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Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

It will be interesting to see what comes out of Ofcom's recent consultation on the future of amateur radio licensing in UK, mentioned in more contributions than one. I can only hope that the total number of responses was a lot more than Ofcom had originally bargained for, demonstrating that us radio amateurs and our friends really do care about this unique hobby of ours. Also, that the content of some of these responses will encourage Ofcom to modify its more controversial accountant-driven plans. For surely it ought to be the content that counts and not just the numbers. And each to his or her own, of course. Personally, though, I can't help feeling totally dismayed by the number of responses which would appear to be in favour of lifetime licences and, even more so, amateur radio exemption from the WT Act. Talk about digging yer own grave...

Yes, when I become dictator (says he, now slipping into traditional '80m SSB on a Sunday morning' mode...). For starters there'll be a few changes at Ofcom. Say no more. And on the non-radio front: well, all TV adverts actively encouraging people to sue others on the basis of frivolous compensation claims will be banned. Ditto the sale of popcorn in cinemas. Motorists who consistently park across people's drives will have their cars impounded and sent to the crusher. There'll be compulsory elocution lessons for the cast of *Eastenders*, pending final axing of this monumentally miserable programme itself. And that Crazy Frog (no, not Jacques Chirac, but the one with the ringtone...) will be shot. Well, that little lot should encourage a few 'Letters to the Editor' next time round.

But I digress. Did you notice the missing exclamation marks in the July *Digest*? I'm not a huge fan myself, but some of our regular contributors wouldn't be without them. And in that issue they mysteriously ended up as blank spaces. These exclamation marks were certainly all there in the PDF file I sent to the printers!! And that's as good a test as any. Most unlike me, there should be double exclamation marks after that last bit, the word 'printers'. If all you can see is a long blank space, then you'll know we have problems again. Oh dear, I hope not.

Anyway, if you went along to this year's AGM and Summer Social on 23 July at Secretary Peter/G3SJX's little pied-à-terre near Alton in Hampshire, then you'll agree that it was a great day out. Even the rain held off. The food, courtesy of master chef Mark Mann, was really yummy too – and I agree with Neville in his 'President's Patter' about the steak and the bangers. And what a marvellous QTH (I'll resist the temptation to add an exclamation mark here...). For Jane the main attraction, apart from the excellent company of course, was the mega-long and truly magnificent garden – perhaps less so the 10-element log periodic in the middle of it all, with the 160m dipole casually tucked away in one corner right down the end, halfway to Southampton. Either way, it's grateful thanks to Peter and Marjorie for their superb hospitality.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

www.btinternet.com/~g3rfx

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

We certainly seem to be in the midsummer low solar activity doldrums at the moment. About the only notable DX of late has been a few new IOTA groups. At least we can look forward to Kure next month. Let's hope they make it this time. This does point to the value of the RSGB IOTA programme, which keeps us going when new countries are few and far between. Not only is it a well conceived award, dating back to Geoff Watts' initiative in the 1960s, but it is also run and maintained with a very high level of integrity and dedication. It's no wonder that it is recognised as the world's biggest award programme after DXCC. The popularity of IOTA is apparent from the size of the pile-ups whenever a rare one appears on the air. The statistics show that huge numbers of operators participate, but that many fewer actually apply for the wallpaper, especially in the UK. One reason for this may have been the perceived complications of the application process. If so, this should be remedied before too long, since the IOTA team is developing a brand new software system which will automate many of the tasks, enabling participants to do much of the process themselves online. With luck, the new system, known at present as NGIS – Next Generation IOTA System – should be rolled out some time next year.

I have no doubt that one of the most important events of recent months – possibly years – has been the Ofcom consultation on the future shape of amateur radio licensing in the UK. Most people will know that since Ofcom took over from the Radiocommunications Agency last year as the government's overseer of all things to do with telecommunications, there has been a radical change in the principles underlying their activities. It is clear that the name of the game is now minimisation of

cost: the government's cost, of course. There has been disquieting talk of deregulation, ie eliminating the need for any licence at all, which would reduce amateur radio to the status of CB and dog owning. It is to be hoped that this suggestion owed much to the (surprising) ignorance of all things to do with our hobby which has been demonstrated by Ofcom officials. It must be remembered that this handicap did not apply to our previous bosses, the RA, and the Post Office.

Having retreated (at least temporarily) from the deregulation stance, Ofcom has asked in its recent consultation for responses, not necessarily from licensed amateurs, to various issues about future licence structures. Some of the early replies have been published on the Ofcom web site and it is sad to see that some people have been seduced by the prospect of one-time licences for life and by the bait of a free licence. Licences for life would effectively make control and monitoring of amateur radio impossible and, as any Yorkshireman knows, "You don't get owt for nowt". In this case, the 'owt' you wouldn't get is the protection and representation which we have enjoyed for the 60 years since WWII. Until now, amateur radio has been accepted as a 'legitimate' user of the radio spectrum. Granted, we are not always seen as priority users, but at least we are in the list, and, together with colleagues in other countries, we have a voice in such issues as spectrum allocation and intruder resistance, without which the hobby would probably not survive for long.

Reading other responses, it was disturbing to see that some respondees (!) seem to have taken the opportunity to enjoy another hobby, that of 'RSGB bashing'. The suggestion is

that the whole licensing issue is a fund-raising exercise for the RSGB. How this view can arise, never mind be sustained, is beyond me, but it allows me to emphasise that we in the UK, like amateurs worldwide, cannot survive without a strong national society which is recognised by government and which can fight for our rights and represent us in forums such as the IARU and ITU where all the really critical decisions are made.

I doubt if anyone, including me, agrees fully with everything the RSGB does, but without it we have no future. Instead of sniping from the touchlines, I wish those dissenters would join the Society and help the many hard-working and unpaid volunteers who do a tremendous amount for all UK amateurs. If they did, there would be much more achieved and much less to gripe about.

As a side issue to the Ofcom saga, I discovered that when I tried to e-mail UK

members to encourage them to respond to the consultation, more than 10% of the messages bounced, usually because the intended recipient had changed his/her address without telling us. If this includes you, please make sure that our Treasurer, Nigel, G3TXF, knows your up-to-date address. Simply changing it in the table on the web site does not update the 'official' members' database.

That's all for now, folks. See you in the pile-up for Kure - and then we can all brag about how many times we worked them when we meet in the bar at the HF Convention in October. A pint awaits anyone who makes it on 160 or 80m. I assume you have all made your reservations for Gatwick. If not, why not?

73 es gud DX John, G3LAS

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

Another CDXC year passed with a very successful AGM and Summer Social in July. We had another really good turn-out, with 36 members attending the AGM and over 50 including guests at the Social. After a showery morning the clouds cleared and we had really good weather in the afternoon. Thanks again to Mark Mann for doing the catering - the food was excellent. I particularly enjoyed the steak and the bangers!

The raffle raised over £400, an excellent figure, and Bob Barden, MØCCE / N2BB,

won the major prize, a Cushcraft MA8040W dual-vertical antenna for 80 and 40m. We are most grateful to Waters and Stanton for donating the major prize this year. The review of this antenna by Secretary Peter appears in the September RadCom. An excellent win!

Our thanks also to everyone - manufacturers, dealers, and of course members - for contributing prizes for the raffle. In these difficult times we managed to raise a good number of prizes.

Thanks also to Digest Editor Martyn for putting together the quiz which was won by Jørgen, MØAXP. [*My pleasure. Ed.*]

And finally, thanks to our hosts, Peter and Marjorie Hart, for letting us invade their lovely home. Their garden is a real delight. I wonder whether they hold open days?

I hope members responded to the recent Ofcom consultation document on a proposal to reform amateur radio licensing – ‘A lighter, electronic licensing process’.

I was very surprised to read some of the proposals and was disappointed that they got into print. I’m sure this wouldn’t have happened in the days of the RA when the RSGB seemed to have more influence than at present. As for claiming that the present renewal process is ‘over-burdensome’: I cannot understand this, particularly for those who pay by direct debit. The process, hopefully untouched by human hand, cannot be more simple. If Ofcom consider this over-burdensome, then how on earth are they going to deal with the complex issues that they undoubtedly face?

The 3B9C QSLing has continued apace and we think we have now broken the back of the direct requests, only 30 cards being received last month compared with the usual 100+. No doubt these direct cards will continue to trickle in for years to come. Bureau cards are now flowing well, with over 3,000 received last month; some of these have already been processed. It took about six months for the first significant batch of cards to appear from the Bureau, so my guess is that Bureau cards, even when sent off soon after the operation, may well take 9-12 months before they get back to the claimant.

One interesting statistic that’s come to light is the ‘direct to Bureau’ breakdown. Of the 84,700 QSOs confirmed (out of a total of

153,109 QSOs, or 55.3%) 59.4% have been sent direct and only 40.6% to the Bureau. This is very surprising, especially when some 20,000+ email requests were sent to the Bureau.

I think there is an explanation for this. We did not publish my callsign as lead QSL manager, but told everyone to QSL to the RSGB or direct to PO Box 73. The reason for not publishing my call was that we were due to move home just after the DXpedition and my old Further Felden address would have been flooded with letters for years to come. Some thought this wouldn’t work, but in the event the cards have flowed well, with perhaps with more than usual opting for the direct route. The other reason could be that for many the 3B9C QSO was their first 3B9 contact and they wanted to get a card quickly. There were hundreds of stations who made just one contact with us, apparently their first with Rodrigues.

Where will we end up? My guess is that we’ll be close to a surprising 50:50 direct/Bureau split and that we will eventually confirm around 100,000 –110,000 QSOs.

The fact that the volume of cards passing through the Bureau system has been lower than would have been expected is a good result, as I know the RSGB in particular has been concerned with the volumes of cards generated by mega-DXpeditions. Members should know that in any case we sent a substantial donation to the RSGB to cover these additional costs.

Another interesting fact about the process we adopted using StarQSL is that we have not used the ‘hospital’ option that we designed into the system for dealing with difficult claims. There have been relatively few really difficult situations that fell outside our guidelines and these were all dealt with by e-mail.

The main issue we are facing now is with second, third, etc. requests. I suspect many managers ignore these, particularly when a first request is made by a direct card and is then followed up by an 'insurance' request by the Bureau. We decided to process second requests, as we are certain that some of our outgoing cards have gone astray. We know an early batch of some 300 direct cards that were all processed by one manager never reached their destination and were lost somewhere. I'm also 90% certain that a batch of Bureau cards went astray. John, G3WGV, is planning to enhance StarQSL so that will have an audit trail of cards sent. This will make it much easier to deal with third, fourth, etc. requests in the future.

Incidentally, if any CDXC member has not received a 3B9C card, please drop me an email with the QSO details and I'll pop a card in the post.

Best wishes to everyone. Perhaps it's now time for some more marketing.

73



73 Neville, G3NUG

Out-of-date e-mail addresses

Do we have your up-to-date email address? If you have changed it in the past few months, please be sure to notify Nigel, G3TXF, at treasurer@cdxc.org.uk. At present over 10% of our e-mails sent are being rejected.

Change to the rules for CDXC Plaques

From 2005 the CDXC Plaques will be awarded to the leading CDXC member who obtains the highest scorers in the Single Operator, Low Power, CW and Phone sections of the CQ World-Wide Contest. G3RTE

Asia Pacific DX Convention

Dear Fellow DXers and Contesters,

You are cordially invited to the Asia Pacific DX Convention, which will take place on 18-20 November 2005 as the first Asian international DX event. In addition to the presentations of recent DXpeditions, technical sessions, displays, etc. that you find at most large DX conventions, this convention offers something special, such as a tour of the Icom factory, a technical session led by the Icom IC-7800 design team, a tour of the electronics district, and more. For the non-hams accompanying you, activities to enjoy Japanese culture, such as a tea ceremony and flower arranging, are being prepared. See our website for more details at <http://www.ja3.net/apdxc>. We look forward to welcoming you at the APDXC in Osaka, Japan. APDXC Committee / JA3USA.

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Call	Name	Location
GØHSA	Andrew Bennett	Sheffield
G3IWC G3XNP	Bill Cox Ken Arnold	Reedham Cheshunt
G4BJQ G4XOP G4UET	Ivor Ireland Terry Cooper Julian Rolfe	Camberley St Austell Thatcham
MØDUF	Alan Homent	Hemel Hempstead
M3NHZ	Neil Hubbard	King's Lynn
MWØJZE	Anthony David	Llanelli
MW5DOS	Roland Hall	Holyhead
<i>tba</i>	Chris Cradock	Witney
<i>tba</i>	Malcolm Mclvor	Harwich

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

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

Annual General Meeting, 23 July 2005 at 1200

Venue: The Willows, Paice Lane, Medstead, Alton, Hants GU34 5PR (G3SJX)

Minutes

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

Present: (36 members)

GØHXN, GØOPB, GØVYS, GØWFK, G3BJ, G3JNB, G3KWK, G3LAS, G3NUG, G3PSM, G3RFX, G3RLF, G3RTE, G3SED, G3SJX, G3SVL, G3TQD, G3TXF, G3XTT, G3ZBE, G4FKA, G4HZV, G4IUF, G4JKS, G4KIU, G4LDL, G4VXT, G7TMU, MØAXP, MØCCE, MØGMT, M1DCV, M3CVN, M3HBI, M3RCV, M3SDE

Apologies: (33 members)

2MØMGY, 5B4AGX, GØLUQ, GØPHY, GØUKX, G3AB, G3KMA, G3MCX, G3PEM, G3PJT, G3RZP, G3SWH, G3TTJ, G3UEG, G3WKL, G3WNI, G3ZAY, G4IRN, G4JVG, G4LWB, GIØTJJ, GI3FJX, GM3OXX, GM4UZY, GW3KFA, MØBJL, MØCLW, MØKCM, MØMRW, MØRHI, M5GUS, MWØIDX, OZ7SM, OZ7YY

Previous Minutes:

The minutes from the 2004 AGM had been printed in the September 2004 Digest and were available to all members present as part of the 2005 AGM handout. There were no questions or corrections and the approval of the minutes was proposed by G4IUF, seconded by G3SED and carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

John, G3LAS, reported a generally successful year. The Treasurer would tell of sound finances, membership numbers continued to rise and stood now at 686, 11 DXpeditions had been supported at a total cost of £2,430 (a similar number to last year), and the *Digest* continued to receive frequent compliments (thanks to Editor Martyn, G3RFX).

