monferrato, ARI Pavia, IK1PML for the QSL printing.

We also thank all the friends who helped us with donations or giving us some equipment:

FO5RF, FO5QG, FO5PS, I1HJT, I1UJX, IK1AZK, IK1CEH, IK1IZB, I2EPT, I2PQW, I2UUA, I2WOQ, IK2BLA, IK2OIU, IK2UTT, IK2UWR, IK2VIL, IZ2AEW, IW2NMX, I2-3551, EA2RC, K9LA, W6OAT.

And finally a special thank to DL5EBE Dominik for the invitation to Friedrichshafen to explain our adventure.

And now some numbers:

Total QSOs: 22503  
QSOs on CW: 12667  
QSOs on SSB: 8897  
QSOs on RTTY: 1029

With the USA: 9952  
With Japan: 6410  
With Europe: 3940 for the following countries:

Italy: 797  
Germany: 511  
France: 300  
Spain: 241  
Poland: 157  
U.K. 142

In total 132 DXCC countries.

Please visit our web page to see some shots and to have access to the online log.

<http://digilander.libero.it/i2ysb>

## **That's a Strange Callsign!**

### **A DXpedition To French Polynesia**

*Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH (Phil@g3swh.demon.co.uk)*

I first became aware of Barry, ZS1FJ's plans to activate some islands in the South Pacific over dinner together in Cape Town in April, in the aftermath of the ZS1RBN expedition, when he very proudly produced a copy of his FO/G4MFW licence, that he had literally received in that day's mail, although I did not become involved until late May, when he invited me to join him. Barry also holds the callsigns G4MFW and ZL1MFW.

Like most people of my age, I was brought up on stories of bare-breasted maidens, pearl diving adventures and tales of derring-do in the South Seas and a visit to Tahiti has always been one of my longest standing ambitions. The five separate archipelagos of French Polynesia cover a vast area of the South Pacific Ocean and are sprinkled over some 5,030 million square kilometres of it, although the total land area is only 3,500 square kilometres. The total population is about 250,000.

Initial discussions suggested that such a trip was affordable and within my DXpedition budget. The information of the OH2MCN web site contained a copy of the application form and indicated that a licence is fairly easy to obtain, although local permission is necessary in addition to the usual CEPT formalities. All correspondence has to be conducted in French though, a language in which my ability is best described as "conversational".

Consequently, I sent a copy of my UK licence, the completed application form, a copy of my passport and a carefully constructed covering letter by fax to the appropriate PTT office in Papeete, the capital of Tahiti and of French Polynesia. Within a couple of days I received an e-mail from Sylvain Affinito, F6GGX/FO5RF congratulating me on my French, acknowledging my application but stating that the passport copy was illegible. I sent a

colour copy by e-mail and that was acknowledged as being satisfactory. A few days later I received a further e-mail stating that my licence was ready but that I needed visit their offices, present my passport for identification and collect the document in person. My e-mails requesting that they send me an advance copy by fax were eventually answered stating that for "security reasons" they were not prepared so to do. However, logic and Barry's own licence suggested that the callsign would be FO/G3SWH.

#### ***A plan comes together***

In the meanwhile, Barry had co-opted Deon, ZR1DQ/ZS1ZL to the team, we had agreed dates and I had booked myself on an Air New Zealand flight to Papeete via Los Angeles. Our various travel itineraries meant that we would actually be together on the flight from Los Angeles to Papeete. Barry was also locked into detailed negotiations with his travel agent in California to agree a workable itinerary. He wanted to activate at least two islands, including Mangareva Island in the Gambier Archipelago (OC-063), which counts for French Polynesia for DXCC purposes, and either Rurutu (OC-050) or Tubuai (OC-152), both of which count for the Austral Islands for DXCC purposes. Of these, Mangareva was the rarest from the IOTA standpoint. There is only one return flight per week, on Tuesdays, between Tahiti and the Gambiers but daily flights to Rurutu and Tubuai. I have both OC-063 and OC-152 confirmed, so would have preferred to go to Rurutu, which would have gained me another IOTA credit, but we finally agreed on Tubuai and an initial public announcement was made at the end of May. Deon set up a web site: [www.qsl.net/g4mfw](http://www.qsl.net/g4mfw) and Barry assembled an impressive list of pilot stations with whom daily skeds were to be kept: Dennis, ZS1AU; Harry, KH6FKG;

Don, W0DM and Don, G3XTT. Gwyn, G4FKH kindly provided us with detailed propagation predictions.

Both Barry and I were keen to undertake the QSLing chores and we initially proposed to obtain a unique and special call for the operation from each island and then divide the responsibilities between us. As it was becoming increasingly apparent that special calls were unlikely to be forthcoming, we decided to use our own calls and be responsible for our own QSLing.

Final costs were double our initial budget and I undertook to obtain some cash sponsorship from various amateur radio foundations and clubs, with modest success. Unfortunately for us, many of these organizations are based in the USA and either do not support IOTA expeditions or consider both the Austral Islands and French Polynesia to be insufficiently rare to warrant their support.

### ***Baggage in Excess***

One of the problems of travelling within French Polynesia is the cost of excess baggage. Locals are limited to 10kg and visitors to 20kg per person. Once our plans were public, I received an e-mail from Hans, DK9KX who had passed through Mangareva with the Ducie Island expedition team in February, warning us about the high cost of exceeding these limits and that Air Tahiti were extremely zealous in charging for any excess. We tried to obtain more details from our travel agent, but were unsuccessful.

As it was routed via the USA, the flight from London to Papeete allowed me 64kg of baggage and, as I was travelling to the airport by train and bus, I elected to take a single suitcase containing all the radio equipment etc. that weighed some 30kg, plus hand luggage containing the laptop. As I was lifting the suitcase onto the scales at Heathrow, I felt a sharp pain in my right calf and afterwards had some difficulty in walking. I had severely sprained a muscle in my leg. There are no first aid facilities at

Heathrow beyond the 999 services and I was reluctant to get involved with them, as I would undoubtedly have then missed my flight. The flight to Los Angeles was uneventful but in these days of enhanced security, even passengers in transit within Los Angeles airport have to collect their bags, clear US Immigration and Customs, then re-check their bags and pass through the individual security screening. The latter involved removing the laptop from the hand luggage, the belt from my trousers and my shoes and for them all to be X-rayed before I could hobble through the usual magnetic loop device and report to the boarding gate for the flight to Papeete.

Barry and Deon were already aboard the aircraft although we were not able to sit together. The first thing Barry said was that, through his travel agent, he had managed to negotiate an extra 10kg per person baggage allowance for all of the Air Tahiti flights, which was good news indeed. The flight arrived in Papeete at 0240 local time and we cleared Immigration without difficulty. Barry had brought along an A3S beam and we had a few moments difficulty explaining to the Customs officer what it was all about. Our connecting flight to Tubuai was scheduled to leave at 1115 and we had been given to understand that the PTT office would be open at 0730. Sylvain had given us good directions in French to show to the taxi driver, as the PTT office that deals with amateur radio licences is notoriously difficult to find.

Leaving Deon to look after to baggage, Barry and I took a taxi the 5.5km or so to the centre of Papeete arriving just before 7.30 to find the building bolted and barred. A notice on the door said that the office was open to the public from 8.00 daily, but it was not until almost 8.30 that a female secretary arrived for work. She apologised most profusely in very rapid French and explained that everybody else was at the airport! She quickly photocopied my passport and handed me my licence for signature, when I noticed that, due to a typographical error, it had been issued as

FO/G35WH, not FO/G3SWH as expected. The licence itself was free, but it cost US \$30 in taxi fares to collect it.

Within the time available and with the language barrier it was very quickly obvious that there was no possibility of getting the error corrected before our flight to Tubuai, so we took another taxi back to the airport and discussed what to do. There was only one option available, as far as I could see, and that was to use the callsign on the official paperwork or risk the operation being disallowed by DXCC desk and/or IOTA for not using the issued call.

We checked in for the flight to Tubuai almost as soon as we got back to the airport. Our total checked baggage was some 110kg, plus lots of un-weighed hand luggage. Regrettably, the Air Tahiti manager, who spoke good English, could find no record on the computer of the arrangement for excess baggage made by the travel agent and despite our protestations we had no option but to pay for 50kg excess baggage. Even with a 30% discount for the return journey, it still cost \$210 (US). We were warned that excess baggage to Mangareva was over \$7 (US) per kilo.

### ***Tubai or not Tubai, that is the question ...***

Tubuai is 568km due south of Tahiti, the largest of the Austral islands and the administrative centre of the archipelago, with a land area of 45 square kilometres and a population of just over 2,000. Captain Cook landed here in 1777 and Fletcher Christian and his mutineers from HMS Bounty tried to settle here in 1789 but were driven off by the unfriendly warriors of the islands. Located just within the Tropic of Capricorn, the climate is a pleasant combination of the tropics and the temperate zone.

The flight took 2½ hours in an ATR aircraft, including a brief stop at Rurutu on the way. On arrival, we were met and driven to our pension, Chez Doudou in the main village of Mataura on the north side of the island

and about 100m from the beach. We were the only occupants of the two storey motel-like building and had been allocated a room each on the first floor. We unpacked and started to look at the antenna possibilities. We negotiated the use of a fourth room for the SSB station after Barry elected to put the beam at the rear of the building on a grassy open space close by. I was able to rig my wire antenna facing north at about 6m across the grassy area in the front of the building. By the time we had finished putting up the antennas, my leg and foot were considerably swollen and very painful, as the sprain had also brought on an attack of gout. Fortunately, I had brought my medication for the latter and it was quickly under control. Even so, it was a relief to be able to set up the CW station in my room and to rest, although a problem with the building's electrical installation meant that the metalwork of both stations' equipment was live and gave a nasty tingle when touched.

The two stations hit the air at the same time and the first CW QSO was with K1AR on 20m at 0423 UTC on 11th July, although I quickly moved to 30m to minimize the mutual station interference. The first European and seventh QSO in the log was G3JAG at 0433 UTC, who also put the first spot on the Cluster, although my strange callsign was clearly causing some confusion. To minimize this, I sent the call after every QSO but was still accused of having a "dit crazy keyer" by more than one operator who really should have known better. QSD only occurs intermittently, not every time on the same character! I see from the Cluster spots that there were still arguments going on about the correct call almost up to the time we closed down from Mangareva!

We were warned that English is not widely spoken outside of Tahiti and that we would have to rely upon my limited French. Fortunately, Vairee, the pension owner's daughter was on holiday from school in Tahiti, spoke excellent English and was a great help during our stay. Barry was in

high dudgeon about the excess baggage charges and sent a fax to his travel agent asking them to sort it out and for us to be reimbursed for the charges already paid. Their response was a textbook example of evasion, accepting no responsibility for their previous assurances but did undertake to attempt to rectify the situation.

Band conditions were generally awful. The SFI was in the mid 120s with a very high "A" index and all the bands were dead until mid/late afternoon local time every day and then closed again in the mid evening. There were no suitable trees or other supports for LF antennas and we abandoned our plans for 80 and 160m. Nevertheless, we kept at it and each station had made over 1,250 QSOs by the time we closed down at around 0500 UTC on 14th.

On checking in for the flight back to Tahiti, we found that the documentation we had been given in Tahiti regarding the excess baggage payment was not in order and the airline initially wanted us to pay again. Fortunately, the local Air Tahiti manager is American and, with the help of the travel agent's fax, we were able to persuade her to speak to her boss in Tahiti and smooth the way for our trip to Mangareva.

### ***And on to Stop Two***

The flight back touched down briefly at Raivavae Island, one of the most exquisite islands in the South Pacific and I was brought to the verge of tears by the beauty of the island and its lagoon from the air. In Tahiti, we were met and taken to the Sofitel Maeva Beach hotel for the night, where we decided to reduce the weight of our baggage by placing all surplus clothes and equipment, including the RTTY decoder and LF antennas, in the airport baggage store prior to flying to the Gambiers next morning. Our flight left at 0550, so we were at the airport early, just in case of any further problems but with our checked baggage now only 85kg and thanks to the intervention of the American lady in Tubuai, all was well.