John reminded the meeting that maintaining membership numbers was not easy. Typically, 40-50 members were lost every year, largely through 'natural wastage', so the target for new recruits was of the order of 75 minimum. It was encouraging to see that the recent new members included a significant number of younger operators.

CDXC had again taken stands at a number of rallies and shows, which were well supported by visitors. However, the Committee could not easily do this at locations outside London and the South-East, so volunteers from members in other areas would be welcome.

The Committee had considered the introduction of a category of life membership. The responses from members to this were minimal, so no immediate action was contemplated.

As an early warning, John mentioned that subscriptions would probably need to rise in 2006. If so, a motion to that effect would be brought to next year's AGM.

The meeting was reminded that the Ofcom consultation on licensing administration had a deadline of 18 August and it was important that as many people as possible registered their responses.

Finally, John thanked the Committee for their work throughout the year and also expressed appreciation to the AGM hosts, Peter and Marjorie Hart, for inviting the Club to their beautiful home and garden..

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

Secretary's Report

Peter, G3SJX, reported on the Secretarial tasks. Membership continued to grow, and recruitment of new members had been particularly successful via targeted mail shots aimed at DXers working the 3B9C and 5TØCW DXpeditions. New members' information packs were sent to the 73 new members joining during the year.

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

The Annual Dinner was held at the Pendley Manor Hotel again this year on 16 April. Although only 37 attended, it was a successful and enjoyable event. However, there were concerns that costs were rather high and this has discouraged some members from attending. The Committee is seeking a new venue for 2006, probably to the west of London within the M3/M4/M40 window, and also return to the earlier date of the 3rd Saturday in March, avoiding as far as possible key contests and other events. The provisional date for 2006 is 18 March. The other major social event on the CDXC calendar is the AGM and Summer Social.

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

Treasurer's Report

The full accounts for the year prepared by Nigel, G3TXF, were published in the July 2005 *Digest* and copies were available for all at the meeting. This showed that the Club

overall is in a healthy financial state. Nigel expanded upon some of the main financial aspects.

Election of Committee

During the year Mark, MØDXR, had stood down due to the pressure of other activities and Simon, MØCLW, had been co-opted.

At this point, the entire Committee resigned, as required by the Constitution. Don, G3XTT, took the chair for the election of a new Committee and thanked the retiring Committee on behalf of the members. The whole Committee was standing for re-election and no additional nominations had been received. G3BJ proposed and MØAXP seconded that they should be re-elected en bloc. This was passed unanimously. The new Committee is therefore:

President	G3NUG
Chairman	G3LAS
Secretary	G3SJX
Treasurer	G3TXF
Digest Editor	G3RFX
Committee Member	G3RTE
Committee Member	MØCLW
Committee Member	G3UEG

Following the election of the Committee for 2005/6 the re-elected Chairman, G3LAS, re-took the Chair.

Election of Auditor

Martin, G3ZAY, was thanked for auditing the accounts this year and was happy to continue in this role. G4VXT proposed that G3ZAY should audit the accounts for 2005/6 and this was accepted unanimously.

AOB

There were no other items of business.

The meeting closed at 12:40

Peter Hart, G3SJX
CDXC Secretary

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

By the time this Digest drops onto your waiting doormats we will be approaching the equinox and, hopefully, a seasonal upturn in band conditions. We have Kure Island to look forward to. The team includes some experienced operators and has an express goal to focus on Europe, so we'll have to hope that ol' sol co-operates. The Kure Web page has some innovative features – do sign up so that you can track your QSOs. I am acting as UK 'Relay' and can send photographs (of you working K7K, or whatever), audio clips etc. to be loaded onto the website. The main page is

www.cordell.org/htdocs/KURE/index.html

and you might also want to take a look at the RSGB propagation forecasts at <http://uk.geocities.com/g4fkh@btinternet.com>

which have a couple of lines for K7K – short and long path. It is worth noting that the high band forecast suggests that long path will be on the only way to work Kure on 17, 15 and 12m. Personally, I would expect the best opportunities to be on 40, 30 and 20m. Good luck with this one.

LoTW again

I got a couple of responses to my comment last time about LoTW and how one might figure out one's DXCC totals confirmed via that facility. For any readers who would like to know, here it is in a nutshell (thanks to G3LZQ and G3YMC): Start a new log using your station logging program. Download from LoTW by logging on to LoTW and going to 'Download Report'. Fill in the date you joined LoTW (the default is the last time you downloaded a report). Tick 'Include QSL Detail', add your callsign from pull-down if you have multiple calls in LoTW. You can

then save the resulting ADIF file in the usual Windows manner, and import to your station logging program. Then, bingo, you have your current listings, assuming the logging programme will produce DXCC reporting. Incidentally, I uploaded my 9G5FD log to LoTW about a month after my return and got over 500 confirmations out of 6,000 QSOs, a hit rate of about 8%. Not bad, probably reflecting the fact that I had been on in WPX CW and many contest operators now upload their logs on a regular basis as a matter of course. HB9BZA has compiled a list (<http://rchalmas.users.ch/lotw/>) of callsigns currently using LoTW, and I calculate that there are 287 DXCC entities on there, albeit often with only a single log (G3TXF, for example, has uploaded logs from all his overseas operations – well done Nigel!). Inevitably, the US dominates the overall number of users – 3,000 US calls out of 5,400 users in total. But this will gradually change over time. I note 217 UK users at present, one of the higher non-US totals.

Unfortunately one of the downsides to LoTW is that it seems to be creating an 'instant gratification' desire among some users. If a contest station or DXpedition hasn't uploaded its log to LoTW within 10 milliseconds of the DXpedition or contest ending, these folk start posting their whinges on the relevant reflectors. For heavens sake!

From Phil, G3SWH

Just finished reading your column in the latest Digest and I really must take up my cudgel in support of Steve, G4EDG, concerning computer-aided guessing. I hope you will find my comments constructive.

I too was surprised to receive confirmations of all the QSOs that I made with 3B9C, even

though I had only requested the two or three new band slots that I needed. This was certainly not the policy agreed and adopted when I handled the 9MØC and D68C QSLing chores. After all, the object of a QSL card is to CONFIRM that a QSO has taken place. The fact that it is in my logbook does not necessarily mean that it is in yours - and vice versa. I have always advocated - and practice - the policy of only confirming what is specifically requested. The all too frequent requests to "please QSL all the QSOs in the log" are returned with a note for the applicant to provide the full QSO details (date, time, band and mode). Only rarely do I ever get a reply!

There is a 160m CW QSO in the D68C log for G3SWH, but I certainly didn't make it and would not dream of claiming it. It's too much like cheating at Patience.

On the same theme, let me tell you about something else that recently amused and annoyed me. In 2004 I worked an African DXpedition on several bands, including a couple of new ones. I duly sent off my QSL card for the new ones only, together with the usual enclosures to the manager. Within a reasonable period, back came my QSL confirming everything in the log, but omitting one of the new bands (40m) and providing no form of explanation. Also enclosed were no less than six cards for other operations which the manager also handled which I did not ask for and did not need. None of them requested that I send one of my cards in return - and (subject to not already having sent one) I am very meticulous about returning cards requested. As I have a storage space problem, they went straight into the bin. Additionally, the postage on this package of cards was greater than I had sent in the first place. What an unnecessary waste of the planet's resources!

The manager had clearly not bothered to check any of the claimed QSOs details against the log, but had blindly printed the cards and sent them off.

An e-mail to the manager returned the message that my missing 40m QSO had been logged as being with G3SHW and invited me to contact him and obtain a written statement that he had not made the claimed QSO. Only upon receipt of this document was he prepared to correct the logging error.

I did try to contact G3SHW, who has always been most helpful in forwarding the incorrectly addressed cards intended for me, but was embarrassed to learn that he had died around the time of the expedition.

On learning of this, the QSL manager did send me my 40m card - together with one for a 12m QSO that was also logged as being with G3SHW and which I didn't ask for or need.

Turning to LoTW, I have uploaded a lot of the station's logs for whom I handle QSLs, but - and it's a big but - there are some logs that are so inaccurate and require far too much human interpretation to correct busted calls, incorrect dates, times, bands etc. that loading them on to LoTW would be pointless. In addition, the ARRL's requirement to get written permission from the DX station for the manager to upload the logs is not always well received, as it precludes the DX station from applying for a DXCC in his own right at a later date.

In short, home callsigns and DXpeditions are fine, but DX stations in remote parts of the world suffer a disadvantage - and this is one of the areas in which LoTW was supposed to help.

Some interesting points Phil. As I said last time, I can quite understand when DXpeditions QSL all QSOs in the log - it

saves the hassle of maybe having to deal with several requests from the same station with one or two in one envelope, one or two in another, and maybe a few more via the Bureau. I am sure 99% of the people who receive confirmation for a QSO they are not happy about would never think of submitting it to DXCC. Conversely, those who make a habit of cheating won't wait to see whether they get a confirmation by 'accident' in this way. They will actively work to get a card. Sadly there are all too many ways. The easiest is to send a card for a non-existent QSO and hope the manager doesn't check the log – some well-known managers used to have a reputation for never checking, but simply sending out a return card. Hopefully there aren't too many of those around nowadays. Another is to doctor an existing card – one amateur who achieved a high 160m DXCC while rarely being heard on the band turned out to be adding a dot to 18 MHz cards! Another way is to get hold of blank cards and fill them in as appropriate – one friend of mine, just to prove how easy it was, managed over a period of a few years to get blank cards for about 250 DXCC entities. I hasten to add that he didn't use them, but could easily have done so. Most were obtained as samples from QSL printers (the better ones stamp 'sample' on the cards), others by asking for them from QSL managers, others by taking down cards that had been pinned up on the visitors board at Dayton, etc.! It goes to show how easy it is to cheat if you wish to do so but, really, what satisfaction is there in that?

International Reply Coupons

Phil, G3SWH, also sent along the following response from Royal Mail regarding the future of International Reply Coupons (some countries such as ZL have already stopped accepting the old-style coupons).

I have been trying to obtain some answers from Royal Mail concerning their policy

towards exchanging IRCs when after 31st December 2006. It has not been easy and I needed to make an official complaint to Postwatch, the independent postal watchdog, before I could get a reply.

However, here is a summary of their policy as set out by Trevor Sayer, the Head of International Products for Royal Mail:

- Q. The current, blue style of IRC, type CN01, bears an expiry date of 31st December 2006. Will you continue to exchange these for postage after this date?
- A. International Reply Coupons are produced and issued from the Universal Postal Union Headquarters in Berne. The United Kingdom, and all other postal administrations buy the Coupons from Berne, and then re-sell them to customers in their own country.

Royal Mail has recently been in correspondence with UPU Headquarters on this issue. The most recent response received from Berne states that they are currently working out the schedule for the release of a new issue of International Reply Coupons, to replace those due to expire at the end of next year. As soon as this has been done, the UPU will be informing the Royal Mail when they will be issued, and provide them with details of their format.

- Q. The older, yellow style of IRCs, types C22 and CN01 (ancien C22), bear no expiry date. What is the Royal Mail's policy towards the continued exchange for postage of these IRCs after 31st December 2006?

A. Whilst Royal Mail might consider taking steps to enable the old yellow IRCs and the current blue style issue to continue to be used after the end of next year, this could cause a problem in the countries of destination, who may well consider both issues to be out of date, and therefore understandably not recognise them as being valid. Royal Mail's current policy is therefore that neither of these IRC's will be able to be used after 31 December 2006.

Q. When will the Royal Mail be issuing replacement IRCs for those bearing the 31st December 2006 expiry date and how will these be distinguishable from the current style?

A. Royal Mail is currently pressing the UPU in Berne for this matter to be finalised as quickly as possible, as any new IRCs would really need to be introduced by the end of this year.

This matter is being addressed with Berne as a matter of urgency, and it is hoped that a positive response will have been received from them by the end of September this year.

Cluster Spots

Finally, just a reminder that VE3UW has collected the DX spots from the OH2AQ Web Cluster since January 1997. The collection - from January 1997 to the present - is available at <http://www.425dxn.org/dxspots/>, as well the software (DXINFO v2.0) which will enable you to handle the files (instructions at the URL above). This is useful for many reasons, whether planning a DXpedition or just working out when a particular entity last appeared on a particular band.

73 Don, G3XTT

WRTC 2006

The next WRTC will be held in Brazil in July 2006. Besides the teams, judges, referees etc, there is much to enjoy for spectators. Many from UK went to Finland last time and had a ball. WRTC is an extremely expensive undertaking. To help with fund-raising they are running a raffle. There are two prizes, one drawn in May 2005 and one to be drawn in May 2006. Each is an all-expenses paid trip to Florianopolis, Brazil, to attend the Games - including flights with Varig, accommodation and free entrance to all events. This is valued at over £1,000 each. See below for ways to buy your raffle tickets. I hope that UK contesters will support this worthy cause by buying raffle-tickets and/or by making donations. 73 de Roger, G3SXW.

Tickets: GBP £5 each. Send to Roger Western, G3SXW, 7 Field Close, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2QD, England. Only multiples of £5. Include your callsign. **PayPal:** cash transfer to k1zm@aol.com. Indicate your callsign and mark 'Raffle'. These should be in multiples of USD \$10. **Donations:** if you wish to make a cash donation towards the WRTC fund-raising effort please pay by the same routes, but mark your message 'Donation'.

Out and About

DXpedition to Ramkin island, AS-108, OD5RMK

July 24-25 2004

With grateful thanks to IREF

The team:

Naim	OD5LN
Alfeo	I1HJT
Claudio	I1NVU
Tony	IK1QBT

The geography

AS-108 is a group of three flat, rocky islands of eroded limestone, 5 km NW of Tripoli, Lebanon, rising to 6m. There is some maquis-type vegetation, but the islands are relatively bare except in spring, when they are carpeted in wild flowers. However, on Palm Island there are some small ponds, boggy areas and two reedbeds. Some of the wild flower species are nationally endangered or extinct along the mainland coast - or otherwise unusual, eg *Euphorbia pithyusa*, *Cressa cretica*.

In the last century the islands were known as the Bird Islands due to the abundant breeding seabirds, but in recent years only *Larus cachinnans* still breeds. Even this species has been declining rapidly (80-90 pairs in 1956, minimum of 15 pairs in 1975, none breeding in April 1993). The site would make an excellent observatory for monitoring the visible migration of waterbirds along the coast (egrets, ducks and waders, etc.). The globally threatened seal *Monachus monachus* and sea-turtles *Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta* were formerly recorded at this site, the latter using the sandy beaches for nesting. Rabbits, rats and snakes are also present.

Being the offshore island, Ramkin has been used for military purposes in the past, and there are some concrete buildings and a platform for two guns, erected in early 1900. Nowadays all the buildings are in bad shape and some are ruined. There is a lighthouse on Ramkin Island, supplied by solar panels. The area is declared a marine reserve - and the islands are visited regularly by picnickers, tourists and hunters, and also by schoolchildren and fishermen. Camping is not permitted and all visitors must leave the area before sunset.

AS-108, the radio ham scenario

AS-108 is not particularly rare. There have been some activations in the past, the last of them in September 1999 by RAL, the Lebanese radio amateur league. This activity lasted for three days and 6,000 QSOs were in the log. Some other activations have been made by single operators, but they were sporadic and short. Despite this activity, AS-108 is towards the top of the IOTA 'most wanted' list, having been endorsed by less than 20% applicants. This is not because of the difficulty in contacting the islands when they are activated - the skip is normally very good for Europe - but the problem lies in getting the QSL cards.

The background to the DXpedition

The idea to activate AS-108 grew when Naim, OD5LN, went to Sanremo (Italy) for job reasons. The wish to be on the other side of

the pile-up was the main issue during our discussions and the idea to operate from AS-108 started to take shape. Naim agreed to take care of the logistics and the domestic part of the operation, as well as to get the licences, whereas we would take care of the technical side, the equipment, the antennas etc.

One important issue was the period of activation, with the sun's activity close to the minimum and the propagation poor. It is slightly better in wintertime since there are more hours of darkness in the northern hemisphere. But we also had to bear in mind that in winter we could have had bad weather in the Mediterranean. The risk of not being able to reach the island because of strong winds and rough seas was a reality. Being forced to plan our activity in summer, after some discussion, we decided to activate the island during the IOTA contest, scheduled for the end of July.

This choice would give us more possibilities of going to the island, but the price we'd have to pay would be worse propagation. We were not prepared to contemplate a three-person trip with the risk of having to stay behind on the mainland and merely being able to look at the island in stormy seas!

Preparation

The programme would be to stay on the island for three days, from Saturday morning to Monday evening, camping on the island for two nights. As already mentioned, camping is not allowed in the protected area, but Naim obtained permission to stay for one night at least by presenting the IOTA contest as an international event. Our licences were granted as OD5/homecall but, in order to make the activation more interesting and exciting, Naim asked for the special callsign OD5RMK.

As usual on this occasion, we had to face the transport problem. If we were to have carried everything we needed, we would have easily reached hundreds of kg in weight, so after

calculating the transport costs it was necessary to optimize weight and volume - and leave some things behind.

We planned to operate two stations at the same time, one for the contest, the second for the WARC bands during the contest. We knew this was not a winning strategy for the contest since this would severely limit our multiplier search, but we believed it was more important to assure the AS-108 reference to a larger number of hams - instead of being on the IOTA contest top score list.

Another dilemma was the beam antennas or amplifiers. By using the beams we could do without the amplifiers, but we would have a larger volume of equipment to transport and the need for masts on the island. By using amplifiers we would have had a smaller volume, but a larger weight and the need for more electric power.

After a lot of discussions we decided to use vertical antennas and amplifiers, taking in account that the vertical antennas, close to the sea, would have had a low take-off angle, favourable for DX. The assembly time would also be shorter.

This is the summary of the equipment:

- 1 transceiver TS-400
- 1 transceiver TS-450
- 1 transceiver IC-735 (spare)
- 2 SWR bridges ROS
- 2 switching power supplies
- 1 linear amplifier FL-2100Z
- 1 vertical antenna Eco 7+
- 1 vertical antenna HV6V
- 1 dipole for 80m
- 2 Dunestar filters
- 3 laptop PCs
- 1 antenna analyser MFJ-259

Plus interfaces, keyers, headphones, cables, etc. and also personal belongings, medicine etc. - with a total weight in excess of 120 kgs.

A very important issue was the packing the equipment, seeing as we knew how delicate it was and the sort of vibrations they would be subjected to when stowed on the aircraft. Suitable packing is a time-consuming operation. Some of the equipment is heavy and delicate and the packing must be easy to open for the customs inspections. Naim provided on site all the necessary logistics and whatever it was possible to find locally such as:

- 2 power generators and the relevant fuel
- 1 tent and blankets
- 2 desks
- 2 big umbrellas
- 4 chairs
- 1 linear amplifier 811
- electric cables and accessories
- 1 roll of RG-213 coaxial cable
- 1 ice box
- drinking water and food

The trip

In order to avoid any discussion when back in Italy it is a good precaution to have a list of the most important equipment, at least those with a serial number, signed by customs. We prepared a comprehensive inventory of equipment, but when we submitted it to the customs officer he pointed out that a temporary export procedure would be necessary, taking a few days and requiring the payment of a deposit. After some discussion he gave us the right suggestion, ie just to fill in a declaration of goods leaving the EC for the equipment identified with a serial number. This way the procedure is reduced to just the inspection of the declared goods.

Once we had solved the problem with Italian customs, we still had some concern when approaching the Middle East Airline desk because of the weight and the volume of our equipment, but there were no problems and we were able to depart on time.

Lebanese customs were a difficult obstacle to contend with, despite Naim having already obtained the authorisation to import our equipment. Our luggage was inspected and sealed and transported to the customs docks where, the official said, we could collect it the following day, too late for our purposes. Only after a long discussion between Naim and the official – a discussion in which we were only spectators, seeing as it was in Arabic - our luggage was released two hours later. Outside the airport two cars were waiting for us, and after loading up these we drove to Naim's house, where his wife Hannan offered us a nice Lebanese-style dinner Lebanese.

The following morning we woke up at 0400, ready to load our stuff into a van and leave for Tripoli, a one-hour trip. At sunrise the landscape offered us a truly poetic show, although it was not very much appreciated seeing as we were still so sleepy. In the previous days Naim had already transported the material there which he had procured, and indeed, a few minutes after our arrival at the harbour a car, fully laden with a lot of equipment arrived courtesy of two strong young lads who had been hired by Naim to help us here.

To avoid any nasty surprises we decided to try out the generators before loading them. They started up immediately and so we put them on the boat. The amount of equipment we had brought with us was so considerable that the main part of the upper deck was taken up with it. During the day the boat transports tourists, but at this time of the morning they were still all asleep. We were surprised to see a number of people jogging on the walkway close to the sea. In fact there was a hidden passenger who accompanied us to the island – and very soon we would discover that Mr Murphy was with us.

The trip lasted about an hour. There was some breeze and the boat rolled slightly from side to side, but it was nothing serious.

We spent our time taking pictures, since we needed some to select for the QSL cards. The boat was always moving, so we needed to take a large number of pictures in the hope that some would be good enough. Thank God that with digital cameras there is no need to print all the pictures first in order to see the results.

Setting up the Stations

Landing on the island was not easy. There was an old pier that is no longer used because the sea at that point is not deep enough, so it was necessary to enter via a small bay, protected from the wind but with an almost vertical cliff.

The sailors knew the area well and they used all their ability to approach the coast. One of them on the shore took the prow of the boat and we started to disembark with our equipment. It was a human chain, from the boat deck to the rocks. Naim's two friends easily handled the heaviest loads and in half an hour all our equipment was on dry land.

But it wasn't finished yet: now we had to transport all the stuff to the building. The distance we had to cover was only 300m, but the first 100m was across sharp rocks – before we finally reached the small path which leads to the main building.

The sun was already high when we arrived at our destination, and now it started to burn. The sky was very clear and the breeze kept the skin fresh, but we had to protect ourselves with high-factor sun cream to avoid burning.

Setting up the stations started immediately. The jobs were shared without specific rules, but everybody knew what to do. The first antenna, the Eco 7+, was raised onto a rock close to the sea.

We had with us the Dunestar filters, but nevertheless we tried to erect the antennas as far away as possible from each other to avoid interference when operating with two stations

simultaneously. The second antenna, the Butternut HV6V, was erected on the top of the roof of the building, where we also installed the desks and the tent. The power generators were on the ground floor in order to minimise the noise.

AS-108 on the air

The IOTA contest starts at 1500 local time (1200 GMT) and we decided to start operations with the first station as soon as possible. The smaller power generator, initially a bit reluctant, starts up and it is 0931 GMT when the first QSO is in log on 18 MHz. The pile-up is fairly lively right from the start, but we soon realise that we will get little help from the propagation.

Meanwhile we set up the second station - and finally, when we're ready to start, Mr Murphy makes his first appearance: the bigger generator, which was tested before loading it on the boat, does not want to start. After trying all possible solutions we must acknowledge that the generator is hopeless. Naim starts to phone his friends in Tripoli (thank God the area has good mobile phone coverage) to find a spare generator, but meanwhile the wind gets up and the sea gets rough.

The wind is rather strong and starts to annoy us. Sometimes the umbrellas almost fly away - and only the weight of the radios and the amplifiers stop the desks from overturning.

Finally another generator is available on the mainland, but the sea conditions are so bad that it is not possible to sail, so we have no alternative but to operate the two radios barefoot since the remaining generator is not big enough to support an amplifier.

Nevertheless the QSO rate is not too bad and we are always manage over 100 QSOs per hour, also in the contest.

We understand that interest in the island is considerable, but the propagation is very variable. Often we have huge pile up, but then a few minutes later we are calling CQ with no signals on the air!

There are a lot of stations from Russia, the Ukraine, and northern Europe, with some JAs and a few from the States with very weak signals. Always the most prominent are the Italians. Finally the pile-up is rolling fast and regularly.

The propagation, as we already said, is not helping us: only an opening on 15m, a few QSOs on 12m – so activity is mainly on 17, 20, 30 and 40m. The noise is very strong on 80m, so we are forced to forget this band for the first night, hoping to have a better chance on the second night, after installing a dipole. We will see later that it remains only a hope.

It is only at the sunset that the wind decreases and the conditions become suitable to sail. Finally we receive the spare generator when the sun disappears into the sea. But the nasty surprises are not yet: the power socket is an American one and we cannot use our plugs. We have no tools and equipment to arrange for a plug to fit into the socket and so the only way is to dismantle the control panel and to connect the cable directly.

It is dark when we are finally ready. Unfortunately the generator is not big enough to supply two amplifiers and we decide to go on running the contest barefoot, since we have already been operating for some hours this way and it would be senseless to change the category right now.

We would like to make a suggestion to the IOTA Contest Committee about the contest rule requiring you to exchange RS(T), serial number and an IOTA reference number with every contact. This means dramatically slowing down the QSO rate. Taking into account that during contests it is not possible

to operate split, if we compare the QSO rate of our station outside the contest with that of the station in the contest, the latter was 40 – 50% slower than the former.

Of course the rules are the same for all the stations in the contest and this evens the problem out, but the point is that when an island is rare and the operation only lasts for a short time, having a low QSO rate means that many stations will miss out on a contact. The operations go on all night long without interruption, despite the very poor propagation.

It is early Sunday morning when Naim receives a telephone call announcing that permission to remain on the island for a second night has not been granted and we must leave for the mainland before sunset. We have no choice other than to dismantle all our equipment, ready to load it onto the last boat tour at 1900 local time. We wait till the last minute to dismantle and we run the last station until 1517 GMT, when the last QSO from AS-108 is in the log.

To speed up the dismantling, Naim asks his two friends to come and help us. They arrive at noon carrying a huge and sweet water melon and a couple of nargilè, a pleasure which the Lebanese cannot resist! Once again their help is invaluable.

Finally the boat arrives with a dozen of tourists who are watching, with some concern, our loading operation and the pile of stuff on the deck. During the trip back the boat makes a complete tour around the island and we can see the whole coastline.

Back to Italy

Time is running out and it's time to go, seeing as our flight leaves early on Friday morning. Naim recommends that we are ready with the equipment on Tuesday afternoon. Before noon he comes to us and asks us to get all our stuff

ready as soon as possible and to bring them to customs. The procedure is very long, a lot of long discussions, all in Arabic, with a half dozen different officers, signatures on documents written in Arabic. An export tax also has to be paid.

All our luggage, including hand luggage, is sealed with the customs seals: we will collect all this later at the airport customs office.

The following morning we wake up at 0330 to be ready in time to collect our luggage and to check in. As soon as we are at the airport we contact customs immediately and are able to collect the luggage. Naim is not there to assist us. A customs officer is with us to ensure that the luggage is loaded onto the flight without being opened. At check-in we are obliged to put everything in the aircraft hold, no hand luggage allowed, since we were heavily overweight and Middle East Airlines expected us to pay the relevant fee.