The Gambiers are 1,650km southeast of Tahiti and also just within the Tropic of Capricorn, although we found the climate to be much wetter. The largest island is Mangareva and there are three other main, six smaller islands and 25 coral islets partially enclosed by an 80km barrier reef. The islands were discovered in 1797 and are named after Captain Gambier, a French Huguenot. In 1834, French missionaries arrived and proceeded to enslave the population, forcing them to build innumerable churches and a 2,000-seat cathedral. The lagoon is a haven for the *Pinctada Margaritifera*, the black-lipped oyster that produces some of the world's finest black pearls in the farms of these islands and many of the 1,000 or so population are employed in the pearl industry.

The non-stop flight in an ATR aircraft took over 4½ hours, landing at the airport constructed on one of the flat islets of the coral reef. A municipal boat service takes passengers for the 30-minute trip across the lagoon at a cost of \$5 (US) each. There was no one to meet us at the dock in Rikitea, the principal village of Mangareva, it started to rain heavily and there was no shelter. Enquiries revealed that our pension, Chez Pierre et Mariette was only a few minutes walk away but that they had no car. The local policeman took pity on us and loaded our gear into the back of his van and drove us to meet Mariette and her son Pierre who, like Vairee, was on holiday from school in Tahiti and spoke passable English.

Their pension is a bungalow with three bedrooms, a kitchen and a comfortable living area in a small meadow at the foot of Mount Duff (441m) about 150m from the ocean, but facing southeast. The take-off to Europe and North America was to the northeast and along the side of the mountain but we were completely shielded to the north and northwest. Barry and Deon started to set up the beam as far to the south as their length of coax would allow, whilst I rigged my wire antenna facing northeast between two conveniently placed trees,

although it was not very high. The swelling of my leg was reducing but the bruise was giving me a Technicolor foot and, together with the gout, was still quite painful. Consequently, and with their agreement, I actually put the CW station on the air whilst they were still assembling the beam and support pole. I did QRT for a short while to help them erect it though.

The first CW QSO was with K4YR at 0030 UTC on 16th July on 20m, but I soon changed to 17m and generated a steady pile up, mainly of North American stations. I see the first Cluster spot was at 0054 UTC. To distinguish between our OC-152 and OC-063 operations, we added the suffix /P to our calls. Conditions were slightly better than in Tubuai, with the SFI increasing steadily during our stay to a maximum of 150, although the A index remained quite high. Once again, all the bands were dead until mid/late afternoon local time every day and then closed again in the mid evening, although I was pleased to work many European stations on both 30 and 40m. By the end of the week, both the SSB and the CW station had made over 3,200 QSOs each. We would have made several hundred more but for the number of stations who tried to make duplicate QSOs, causing severe QRM in the process.

The flight back to Tahiti was via Hao in the Tuamotos to refuel and on arrival in Tahiti we collected the bag from the store, reclaimed our belongings and went our different ways. Barry and Deon managed to

get on the air from Tahiti (OC-046) as well, as they had a day or so before their flight to New Zealand, where they also planned to activate Great Barrier Island (OC-201) before returning home via Singapore. My own flight home was not for another two days, so I checked into a small pension where there were no possibilities of putting up antennas and spent the time relaxing and resting my leg.

### ***Wrap-up***

Special QSLs have been printed and for SSB QSOs are available from ZS1FJ and from G3SWH for CW QSOs, either direct or through the relevant bureaux. The necessary documentation has been submitted to (and accepted by) Roger, G3KMA for both IOTA activities and to Bill Moore, NC1L at ARRL for DXCC purposes. My particular thanks go to my XYL, Jan for letting me go; Sylvain, F6GGX/FO5RF and the staff at the PTT in Tahiti for the strange callsign; Barry, ZS1FJ and Deon, ZS1ZL for their help on the islands; Don, G3XTT and John, G4PDQ for the loan of equipment; all the islanders who made us so welcome and our sponsors: RSGB, GM DX Group, Chiltern DX Club, EUDXF, GDXF, Fort Wayne DX Association, Mile High DX Association, Clipperton DX Club, Danish DX Group, IREF, Greater Milwaukee DX Association, GACW and Nanchette DX Aikoukai, without whose help and understanding this operation would not have been possible.

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## **S9LA, The Nordic DXpedition to Sao Tome & Principe in West-Africa**

***by Rag LA6FJA***

### ***“From a boys’ trip to a big DXpedition”***

It was LA7THA Rune Egil Öye, who had a dream about going on a big DXpedition to a place far away. Our plans started with Laos XW, but there were problems in getting a licence and, meanwhile, it appeared to be very difficult. Rune checked about licensing

and Stein Roar LA6FJA got the visa application papers from the embassy of Laos in Sweden.

Later LA5QKA, Öystein, LC3EAT, Svein Jarle and LA6FJA, Stein Roar “Rag”, became involved. The ball started to roll.

Stein Roar and Rune exchanged over 2000 e-mails between them, and several hours on the phone. There were actually two more hams on the team, but unfortunately they had to drop out. Stein Roar then spoke by telephone with about 50 Norwegian DXers to discuss whether they were interested in a DXpedition to Sao Tome. Most of them had a doubtful attitude and we were in the middle of October 2001. The departures were scheduled for 2nd February, and the flights and tickets had been ordered in the summer of 2001.

### ***We settle on Sao Tome***

Stein Roar & Co. were worried about the visa and licence. Anyway we had decided the target would be Sao Tome & Principe, in West-Africa CQ Zone 36 and IOTA AF-023. We established contact with CT1EAT, Fransico Costa, from Lisbon, who had twice operated from Sao Tome.

We also made contact with SM0AGD, Erik and SM5DJZ, Jan, who had travelled extensively and had operated from Sao Tome a couple of times, so they were able to offer some advice. In addition, many Norwegian DXers supported us with ideas and offers of help.

We had the process going on with the visa and licence, so that part was almost OK. The licence application had to be written in Portuguese, and we were fortunate in that Rune's job is on board a ship, and he found himself with two boys from Sao Tome as workmates. These two boys were asked about information, and they helped with translating the licence application from English to Portuguese, so CT1EAT Fransisco was not needed for this job.

Stein Roar finally got hold of SM5COP, Rune Wande, a past-President of SSA (Svenske Sender Amatörers forening), a big DXer and a skilled CW operator, and persuaded him to join the team. But the icing on the cake was when he also managed to get Dan Hultgren, SM5IMO, a Big DXer, contester, a skilled CW operator, and participant in WRTC 2002 in Finland,

to sign up. Finally, after a slight delay, Jörgen "Joe" Hoel, LA5UF, also said yes. So there we were with 7 hams.

Well, we had lost some operators early on, but now we were back to the numbers we had planned from the beginning, but it didn't stop there. We had had some contact with LA6EIA, Ole Forr, Mr. 80m DXer, who said "no" initially, as he couldn't find someone to take care of his farm while he was away. However, he managed to fix this and also suggested asking Arne Haugseth, LA7WCA, who was pleased to join us. So suddenly after the weekend, we had become a real big team with 9 operators.

In addition, we had the following support team:

- LA3WAA, Tor Pettersen. 6m / Europe & Africa
- LA9VDA, Trond Johannesen. North/South- America & Low-Band
- JM2HBO, Terunobu Hashimoto Japan, Asia & Oceania
- LA9FG, Norleif Bjørneseth. Contact person for our families
- LA5VM, Otto Norhagen. The Cashier / Bank

Suddenly what had started as a "boys' trip" had become a big DXpedition. The Webpage was made by Stein Roar LA6FJA, Rune Ö. LA7THA organised the travel, hotel, equipment list with weights, visa, licence, insurance, Svein Jarle LC3EAT was the technician with responsibility for logging, interface for digital modes, and Rune W SM5COP organised the extra baggage allowance for all of us. Actually from the beginning we had only 20 kg + 5kg hand luggage. Finally we got 40kg per person ++. That amounted to a total of 360kg, so we could take everything except a Butternut HF6V and an amplifier AL-811 Ameritron.

There were many hard weeks of work to make a complete equipment list which had to be broken down by team member so that

each had the correct items in his suitcase. LA7THA and LA6FJA had over 2000 e-mails and hundreds of hours on the phone during this year of planning. We watched the VK0IR video and wrote down all details and gathered suggestions from other LA stations which gave us many important things to think about. LA6FJA Rag, produced an operations manual which contained band plan, routines around changing band (bandpass filter etc.), propagation charts, how to tune the amplifiers, labels for each antenna. Each operator had to train personally with CT by K1EA so that they were fluent in its use, and the CW operators had to train with the CW program RUFZ and JA pile-up program PED. We had to be trained to meet a wall of pile-up in any situation.

All the small and larger items had to be weighed, and we had the final meeting at LA6FJA's QTH on Friday for the whole team (without the SM stations) and tried to match each suitcase the right way to fit the allowed weight for the flight. This involved weighing each suitcase and box. Three weeks before departure we had sent some coax and wire for radials direct to the hotel in Sao Tome. And finally we had asked the Swedish hams to bring things we hadn't room for, like tools and antenna tuner.

### ***Let down by the bathroom scales!***

Finally we found out at Oslo Airport that we had brought less equipment than we could have done. Apparently Rag's bathroom scales had overestimated the total. We were agreed, we could have brought the HF6V and the linear.

In the meantime, we had also arranged many sponsors from around the world, from DX groups like NCDXF, EuDXF, German DX Foundation, Clipperton DX Club, LA-DX-GROUP LA1DXG, Lake Wettern DX Group SK6WW, Chiltern DX Club, and other sponsors including Permo Electronics AS (Norwegian Hamshop [www.permo.no](http://www.permo.no)), DL8YHR (provided an F9FT 6m Yagi), welding wire from Veidekke ASA, LA5UKA Björn (loaned us his bandpass

filters), LA6MP John (loaned us his suitcase linear, a broadband transistor linear Finnfet 1kW), LB1HC made a portable professional 6m 3el. Yagi, Titanex Antenna gave us a huge price discount on a vertical V160E (a 160, 80 and 40m antenna 27m high plus tuner), and Manta Reiser in Oslo (travel agent) gave a good price and a good service. Of course all of our supporters made our dream come true!!!!

We also maintained regular contact by e-mail with Tom S92TX (S9TX today), and he had a HF Yagi which wasn't in use. Unfortunately he was back in the USA when we reached Sao Tome. So we didn't manage to meet him or to get the Yagi, but nevertheless he helped us with different amenities and he works at Voice of America Broadcast station on Sao Tome.

We had the final meeting at LA6FJA Rag's QTH before departure, without the SM's and we had brought LA4GHA Roger with us. We went downtown to Gjøvik, Olympic arena for Lillehammer winter Olympics games 1994. There we had a beautiful dinner to celebrate our upcoming DXpedition.

Next day we left Rag's home around 10am for our 1730 departure from Gardemoen, Oslo Airport. We spent a few hours at the airport, but the time passed quickly with lots to do like completing customs documents for all the equipment and enough time to get out the flight tickets. We had to tell the woman behind the desk that we had brought too many kilograms after agreement with TAP Air (Air Portugal), and we found that we had left too many kilos at home at Rag's house, a pity as we could have managed to drive back 45 min. with the car and pick it up.

While others were relaxing with newspapers and a cup of coffee, some got cravings. Rag LA6FJA had been too long with his radio, and in the middle of the departure lounge he picked up the Schurr Paddle and Heil Headset from his hand luggage. He sat the paddle upon the table, put on the headset and started with the pile-up trainer. He made

da-dit-da-dit da-da-dit-dah sounds, and other travellers looked up from their newspapers for a moment. While Rag made the CW noise the other team members laughed. Ole LA6EIA and Rag LA6FJA worked a QSO over the table with loud CW.

The flight took us via Switzerland, Zürich, where we had to wait some hours until we left for Portugal. While there, John LA6MP's amplifier got vacuum cleaned by the customs (excellent service!!), because they couldn't understand and had to ask many times what this box actually was, so we can recommend this if you have a dusty amplifier at home, hi hi. They also tried LA6FJA's CW paddle and really wondered why he had a glass tube, a 3-500Z, in his suitcase. He told them; "I'm a radio-amateur and this is a ham's stuff" and, of course, he showed them his licence from the Norwegian PTT.

There were a few minutes before departure for Lisbon, Portugal. We kept our eyes on the trolleys which drove fast in and out from the hangar. And we walked aboard on the plane and followed "all" of our stuff carefully, and saw that ground personnel loading the plane. Suddenly, Arne LA7WCA and Rag LA6FJA, noticed that the ground personnel had stopping loading our stuff and suddenly returned with the trolley into the hangar. And what happened? Well, the Captain says; "Welcome aboard, we are finished with the loading of all luggage. We will depart in a few minutes!"

### ***Hysterics or Hysterical?***

Oh, yes, with tears in his eyes LA6FJA watched his suitcase, amplifier and radio go back into the hangar..... Well, the plane is moving away from the gate and the team starts laughing. Yes, we laughed, what else could we have done at this moment? Arne and Rag sat there in their seats with big eyes, and Rag had big lump in his throat after this scene. We tried to tell the cabin crew, but they just told us to sit down. All your stuff is aboard. So the departure was a fact, on our way through the cloud headed to Portugal. "Oh, yes I can surely work

some radio with a paddle, headset, 3-500Z tube and my laptop too!" said LA6FJA.

While the flight continued we spoke to the cabin crew at least 20 times, and after they had given us plenty of beers each and wine and we were beginning to speak indistinctly about our stuff; the Cabin crew Chief came back to our seat to write down our names and ticket numbers. We were well on our way to Portugal, and the others of the cabin crew didn't believe our story, because we laughed too much when we told her what we had seen on the ground in Zürich. Normally, other people had got angry when such things had happened. We laughed and she didn't believe our story. We promised to send her a postcard to tell her who was right.

Finally we got some action. The Captain sent a FAX to the airport at Zürich, and some minutes before arriving into Lisbon, he came to the back seat and apologised that we had been right. And he promised that TAP Air would bring the stuff to Lisbon with their first flight.

Finally we arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, where there was a good long queue for passport control. An official waved his hand for our attention, pointed at the European Union flag and ask whether we were Norwegians. Norway is member of the EEA contract, and we could just walk through passport control without any further questions.

We had to enter the airport, and were stopped again by customs to check our luggage. We had to bring out the paddle, the valve and the amplifier upon the table for inspection again, but there were no problems. The most important thing for us was to get access to TAP Air and to find out any information about our luggage which we believed had been left in Zürich. And we had guessed right of course, for on the system they found that most of our stuff was still standing in a hangar in Zürich. The woman at Lost and Found reception told us that our stuff should arrive there at 1400 on Sunday. Our departure for Sao Tome was

2030, so we said that would be OK for us if they managed that. So then we were happy that we had planned a day in Lisbon in case the worst happened.

We went to the Hotel Rex in Lisbon where we were joined by Rune W. SM5COP and Dan SM5IMO. We talked about the flight and all the things which had happened to us that day. Rune W and Dan had arrived in Lisbon some hours before us. So now we had our first eyeball QSO with the Swedish hams. We relaxed for several hours. On Sunday we had an arrangement with Fransisco Costa CT1EAT. He came to our hotel to take us sightseeing in Lisbon. Fransisco took us to a shopping centre and we had a beautiful walk on the EXPO 2000 beach where there were lots of restaurants in a long line. We enjoyed a good dinner with him, and he told us a lot about Sao Tome and his experience about his earlier operations from there. We sat down for a few hours and had a pleasant stay together, the team relaxed a lot and rested to keep up its energy for the DXpedition. He called up the airport to check whether our luggage had arrived from Zürich, and it had arrived at 1400, which cheered us up! A beer for everyone.

Our worst case scenarios had come true for some hours..... So we had this extra day in Lisbon. We had only this one chance to be reunited with our luggage, since there is only one flight a week to Sao Tome. It had been a bad experience to get your radio the day you leave.

Then our pleasant stay with CT1EAT Fransisco was over, and he followed us back to the hotel. We wished him all the best and thanked him for all the support during planning for our DXpedition and the visit to Lisbon.

The time for the taxi trip to airport was 1800 and we needed time to get our stuff out of Lost and Found. When we appeared at the reception for security we needed our passports for access and a special application paper for getting into the Arrival Hall. Yes, inside that place our "Lost"

equipment was kept. So LA5QKA Ôystein and LA6FJA Rag, got the access card and went the long way to Lost and Found. With some pessimism they enlisted the service of a helpful lady who asked us to come with her to a back room. There were all the nine lost boxes waiting for us. They had been stored inside a locked room and everything was into good shape.

But time to hurry. We were actually going to Sao Tome, so we needed the time we had left to check in the complete stuff. The rest of team were waiting and a great big smile appeared when Rag and Ôystein came back with all the luggage.

We started the check-in for our Sao Tome flight, but were very disappointed because it was cancelled and the new time kept being delayed, so the original time of 2040 eventually became 0430 the next morning.....

They added an hour every time it was close to departure, so we got used to it. This meant that we would not be able to work on antenna setup during the morning as we had scheduled. We could not work hard in the daytime sun and high temperature. Well, finally after some meals and some kind of service, the departure was a fact. Africa here we come.

### ***Africa at last!***

Finally we were standing in the door of our plane with the hot African air hitting our face and the humidity pressing our bodies as we walked downstairs to the tarmac of Sao Tome airport. Local time was 1045 as we walked inside the airport. One of the staff from our hotel came inside the customs reception and took care of all passports and of the officials. All our equipment went on a trolley and we walked out to the waiting cars. We were also met by one of S92LB Luis's boys who was driving Luis's car, so we had plenty of room for all of our stuff and the team.

We arrived at the Hotel Miranmar and Manfred the hotel manager, a German gentleman wished the team welcome. At

first he showed us the room and the main shack. Then he showed us the garden and told us that we could use the whole area as we wanted. Well, we soon found that we had brought too many antennas, believing that we could use the second garden too.

Anyway, we had our lists for who would be responsible for each part of the installation work. Svein Jarle and Dan rigged all the equipment inside the Main Shack #1 and also shack #2 and #3. Two people worked at the Butternut HF9V, one at the 6m Yagi while the three other guys worked hard at the Titanex antenna. The last member of the team made a dipole for 15m, and then we had one antenna for each shack that day. Rag very quickly finished the F9FT Yagi for 6m so he started to erect a half-square wire antenna for 30m.

Most of the team worked hard, but it was going to be difficult to erect a 27m vertical in the garden, but Rag was smart and slept 2 hours before he came out again and told us how to erect the Titanex antenna. Well, his idea worked and the antenna went up after some work with cutting down some palm boughs. After a lot of work the Titanex was erected in the garden, with some assistance from the gardeners and an electrician from the hotel.

We had a lovely dinner in the hotel restaurant and time for some relaxation. Well, some of the team had rested while the others had been working hard with antennas. You can guess why?

### ***The start of Operation, 4th February***

We started operation at 2056 UTC 4th February, LA6FJA worked CW on 20m and LA6EIA worked 80m SSB. The pile-up just exploded as a wall when we hit the bands. We had plans to just run two stations, mainly one for CW and one for SSB. However, as 6m was closed, we decided to QRV also shack #2 with an IC-746 and 100 Watts to a 17m dipole. At Shack #3 we had an IC-706 MkII with 100 Watts with a 15m dipole.

In shack # 1 we used a Kenwood TS2000

DSP and an AL80BX desktop amplifier 1kW for SSB. And a Yaesu, FT-1000MP, with a Flnnfet, a suitcase amplifier 1kW for CW. Antennas were the HF6V Butternut for 80 to 10m incl. WARC and Titanex 40, 80, 160m. Plus the dipole antennas from other shacks were also accessible. So suddenly we had four stations on the air. People were very tired, but we kept on for many hours. LA6FJA operated for 14 hours almost continuously. Then he slept another 10 hours.

### ***Day 1 of Operation 5th February***

Tuesday was time for adjusting the Titanex for 160m, because on Monday we hadn't had time to run out any radials for topband, because when you are in Africa sunset comes so quickly. Well, we didn't understand what was happening when we connected the MFJ 259 antenna analyser, the meter started turning right and left at high speed. Hmmm.. what happened?

We take a look around the horizon and could see some big towers about 800m away from our hotel. We realised that this must be the Voice of America broadcast station on 1530kHz with about 600kW output which was playing a game with our MFJ 259. Finally we got this antenna working after some work with the radial system and tuning after we had resolved the distortions from VOA.

We assembled two sets of dipoles, a combination 20 and 40m dipole up on the roof for use in shack 1 and 2. For shack 3 we added a 10m dipole.

Rag slept until evening and was quite surprised that evening at how many contacts we had made in the first 24 hours, we had reached 2724 QSOs.

Tuesday evening we kept up the good work, working lots of JA on 80m SSB and we worked America and Europe on 15m CW, America Japan & Europe on 30m CW and Europe and Asia on 17m CW. So 4 stations on the air at one time. Later we went from 80m SSB to 40m SSB, there we worked Asia, JA and north-western Oceania.

So it was time for 160m, and Rag tuned up and made 13 contacts. He worked LA3XI as strongest station in the QRM from Voice of America. Their signal was peaking over 599 + 20dB. So it was very difficult to receive a signal at all on this band, and we had hoped to give VK6HD and the other topband people a new one.....hmmm....Well, these were the lucky guys; LA3XI, OH2WI, 4N7ZZ, HA0NAR, YU7BW, YU7JDE, GM3POI, PA3DZN, PT7BZ, IK7MCJ, OK1XUV & DJ5BV. We hope people see why we had problems with the 160m activity, since it was almost impossible to catch a callsign through the splatter from the VOA BC station.

We had better conditions on 40m CW working Asia, NA and Europe, so we worked here continuously for the next several hours of the night using the Titanex on 40m, until the morning when we QSYed to 30m and let 80m SSB use the Titanex for operation at our sunset.

### ***Day 2 of Operation, 6<sup>th</sup> February***

Wednesday morning we started by working Oceania, EU & NA on 17m SSB. 15m CW for JA and EU. Later on we also went active on 20m SSB for EU and 12 m CW for JA & Europe. During the morning we lost most of the propagation but still kept QRV on 12m and added an operation on 10m. We found that the Titanex worked great on 12m to JA +EU. On 10m SSB we worked JA, Asia and EU. We were QRV on 15m CW for EU again at midday, by which time NA was coming through on 12m. The second full day of operation had passed and we had reached 6344 QSOs by 2100z.

We kept going up to and after dinner in the evening. From Shack 1 we were QRV on 40m SSB for EU Asia and JA, later also South-America came through. We were QRV 80m CW for EU, Asia and JA. After the propagation went down at 22z we QSYed from 80 to 20m for EU, Asia, North-America and JA. We also got a good opening to South-America around 2240z with a few QSOs from shack 2 or 3, so we QSYed from 10m to 17m and appeared on

CW for NA.

### ***Day 3 of Operation, 7<sup>th</sup> February***

Past midnight on day 2 we were active on 40m SSB and 20m CW, and 0100z we changed mode on each band to 20m SSB and 40m CW. We had lot of requests from NA for SSB 20m, but we had also lots of good conditions to northern and east Oceania, Asia and Central America.

Signals on 40m dropped at 0130z and we went to 30m for CW and worked EU, Asia and NA. But now the coil on the HF6V Butternut blew up, the isolator and the connection had burned up, so now we could call ourselves "Team Hot Coil". So Rag had to use the 40m dipole for a while....The crew fixed the antenna later that morning. 0500z we had our sunrise and QSYed back to 40m CW. We got a huge opening to EU, NA (west coast) and South America. From Shack 3 we got a nice shot to JA on 15m CW at 0516z. We closed down on 40m at 0628z. 0719z we appeared on 17m CW for EU, JA. JA, VK and ZL coming through on 20m SSB too. 0853z signals dropped out on 20 and we QSYed to 12m SSB for EU and SA.

0945z we went QRT on 17m CW and QSYed to 10m CW for a good opening to EU. Around 1130z NA was coming though on 12 and 10m. 1451z we got a nice opening for JA on 17m SSB, later on EU and Asia also came through.

Through the day we worked 10m CW, 17m and 12m SSB. We went QRT for dinner 1800z. 2026z we were finished with the good African dinner at the hotel's restaurant, and hit the 80m band for EU on CW. 17m was also quite good for EU CW; Later on NA/SA came through easily. 2141z JA are coming through loud on CW 80m. Around 2100z we had worked about 10 of them. Right before midnight we got a nice signal from whole NA on CW 80m.

### ***Day 4 of Operation, 8<sup>th</sup> February***

On 80m the signals from both South and North America rocking the band, and the

same situation on 17m CW, we have only two stations active because of the sightseeing trip later that day. Most of the crew went to bed early.