Finally we leave – and land on time at Milan Malpensa. The luggage is delivered, still carrying the Lebanese customs seals. We expected Italian customs to ask for explanation, but the officers are not interested. Claudio, IK1LWK, who drove us to the airport on the way out, is waiting for us: our Lebanese adventure really is now over.

Conclusion and statistics

We put a lot of effort into this expedition - and being forced to stop our activity from AS-108 one day early did not allow us to put all the QSOs in the log we would have liked, even if the QSO rate was what we expected.

Furthermore, owing to shortage of time, we could not operate 80m, which it was not possible to activate in the first night.

The propagation was not good to us. In fact after our return home we discovered that a solar storm had negatively affected

propagation. This we already noticed while operating from OD5. Signals were very weak from the States, with not much from Japan - and very deep QSB.

Some statistics

OD5RMK overall

Band	CW	SSB
12	12	0
15	1	135
17	706	259
20	620	646
30	232	0
40	207	85
Total	1778	1125
Grand total	2903	

OD5RMK in the IOTA Contest

Band	CW	SSB
15	1	135
20	546	579
40	207	85
Total	754	799
Grand total	1553	

IOTA References: 40

OD5RMK outside the IOTA Contest

Band	CW	SSB
12	12	0
17	706	259
20	74	67
30	232	0
Total	1024	326
Grand total	1350	

We wish to thank all friends and organisations who supported our efforts.

Preparing for TZ5A

Roger Western, G3SXW

g3sxw@compuserve.com

As any self-respecting DXer knows, Tango-Zulu is Mali, West Africa. But maybe he doesn't know a whole lot more than that about Mali - and nor did we when we first decided to go there. Our VooDoo Contest Group has operated the CQ World-Wide DX CW Contest in eight different West African countries, and the last two signing 5U5Z from Niger, so it was time to move on. In November we will move our base to Mali to operate multi-multi with the callsign Tango Zulu Five Alpha. Here are a few notes on how we have put this project together.

Having operated for the last four years in Niger (5U5Z) and Burkina Faso (XT2DX), we decided that in future years we needed to move back west. Immediately to the west of Niger is Burkina Faso (XT2) where we have a friend who could help us with the storage of our equipment, so this could provide a very handy staging post en route to Mali. So we shifted our 1+ ton of equipment to Bobo-Dioulasso, in the west of Burkina Faso, to store it for one year courtesy of Hugo, XT2HB.

First Contacts

Starting with a blank sheet of paper (we knew absolutely nothing about Mali at that stage), how do we progress things like licences, a suitable operating location, travel? Is it a safe country to visit? Do you need malaria tablets? etc. We knew that it was sub-Saharan black-Africa with a rich cultural history, but that's not really enough to put together a project for ten contesters to visit for two weeks and hopefully to win a contest.

The first step is to read up about this new country. First stop is 'The Lonely Planet

Guide to West Africa' and/or 'The Rough Guide' - each includes 60+ pages of hard facts about Mali. We immediately found out that this is a stable, safe country, and with a capital city with many hotels. After four years in Burkina Faso (XT2DX) and Niger (5U5Z) we would find Mali more economically developed.

So we had the general idea that we would wish to move to Mali. There are no local ham radio licensees, only occasional DXpeditioners and one American (US Peace Corps) - TZ6YV, Gene. Then along came one of those freak moments in life. They happen rarely, but they are indeed more likely to happen if you are on the look-out for them. I visited Dayton (April 2004). A bunch of us were picked up by the Crowne Plaza Hotel limo at the airport and we all got talking. One of them suddenly said (or words to this effect) "I have just finished three years in Mali. I operated as TZ6YV". Err, excuse me, Gene, I need to talk to you, like NOW! Not only was he a potential mine of information, but he lived in Phoenix. Sure enough, several of our PHX-based VooDudes knew him. Cor! Gold-dust! As it turned out Gene didn't seem to want to get too involved, but he did give us a name, Siré (pronounced See-Ray) Diallou, as being his right-hand man in the Mali Peace Corps.

Professional Football

What has professional football got to do with amateur radio contesting? Absolutely nothing. But we were given Siré's e-mail address and we started exchanging messages. It turns out that he worked for Peace Corps for 15 years and was previously a professional footballer, playing for his country. We explained our

project and (like every West African that I have ever met) he was keen to help us. In addition, he had a daughter living in London and was about to visit her so I arranged to meet up with him. One thing led to another and we hit it off - a really nice bloke, spoke good English, good sense of humour. I gave him a copy of our new book 'Contesting in Africa' and arranged to spend a day showing him the tourist sights of Central London. We had fun and I learned that Siré was keen to see a football match while he was in London.

One of the major London teams, Tottenham Hotspur, was due to play a big match that weekend and one of their players is from Mali. As it happens John, G4IRN (a 2005 VooDude), is a keen football supporter. He follows Manchester United, but we won't hold that against him! So John arranged to take Siré to see that match. It was a great success. Spurs beat Aston Villa 5 : 1 and the Malian scored twice. This was a major event for Siré, enjoying this spectacular match in a 40,000 crowd.

The Recce

If we are to move to a new country we need to learn a lot, and quickly. And the only way to choose the most appropriate hotel (especially RF take-off-wise) is to visit them all, so a reconnaissance visit is needed. Typically, Fred, G4BWP, and I make this trip, for about four days to set everything up for November. So, the two of us headed for Bamako, the capital of Mali, in April, 2005.

The objectives of this Recce Trip were to:

- 1) apply for transmitting licences
- 2) find the best hotel location
- 3) hire a bus/driver to collect our gear from XT2
- 4) get to feel the general situation in Bamako
- 5) (if there is time) find some decent restaurants

Siré was on hand to help us throughout our visit, ferrying us about all over the city. It soon became apparent that he is VERY well-known, all manner of people saluting him on the road. He also, ahem, just happened to be a close friend of the PTT licensing officer. This made the whole process of applying for our transmitting licences easier.

Now, it must be explained at this juncture that in Africa everything is very personal. As soon as you have met an individual and shaken hands you are 'brothers' for life - you are ready to help each other in any way. That's really nice.

Applying for Licences

Having arrived at 0330 and checked in to our rooms at 0430 local time, Fred and I met Siré at 0800 for breakfast and the trip to the PTT. There we were welcomed by the big boss and his team with the greatest courtesy. We repaired to the office of the Licensing Officer and arranged the ten licences. He was concerned that the sum of money for ten one-year licences was too much, so we found a way to calculate the fee as being for two months only (licences expire each December 31st and we needed them to start only in November). So we were all happy, the fee was paid and arrangements made for Siré to pick up the documents a few days later.

This he did, photocopied and posted them to me in London. Mission accomplished - we would definitely be TZ5A in November. In addition Mr Keita, the Licensing Officer, offered to provide us with a letter for customs to accept our equipment into Mali. Very welcome!

Checking Hotels

We then wanted to visit just about every hotel in the city to pick the one most appropriate to our needs, ie plenty of space for antennas and no hills to block our signals. Siré (having read

our new book) said right away that we would need the Olympe Hotel. But he first, very wisely, took us to see a dozen other hotels. None of them was suitable, although one or two would have been just about usable.

By mid-afternoon, tired, sweaty and thirsty, we ended up at the Olympe Hotel. You know how it is when you are house-hunting – almost always you just know right away if it is likely to be suitable as soon as you see the outside. As soon as Fred and I saw the Olympe we knew it was the right place for us. Lots of space, and sitting up on a lip overlooking the River Niger valley to the north. Great!

Subsequently, we uncovered a major problem. It seems that the Francophone Summit (gathering of leaders from all French-speaking countries) will be held in Bamako in late November and the Olympe is one of many hotels designated to host the guests. This will include country presidents and also their entourages – security and comms specialists, you name it! The charming Commercial Manager of the hotel explained that the only way to absolutely guarantee our room-reservations would be to pay a 50% deposit. This we did later, by bank transfer. Otherwise the rooms might be requisitioned by the government for the Summit.

This hotel has four storeys with a large, very solid roof. Whilst taking measurements we bumped into the hotel's Technical Manager, a nice guy who spoke English and was really interested in our project. We will be assured of his assistance (eg a 60 amp power line) in November.

Hiring a Bus

Should be simple, but nothing is that straightforward. We had discovered that the drive from Bamako to Bobo to collect our equipment is one whole day each way. We had uncovered several tour companies on the Web and got quotes (about 300 Euros per day

for bus and driver). But when we visited the address of our favoured company we were told that they were out of business and we should instead go to ATS. This turned out to be a modern enterprise with, again, a Manager who spoke good English (we are not used to this in other Francophone countries like Niger, Togo, Burkina Faso). We explained our project, he confirmed that it was do-able, we looked at maps and he told us that his brother was head of Mali customs at that border crossing. We didn't ask whether this was a blood brother or a 'brother' (close friend). We agreed prices and made the booking.

It is important not to travel in darkness, so we will leave at the crack of dawn to allow contingency time (breakdowns, border delays). We will stay in a hotel in Bobo overnight, load the bus with all our gear at 0500 the next morning and return to Bamako. We already know that eight of the ten operators will make this journey – that is fine because we need to have plenty of white faces on the bus so that customs see all our equipment as normal tourist luggage.

Mission Accomplished

So we had our licences, had found and booked our hotel and had contracted a bus-hire company. We had even found an excellent Oriental restaurant. Our team of ten operators is solid and we have now booked our airline tickets.

In the CQ WW CW Contest at the end of November we will sign TZ5A, with seven 1KW stations and monoband antennas for each of the six contest bands. We hope to activate the WARC bands as well, for a day or two before and after the contest.

Operators (QSL via home call) will be:

AA7A	Ned	TZ6NS
G3PJT	Bob	
G3SXW	Roger	TZ5A

G4BWP	Fred	TZ6WP
G4IRN	John	TZ6RN
K5VT	Vince	
K7WP	John	TZ6CW
KC7V	Mike	TZ6MF
KY7M	Lee	TZ6LF
N7NG	Wayne	TZ6NG

touristing to see the Manding area, near Bamako. Our schedule is:

Fri 18 Nov	arrive in Bamako
Sun 20 Nov	drive to Bobo to collect the equipment
Mon 21 Nov	drive back to Bamako
Tue 22 - Fri 25 Nov	install stations and antennas
Sat 26 -Sun 27 Nov	CQ WW CW Contest
Mon 28 – Thu 1 Dec	pile-ups, Manding, tear-down
Fri 2 Dec	fly home

Good Luck in the Contest!

We are hoping to break our previous record of 40 million points (about 16,000 QSOs). Even though low sunspot years are with us, we do gain an advantage being on the equator, as we benefit from the North-South propagation.

We will also renew our acquaintance with our good friend Siré and learn more about Bamako. Also, for the first time ever on these annual trips, we will take a day off for

The whole VooDude team looks forward to working you from Mali before, during and after the contest in November. And we promise to provide a report of our experiences for later publication. Good luck in the Contest!

Cray Valley return to the Isles of Scilly

Dave Lawley, G4BUO *g4buo@compuserve.com*

For a second year a small team from the Cray Valley RS travelled to St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, EU-011, for the IOTA Contest and M8C. We had been pleased with our seventh place in the 2004 contest on our first outing, and although there are limitations which make it impossible to put on a really large-scale entry from the islands, we wanted to see how far we could improve. In our sights were GU8D who, with the advantages of bigger antennas, more operators and especially the GU prefix, had only just beaten us in 2004.

The operating team would be the same as in 2004: Nobby, GØVJG; Ralph, 2EØATY; Richard, G7GLW; Simon, M3CVN, and me. Also on the team was Chris, GØFDZ, who is a great technician and invaluable when setting

up antennas and stations, but he declines to operate HF contests. Instead he concentrated on operating 10 GHz and was able to give the very rare IN69 square to a number of the deserving on that microwave band, one of his contacts being in excess of 550 kms.

We travelled on the Scillonian ferry on the preceding Monday, and because we planned to take a few more things compared with 2004, we arranged for two cars to be transported in the ferry's hold. Ralph's car tipped alarmingly when the crane picked it up on the harbourside at Penzance, but fortunately nothing spilled out.

We arrived on site at 1pm and found a good selection of steel scaffold poles waiting for us.

We managed to get all the antennas up and the cables run back to the barn before leaving at about 6pm. Most of the team had driven the 300 miles to Penzance overnight, so everyone was too knackered to set up the station and put it on the air that evening.

We managed to increase the height of the main antennas by 10ft over last year, which led to some problems as the rotator cables weren't quite long enough. The use of steel scaffold poles meant we couldn't get anything up really high and no support was higher than 40ft. The superb location on the east coast of the island compensated somewhat for the lack of antenna height.

Antennas for the contest were an 80m dipole at 39ft, a 40m dipole up in a tree at about 37ft, a TET HB33SP tribander at 41ft used on 20 and 10m, and a homebrew 10/15m quad with its centre also at 41ft. We mounted a Butternut near the barn for receive.

All antennas had to be broken down to no more than 8ft for transportation: when the vehicle is craned into the boat no roof-racks are allowed, so the antennas have to go inside. In addition to the contest antennas and Chris's microwave gear, we had dipoles for the WARC bands, a 5-el yagi for 6m and a 11-el for 2m. Last year we brought more than 1200ft of coax, which proved to be only just enough, but the innovation this time was to bring along my WX0B six-pak which was fed with two lengths of H100, and we found we had a little coax to spare. Coax stubs were mounted next to the six-pak and the whole lot covered by plastic boxes.

The days before the contest were spent mainly on VHF and the WARC bands, and with dipoles up at about 30ft we enjoyed some great pile-ups. 6m proved fruitful, with many contacts deep into Europe as well as back to the UK. The IN69 square is as rare on VHF as is the EU-011 reference on HF. Nobby brought his Acom 1000 for use with one of the

HF stations, but it also found use on 6m in the days before the contest.