0344z we are QSYing to 20m SSB for NA and 40m CW for EU/SA and soon we change mode on 40 to SSB and are again getting a huge pile, we close down 40m 0612z.

0635z we are having good 10m conditions for EU on CW right after our sunrise. ZL, VK and JA are coming as a shot on 20m SSB, also a station from Hawaii booming in.

0714z; Waking up time; we get on 17m CW for EU and Asia. And we worked on 20m and 15m SSB for EU, Asia and JA. People are leaving for the trip around 0900z.

LA6FJA and another operator are left, and we are working JA still on 15m SSB with EU coming in also. We are also active on 17m CW for EU. 1000z it's time for EU and Asia on 12m CW.

1540z LA6FJA starts to work PSK31 on 15m, we got 43 QSOs with HS0ZBS as first QSO with S9 on first PSK31 from that island? OK2WED the 2nd and ON7GB as 3rd. DJ6TK first DL, SM3AFR first SM, PA0VHF first PA, SP9UPK first SP, IZ1BII first I, LX1DA first LX, G4YVV first G, OK1AMB first OK, F5JJK first F, LA7AJ first LA, 4X6UU first 4X and EA2BWM first EA.

Well we were very sorry for our promises about digital operation, but our TNC went QRT on the flight and something had also happened to our soundcard interfaces. But finally we had managed to work a few QSOs on a digimode.

We worked afterwards 10m SSB for EU, SA and NA and also on 12m CW for EU and NA until 1621z. The Team had a break until 1751z, then we had our sunset opening on 40m CW for EU and JA, then QRT 1832z for dinner.

1953z we hit the band again on 40m, but this time for SSB. We having fun with a

good JA and EU pile up.

2100z; the QSO score had reached 13100 QSOs.

So it continued on various bands and modes. We still wanted to work NA on 40m but heavy QRM on the receiving QRG, and we managed to work only a couple.

### ***Day 5 of Operation, 9th February***

We still keep up the pile up and we are approaching our last day. We had better low band openings than earlier in the expedition' earlier we had got messages from our pilots that the Aurora had made it difficult for Northern EU and other parts like ZL/VK.

As day dawned we moved back to the higher bands. It was also time for doing other things which we haven't mentioned before, everyday we went to the market and to supermarket for buying water and beer.

We also spent a lot of time in the pool during the pile ups.....

The temperature was about 28-35 °C and the humidity was quite high, if you walked a few metres you felt your heart starting to pump faster and got quite a wet T-shirt.

A flight with medicine and emergency treatment to Biafra in the 70's had to make a emergency arrival at this place.

At the market place we had a view of this large area with yellow taxis and the technical shop had a TV, etc. on a single table in the centre of the shop.

Well, back to the hotel and for our operation we kept working the whole day – yes, we knew that people had their weekend and a big chance for the workers to get a new one.

By 2100 the QSO total had climbed to 16673 QSOs + (Digital not included); some of the operators woke up to the possibility for maybe reaching 20,000 QSOs. As a result, some speeded up, especially SM5IMO for the whole Saturday.

### ***Day 6 of Operation, 9th February***

The bright morning comes closer and closer

to us, but we fight the last battle and many of us are getting tired of this operation.

We knew we had to do some activity on RTTY and we had some SM's and others who desperately needed S9 for a new one on SSTV. The last morning we also spent a good time helping the SSB guys to fill up with some QSOs, as the CW ops had worked too much.

We had a nice shot to Scandinavia and we did use a lot of time to give all a chance since they had been fighting due the Aurora the whole week. A lot of people we had worked from up there sent us congratulations and it was very nice to hear all their good comments. Well, like a USA station said to us; "This is one of the best DXpeditions since VK0IR!" And that is quite a big word to get on our first DXpedition. After breakfast Rag also had to be QRV on SSTV as promised!!!!

We announced a time on 15m SSB, and then QSYed to this QRG and picked up a SHORT list. We worked about 11 stations: SM5EEP, SP4KM, DL5ZB, G0WHP, ON7GB, S53X, IZ5BAM, SM3AFR, HA1ZH, IK5GOK and OM7PA. While we made our QSOs the staff from the hotel watched the "online" Slow Scan Television from EU.

So next target was this RTTY problem, we had brought a PK232 for RTTY with WF1B, but our laptops would not run this program and neither would the interface do its job. So no FSK, but we equipped the IC-746 with this soundboard to radio interface made by LC3EAT Svein Jarle.

During the wild wild pile up we announced a QRT because we had some broad band station on RTTY with a very wide and distorted signal. We asked him to QRX while we worked many other stations, but he had 6 QSOs before he did understand that we had worked him. But again he pushed down the northern European stations signals. We went QRT and our group photo was taken outside beside the swimming pool.

While we continued the RTTY operation, the others started with disassembling the antennas. The Titanex had to be lowered and all the dipoles were taken down, also the half-square for 30m and the 6m Yagi.

We worked on the butternut HF6V until 2100z. Then we had a score about 21,000 QSOs. The final QSO was KC1F on 20m SSB.

For statistics on this operation, please check the S9LA Web site: [www.qsl.net/s9la/](http://www.qsl.net/s9la/)

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## **A holiday operation from the island of Crete EU-015**

***Carl Mason GW0VSW (carl@gw0vsw.Freeserve.co.uk)***

Not all DXpeditions need to be expensive. There are a growing number of radio amateurs who are taking their HF equipment with them on holiday, especially when they travel abroad. Rigs like the Icom 706 and Yaesu FT100 for example, as well as various QRP transceivers and homebrew equipment, take up very little space and are easy to carry. I am no exception and to date I have operated QRP from Minorca (EA6), Tenerife (EA8), Italy (IK3), Rhodes (SV5) and Zakynthos (SV8). All these mini DXpeditions have been great fun using just a QRP plus, MFJ-971 portable tuner, battery

power and a half-size G5RV. Its amazing how well a 5-watt signal can be heard when someone is chasing a new DX country or IOTA!

My most recent DXpedition was to the Greek Island of Crete, EU015. My family and I were looking forward to a week's break in the south-eastern resort of Makriyalos. This time, my QRP Plus was replaced by an IC706 together with a SEC-1223 switch-mode power supply. The antenna was to be the half-size G5RV that had been used on previous holidays, and had

always worked well, despite being folded or bent into all kinds of shapes to suit various locations.

All this equipment is carried as hand luggage in a large camera holdall which also contains several lengths of wire that enable me to construct various dipoles or long wire antennas should the need arise. Also included are spare fuses and small hand tools, as well as my ex-Army Mk2 Morse key and logbook.

My preferred mode is always CW. This is because I usually operate early in the morning, well before my family are awake. I am sure they would not appreciate being woken to the sound of me calling CQ, CQ, CQ if I used voice!

Crete is the fifth largest Mediterranean Island and measures 260km from east to west and averages 60km north to south. In geographical terms, Crete is part of a system of young fold mountains rising up above the sea to extend from Peloponnesus across the Islands and on to Kasos, Karpathos and Rhodes as far as Asia Minor. The coastal scenery is varied with high imposing cliffs, broad coastal plains and sandy or rocky beaches. Crete has a population of about 600,000 which is about one twentieth of the total population of Greece. The Island capital is Iraklion and the main airport is near this city.

On arrival to the island we were met by our representative, who guided us to a nearby coach for a two-hour transfer across the Island to Makriyalos, our chosen resort. 'Makri' means long and 'yalos' means shore' which describes the sandy beach of the village well. I was very pleased when we were shown our apartment because it was close to the sea and on the first floor. It had a flat roof and plenty of space to put up the G5RV, however, the surrounding power cables looked like they could be a problem.

After unpacking and spending our first morning on the beach I decided to try and gain access to the roof of the apartment to put up the antenna. My son found an old

wooden ladder nearby that was just about long enough to reach. We both climbed up onto the roof where James and I decided to fix the antenna up above a small water tank. This we achieved using the branch of a tree as the centre support, which we had found earlier. This was then fixed to one leg of the water tank using cable ties. It was not much to look at but did its job, surviving some very strong winds during our week-long stay.

With the rig set up on our balcony I called 'CQ' for the first time as SV9/GW0VSW at 1249 UTC on 18MHz using 70 watts. First reply was from Sergo RZ6HDL in Stavropol. Signal reports both ways were 599. This was good considering the electrical interference I was having from those nearby power lines. Sergo told me he was very pleased to get a new IOTA on this band. My next QSO was with Andy SP9ADU at 569. As no other calls were received I decided to switch to 24MHz. A 'CQ' call here generated a small pile up with stations calling me from all over Europe. These included Phil F8AWA 559, Eric DH0IAF 549 running just 5 watts QRP, Palle OZ1RDN 449 and Lars SM7DZD 559 who was using 80 watts into a R5 vertical from his QTH in Eksjo. Received reports were very good with my signal averaging 579. However, sent reports were often low because it was becoming more and more difficult to copy signals with all the interference I was experiencing from those power cables. It was also very hot around midday and I was finding it difficult to find some shade for the rig. The cooling fan must have been working overtime at this stage!

The following morning at 0530 I made my first calls on 14MHz. One of the first contacts on this band was with Mike GM0HCQ/MM at 559. Mike is a fellow Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society (RNARS) member who was working onboard the Merchant Vessel Ernest Shackleton in the North Sea. Despite some QSB we enjoyed a long QSO before signing clear. I then proceeded to work a large pile-

up that included my best DX at that time, Alex UA9OA in Novosibirsk before calling it a day an hour later.

This set the pattern for the week. I would get up early morning and operate for about an hour while it was still cool. The rest of the day would be spent on the beach with some short operating times in the evenings whenever possible.

I also operated QRP with 5 watts and made several contacts on 14MHz around 0600. This included George GM3OXX in Turriff on the East Coast of Scotland who was also QRP running just 1 watt and was 339. Harry LZ1BB/P followed a little later and was 549 using an homebrew transceiver with 3 watts into an indoor doublet antenna from his QTH near Burgas. I am sure that there would have been many more two-way QRP contacts but the noise levels were such that any weak signals were barely audible!

We found plenty of time to explore Makriyalos, which has a fantastic sandy beach that is long and gently slopes into the sea. It is ideal for swimming, as its waters are warm and crystal clear. Along the beach are various tavernas which serve many specialities including fish soup, deliciously seasoned Dolmades which are vine leaves stuffed with rice and minced meat, and superb roast lamb, Kleftiko.

We also completed a walk to the village of Orino, which is in the Thripti mountain range. To get there you have to climb up the beautiful Butterfly Gorge that passes through the only pine forest on Crete. The forest is slowly recovering after it was burnt down by the German army during the Second World War, while their troops were trying to root out hiding Resistance Forces. Despite temperatures in the high nineties we navigated the gorge along a dry and rocky river bed which gradually got steeper towards the top. You need to be reasonably fit as the last kilometre or so involves some scrambling and climbing up dry cascades, sometimes with the help of rope ladders! Several litres of water were consumed between us during the long climb and we

were very pleased when we finally reached the top and the village. Here you have splendid views of the surrounding countryside and the chance to rest your legs and recover over a cool beer in one of the local bars.

Our week was soon at an end and I could not resist one last hour on the radio before I dismantled my station ready for our return flight home. Band conditions were very good and I made several contacts in to the U.S. including Larry W5TZC in Bismark, Arizona at 0357 followed by small pile-up on 10MHz. Yuri RZ3ARS near Moscow was the first of several Russian stations worked around 0415 and Scotty WK3N in Hartstown, Pennsylvania was one of only two U.S. stations to make my log on this band at 0437. My final contact was made at 0510 appropriately with another RNARS member Dick G8NT in Leiston near Ipswich who just made it at 339 before the band closed.

This was one of my more enjoyable DXpeditions as I was able to give a 'new one' to many amateurs and in total I made 262 QSOs on 7 bands and worked 37 countries. The best DX was on 14MHz where contacts were made with Asiatic Russia, Canada, Japan and the U.S.A.

I would like to thank all my family for allowing me the time to operate during our holiday and James in particular without whose help I would not have been able to put up my antenna.

### **Countries worked by band**

7MHz	10
10MHz	18
14MHz	29
18MHz	12
21MHz	15
24MHz	9
28MHz	2

## Get Rich Quick??

*Ian Buffham, 9M2/G3TMA*

I happen to live fairly close to a moderately rare Asian IOTA:- Pulau Ketam AS-074. So should be fairly easy to make lots of money from the QSLing eh? Well the situation looks like this for a weekend trip from Kuala Lumpur starting Saturday morning and returning Sunday afternoon:-

Item	Cost (£ Sterling)
Return Taxi Fare Kuala Lumpur to Port Klang	20.00
Return ferry ride Port Klang to Pulau Ketam	1.75
One night hotel on Pulau Ketam	10.80
Saturday evening meal (fresh prawns and crabs!)	3.20
Sunday lunch (more prawns and crabs!)	3.20
Bag full of fresh fish from the market	4.50
<b>Total for weekend</b>	<b>43.45</b>

Assuming that about 500 QSOs are made overnight then the likely outcome is as follows:-

Item	Qty	£ Sterling
Direct QSLs received	20	
Dollar bills received	5	3.12
IRCs received	15	?
Bureau cards	450	-40

So the total profit/loss for the weekend is as follows:-

Item	Profit/Loss (£ sterling)
Travel/Hotel/Meals	-43.45
QSL printing costs	-40
Dollar bill income	3.12
<b>Total Profit/Loss</b>	<b>-80.33</b>

However £80 represents quite a low price for a nice relaxing weekend away from the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur. Much as I would like it does not offer the possibility of being able to retire and live off QSL income! The day job will have to continue for some time yet! I must confess to just one thing. I do make a huge profit on each dollar bill received:- Each one equates to Malaysian Ringgit (RM) 3.40. Airmail cost to Europe is RM 0.90. So the small number of dollar bills received help to reduce the cost of my weekend by £3!

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## 6m, VHF or HF Plus ?

*Colin Fallaize, MU0FAL*

Following Don's "Dare I mention 6m?" in the July editorial, I was inspired to write this article. Thanks Don, your editorials inspire people!

Contrary to popular belief that 6m is hours

of listening to white noise for short contacts and then back to listening for days, the band is actually a valuable propagation studies part of the spectrum. Although I make no claims to be a propagation Guru, about 8

years' of constant use of 6m and personal observations shows all sorts of multimode propagation. These kinds of propagation are also noticeable on the LF and HF bands although not as obvious as they are on 6m.

One major common mode of propagation, in common with LF is the skewed path; on 6m I have seen this on F2 and intense Sporadic E. On 40m I have seen this Skewed path to SE USA many times during Auroral activity and also, of course, on 10m.

OK, so we have established a common relationship between 6m and HF.

Of course 6m is not as busy as the HF bands and the major centre of activity for us is Europe, with reliable Sporadic E in the months between late April and the beginning of August, also from mid-December to late-January. During this time multi-hop Sporadic E to much more distant locations is also prevalent, but often the conditions are there but no operators, as these paths fall into Russia and Africa, where activity and permission to operate is sparse.

During June especially multi-hop Sporadic E to USA can be quite common with W1,2 and VE available with good signals. Contacts deeper in to the states are quite possible although a much rarer event.

We must remember that many countries have limited access to 6m or, in a lot of cases, no access to the band at all. Therefore even if there is a major opening to them the band will appear dead! 6m openings can be very geographically selective, even down to a few miles. Hence an awareness of propagation characteristics is often a better tool than the DX Cluster.

The successful expeditions to west Africa and other locations show that on 6m, if you put the station there, then the conditions are there. At least some of the time.

As we move into the Autumn months we enter the TEP season when contacts to South America and Southern Africa become more likely. The UK lies pretty much at the

northern limits of TEP propagation and we usually require the mixed modes to "gain a hop" into the primary zone, down in the Mediterranean. At this stage of the cycle we (in the UK) can expect little in the way of F2/TE DX now, but never say never! This is a mixed mode propagation linking up with either European F2 or Sporadic E.

For those of you who like playing with antennas the scope for building antennas is of course very varied. and those with a small garden can fit that real antenna as opposed to a compromise HF one.

Of course as the cycle declines the DX is less likely but even at the low part of a cycle Sporadic E can throw up some unexpected DX and there are other modes of propagation to play with; MS signals on 6m during major showers are often quite amazing. 6m Aurora can be fun as well.

I know that the 6m band has been an Amateur band in some countries for many years but due to limitations and restrictions in many other countries it is still a band that has not shown its full potential. The current trend in increased activity, no doubt brought on by the recent peak in the solar cycle, needs support and nurturing. Yes there are long spells of "no propagation" via the F layer on 6m but perhaps this is partially due to low activity generating low activity. Propagation is often there, we just need more ops. The current trend for major expeditions to add 6m to their activations is a great promotion of the band and it is great to see CDXC members so active in this area.

One observation is that dedicated "Sixers" in the teams promote the band to the rest of the guys who were sometimes unaware of the potential. Tuning through this summer's 6m pile-ups one can hear many high profile CDXC members; some of you have maybe recently dipped your toes in the water!

If you are interested see the UKSMG web site all time standings tables. Be aware that location is all important but, by my reckoning, 150-plus countries are currently workable per cycle from G allowing for

extra bonus ones if you have the location and the patience. In my southerly G location 60+ EU countries are available annually with plenty of other DX areas to take pickings from.

On the web UKSMG [www.uksmg.org](http://www.uksmg.org) and on4kst chat [www.on4kst.info/chat/](http://www.on4kst.info/chat/) or W4TRH <http://chat.dxers.info/> chat are all

useful sites to visit for all you need to know about 6. If you do visit the chat pages follow the links to the DX maps and look at the history ones to see past openings. These maps are generated in real time by posting both locator squares in the ANN field when you spot the DX on the Cluster.

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## Op-Ed

### ***Randy W6SJ (forwarded by Phil G3SWH, currently President of FOC)***

As the old saying goes, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” It is with that thought in mind that I consider my experiences getting reacquainted with ham radio after an absence of 50 years.

As a teenager, I was first licensed in December 1951. I didn’t have an AM modulator so I became a CW-only guy. The sunspot cycle was at a low but I had modest success working DX on 40 meters with my converted Army tank transmitter. Then, as now, QSOs started out with RST, name, and QTH. A lot else has changed.

Back then you could only get your license by taking an exam at an FCC field office. You couldn’t purchase equipment off the shelf, plug it in, and be on the air either. Technical expertise was more important because a lot of equipment was homebrew. You had to be able to design and/or build some of it yourself.

There weren’t as many hams on the air back then, particularly in war-ravaged Europe. Thankfully, “R 5NN TU” had not been invented yet so it was likely that you would have real conversations, even build relationships, with hams from another countries.

As to the code requirements, it was a 5-13-20 world. When I became interested in ham radio again in late 2001 it was with some surprise that I found that the code requirement had dropped to 5 wpm. Of course, I later found out that there was a lot of discussion about dropping the

requirement altogether, a move that now seems likely.

Fifty years ago, hams looked at code competency as a “rite of passage.” I never thought that people might actually want to get out of the requirement. Rather, reaching each level of accomplishment created a feeling of pride. Just as there is camaraderie among recruits upon completing boot camp, hams universally had feelings of fellowship with other hams, in part because we all were code proficient.

I do not want make people who don’t, can’t, or won’t operate CW feel badly. After all, there are many means by which hams can successfully and happily practice our hobby where code is irrelevant. So the argument for eliminating the requirement has some merit.

So why do many of us still prefer CW as a means, if not the principal one, of expressing ourselves? For me, perhaps it is a way for me to connect with the kid I was in 1951. But more important, I feel a purity in the practice of CW that is pleasing to my soul

There are lots of similar activities that mirror this feeling. Why sail a boat from point A to point B when it is easier to crank up a motor? Why learn to play the piano when you can listen to a CD? Why learn to paint when you have a camera? Why learn a foreign language? Why run marathons when you can easily drive 27.2 miles?

I believe it is because, on a very basic level,

self-actualization is a critical component of a successful life. Activities involving acquisition of difficult skills enhance a person's self-worth. Earning Eagle Scout rank is significant not because of the badge but because of the dedication required in its achievement. It would be worthless if they handed them out for just showing up.

There are many accomplishments where the journey is the important thing, not the end, where the significance is based upon the rigor and discipline that is required to succeed. Most young athletes will never make it to the Olympics, but that is irrelevant. The important thing is that in dedicating themselves to achieving their highest potential, they have found out more about who they are as individuals. These accomplishments actually achieve spiritual meaning in my view.

It has been said that you get back from an activity what you put into it. But there are some activities where you get back immeasurably more than what you put into them. I believe that becoming proficient at code and using it skilfully is one such endeavour. I'm equally sure that you can relate to other such activities because each of you is successful in some other areas of

your life.

For that reason, I would make the following suggestions. If you are just getting into the hobby, look at the code requirement as a welcome challenge, not a burden. Think of it as an opportunity for personal development and as a means of connecting with the heritage of amateur radio.

If you have been operating phone or some other mode for years, take some time to re-develop your skills and get re-acquainted with the joy of CW. If you are becoming disillusioned with ham radio or find you are no longer challenged, see if becoming proficient in and operating CW again will increase your motivation to stay with us.

Regardless of what the FCC does, I hope that you will see code as an important link to the past, a bridge to the future, and as an important element of our hobby to be valued and retained.

See you on the lower end of the bands!

(PS The easiest way to hone your skills is to use the practice MP3 files at the ARRL website. You can listen live to them from your computer, or download them for study later.)

### **“Up Two – Adventures of a DXpeditioner”**

This new book is a fascinating account of operations by Roger G3SXW from 22 different countries, many of them quite rare, all reached by commercial transportation, and most of them “microlite” expeditions taken long before others invented the term. Roger entertains the reader with his accounts of sea voyages, bus journeys across Africa, of far flung islands and sun-blasted deserts, all with rig in hand. Some of Roger's trips were keyed to major contests, others were purely DXpeditions. All were made without support from the major foundations. This book is both an entertaining travelogue and a roadmap for others interested in mounting similar operations, sure to fascinate both the armchair DXpeditioner and the ham plotting his own adventure.

Please visit the Idiom Press website, [www.idiompress.com](http://www.idiompress.com) for complete details. 240 pages, \$19.95 (UK members may also get a (signed) copy directly from Roger Western, G3SXW, 7 Field Close, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2QD, UK cheques payable to 'Roger Western' for £12 + £2.50 P&P).

# IOTA CORNER

**Island Radio Expedition Foundation Inc.**

**News Update, July 20, 2003**

*(forwarded by Neville G3NUG)*

Just a quick note to update you on the activities of IREF. This has been a busy year for IOTA expeditions as everyone must be trying to get on the air before the sunspot cycle hits the doldrums. IREF has provided a record 14 grants to expeditions that activated 17 islands so far this year including 5 new ones. Below is the list of sponsored expeditions.

Callsign	IOTA Ref.
XF1K	NA167
G3OCA/DU	OC92, 120
YE8A	OC242
XF2IH	NA224
KB5GL	NA089
ZS1RBN	AF064
XY4KQ	AS167
ZW8M	SA042
YE5A	OC262
7W4HI	AF094
YE9R	OC241
FO/A	OC46,63,152
R1PQ	EU035
VY0/K9PPY	NA225

Grants have been approved for expeditions to AS138 and SA086.

Nearly \$6,000 has been or will be paid to these expedition teams in support of their efforts to put rare islands on the air. On behalf of the expeditioners, thank you for

your support

## Website

Hopefully most of you have visited the new IREF website at [www.islandradio.org](http://www.islandradio.org). We try to keep current information regarding upcoming IREF sponsored expeditions as well as articles, pictures, etc. of the expeditions after they occur. Since introducing the site in January of this year, we have already had more than 10,000 hits. In 4 years of our previous site we only had 8,000 hits, so I would say this one is a great improvement. If you have a personal website please add a link to our webpage.

## Membership Category Added

IREF has added a membership category for Clubs. Many of you are members of DX clubs that periodically make contributions to DXCC expeditions. As the IOTA program grows, more and more DX clubs members have started chasing islands. However given the relatively large number of IOTA expeditions it is hard for a club to single out the ones that their members would favour supporting. This is where the IREF Club Membership makes sense. The club can make a single annual contribution to IREF and have a hand in supporting the expeditions to rare islands. IREF will also provide a link to the club website. CDXC, the Chiltern DX Club in the UK has led the way in this category.