A part of station set-up which always takes far too long is the computers. Chris, GØFDZ, and I spent many hours trying to get the GPRS card (kindly loaned by G4TSH) to integrate with the Writelog network. It wouldn't do it at all on the Windows 98SE laptops. We had a little more success with Windows 2000, but we couldn't get it working reliably and we realised that for the second year running we'd have to have a stand-alone cluster machine and could not feed spots automatically into Writelog. I was concerned that our multiplier performance would suffer and this turned out to be the case.

Unlike last year there was no strong 10m opening at the start of the contest, so Ralph 2EØATY, kicked off on 20m, but the band was a zoo and he found it hard to copy, what with all the Continental QRM and wide signals. All of a sudden the fact we were on EU-011 didn't seem to matter: very different from the situation before the contest. He struggled along, while I knocked off mults on CW, and after about 45 minutes we felt 10m would be good enough to run and the rate picked up, but once we switched to 15m things really got going with 171 QSOs and 181 QSOs in hours three and four respectively.

From then on we ran as hard as we could, and I kept telling them that conditions couldn't possibly stay as good as this: I felt a flare was on the way. After last year's doldrums it was great to be able to run 15m until nearly 2300z and 20m was still open when we left it just after 0100z. I was becoming concerned that we wouldn't have enough time to pull in QSOs and mults on 40 and 80m - what a nice dilemma!

The real revelation was the performance of Simon, M3CVN, on CW. Last year he had no code at all, but resolved to work on it and I got

him started last autumn, using G4FON's excellent Koch software. This year he was confidently running CW pile-ups at rates of over 100/hour. It also meant that the team wasn't totally reliant on me to work the mults on CW.

My predictions proved wrong and, although DX conditions weren't great, 15 and 10m were wide open to Europe on Sunday as well. We never heard ZL, but managed to get VK3 and VK7 on 20m for a couple of mults, and we worked a couple of dozen JAs (our best direction) which was an improvement on last year's single one.

We felt that activity was well up this year, and there were plenty more QSOs to be made on all the bands. Once again on the Sunday morning we had the dilemma of which band to operate, and we were aware that very many of the deserving hadn't managed to work us on CW.

I'm still not sure what the right CW/phone balance should be, but we could usually run faster on phone, so that's what we did for most of the time. The last four hours of the contest averaged 157 QSOs and at the end there were still plenty of QSOs to be had.

We're extremely pleased with the QSO total of 3,165 using very modest antennas, but I feel multipliers are still the weak point and the total of 501 is a little off the pace. The claimed score is 9.3 million, which would very nearly have been the winning score last year. We started out saying we wouldn't go back after 2005, but the whole trip, including some great openings on 6m in the week beforehand, has made us want to return in 2006 and give it another go.

Nobby, Ralph and I had each brought our partners and we managed to combine the radio trip with some walking and visits to the other islands, and of course the pubs. The Isles of Scilly are a wonderfully peaceful holiday

location. We met both of the resident amateurs on St. Mary's, John, M1IOS, and Mike, G3RPC.

As always, tear-down of the station only took a fraction of the time needed to put it up. At 10am on Monday morning we prised Nobby from the 20m pile-up on the one remaining rig and went outside to take everything down. Three hours later it was all packed into the two cars ready for the trip home.

While waiting to board the Scillonian we saw an antenna and equipment box loaded into the hold, and realised that the M1KTA/P team which had operated from the island of St. Agnes in the contest, must have been booked on the same trip home as us. On board we sought out Dom, M1KTA, and Clive, M5CHH. Theirs had been a smaller-scale operation but they enjoyed the contest and we spent the 2½-hour crossing back to Penzance swapping stories and planning for the next one.

Statistics:

Band	CW Qs	mults	Ph Qs	mults
80	112	35	76	40
40	218	33	255	52
20	266	67	806	98
15	130	44	626	68
10	98	20	574	44

3,164 QSOs x 501 mults = 9.3M points

Digest and CDXC website ads

Please note that ads can be placed both on the CDXC website and in the *Digest*. Contact Chairman John, G3LAS, in the case of the former and *Digest* Editor G3RFX in the case of the latter.

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory – 40th Anniversary Edition

New IOTA reference number issued

AF-098 C9 Sofala District group
(Mozambique)
AF-099/Pr SU Matruh Region group
(Egypt)
AS-174/Pr RØK Chukchi Sea Coast
West group (Russian Federation - Asia)
EU-189 GM, MM Isle of Rockall
(Scotland)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AF-098 C93DY Chiloane Island
(July/August 2005)
EU-150 CQ2I Insua Island
(July 2005)
EU-189 MSØIRC/P Isle of Rockall
(June 2005)

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 21 August 2005

AF-099/Pr SU8IOTA White Rock
(August 2005)
AS-174/Pr RØK Shalaurova
Island (August 2005)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA

RSGB IOTA Manager

21 August 2005

Email: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk

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

Visit the website for the latest IOTA information.

HFC2005

**RSGB HF & IOTA Convention
2005**

Friday 7th – Sunday 9th October

at the

Gatwick Worth Hotel

Crabbet Park, Turners Hill Road,
Crawley, West Sussex RH10 4ST

See www.rsgb-hfc.org.uk

Enquiries to hfc@rsgb.org.uk

IOTA 2004

Don Field, G3XTT

After the success of the IOTA Millennium award scheme, which was run by CDXC, it was agreed to run a similar programme in 2004, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the IOTA awards.

IOTA 2004 attracted fewer entries than the Millennium awards, almost certainly because of the poor band conditions. Totals were also somewhat lower, only four stations reaching the Gold level of 900 points. But pretty much everyone who took part commented on how much they enjoyed participating in the challenge, with quite a few posting their scores on the CDXC webpage as the year progressed, adding to the sense of competition and achievement.

Particular congratulations are due to Malik, 4X4JU, who heads the table, and to Cezar, VE3LYC, the only North American to score over 900 points for a Gold certificate. Cezar says in his entry that he was determined to show that a high score could be achieved from North America, but it is clear that he had to work very hard for it. Many others settled for the lower levels of certificate when it became obvious that the propagation gods were not on their side, often calling a halt when they had just enough in hand to guarantee a Silver or Bronze. One can only imagine how frustrating it must have been, though, for the likes of Zoli, YO2BP, to get so close to the Gold (883 out of the required 900), but to fail to catch those last few islands that would have made the difference.

All the entries were well presented, the majority using the spreadsheet downloadable from the CDXC webpages (tnx G3LAS), and only two ended with lower scores than claimed, due to a misunderstanding of the rules in one case and an arithmetical error in

the other. It was also nice to see several SWL entries.

There were relatively few applications for the DXpeditioner awards, although anyone who activated a new IOTA during the year would have qualified. Congratulations to Manohar Arasu. VU2UR. and his colleagues for the certificates they earned for putting on two new Indian island groups.

And last but not least, thanks to Nevada for sponsoring IOTA 2004, without which the programme could not have taken place.

The table lists all award winners, though applications will continue to be accepted until the end of the year.

4X4JU	931	Gold
VE3LYC	926	Gold
9A4KA	923	Gold
OZ5MJ	904	Gold
YO2BP	883	Silver
GW0NCU	865	Silver
UT7WZA	850	Silver
OK2RU	818	Silver
OZ4RT	766	Silver
OZ1ACB	691	Silver
LZ1HA	686	Silver
S55SL	678	Silver
OK1AOV	635	Silver
DF5WA	633	Silver
W4ABW	627	Silver
DL3JPN	622	Silver
9A9AU	612	Silver
LZ3SM	605	Silver
9A2NO	603	Silver
LZ1XL	603	Silver
G4NXG/M	576	Silver
EA4MY	575	Silver
DJ9BK	566	Silver
G0WRE	565	Silver
DL3APO	562	Silver
JR0DLU	531	Silver

VU2JVA	Gold	VU2SWS	Platinum
VU2KGN	Gold	VU2UR	Platinum
VU2KLG	Gold	VU2VIT	Gold
VU2LR	Gold	VU3RRU	Gold
VU2NDR	Gold	VU3WIA	Gold
VU2NXM	Gold	VU3YFD	Gold
VU2RMJ	Gold		

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP pcooper@guernsey.net

By the time you get to read this, CQWW RTTY will be close! This is the last full weekend in September, so this year it falls on the weekend of the 24/25th.

This is an excellent contest, and attracts a great deal of good DX participation, so whether you want to have a really good go at it, or whether you just want to work a few new DXCC entities, then this is the contest to try. The exchange is simply 599 and your CQ zone, which in the case of Gs is 14.

When setting up your buffers, I would be tempted to suggest that you put something like this: Hiscall TU UR 599 14 14 14 de Mycall BK.

However, it is worth having another buffer with just one instance of 14 in it that you could send as many times as needed, depending on conditions. In most cases, folk will know you are in Zone 14, but I am willing to bet you will get a few that will ask for a repeat.

The ones to watch are the US calls, as these are not always where the callsign indicates, nor where the contest software assumes they are either. And remember that W/VE stations will send their State/Area as well as the CQ zone.

Do make sure you watch what is sent, and enter that, rather than just logging whatever Writelog, N1MM or your own contest software predicts.

Whether you plan a full-time effort, or just a bit of casual search and pounce, do read the rules fully, and make sure you understand which category you are entering. If you are a single op, then you could be high or low power, but these preclude the use of any form of DX cluster or spotting net. If you wish to make use of the cluster (and it can be very helpful if you are only a casual S & P'er looking to increase your country count), then choose the assisted category, but be aware that there is no power class in this section.

In November there is the WAEDC RTTY Contest, which is the one that has QTCs. Many folk shy away from QTCs, yet it is fairly simple, and can increase your score dramatically. You will find a separate piece all about handling QTCs on page 33 of this *Digest*.

Over the past few weeks (as I write this), there has been a great deal of RTTY activity on the WARC bands. Not only have the usual Europeans been around, but there has been some very good DX about too. I know that you will often find no RTTY activity on these

bands, but it doesn't usually take many CQ calls to generate some interest, and a spot on the cluster will soon follow. Why not take the initiative and start to CQ on a dead band? I am sure you will find it quite productive, and you may well get some rare DX calling you.

The frequencies to try are around 10.138, 18.101 and 24.921 MHz, give or take a little.

Of late, spots for the WARC bands have included the following: A61AJ, 9G5OO, YV5YMA, MWØCPZ, HBØ/DL6JZ, CE3AKK plus a selection of W/VE calls. A61AJ has been very active on all bands on RTTY, and QSLs for this operation go to DJ2MX.

Despite my rather dodgy start to the year, I still managed to go to Friedrichshafen again this year, accompanied this time by Andy, GU4WTN, and Dick, GU4CHY.

Flight times from Guernsey meant an overnight stay in the UK before flying out to Germany, but this year it seemed to be so much more complicated and involved going via Gatwick, and then by train up to Stansted. Not the easiest or quickest of journeys, and it was quite late before we got to our guest house. The flight out, courtesy of Ryanair, was fine, and we landed in Germany before lunchtime.

This year we were prepared for the train journey down to the harbour, and we were able to offer advice to others, as though we were seasoned veterans of the trip. After the weather we had been used to, it did seem hotter here, but I don't think we realised just how much hotter.

As last year, we checked in and then went for a walk round the town, and what do you know? We ended up in the same beer garden as last year! I guess it was around 2pm when we got there, and after an hour or so, we were joined by Waldemar, DK3VN, and we also

saw another part-time GU resident: Bob, G(U)3VXJ, who also joined us for a drink. At some point someone wondered if we ought to continue looking around, but somehow it was 6pm already and so it was back to the hotel to shower and change for dinner. On the way back to the hotel, we passed a weather station, and this informed us that it was 32° C and the humidity was up around 92%. Whew! Hot or what? No, it was to get much hotter, and much more humid than that.

After a pleasant meal, and the odd beer or seven, we went off to bed. I found it very hard to sleep and ended up having a very cold shower at 4am, before dropping off to sleep for just a few hours, waking up very hot again at about 6am. We all met for breakfast, and then made our way to the Messe via the free bus.

On the Friday evening, I went off to the RTTY dinner with Waldemar. We learned that Friday had been the hottest day in Germany, with a recorded temperature of 35C in Stuttgart, although there were indications that it was a little higher than that around Friedrichshafen, as several folk were saying that the thermometer in their hire cars was registering 39C.

On the way back to the hotel from the RTTY dinner, there was an amazing thunderstorm, complete with torrential rain. Waldemar and I got drenched just getting from the taxi to the bar, and then even wetter as we were told that the front door was closed, and we had to enter via the side door! This meant retracing our steps and walking a bit further to that door. By the time we entered, it was as if we had been ducked in the lake! And after just the time it took to drink one beer, we were both steaming, literally!

After a reasonably early breakfast at 8am on a Saturday morning, we once again caught the free bus up to the halls.

Saturday was spent making purchases, many of which had been checked out the day before. I took a shopping list with me, and this definitely helped.

During the morning, Waldemar had arranged a meeting point for those folk who were not able to make the RTTY dinner, and although only a few turned up, I did meet Bo, OZ8ABE, plus Casper, HB9AWS, and his son Daniel, HB9TOC here. They also got copies of Datacom to take home.

On the Saturday evening the other GUs, Waldemar, and I all went to the Bavarian Contest Club Buffet. This was a very good event, where we all met folk we had worked many times. There was a good contingent of Gs, plus numerous calls that are familiar to anyone entering RTTY contests, or chasing RTTY DX. Saturday evening also saw another thunderstorm as we were starting to leave, but the rain wasn't as heavy. As usual, we ended the evening in the bar by the hotel.