## IREF logo merchandise

Currently IREF does not sell any merchandise with our logo on it. However have had a few requests, so I want to pose the question. If IREF had T-Shirts, pins, coffee cups, etc., would there be any interest and if there was interest what would you be willing to pay for this merchandise. Please give me some feedback on this.

## Contributions

Contributions have been steady and

currently IREF is healthy financially, however, to stay that way we need your continued support. So if you haven't made your contribution this year perhaps you would take the time write a check. You can also use your credit card to pay via PayPal on the IREF website. The address to mail contributions to:

IREF  
118 Oak Ridge Drive  
New Braunfels, Texas 78132

Remember, for US hams, your contributions to IREF are tax deductible.

73 for now and thanks again for your continued support.

Mike Crownover AD5A  
President  
Island Radio Expedition Foundation, Inc.  
www.islandradio.org

## ***IOTA NEWS***

***By Roger Balister, G3KMA, RSGB  
IOTA Manager, 1 August 2003***

### **NEW IOTA REFERENCE NUMBERS ISSUED**

AF-093 J5 Guinea-Bissau Coastal Region group (Guinea-Bissau)

AF-094 7X Mediterranean Sea Coast West group (Algeria)

AS-167 XZ Irrawaddy / Yangon / Pegu Region group (Myanmar)

AS-168/Pr HL2 Kangwon-do Province group (Korea (South))

NA-223 HR Gracias a Dios Department group (Honduras)

NA-224 XE1 Veracruz State South group (Mexico)

NA-225/Pr VY0 Nunavut (Prince of Wales and Somerset Islands) group

OC-256 P2 Kilinailau (Tulun) Islands

OC-257 P2 Nuguria Islands

OC-258 P2 Papua New Guinea's Coastal

Islands North (Papua New Guinea)

OC-259 V63 Nukuoro Atoll (Federated States of Micronesia)

OC-260 V63 Oroluk Atoll (Federated States of Micronesia)

OC-261 VK5 South Australia State West Centre group (Australia)

OC-262 YB4-5 Sumatra's Coastal Islands South (Indonesia)

### **PROVISIONAL IOTA REFERENCE NUMBER AS AT 1 AUGUST 2003**

AS-168/Pr HL2 Kangwon-do Province group (Korea (South))

NA-225/Pr VY0 Nunavut (Prince of Wales and Somerset Islands) group

### **OPERATIONS WHICH HAVE PROVIDED ACCEPTABLE VALIDATION MATERIAL**

AF-093 J5UCW Pecixe Is (March 2003)

AF-094 7W4HI Habibas Island (June 2003)

AS-017 JQ1EYN/6 Komaka Island, Okinawa Islands (April 2003)

AS-024 JJ8DEN/6 Yonaguni Island, Yaeyama Islands (January 2003)

AS-024 JL3SIK/6 Yonaguni Island, Yaeyama Islands (May 2003)

AS-047 JJ8DEN/6 Minami Daito Island, Daito Islands (January 2003)

AS-079 JJ8DEN/6 Miyako Is (December 2002) and Tarama Is (February 2003)

AS-079 JJ3NAW/6 Miyako Island, Miyako Islands (March/May 2003)

AS-079 JR3TVH/6 Miyako Island, Miyako Islands (March/May 2003)

AS-147 JR8KJR/8 Rishiri and Rebun Islands (March/April 2003)

NA-013 H74C Little Corn Is (May/June 03)

OC-057 FO/JJ8DEN Maupihaa Atoll, Maupihaa group (April/May 2003)

OC-063 FO/G35WH/P Mangareva Island, Gambier Islands (July 2003)

OC-063 FO/G4MFW/P Mangareva Island, Gambier Islands (July 2003)

OC-066 FO/F8CFU Hao Island, Tuamotu Archipelago (Apr/May 2003)

OC-067 FO/JJ8DEN/P Maupiti Island, Leeward Islands (April 2003)

OC-152 FO/F8CFU Tubuai Island, Austral Islands (May 2003)

OC-152 FO/G35WH Tubuai Island, Austral Islands (July 2003)

OC-152 FO/G4MFW Tubuai Island, Austral Islands (July 2003)

OC-200 KM9D/KH8 Swains Island (November 2002)

OC-262 YE5A Pisang Island (May 2003)

SA-060 ZW8P Cotijuba Island (Dec 2002)

SA-082 HK3JJH/2 Morro Grande Is (June 2003)

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

**OPERATIONS FROM WHICH VALIDATION MATERIAL IS AWAITED AS AT 31 JULY 2003**

AS-168/Pr HL1EJT/2 HL1OYF/2  
HL1TXQ/2 HL1VAU/2 HL3QP/2  
HL9DX/2 DS1EVQ/2 DS1KOQ/2  
DS3BGI/2 DS4NYE/2 Chuk Is (July 2003)

NA-162 XE2/W7KFI ??????? (April 2003)

NA-193 VY1/N7FL Herschel Is (July 2003)

NA-225/Pr K9AJ/VY0 K9PPY/VY0  
Somerset Is (July 2003)

NA-225/Pr Somerset Is (July 2003)

OC-125 4G6A Semirara Island (April 2003)

SA-042 ZW8M Mexiana Island (May 2003)

SA-070 3G5Q Quiriquina Is (Feb 2003)

SA-089 YV5ANF/1 Sal Key (April 2003)

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

**NEW IOTA CHECKPOINT**

After more than eight years of checking cards Jose "Pepe" Ardid, EA5KB and Francisco "Paco" Gil, EA5OL have relinquished their posts as checkpoints for Spain (Thanks, Pepe and Paco, for all your help). We welcome as their replacements Josep del Pino, EA3BT, and his wife Nuria Font, EA3WL, who are well-known to the DX and IOTA community. Their appointment, which has the full support of URE, the Spanish National Society, takes effect from 1 September 2003.

Members are asked to note the new checkpoint details:

Josep Del Pino, EA3BT, & Nuria Font, EA3WL, Collegi 1, E-08800 Vilanova I La Geltru, Barcelona, Spain

E-mail: [ea3bt@ea3bt.com](mailto:ea3bt@ea3bt.com)

**CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESS**

Please note your records that my personal email address has changed to [g3kma@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:g3kma@dsl.pipex.com). The previous addresses of [g3kma@dial.pipex.com](mailto:g3kma@dial.pipex.com) and [eo19@dial.pipex.com](mailto:eo19@dial.pipex.com) will both be discontinued from 20 August. The web page URL will also be changed at the same time, new details to be announced.

Roger Balister, G3KMA

RSGB IOTA Manager

**IOTA NEWS**

***IOTA activation experiences of DL2GAC***

Over the last 15 years I have operated under various conditions from about 45 different IOTA locations. I have always been to islands with some local population, so I never had to take everything along. Accommodation and food were provided locally, in some cases I took along some back-up food.

In most remote locations there is no 24 hour public power supply, sometimes a generator running during local evening for 2-4 hours. To be on the safe side with power and have more flexibility when choosing my QTH locally I rely mostly on solar power.

My present equipment: Icom 706, 20A switch-mode power supply, 42m long Windom type long-wire antenna, 60Ah solar panel, 40-60Ah car battery, bought locally in the nearest city to the island location, so I am as light as possible loaded with the battery weight.

I travel mostly by ship and road and sometimes by plane to island locations. Plane pilots consider batteries as dangerous goods not allowed on board. This year I had to drain the battery acid in front of the airport shed to get it on a 20 seater plane back to the mainland, on the next leg the airline people refused the battery, because according to them there was still a little bit of acid inside. The battery I gave as a gift to the guy who provided me transport to the airport.

On full load I carry 50kg and more luggage in 4-5 pieces, battery: 25kg, solar panel: 10kg, the remainder are rig, clothes and tools, not light at all.

With sunrise I start to charge my battery, measuring the battery voltage and redirecting the panel into the sun from time to time to maximise the charge. Usually in mid afternoon when DX propagation starts to open up I have enough power to listen and operate on the bands for an hour. By sunset the battery is fully charged, which gives me another 3-4 hours operating time. When the battery is nearly flat usually 9-11 pm local I go to bed, next day same procedure.

To save power I keep my transmissions short and rarely call CQ, most times I am coming back to a CQ calling station.

Even with good sunshine I am always SHORT of POWER and if is rainy or overcast there is nearly no charge at all. If there is string of rainy days I am practically

off the air; luckily this has never happened so far. This year I missed one operating day on my last location in P2 because of rain.

For IOTA confirmations ONE contact per reference number is sufficient. I don't like it at all if someone tries to work me on two or more bands (e.g. 20 and 15m) as he uses up my valuable power in short supply unnecessarily.

I still keep a paper log and can't see immediately as with a computer log if someone has worked me before. Therefore I expect from every serious IOTA hunter to check first if he needs me before he calls. Inconsiderate stations, who are trying to call me on multiple bands or otherwise don't behave on the band will delay their QSL cards. I am still old fashioned and want to exchange and confirm real reports, I give only 59 if the incoming signal is really 59. I will repeat the partners call, confirm the report received and I expect that my QSO partner repeats what report I gave him. Otherwise I consider our QSO not as a complete two-way QSO. Transmissions telling me QSL, QSL, QSL thanks for the new IOTA, without repeating the report I gave, results in an incomplete QSO, so no QSL card from me. I don't like tail-end and partial callsign calling. In a pileup situation I come back first to full callsign callers and may ignore someone putting in his last two.

On remote islands there are seldom guesthouses, most times I stay with local families. If there is no power locals rise early and go to bed early. In a number of cases I had to go QRT and go to bed at 7-8pm because my talking into the microphone would have disturbed my hosts trying to sleep next to me. So it may happen that I can't operate for long after sunset, which is usually a good time for DX propagation. This year out of four locations in one case I was set up in a separate guesthouse, one time in a separate community building, in two cases I slept next to my local hosts, local family huts are also cheaper than official guesthouses.

I believe in membership of the national

amateur radio society and QSL via the club. All QSOs are confirmed after return home before I go on my next trip regardless of whether I get the card of my partner or not. I first work down the pile of direct QSL requests; all remaining QSOs are automatically confirmed via the club.

If you can't wait for QSL via the club, don't send a direct QSL request next day. You may work me on another new one and want to send another direct request. Save postage and bundle all requests in one letter mailed after I have returned home usually in May each year.

Postage from Germany to countries inside Europe is €55, outside Europe is €1.50. Air-

or sea-mail same postage. Stamps with old DM currency are invalid. \$1 (US) inside Europe is okay, outside Europe \$2 (US) is needed. One IRC is worldwide okay. My local post office refuses to accept IRCs not stamped in the left field by the issuing post office.

For SWL confirmations I require in line with IOTA recommendations more than just one station mentioned on the SWL report. It is no problem to pick up several calls which I worked as there is usually always after a short time a pile-up of calling stations.

Best IOTA hunting and 73 de

Bernhard, DL2GAC, H44MS, P29VMS

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# ***The RTTY Column***

***Phil Cooper, GUOSUP (pcooper@guernsey.net)***

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It seems to me that the bands have been in very poor shape, and although there have been small openings to exotic places, it has been very much hit and miss.

Gone are the times when you could rely on JA's on 10 and 15m in the early mornings, with VK and ZL coming in shortly after. Even in the contests, it has been hard work to accrue more than a handful of contacts on 10m.

With conditions like this, I tend to use the time to go through my log and check for missing countries and QSL cards. I am sure we all chase the DX, and when we do so, we also chase the QSL cards actively, especially if it is an all time new one.

However, what often happens is that we forget about confirming that SP or DL on the higher bands. There are also those countries that one tends not to consider as separate entities, such as IS0 or UA2. Because you work European stations so readily, it is all too easy not to bother with cards, and that can mean you miss out on some very easy ones for DXCC.

If you are not sure about a route for what may possibly be a contest call, then check out [the www.nfdxa.com/K4UTE/K4UTE.HTML](http://www.nfdxa.com/K4UTE/K4UTE.HTML) website. This is an excellent site, especially for checking if a call uses a manager.

Another useful site for checking routes is [www.qsl.net/pathfinder/WebClient/](http://www.qsl.net/pathfinder/WebClient/)

The new DL-DX RTTY contest took place over the first weekend of July, and it attracted a good number of entries. There was some suggestion that we didn't actually need yet another contest, but I am sure the number of entries will please the organisers.

Although it was a 24-hour contest, there were sections for wire antennas, and 6-hour entries as well, and it may be this that attracted some people.

So far, only 12 G's have submitted logs, although I am sure many more took part. Go to [www.dl-dx.de](http://www.dl-dx.de) then click on English on the left-hand side, and then click on LOGS 2003 to see who has entered.

The end of September is the time for

CQWW RTTY, and this is a good opportunity to find a few new entities on RTTY, as there are often small dxpeditions for this contest. Keep an eye out on the DX bulletins to see what may be activated around this weekend.

This is one of the most popular RTTY contests, with a large number of entrants, and is always good fun.

One of my favourite contests takes place in October, and is the WAEDC RTTY, as it includes QTC traffic. This is great fun, and is so easy to do, but all too often, you see folk sending SRI NO QTC and missing out on easy points.

For those of you who are members of BARTG, you will find a guide to handling QTC's in the August issue of Datacom.

If you haven't yet joined BARTG, I have to suggest you do so, as the magazine is full of hints and tips for contests, and I am sure you will find it a good read.

Last month, I mentioned a way to handle QTC's with MMTTY, but I have since thought of a better way to do this.

Please remember that you will only be able to receive QTC, as there is no mechanism for sending, but that doesn't matter, as you get the same points.

I mentioned that you could use SAVE RX TEXT TO FILE, but this saves all of the incoming data received since you started MMTTY. This means the file is cumulative, and you would have to search for the right place in the file.

Another, and probably a better way, is to open several instances of Notepad and then use cut & paste to save the data to one of the Notepad screens.

I would suggest that you save the batch as the callsign of the person it came from, but do remember to include the batch number of the QTC in the file. It will look like 005/10 meaning the 5th batch that person sent, and that it contains 10 QTC.

Of course, after the contest, you will need to score your log manually, but assuming you

are used to that, it shouldn't take too long. Do remember to add the number of QTC's to the number of QSO's, and then multiply by the number of mults.

Whatever contest you enter, and whether you make 25 or 250 contacts, please do submit a log. I would go as far as to suggest that if you only make half a dozen contacts, it is more important to submit your log, as this helps to validate the logs of those you worked. You can also include comments, such as why you couldn't spend much time playing, or that it clashed with something more important. If you enter a contest just to work some exotic DX, then please make sure you work a few other stations in the contest, or that one station may just get docked points for working a unique call!

In the last edition, I mentioned PSK63, and that because it was wider than PSK31, the idea was to use 14.072/21.072 but I see that many people are sitting with their dial set to the ".070" frequency, and this seems to give the low power PSK31 users a hard time.

If you are going to use PSK63, please try moving up the band a little, and leaving the PSK31 frequencies clear.

When the 3C0 Annobon DXpedition was announced, a few of us emailed Vicente EA5YN asking (politely) that they try and include RTTY, as this country is amongst the top ten needed on RTTY. Apart from just asking that they include RTTY, I suggested to Vicente that they look at MMTTY, as it is easy to operate, and could integrate with some logging programs.

I had a very nice reply from him, saying, "thanks for the info", and that they would try very hard to provide RTTY for us. I really hope they do, and I hope the pile-ups aren't too much for them.

While writing this, I have been watching the TZ6RD operation on RTTY, which is very slick and professional! I popped into the shack at one point to see if they were around on 20m, and had them in the log within 10

*(cont'd on p.55)*

# QRZ CONTEST

**Tim Kirby, G4VXE ([tim@g4vxe.com](mailto:tim@g4vxe.com))**

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## **GB5HQ**

Many readers of this column will have seen Dave Lawley, G4BUO's excellent article in RadCom recently, about the GB5HQ operation carried out on behalf of the RSGB during the IARU HF Championship. Dave outlined the plans for the operation that was being planned from different sites around the country.

The aim of the operation was to try and unseat the very successful DA0HQ operation from the top of the HQ section in the contest. To do so would require a combination of excellent stations and operators, technology, good conditions – and excellent support from UK operators.

DA0HQ have historically had excellent stations and operators and have had tremendous support from within their own country. Indeed, I happened to catch a very weak band opening on 10m to Germany during this year's contest and I could hear DA0HQ running continuous strings of German stations. None of which, I might add, called our own 10m station!

The GB5HQ team, led by (Admiral) Dave, G4BUO had been planned very carefully and made an attempt to mobilise support from UK stations with an awards program to encourage stations to work GB5HQ on as many different bands and modes as possible. We'll show some of the leading stations in the awards program later on.

The idea to try and compete aggressively in the HQ section came when many of us were in Finland for the WRTC last year and we tried to plan how it could all work. The technology to support the event was a challenge. We knew that the year before W1AW/5 had used Writelog at the individual stations with the Writelog

LogBook server and concluded that realistically, there was not much alternative to this software configuration. This proved a challenge for many of the operators involved with GB5HQ who did not immediately take to Writelog. I've been using the software for several years now, mostly for data contests and find it very straightforward, reliable and simple to use – but dyed in the wool CT users did understandably find this more of a challenge. Perhaps we'll examine the Writelog software in a future column.

The idea was that each station would run Writelog, configured to use an Internet connection to the logbook server, which allows a central repository of all our contacts to be maintained. Most importantly it allows for the different bands and modes to be able to keep track of multipliers and also to permit stations to be passed from one band to another.

Alan, G3XSV did sterling work setting up the Writelog server initially and ironing out many of the bugs and then Andy, G4PIQ arranged for a server to be set up and installed at Martlesham. Once this was done, many evening sessions took place with simulations of contest operation which showed up many issues in both our operating procedures and also, how to get the most out of the Writelog software.

What also became apparent was that the Writelog server did not support the inter-station messaging facilities to the degree we required. Different solutions were tried, but in the end, we settled on a customised version of DXSpider for the GB5HQ team, run at Martlesham.

Setting up Internet connectivity was a challenge for many of us. At 10m SSB,

which was located at the station of GW5NF, we had issues because we could not have a continuous connection because the telephone line is used for business purposes during the day. However, Roger kindly consented to us connecting as frequently as possible during the day for logbook updates. At 15m CW, located at the G3TXF station in Devon, a satellite Internet connection was obtained! Other stations used mobile and GPRS for their connections and others standard telephone lines.

And the contest itself? Well, of course, as luck would have it, there was a flare! On 10m SSB, the Saturday was extremely slow and I know that the other operators running higher bands had similar issues. Nevertheless, by plugging away, it was possible to work a reasonable number of stations including some Africa and South America as well as a goodly number of UK stations who were kind enough to support our efforts.

On 15m SSB, run by the Granta Contest Group with operators Mark G4AXX, Andy G4KNO, Simon G4EAG and Steve G4JVG, conditions made things hard work. However, Mark reports; 'Despite the flare, Saturday was mostly LU's and PY's, conditions improved on Sunday and we had a good run to the East. Nice Q's were, VK's, China, Thailand, a rare one was Albania and it was nice to work some US army guys just back from a mission east of Baghdad!'.

Andy, G4PIQ did a marvellous job on 20m SSB and Dave, G4FRE commented that Andy sounded like an air-traffic controller handing off stations to different bands and giving the frequencies where our other stations could be found. Excellent – just what was needed! Andy comments that 'Conditions disappointing - distinct lack of decent overnight W opening - about 460 Ws in total, and only 51 JAs in log. These made a distinct hole in the QSO totals - was looking forward to those 250+ hours.... Almost nothing outside of Europe Sunday morning - band sounded more like 40m with S9+ Gs and DLs.....'

All in all, we felt that we had made a good attempt at winning the section and will be intrigued to see how we fare in the final results. DA0HQ are very hard to dislodge at the top of the table and we strongly suspect that we could have used some more QSOs and multipliers. Nevertheless, we gave it a good shot and had a great time, so have no complaints. And of course, there has been talk of doing it again next year! If we do – please work us – DA0HQ work hundreds of DL stations who don't work anyone else! We wouldn't want to encourage you to do the same as surely that wouldn't be in the spirit of the contest, but we would want you to make an effort and come on and work us!

### ***Club entries***

CQWW season is approaching fast! Don't forget that if you put in an entry, please mark your club affiliation as CDXC – it would be great to see CDXC featuring in the Clubs section. Remember, Frankford and YCCC had to start somewhere. And if you make an entry, please consider sending me a few notes on how it went. It would be fun to include some of those comments in the next column. I've been promised some IOTA write-ups too – but none have materialised so far, so if you made an operation for the IOTA contest and fancy penning a few notes, then I'd be very grateful.

### ***Licence Changes***

I for one welcomed the RA's decision to combine the Class A and B licences and to allow the Class Bs onto HF. It will be interesting to see if this changes the shape of some of the HF contest entries from the UK. From my VHF contesting experience, I know that there are a considerable number of Class Bs who can put together a potent contest station. I have every confidence that they will be moved to do the same on HF! I'm sure that on SSB and RTTY that there could be some increased competition – and who knows, perhaps on CW as well! Of course this decision gives CDXC a chance

to grow. If you know a Class B who is enjoying their new HF privileges, please consider inviting them to join CDXC.

Finally, my apologies for making this a shorter column than normal. This is partly due to the fact that we have just moved house to near Abingdon in Oxfordshire. There's definitely more space here than at my previous place in Windsor, so I am looking forward to getting some aerals up and playing once again! Justin, G4TSH and Don, G3XTT have already come to inspect which was excellent. And at a village barn dance last weekend, I met John, G3VPW and Robin, G3LBA who are my new locals!

Please take the trouble to send me some input for this column. It will be much appreciated.

73, Tim G4VXE (tim@g4vxe.com)

## ***The IOTA Contest – Behind the Scenes***

### **Don Field G3XTT**

I've always been a keen contester and am what I would consider a casual IOTA chaser – if I'm in the shack I work them. The IOTA contest has always been a fun combination of contesting and IOTA chasing, and I've tried to join in whenever I could.

Having said all this, I was nevertheless rather taken aback just over two years ago when Justin G4TSH, Contests Committee Chairman, asked me if I would take over the adjudication! I had never adjudicated a contest, or even served on the Contests Committee. My main qualification for the job appeared to be that, with early retirement behind me, I might have the time to handle what is far and away the biggest of the RSGB's contests.

I had very little idea what to expect. Chris G3SJJ, my predecessor, passed me various paperwork and statistics, but simply reading that the number of logs has increased to the level of over 1,000 a year simply didn't prepare me for what that meant in practice! I made some preparations, but there was no

“off the shelf” checking software available and I had very little idea of the form in which the various logs would be arriving.

As it turned out, once the contest was over there was a flood of electronic logs of many different descriptions, most e-mailed but some arriving by disc at RSGB, and there were still plenty of paper logs. Even this year, with 1150+ logs having arrived as I write this, 117 have come in on paper, and there will no doubt be more to follow (as the mailing deadline is past, I am assuming the arrival of e-mailed logs is almost at an end).

I am led to believe that my predecessors took the route of printing out the many logs, and checking them by looking through them for obvious broken calls, etc. But even if they were to spend 5 minutes on each log, that would be about 100 hours of work, even before coming back to rescore them, start the write-up for RadCom, etc. There had to be a better way! In any case, IOTA now stands up there with the major international contests such as CQWW and the ARRL DX events, so participants might reasonably expect a similarly rigorous approach to adjudication.

### **Critical Path**

I spoke last year at the HF Convention about some of the steps I have been putting in place to automate the whole process. So let's take a slightly different look at how my IOTA Contest Timetable works out.

Let's start the cycle with the autumn HF Contests Committee meeting, at which the rules of the various contests are discussed. The timing is critical, as the Contesting supplement appears in January RadCom, so decisions and rewrites have to be done to a tight timescale. Let's say some rule changes are agreed (last year we introduced a QRP category, but the main changes were to the recommendations for electronic logging, trying to steer participants towards the use of cabrillo, which I have discussed in these pages before). Once the rule changes have been captured and gone to Rad Com, it's time to consider what else needs to be put in

place.

My main concern for the 2003 contest was to get some additional trophies sponsored, to reflect the increased number of participants over the years and the high profile the contest has achieved. I am delighted to say that a number of sponsors have come forward, and I'm even more delighted that John G3LZQ has taken the Trophies side over lock, stock and barrel; he'll do a great job and free me up to focus on other matters.