We had planned a lazy Sunday morning, and indeed we did have a lazy breakfast, but for some reason we all decided another trip to the halls was called for. I guess we only had a couple of hours there, but it was good fun. However, my resolution to visit the Zeppelin museum got forgotten once again. Maybe next year? This year we had gone for an extra day, and having that extra day at the show was much better and also allowed a much more relaxed stroll around the stands. It was definitely the wise thing to do.

The journey back started a little late, as the flight was delayed by 20 minutes, and this had a nasty knock-on effect for two of us GUs, as we had to get back to Gatwick for a 1950 flight. I can't quote times, as there simply wasn't time to look at a watch, but we checked in at Gatwick just after 1930, some 20 minutes before the departure time! This was far too close for comfort. We also had to clear customs, and for some reason they

picked on Andy. His bag was emptied and all contents were searched. I had a 2m/70cm vertical, and this caused some concern to the officials. It was taken off and checked against a list, questions were asked, and finally it was handed back to me. It isn't the best feeling when you are one of the last to board the plane, with everyone staring at you!

If you haven't been before, then do consider going next year. Getting there is fairly easy, although I would suggest booking by the end of January to ensure you get a room and a flight.

If you want to see some of the pictures from this year, then take a look at

<http://home.arcor.de/waldemar.kebsch/>

and also

<http://www.ik1pmr.com/vari/Friedrichshafen-2005/>.

DX Info:

A61AJ via DJ2MX:

Mario Lovric, Kampenwandstr. 13, D-81671 München.

(For NA/SA, via K2UO:

George R. Oliva Jr, 5 Windsor Drive, Eatontown, NJ 07724)

9G5OO via DL4WK:

Wolfgang Kunicke, Mühlenstr. 30, D-17098 Friedland.

HBØ/PA6TUE via PI4TUE:

ESRAC, EHOOG 13.19, Postbus 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven, Netherlands.

73 for now

Phil, GUØSUP

The WAE RTTY Contest and QTCs

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

What are they all about?

Each year the WAE RTTY Contest comes along and there are many of us who keep saying “SRI NO QTC” because we simply do not understand what they are all about.

QTC traffic is quite simple really, and very easy to handle with the right software. In WAE RTTY everyone can work everyone, unlike the CW and SSB legs of this contest.

A ‘QTC’ is simply a list of (up to) ten contacts made by one or other station, showing the time, callsign worked, and the serial number exchanged. Once a batch has been sent, it cannot be sent again.

There is very little to understand, except that you can only exchange them with someone from another continent, and the batch cannot contain a QSO sent between the two stations doing the exchange. For example, if my 10th QSO in the contest is with AA5AU, and I send him some QTCs, I cannot send him that 10th contact, as it contains the QSO made between the two of us.

QTC traffic is normally sent in batches of 10 contacts and each line contains the time, callsign and serial number of that contact. Each batch is numbered in the format 001/10 meaning the first batch containing 10 contacts. Although there is no absolute requirement to send or receive a batch containing 10 contacts, this is the default for most contesting software, and is the easiest to handle.

To make life easy for me, I usually aim to get about 100 contacts in the log before I start bothering to send QTCs, as this would give

me 10 QTC batches, but you can receive from the outset.

Don’t bother trying to exchange them with that weak ZL, whose exchange you only just got after several attempts, as you will end up re-sending them time and time again. Far better is to wait and go for that UA9 with the S9++ signal, or maybe the 5B4 or EA8. Later into the contest there will be plenty of Ws and VEs with good signals who will readily exchange QTC traffic with you.

So, how is it going to happen? First of all, you will call someone and exchange the usual contest report with them, and one of you will send “TX/RX QTC??”. Assuming the answer is yes, then one of you will send, and one will receive. How you decide who will do what is up to you. Some folk use a buffer for each option, and some will tell you what is going to happen. It really doesn’t matter who does what, as both parties get the same points for the exchange of QTCs.

For now, I will assume you will be on the receiving end. He will send QRV? To which you reply QRV, and then he will start sending. You are looking for the batch number, so watch out for that first. Next comes the actual traffic, and it will most likely be one contact per line, unless propagation screws it up. So you will end up with something like this:

```
001/10
0012 G3URA 049
0013/AA5AU/056
0014-RA9FOE-012
```

etc. for ten lines. Whether there is a space, a dash or a slash between the fields depends on what software is being used to send the data,

and is not important. If you have all the data and the calls look OK, then simply send QSL TU, and let him get on with the contest. If you have one line of garbage, then just ask for "07 AGN PSE" and he will send line 7 again. If there is more than one line, do it one line at a time, as this is less confusing all round. Too much garbage, and you can ask for ALL AGN PSE.

Once you have all the data, you will need to store it, and how you do that will depend on your software. Some methods of doing this will be explained later. If you elect to send, then the first batch of 10 QTCs you send with your contest software will be your first 10 contacts. The second batch will be the next 10, and so on. Once a batch has been sent, it cannot be re-sent, so please do make sure the other guy has all the data correctly before ending the QSO and closing the QTC box.

Now you have handled QTC traffic, what does it mean to you? Let's use a simple example, as this will make it clearer.

Suppose you have worked 100 contacts in the contest, and there are 30 mults in that total. This would give you 30×100 as a final score, ie 3000 points.

Now, if you received 50 QTCs from 5 different contacts, your score will now look like this: $30 \times (100+50) = 30 \times 150 = 4500$ points.

This represents a 50% increase in your score, and is well worth the extra points.

Handling QTC traffic with MMTTY

MMTTY is not able to handle QTCs directly, but as many of you will be using MMTTY anyway, I have given some thought as to how you might be able to do this task. You will NOT be able to send any QTCs, but it doesn't really matter whether you send or receive, as

10 points are given to both sender and recipient.

You will need to think about whether you want to create buffers to aid you in this. It might be useful to have one that says CAN YOU SEND ME QTC? and maybe one that says QRV, and another for QSL AND TU at the end. If you need a repeat, I would suggest simply doing that on the fly.

Within MMTTY there is a text capture facility and you could use this to simply receive the QTC traffic, and then save it as a simple text file by the batch number.

Go to FILE| SCREEN TEXT TO FILE and then save the screen text as 001-10.txt or whatever, but please remember to save the callsign of the person that sent them to you.

Alternatively, you could simply open several instances of NOTEPAD and then highlight the text and copy it to NOTEPAD. Again, save it as the batch number, and include the callsign of the sender.

When you come to sort out your final score, simply add the number of QTCs to the number of QSOs and then multiply by the number of mults, but do remember to take into account the bonus points for the various bands.

At the end of the contest, simply use 'cut & paste' to copy all of the QTC data to one text file. When you submit your log, include the QTC file with the rest.

This is not an ideal method, but then neither is using MMTTY alone for contest work. I can only suggest that if you enter contests on a regular basis that you invest in one of the major contest programs such as Writelog or RCKRtty. Although you could use WF1B, please note that the rules have changed since this software was last updated, and it will not score your log correctly.

Handling QTC Traffic with Writelog

Writelog is well suited to handling QTC traffic and is a delight to use. Before you start the contest, you must ensure that you have the correct buffers set up, as the software uses specific positions in the buffer that you may generally use for other things. You cannot change these buffer positions, so it is vital that you put the correct messages in the right places.

These buffers are in Shift+F8, Shift+F9, Shift+F10 and Shift+F11.

When you start the QTC procedure you press ALT+R to receive and ALT+S to send. This brings up the right QTC dialogue box that has buttons to send QRV/QSL etc., depending on whether you are sending or receiving.

These buttons are the ones that send the text stored in Shift+F8 to F11, so you must program them in the right order.

When you receive, the RTTY receive window shows the lines, and they change colour when complete. At that point, you can click anywhere in the line to save it to the dialogue box. Do this for each complete line, and then click SAVE once you are happy that you have all the data correct.

When sending, you simply click on the box to send the data. If the other party asks for a fill of a particular line, use Alt+1 to send line one, Alt+2 to send line two etc. Then, once the QTC exchange is complete, simply click the SAVE button and go and look for some more QTCs.

There is plenty of help in the Writelog help files, but don't try looking for QTC in the index! Go to the CONTENTS at the beginning, and you will see a list of the supported contests. As it may depend on

which version of the help file you have, I won't mention the page number, but look for WAE contest in the Contents.

Handling QTC Traffic with WF1B

It is some while since I last used WF1B for RTTY contesting, so I will only give you a brief understanding of how to work the QTCs with this software.

As mentioned before, WF1B has not been updated and will not score the log correctly, so it probably isn't the best program to use.

To get access to the QTC boxes, you have to use Ctrl+S for the SEND QTC box, or Ctrl+R for the receive box.

If you are receiving, then you have to click on EACH field as it comes in, and make sure you click on them in the right order, as trying to change what you have entered is not the easiest thing. When you have all the data, it can be worth winding the squelch up on the radio to stop further lines being decoded, or the QTC data will scroll off the screen!

WF1B prefers to see spaces between the fields, and if you get slashes, then you might find you have to start entering it all by hand. In theory, you can use the right-hand mouse button to click on the whole line, BUT ONLY if it is in the right format.

It is possible to edit the entire QTC data after the transmission has ended by typing EDIT SQTC to edit sent QTC, or EDIT RQTC to edit the received QTC into the callsign field.

If this all sounds as though it is hard work with WF1B, then maybe it is! Although I got used to it, and did manage it for many years, it was only when I started using Writelog that I realised how easy it could be with the right software.

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

As usual, it's been a busy couple of months on the air, with the culmination of the preparation work for GB5HQ paying off with the IARU HF Championship contest itself in July, soon after followed by IOTA, the RSGB's flagship HF Contest. [*For an account of the Cray Valley RS's expedition to the Isles of Scilly and their M8C activity from Dave, G4BUO, see page 24. Ed.*]

But it wasn't all hard work, as there was also an opportunity to visit Germany and the Ham Radio exhibition as well. Something very different from normal this time is the article from John Pepper, GØCHQ. This is in response to my query over issues of safety concerning (contest) amateur radio stations, in particular portable ones, in the last *Digest*. I'm sure you'll find it interesting reading.

IOTA Contest 2005

This year's IOTA contest was another success. From reading the reports on the 3830 claimed score reflector, other stories published on the Internet, and speaking with some operators from leading UK multi-op teams, it seems that this year could have seen an all-time record number of multipliers active. That's good for the contest as a whole, and also for the IOTA awards programme overall. Several of the expeditions seem to be fairly casual operations, combined with a holiday with friends or family.

I've not seen any scores myself, but there are rumours that a Croatian team will be claiming a new multi-op record too. Propagation seemed much improved compared with IOTA 2004, and indeed far better than we should ideally have expected at this stage of the solar cycle. HF band conditions were good, with

long openings to Europe (and the majority of those 'easy' EU-xxx mults.). Finding DX multipliers was difficult, and this sort of propagation must have made it even tougher than normal for IOTA operations outside Europe to be heard. My operating plan that worked well last time was revised on the fly as the continued HF propagation delayed activity appearing on the low bands, and high levels of QRN on 80m across Europe. The following few weeks have seen the EUHFC contest, and the CW leg of Worked All Europe, both of which suffered with 10m and 15m being very quiet.

One of the earlier claimed scores announced was a multi-op score of just over 10 million by OH9A, with just two operators, a pair of verticals and an 80m dipole. Admittedly their island QTH must have a very good take-off for 3,300 QSO in 24 hours.

I operated in the 12-hour section Single Operator section again this year from home, as a plan to do some more island-hopping in Croatia didn't quite come to fruition. I've realised that from my QTH, and with a SO1R setup, how important it is to keep looking for multipliers. So the majority of my activity was Search and Pounce. I even went as far as having a Post-It note on my PC monitor reminding me "Do not Run!". A nice bonus of this style of operation was that you would tune over a number of the serious Multi-Op stations a number of times. It was interesting to see that many of these stations were very close in terms of QSO numbers after several hours. To me this said that there was always a steady stream of callers, the activity and propagation were good enough to support it, and variances could be easily explained by the amount of time chosen to spend on CW,

where the rate speed in IOTA is certainly less than SSB. The deciding factor, as ever, will be the multiplier totals, and the success of your counterparts in this area isn't really obvious during the event itself.

Another fairly common trait coming out from the post-contest chat was that there were more visits from Mr Murphy, with a number of software and hardware problems experienced. This is to be expected for IOTA stations when putting together a portable station from scratch at short notice, although hopefully most of the system should have been able to be tested before leaving home. The IOTA contest adds slightly more risk of incident than most contests for the high percentage of entrants experiencing some boat travel, sea water, sand, and so on, none of which are known for being particularly radio-friendly.

Also some people found out the hard way that certain things we take for granted from home (such as a reliable electricity supply) are far more of a luxury at some island locations! But it was reassuring to see an overall philosophical response to most problems that occurred, with folk still enjoying an island holiday, even if their contest results were below expectations.

Friedrichshafen

I attended the Ham Radio exhibition in Friedrichshafen for the first time this year. For the social side of meeting amateurs and contesters from around Europe (and beyond) it surely can't be beaten. With a low cost airline flying directly to Friedrichshafen from the UK, and a number of reasonably priced hotels and guest houses in the area, visiting needn't be expensive. Whilst attempting to book a room in a hotel earlier in the year using my best schoolboy German on the telephone, as soon as I mentioned the dates I wanted, the response was "Oh, ja, die Ham Radio...". It's certainly a well-known event locally.

I didn't even have time to visit the lake, but there's always next year. Other UK visitors flew to Zurich, and the (of course) very efficient railway swiftly delivered them to Friedrichshafen.

So your radio trip could easily be extended by a day or two for some general tourism, which may be perfect if you're bringing along your partner. More brave souls travel by road, which at least does give the option of taking more items home with you. Despite that, several antennas were spotted as hand luggage for some well known GU guys in Departures on the way home.

From the contest perspective, it was nice to be able to see a wide variety of keyers, station controllers and amplifiers all under the same roof, especially those that are not available yet in the UK. Likewise, being able to compare the build and performance figures of Optibeam, Force12 and SteppIR yagis was useful – I just wish I was in the market for a new large yagi! The legendary flea market did live up to expectations, with all manner of wares available – some of which would have to be stored in the 'will definitely come in useful one day' drawer back home.

Away from the trading halls and meeting areas, Roger, G3SXW, gave a well attended presentation on the history of the VooDoo contest group. Walter, DJ6QT, gave a WRTC update and Ben, DL6RAI, drew the results of the 50th Anniversary WAE Contest Superbowl 'raffle', which had prompted all-time record participation levels in the three WAE contests in 2004. The DARC had a number of meeting areas, one of which was for HF Contesting. Additionally the Bavarian Contest Club (BCC) had their own meeting area where plenty of well known contest operators could be found.

A number of groups organise evening meetings and dinners. One of the most popular was the BCC buffet. An amusing after-dinner

moment was when one of the secrets of the world-beating CN8WW CQ WW operations, a BCC endeavour, was revealed. The technological marvel that was unveiled was an operator's chair with a hole in it, and a bucket mounted underneath. The said operating chair was then put up for auction. Although played for laughs here, I recall some serious discussions about taking 'comfort breaks' or not during contests on the CQ-Contest reflector. If anyone is really interested they can look it up for themselves. My photo record of the moment includes a 4ft inflatable Micro-lite DXpedition team penguin mascot sitting on the chair. It takes a little explaining when showing it to friends, and perhaps sitting in front of a radio for 24 hours at a time seems sane in comparison!

Now over to the article from John, GØCHQ, regarding our contest safety obligations:

Contest Safety

As a member of CDXC I read with interest in each *Digest* about members' feats of achievement, whether it be activating a rare DX entity or operating a contest station. Rarely do I have the experience, knowledge or competence to contribute to these interesting articles. However when reading the July *Digest* I was surprised to read an article on contest safety. As a Health and Safety consultant, here was a topic I could contribute some guidance to!

The information I have provided does not list every single regulation in full detail. Instead I have taken relevant information and provided it in bullet point format or practical guidance. At the end of this article a resource list is provided for more detailed information.

There are legal, ethical and moral reasons why we should ensure the safety of those involved and that of the safety of those who may come into contact with the group's or individual's activity.

It should be noted that prior to the new self assessment safety regulations (six pack 1992) health and safety legislation was prescriptive - the Factory Act, for example. This meant that no flexibility was available, for instance if a machine guard had to be a certain distance from the machine with a set-size mesh. Then if you did not conform, the operating of that machine was illegal. The legislation was not flexible and did not make allowances for different uses within the workplace. While the new legislation does have additional requirements, for example recording your findings, it also has the benefit of allowing you to decide, by using risk assessment, what is reasonably practical for your undertakings.

Lee raised safety concerns in his regular column regarding the safety of the public and that of the club's own members when establishing a temporary station. The following safety-related information only applies to the UK - maritime/overseas activities would not be covered by UK legislation, with the exception of EEC member states that have adopted this legislation.

Large contest groups that are steered with a committee should have Public Liability Insurance. This indemnifies the individuals against the possibility of litigation, in the event of someone making a claim due to a tort they feel they have received as a result of the group's activities. If the group does not have any form of insurance that covers all of their activities, then they could find themselves with large legal bills and the prospect of financial compensation. As we find ourselves living in a compensation culture the prospect of a claim from an individual member of the group, or member of the public, is a real prospect. The pecuniary and non-pecuniary losses are based on the amount of disability ie how much it has effected the person. Pecuniary loss deals with the financial compensation based on age and quality of life prior to the accident. There could also be a

criminal case to answer - in which case a fine, a custodial sentence, or a combination of the both could be enforced.

It is well worth any group establishing a safety file of information covering risk assessment, training, competent persons, equipment testing, method statements for setting up the contest station. In the event of an accident the claimant's solicitor will request standard disclosure information from the group. A time limit of three months is placed on this information being provided.

Recently public liability insurance has significantly risen in cost. Often there are stories in the national papers that a local scout group has had to cancel a fireworks display due to the costs of insurance. It's only when you look deeper do you realise that this has mainly been due to the poor safety performance of the individuals involved, and the number of accidents/injuries/severity of the incidents over a small time period. The message is clear that if you wish to keep public liability insurance at a reasonable cost you must invest time in your safety performance and procedures.

A lot of the information to establish your safety file can be found from your own work resources by taking the parts you need and altering them to suit your group's needs. Another good source of safety information is available from various universities which have webpages. I would recommend that you record all your safety work and e-mail the information to those concerned so that there is a dated historical trail. This indicates that, where reasonably practical, you have used control measures to reduce risk wherever possible.

Mobile Towers

Mobile towers are effectively lifting equipment and as such come under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment

Regulations 1998 (LOLER). LOLER applies to any item of equipment used for lifting or lowering of loads. The regulations cover:

- Risk Assessment
- Use
- Strength/stability
- Lifting of people
- Fixed/Mobile lifts
- Safe working Load Information
- Competent persons
- Inspection/Testing/Inspection Requirements
- Record Keeping

Any equipment should be examined prior to being put into use and there should be a minimum examination once a year when not in use. Realistically the most common type of examination will be a visual one, as using a more sophisticated examination by ultrasound or X-ray is not available to most groups. Obviously any faults that are sub-surface will not be detected, which could lead to an undetected failure. I would also state that equipment should be allotted a 'work life' after which you seek newer equipment and scrap older faulty equipment. It is perfectly acceptable to use equipment that is suitable for its intended use and that is in good condition and has no obvious faults etc. If you choose to use equipment in the knowledge that it is faulty then there are certain risks. For example, if on inspection it is found to have been in such condition prior to use then you will face prosecution, fine or imprisonment or a combination of both.

Public Access

A group or individual who are establishing a contest station in an area that the public have access to have a duty of care. This is not only to those involved in the work, but also those who may be exposed to the risks of such work. The use of competent persons is a must when raising a tower. The use of safety

notices and a barrier of rope/tape etc. are well recommended. While those involved may fully appreciate the results of a tower falling on them, the general public in the main will have no clue! As such they will wander into the most dangerous areas often to get a 'better look'. It is essential that a safe working area is established and if needed any related safety devices clearly marked and/or locked off to prevent tampering or vandalism. The planning of the lift prior to commencement is essential so that everyone is aware of the planned works.

Alcohol Ban

Lee mentions in his article that some groups have an alcohol ban. While nothing in safety legislation enforces this, it's probably another indication of a group's commitment to health and safety.

It's a well-known fact that most accidents in the workplace occur in the afternoon. There's nothing wrong with having a drink after the work's done and it will taste better as a result.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE has to be provided by employers to protect employees while they carry out work on their behalf. An employer cannot charge for such items of equipment. He does have to maintain/store the equipment. From a contest group's perspective I would recommend the use of PPE where required. On particularly hazardous work I would make a point of having it available and advise those carrying out the work that they must use it.

As a health and safety practitioner I find it a source of great contention with some users refusing to wear PPE and then developing an industrial disease or having an accident which results in permanent disfigurement. It is better to use it and be protected than live with the results of not using it.

Site Information

It should be provided where a hazard cannot be controlled in any other way. For example if a group is using vertical antennas that a member of the public could come into contact with, then signage must be used to warn of the hazard. I would also ensure that if generators are being used that they are cooled before attempting refill, as refill accidents could be severe. Any risk or hazard, ie electrical, chemical or physical, should be indicated to warn the user/passers-by.

Tower Safety

While I cannot comment on the reasons that led to the accident involving Krassy, K1LZ, it should be noted that in the UK falls from height, despite all the recent legislation, have increased. The government has several schemes in place to reduce fall from heights. Most of these involve serious life-changing injuries. Often they can be fatal, which indicates that any work at height is of a higher risk and should be taken into account accordingly. Climbing on a tower that hasn't been tested as safe should not be an option. Testing that it is safe by climbing it is not suitable.

The use of safety equipment is essential and the person climbing should have been trained to do so and have the necessary experience, knowledge and understanding of the task. In addition they should be aware of how to use the safety equipment and check that it is in good condition for use prior to use. Consideration should be given to the work environment ie is it daytime/nighttime and are you exposed to high winds or rain? If possible I would advise only to climb the tower as a last alternative. If possible lower the tower to work on as at ground level. Then you will have eliminated one of the higher risk elements. Although it might take longer to lower the tower and raise it again, it's a much better and safer working practice.

If you have to climb onto a tower to erect it, then inspection audits will need to be carried out at a minimum of every six months. Personally I would reconsider if it were suitable for use and look to invest in equipment that doesn't rely on regular climbing, thus removing the risk to users and members of the public.

Summary

It is not possible to cover every eventuality in your activities. Small accidents will happen, whether it is a small cut/graze etc. This is why it is important to have a first-aid kit and preferably a trained first responder. (Courses for first responders are actually quite cheap and a great life skill) We deal with risk everyday in our normal lives, so let's be realistic and understand what we are dealing with so as to reduce the possibility of it occurring and with varying degrees of severity as a result.

In all your activities you should seek to lower risk so that you have a good time! It is a far better approach to undertake to do this rather than face the results of ignoring the requirements. Most of the work can be done prior to arriving using the risk assessment/work method statement as a checklist if required. It is surprising what you can miss when you are in a hurry to set up.

Consider the efforts required to create a successful contest station. For example, finding a good site, ensuring the station is putting out an effective signal, and providing accommodation for operators. In comparison, the resources required to address the safety aspect is very small. This can actually save you money too. Legislation provides the minimum legal requirements and it is up to those involved to achieve their own levels of competence above the legal requirement.

If you are well prepared there is no reason why you cannot enjoy this aspect of our hobby. I am always trying to convince others that productivity will increase if you are comfortable and safe.

John Pepper, GØCHQ

MIOSH MIIRSM Tech Sp

Resource List:

<http://www.iosh.co.uk>
<http://www.hse.gov.co.uk>
<http://www.rospa.org.uk>
<http://www.britishsafetycouncil.org>

That's about all for this time. Thanks again to the Dave [page 24] and John for their input. To everyone else - please send your reports in too. It's always interesting to hear fresh ideas about all areas of radiosport from other people and groups. This includes what antennas and other equipment are in use and why, how the problems of transporting equipment to far-off lands, and getting permission to operate at all are resolved, and the actual strategy applied during a contest itself. There's almost always something to learn from every event – please let us share in it.

I've discovered recently that I was sent an e-mail to the CDXC address that never arrived. I will respond personally to any emails sent to the contests@cdxc.org.uk address, so if you have sent something and I've not replied to you, please get in touch again.

73 Lee, GØMTN

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

VU4 Hamfest

from VU2MY

Dear friends,

We would like to express our appreciation for your remarkable service to the teams that worked during the December 2004 VU4 DXpedition & tsunami relief operations. The contributions made by you and amateur radio community to NIAR have been invaluable to us.

This activity received tremendous appreciation in the electronic and print media all over the world. The ARRL's Award and German DX Associations appreciation to the members of the team is certainly the recognition for hams and for their role in disaster management.

We are now making every effort to see that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are permanently habited with licensed radio amateurs - as a response to the appreciation and world-wide demand, the Government of India is considering very positively NIAR's proposals.

Ms Bharathi, VU2RBI, along with three other hams from NIAR including me, had the opportunity to attend the USA's Dayton Hamvention 2005 and the German Hamradio 2005, and we personally met several DXers, Interestingly, this time the Government of India had sponsored senior officials to both these events to the award ceremonies conducted in the USA and Germany. These officials had interacted with several hams from all over the world and visited exhibition stalls besides attending some of the seminar/lectures. These officials also received several requests from DX hams to permit them to go to Andaman and Nicobar (VU4), also to the Lakshadweep Islands (VU7). The NIAR

has also forwarded several such requests to these officials.

The officials have made favorable proposals to government of India to further promote amateur radio activity in India, which include permission for foreign hams to operate from the VU4 and VU7 islands.

There is a dialogue going on between NIAR and the Government of India on a regular basis. Now the officials wish to know from us as to how many hams will be seriously attending a Hamfest, if it is organised in these islands - also with special permission granted to them to operate their amateur radio stations during the Hamfest and also thereafter.

We have promised them to come back with favorable information in another two weeks' time. It appears the Government will consider seriously if there are good number of hams who are willing to attend the Hamfest sponsored by Government of India as they would like to hear and see the hams' participation. This will also enable the Government to taken many steps to promote amateur radio in India and in this region affected by tsunamis.

It is in the above context, NIAR has proposed to conduct a Hamfest in Portblair, Andaman Islands during Christmas Holidays & New year i.e between 25 December, 2005- 10th January, 2006 (any 3 days in between). Port Blair has good infrastructure facilities Air and Sea connections from Chennai and Kolkatta.

The Governor of the Islands and others important functionaries of government of India will be the honored guests. This is besides the permission to be granted to DXers visiting the Islands to operate Ham sets.

Thus DXers will have the opportunity to meet the First Citizen of the islands and with his help we will also try to organize visits to nearby islands to see the aboriginals (tribes) whom it is not normally possible for all to see. It is not necessary that every ham carries a ham radio set to the Indian Islands from your lands - as NIAR can also make arrangements/facilities for the equipment from those already sponsoring us.

May I now request you to send in your opinion addressed to:

Prof. Ram Kapse
Lt Governor

Andaman and Nicobar Islands,
Port Blair
India.

Email: lg@and.nic.in or ramkapse@and.nic.in

Also a copy by e-mail to NIAR: vu2nro@gmail.com for follow-up and further action.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,
S.Suri, VU2MY
Chairman, NIAR

Letters and E-mails to the Editor

from 2MØMGY

Dear Martyn,

Since joining CDXC I have now been encouraged to take part in contests and took part in my very first one during the IARU Contest a couple of weeks ago. I really enjoyed it, even though I didn't make a lot of contacts.