Other ongoing concerns have been to work with software writers to get Cabrillo implemented for the IOTA contest (EI5DI of SDI and LX1NO of LuxLog have worked closely with me but several other contest logging programs have, I'm pleased to say, followed their lead). Then there is the usual cycle of publicity, ensuring that the major Web sites, bulletins (especially the ARRL's Contest rate Sheet) and national magazines are aware of the current rules, taking due cognisance of their publication lead times.

Running in parallel with this, I wanted to make improvements to the software side, so that the checking gets slicker and more comprehensive year on year. The previous year's logs form an excellent database for trialling different routines.

Eventually the contest approaches, and I start to get a steady stream of e-mails from potential participants, usually asking for some sort of clarification of the rules, or simply notifying me of their intention to be on from some reasonably rare IOTA.

### **Finally, the contest**

The contest itself passes quickly enough, though I tend to watch the PacketCluster and spend more time tuning than operating, just to get a feel for what is going on. Who is working stations three minutes before the contest is due to start (!), are any entrants operating in a manner which is against the letter or spirit of the rules. I'm not about to pull the plug on anyone at this stage, but I invariably get complaints about specific stations after the event, and it helps if I have

a feel, from my own listening, as to whether these complaints are warranted.

By the end of the contest the logs will have started to arrive – I checked my e-mail a few hours before the end this year, and four 12-hour logs were already there! Over 300 logs had arrived within 48 hours of the contest finishing. It then drops steadily to about 25 a day, and peaks again during the few days up to the mailing deadline.

My first concern is to log in the entries as they arrive, capturing information such as island operated from, category, claimed score, address and, especially, e-mail address. This information will enable me to compile the Claimed Scores list for posting mid- to late-September, but also forms the basis for my master spreadsheet which I use for tracking everything, hopefully ensuring that no-one's log disappears into a black hole. With many logs arriving as attachments called, for example, "iota2003" this is easily done – why, oh why, can't people name their log "mycallsign.log". Mind you, the rules last year indicated that this should be done "e.g. g3xyz.log" and, lo and behold, I got a log from an LU station named "g3xyz.log"!

I send out quite a number of e-mails asking for clarification, especially about category. I can infer mode and time-operated from the log but entrants have to tell me their power category, for example. There is a school of thought among some members of the Contests Committee that such entrants should simply be defaulted to "High Power" or whatever, but I see my role as being a facilitator rather than a policeman, making the contest as inclusive as possible. In any case, IOTA is unique in that many entrants are IOTA chasers as against regular contesters, and don't always know the contest "ropes".

This year I have been able to import most of the logs to my master database as they have arrived. This is largely because, despite some early protestations about Cabrillo on the various reflectors, it has been adopted by a very high proportion of entrants. Even those

logs which are only Cabrillo-like, rather than fully compliant, are usually much easier for me to handle than the plethora of formats I was tending to get before.

In parallel, as the logs come in, I have been saving Soapbox comments to a Word file, and photographs have been carefully archived (renaming as appropriate – I can only handle so many photos called `iota2003.jpg...`). Soapbox and photos go off to Justin G4TSH for posting on the HFCC Web page sometime during September.

Paper logs are sent to a small army of volunteers, who type them up. The number of paper logs reduces each year, but there are some entrants who, I suspect will never become PC-literate. Unfortunately, most tend to be of the older generation, and some of the handwriting gets more and more illegible as the years go by!

Once the database is ready (typically it will contain about 400,000 QSO records), the first step is to do a quick analysis to build tables of valid island stations, number of times each callsign appears in the logs (helps not only to identify uniques, but also to spot those active entrants who have failed to send in a log – maybe an e-mail will encourage them to at least send one in as a Checklog).

Further adjudication involves a complete cross-check of QSOs, where we have logs for both sides of the contact. This is a huge task and, frankly, was quite impossible with manual checking. Casual entrants will find that probably 80% or more of their QSOs can be cross-checked, as they will most likely have been working active contest stations who will certainly have sent in a log. But even for the “big boys” a very high percentage of contacts can be checked. This cross-checking took a whole weekend on G4VXE’s fast Pentium PC last year, and resulted in an output file of something like 18,000 QSOs where there were discrepancies and which therefore merited manual checking before deciding whether to disallow them.

18,000 sounds a lot, but is actually a relatively small percentage of overall QSOs, especially given the complexity of the IOTA contest exchange compared with many other contests. But I’d love to do more to reduce the number that actually require manual intervention!

Once the final adjudication has taken place, logs can be rescored and the results’ tables compiled. Then it’s merely a matter of adding the commentary and, lo and behold, it’s all set to go off to the Contests Committee for sanity-checking before being mailed to RadCom. A copy of the results also goes to G3LZQ (Trophies) and G3NKC (Certificates) to do their stuff. An electronic copy gets posted on the HFCC Web site, members-only pages initially until RadCom has appeared.

Of course, by this time we are already into the next year’s cycle – many of the logs contain comments on the rules, which I compile for the Committee’s rules’ discussion, for example. And this is where we came in ..

Somewhere behind all of this, software developments have also been taking place – my thanks to N5KO G4VXE G0WWW/5B4WN G4FON and others for working with me on these. By 2004 we should have Web-based submission as an option, saving me time with the collation of summary information. Anything which saves time, of course, will ultimately lead to faster final results. It will also free up more time for me and members of the HFCC to focus on discussing the philosophy of the checking process (there are lots of issues which really need to be properly discussed) rather than simply being bogged down month in and month out with the sheer mechanics of contest adjudication.

If you’ve stuck with me so far, please don’t think I have written the preceding to blow my own trumpet. Frankly, if I’d known how much work was involved, I might never have been persuaded to take the job on. But I think it’s interesting to those who take part in contests to have some idea of what goes

on behind the scenes – multiply what I have described by a factor of four or more for major contests such as CQWW and WPX. It

might also explain why, given that the whole process relies on volunteers, things occasionally go wrong. Happy contesting!

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## Worth a Look

The story of the Gatti-Hallicrafters expedition of 1947-1948, billed as "the first grand ham DXpedition ever," is now on the web, at <http://www.qsl.net/pa0abm/gh3/00ghe.htm>, aggregating previous accounts and adding a lot of new material.

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*(cont'd from p.49)*

minutes of switching the rig on! Doug N6TQS is a member of this team, and also a CDXC member, but it wasn't him on the keys at that time. I am hoping to get them on 15m as well, and possibly even 10m, as they have been working on that band into Europe.

### Coming DX:

3C0: Franz/DJ9ZB (3C0F), Elmo/EA5BYP (3C0A), Victor/EA5FO (3C0R) and Vicente/EA5YN (3C0V) will be active from Annobon between 27 September and 10 October. They have promised to activate RTTY on this trip! QSL is via Franz DJ9ZB.

FG: Roberto, EA2RY will be in Guadeloupe for the CQWW RTTY contest with two friends. I don't know if he will be FG/EA2RY in the contest, or whether he has a contest call. QSL via his homecall.

FO/a: DJ4OI, DL3GA, DL1IAN and DF6IC will active from Tubai (OC-152) between 18 September and 3 October as FO/homecall/A and QSL is via each homecall.

VK9x/VK9c: Hartmut DM5TI and a few friends will activate Christmas Island VK9x between 4 October and 11 October. After that, they are then going to Cocos Keeling VK9c until October 23. QSL is via DL2RMC.

VK9x: If you miss the DM5TI operation, W0YG will also be active from Christmas Island between 26 October and 8 November as VK9XG. He is planning to focus on the low bands and RTTY. QSL to W0YG.

3DA: For those of you who missed the last operation from here, there is another chance for you between 9 – 12 September. NA5U will be active on RTTY, possibly as 3DA0MT. QSL to NA5U.

XZ: Myanmar will be activated between 30 September and 17 October by DL7DF and others. The callsign will be XZ7A, and QSL's got to DL7DF.

HK0: San Andres will once again be on air between 20 and 28 October. K4QD, W4WX, K9MDO, N1WON, N5VL, W9AAZ, W1LR and N2WB will be active as HK0/homecall. QSL to the homecall except N2WB, whose QSL's go to N2OO.

That's it for this month, so good DX, and see you in the contests!

73 de Phil GU0SUP

**CDXC**  
CHILTERN DX CLUB  
The UK DX Foundation

# DX AND EVENTS CALENDAR

*(tnx 425 DX News for most of this)*

till 30/11	HL0KSJ & D88S, DP1POL		W7UG and K7ZZ
till 31/12	HE2MM, I11D, JM6DZB/JD1	04/10-12/10	NP2SH: US Virgin Islands
	Iwo Jima (AS-030 Ogas.),	04/10-17/10	S79NS by DL2RNS
	UE0JWA (Z.19), VI8NT	04/10-11/10	VK9XW: Christmas Island
till Jan 04	8J1RF: Dome Fuji Base (AN-016) (WABA JA-04)	4 Oct	(OC-002) by DLs <b>EU Autumn Sprint, SSB</b>
till 2004	R1ANZ: "Mirny" Base	04/10-05/10	<b>Oceania DX Contest, Phone</b>
01/09-30/09	EN100WAY: special event	5 Oct	<b>RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest, SSB</b>
04/09-21/09	7Q7CE: Malawi by IN3VZE		
04/09-18/09	9Y4/DL1MGB and 9Y4TBG: Tobago (SA-009)	07/10-12/10	4M9YY: Venezuela
06/09-27/09	SV8/F5TGR: Cyclades (EU-067)	09/10-16/10	BQ9P: Pratas Island (AS-110)
13/09-22/09	5R8HA: Madagascar (AF-013) by G3SWH	11/10-23/10	VK9CD: Cocos-Keeling (OC-003) by DLs
13/09-18/09	IL7/IZ8FDH: San Domino (EU-050)	11 Oct	<b>EU Autumn Sprint, CW</b>
16/09-23/09	FH/G4IRN: Mayotte (AF-027)	11/10-12/10	<b>Iberoamericano Contest, Oceania DX Contest, CW</b>
16/09-22/09	JW7QI, JW8AW, JW8D: Svalbard (EU-026) by LA7QI, LA8AW	13/10-27/10	VK9XYL: Christmas Island YL operators
17/09-24/09	IM0/IZ2DPX/P: Maddalena Island (EU-041)	17/10-19/10	3G2D: Damas Island (SA-086) by CEs
18/09-28/09	PA3GIO/VP9: Bermuda (NA-005)	17/10-01/11	CE0Y/SP9PT and CE0Y/SP9EVP: Easter Island (SA-001)
19/09-26/09	OJ0LA and OJ0RJ: Market Reef (EU-053)	18/10-19/10	<b>JARTS WW RTTY Contest, Worked All Germany Contest</b>
20/09-21/09	IO1DCI: special event station	19/10	<b>Asia-Pacific Sprint, CW</b>
22/09-27/09	5R8HA/p: Ile Sainte Marie (AF-090) by G3SWH	19/10	<b>RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest, CW</b>
23/09-27/09	S79IRN: Seychelles (AF-024) by G4IRN	20/10-23/10	FR/ON5AX: La Reunion (AF-016)
20/09-21/09	<b>Scandinavian Activity Contest, CW</b>	20/10-28/10	HK0: San Andres Island
23/09-09/10	FG/EB2DTP, FG/EA2RU, FG/EA2RY: Guadeloupe (NA-102)	20/10-28/10	PZ5CQ, PZ5FF, PZ5UE and PZ5A: Suriname
27/09-10/10	<b>3C0F, 3C0A, 3C0R, 3C0V: Annobon (AF-039)</b>	24/10-04/11	S79AX: Seychelles
27/09-28/09	<b>CQ/RJ Worldwide DX Contest, RTTY; Scandinavian Activity Contest, SSB</b>	25/10-26/10	YJ0X: Vanuatu by VKs
from 29/09	VK4FW: OC-160, OC-171, OC-172 and OC-142	25/10-26/10	<b>CQ Worldwide DX Contest, SSB</b>
30/09-17/10	XZ7A: Myanmar by DLs	27/10-10/11	VK9CYL: Cocos Keeling YL operators
from 01/10	T88ZX: Palau (OC-009) by	31/10-02/11	<b>RSGB International HF and IOTA Convention</b>
		October	FO/IT9YRE, FO/IT9EJW, FO/I1SNW: (OC-??? & OC-052)
		October	V63ZT: Yap (OC-012) by W7UG and K7ZZ

# CHILTERN DX CLUB

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