I wondered if it would be possible to ask you for a little bit of advice. I'm fairly newly licensed, so still finding my feet in this wonderful hobby.

My problem is that a few weeks ago I put a 10m length of coax between my aerial and my radio and I suffered a lot of static, so I changed it to a 30m length of coax (both RG-213) and the static disappeared until about 10 days ago, when the problem reoccurred and the static is really bad on 40m and 20m.

Is it down to a fault in the aerial or coax, or could it be down to the time of year - being summer time - and do you know of anyone else or who has problems with static at this time of year.

Sorry about this long and winding e:mail

I thought I would ask the advice of someone licensed longer than myself.

God bless and 73

James Boag

2MØMGY

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Not the GB2RS News

The news headlines:

- Radical changes to some country prefixes
- IQ and UK prefixes also under review
- Contests nothing but computer training
- ME1C QSL manager announced

We have been informed of the radical changes soon expected to the callsign prefixes of the following countries. This is because their standard phonetic realisations are either politically incorrect, misleading, or could portray the respective country in a negative light:

- BY In China it's not the done thing to applaud an American.
- FO Could be interpreted as a very rude way of telling somebody to go away, the last thing they'd do in French Polynesia.
- HR Not all Hondurans scour the local tourist accommodation in the hope of enticing female guests into bed.
- PP If Brazilian children require solace or reassurance they don't call for their father, but normally shout "Mama, Mama!"
- TF Two very un-Icelandic dances.
- XX Could be interpreted as the only thing that hospitals in Macau ever do...
- ZG They never play this African game in Gibraltar, even on special occasions.
- 5N They don't celebrate Guy Fawkes Day in Nigeria.
- 9M In Malaysia they never say 'no' in German to somebody called Mike.

In a related move: in Italy the special 'IQ' prefix is also under review - especially IQØ, seeing as this could easily be seen as the ultimate insult to that nation's intelligence.

Serious concerns have also been raised about the continuing use in Uzbekistan of the 'UK' prefix. After all, IQØs, in whichever country they may be, might well think they're talking to a station in the United Kingdom.

According to a thesis recently submitted for the degree of PhD at the University of Luton, contests are nothing but computer training in disguise. Forget all that guff about the competitive spirit. The sole purpose of modern amateur radio contesting is to enable radio amateurs to hone their computer skills.

The Five Star DXers Association have announced the QSL manager for their forthcoming DXpedition to Middle-earth, ME1C. That's Will Fitchurch, ME3SWH. Will is an organ builder by trade, the bigger the organ the better. His company motto, 'Anything we build Will Fit Church'. Will also does a lucrative sideline in fonts [*In this case surely Times New Roman Italic. Ed.*].

Solution to Digest Prize Crossword 11

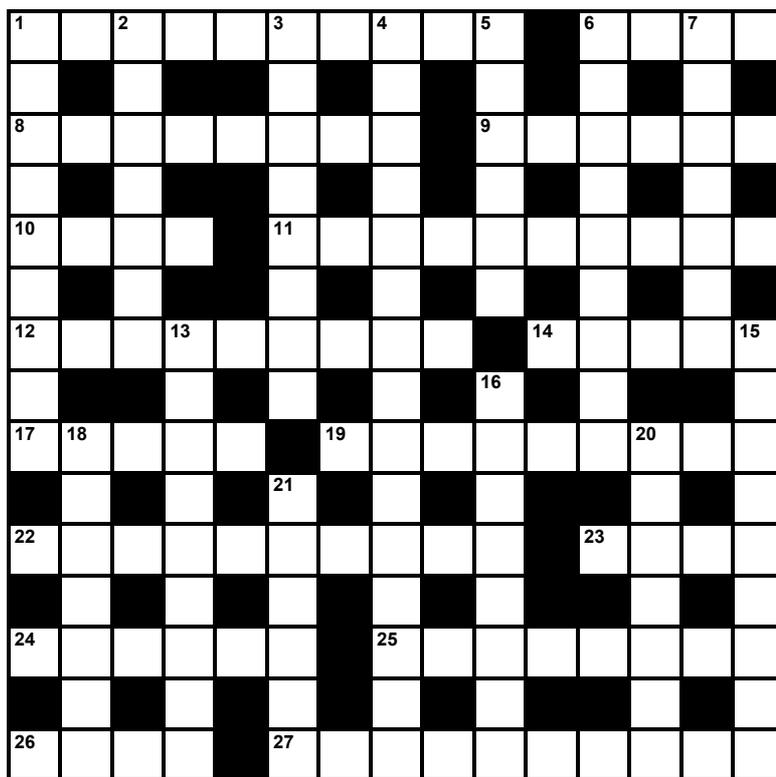
R	E	S	I	G	N	E	D		S	E	T	T	L	E
E		C		O		N			P		E		I	
B	R	O	A	D	G	A	U	G	E		A	L	A	S
E		R		U		B			C		L		I	
C	A	P	I	T	A	L	L	E	T	T	E	R	S	
C		I		C		E			A		A		E	
A	N	O	T	H	E	R			S	T	I	F	A	D
		N			U				E			N		
B	I	S	H	O	P	S			A	D	D	U	C	E
	R		O		H				U		U		H	E
		K	N	O	W	O	N	E	S	O	N	I	O	N
	S		T		R				P		E		R	I
R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

Digest Prize Crossword 12 *by RFX*

Causing a slight problem for some in Crossword 11: the spelling of the second word in 8 across, GAUGE [sic]. But then I remember a very learned university colleague of mine once spelling it 'GUAGE' in a notice for students, so you were in good company here.

17 down, HOOTERS, may have raised the odd eyebrow or two, but it is in Chambers. Indeed recently the Times Crossword contained the clue 'Cleavage commonly attributed to tidal waters (7,7)', solution BRISTOL CHANNEL, so I like to think I'm in fairly good company here too.

The winner of Prize Crossword 11, July 2005: Stuart Swain, GØFYX, Havant, Hants.



ACROSS

- 1 What one hopes the judge is, if need be (4,2,4)
- 6 Large-scale religious service (4)
- 8 Subject graduates rejected, being subjective? (8)
- 9 Girl admits urge to produce music (6)
- 10 Nordic verses theologian found in 19? (4)
- 11 Always very weak signals from this country, according to the RST code? (10)
- 12 Going to bed with popular drink after spell of duty (7,2)
- 14 Patriarch is caught entertaining group of drivers (5)
- 17 Respond and perform again (5)
- 19 Is a landau designed for this part of Europe? (9)
- 22 Embarking on a swell career? (5,2,3)
- 23 The last word in hologram encryption (4)
- 24 Less intelligent type of switch? (6)
- 25 A Canadian girl's Angelic Salutation (3,5)
- 26 Animals loudly celebrated in retrospect (4)
- 27 Rare fish introduced to divert attention (3,7)

DOWN

- 1 Black compiler's a frequent flyer (3-6)
- 2 Order red pens for the poet (7)
- 3 But maybe a Munro, eh? Not half. Mark my words! (4,4)
- 4 Where to start a heavenly journey in the South Atlantic? (9,6)
- 5 Signs on every new road opened lately successful initially (6)
- 6 Cat food without tuna finally acceptable in this African city... (9)
- 7 ... a city in which SXW loses heart and almost starts to shout "Expedition abandoned!" (7)
- 13 Prison sobriquets? (9)
- 15 Working party about to be suspended admits criminal gain (5-4)
- 16 Asian joke about Europeans losing their head (8)
- 18 European proposal generates strong feeling (7)
- 20 Aramis - you, we hear, could be a warrior (7)
- 21 Looker with heavenly body meets the Queen (6)

Deadline for entries: 20 October

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

Period	Call
till 30/09	WA2ART: Johnson Island, The Thimbles (NA-136)
till October	SVØXAN/5: Lipsi Island (EU-001) by IK2WZD
till November	HFØPOL: Henryk Arctowski Base (SP-01; AN-010)
till November	KC4/W1MRQ: McMurdo Station (K-09; AN-011)
till November	JW: Bear Island (EU-027) by LA2TOA
till 31/12	4N35CW: special event station
till 31/12	9A1ØKC: special event station
till 31/12	EIØ5CCC: special event call
till 31/12	HA2ØØCVM: special event call
till 31/12	HA8ØIARU: special event station
till 31/12	IR7LH/P: Italian lighthouses by IK7JWX
till 31/12	IU7SCT: special station
till 31/12	LZ8IARU: special event station
till 31/12	OE5Ø: special event prefix (Austria)
till 31/12	OL2ØØBA: special event station
till 31/12	OO: special prefix (Belgium)
till 31/12	YT31ØSKY, YZ61ØSKY, 4O31ØSKY: special stations
till 31/12	ZS75PTA: special call
till December	XQ3/IQ6CC: Chile by IZ6BRN
till February	ZS1ØØRI: special station
till March	R1ANT: Mirny base (UA-07), Antarctica by RW1AI
till April	R1ANN and RU3HD/ANT: Novolazarevskaya (UA-08, AN-016)
till March 2007	T68G: Afghanistan by LA5IIA
till ??	LU1ZA: "Orcadas del Sur" (LU-14; AN-008)
till ??	LU1ZD: "General San Martin" (LU-11; AN-016)
till ??	LU1ZG: "General Manuel Belgrano II" (LU-08; AN-016)
till ??	LU1ZI: "Teniente Jubany" (LU-15; AN-010)
till ??	LU1ZV: "Esperanza" (LU-06, AN-016)
till ??	LU4ZS: "Vicecomodoro Marambio" (LU-03; AN-013)
07/09-18/09	ID9/IZØEHO: Lipari Island (EU-017)
16/09-18/09	AH6HY/W3: Smith Island (NA-140)
17/09-18/09	III HF-DX & Contest Convention (Catania)
19/09-21/09	AH6HY/W4: Tangier Island (NA-083)
24/09-01/10	GBØSM: Isles of Scilly (EU-011)

24/09-08/10	K7C: Kure Atoll (OC-020)
24/09-25/09	XXI Italian HF-DX Convention
28/09-15/10	T32S, T32SNW, T32EJW: Flint Island (OC-NEW)
28/09-15/10	T32S, T32SNW, T32EJW: Millennium Island (OC-NEW)
September	SU8GFT: Giftun Island (AF-NEW) by SUs and Is
03/10-10/10	A52SY: Bhutan by ON5SY
05/10-10/10	GJ/OO4IPA: Jersey (EU-013)
08/10-10/10	3G1M: Santa Maria Island (SA-069) by CEs
18/10-23/10	GB200T at Greenwich Maritime Museum
20/10-26/10	L95WI: Isla La Escondida (SA-NEW)
23/10-31/10	FR/F5SGI: Reunion Island (AF-016)
23/10-07/11	VK9XG: Christmas Island (OC-002) by WØYG
24/10-01/12	A35BO: Tonga by HB9FBO
25/10-01/11	VP2EWX, VP2EDP, VP2ECM, VP2EAZ: Anguilla
28/10-02/11	WF4W/4: Jekyll Island (NA-058)
29/10-30/10	CQWW Phone - many announced operations
October	8Q7EA: Maldives (AS-013) by EAs
07/11-21/11	VK9CG: Cocos Keeling (OC-003) by WØYG
Jan-Feb 2006	3YØX: Peter I Island
07/07-10/07/06	World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC)

For Sale

from G3RZP

I have two piles of aluminium for sale.

Number 1 is a Hy Gain 205BA 5-ele 20m beam. Needs some overhaul, including a few new bolts, but complete in all essentials, with Radioworks Balun. The boom sections are stuck together and will need blowtorch, come-along, winch, or whatever to separate them - or you need to be able to transport a 30 foot boom. Buyer collects, Swindon area. £125.

Number 2 is a Cue Dee 4-element 15/10m beam. This is smaller - about an 18 foot boom. It is two separate interlaced 4-element beams for 15 and 10m, each with its own gamma match. Needs some overhaul, new U-bolts desirable (originals standard automotive zinc-plated), price includes some spare stainless steel self-tapping screws. Buyer collects, Swindon area. £75

Both beams with instruction books, both worked very well for nearly 20 years, with signals described on various contest occasions as 'loud', 'stronger than G3FXB' and so on.

Genuine reason for sale - been replaced with a 4-ele Steppir.

Peter, G3RZP, (01666) 860 423, QTHR, or g3rzp@g3rzp.wanadoo.co.uk.

Standing Order Request Form

To: Bank

Branch :

Please pay:

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

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

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

1. starting with an **initial payment TODAY**
2. followed by an **annual payment on 1 July** thereafter,
starting with 1 July 2005 and until further notice in writing.

Please debit my/our account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited :

Account number :

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

Name(s) :

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Signature :

Signature :

(For accounts where two signatures are required)

Date :

Address :

.....

Postcode :

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

How to fill in the CDXC Standing Order Request Form

1. The form should be addressed to your own Bank and branch.
2. Write your CALLSIGN after 'reference'. This is very important as it is the way your subscription is identified in the CDXC bank statements.
3. Delete one of the amounts (£15.00 is the 2004-05 subscription for UK members; the subscription is £20.00 for those living abroad.)
4. The form has been pre-filled with "today and on 1st July annually thereafter".
5. Enter your account details after 'Name of account to be debited' and your account number.
6. Complete the lower part of the form with your name, address, date and don't forget to sign it.
7. THE COMPLETED FORM SHOULD BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE BANK BRANCH WHICH LOOKS AFTER YOUR ACCOUNT.
8. It helps the CDXC Treasurer if you also tell him that you intend to pay by Standing Order in future.
9. Check your bank statements after the first payment should have been made to ensure that your bank is executing the order correctly.

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

On-Line Banking

If you use **On-Line Banking** then you can make a transfer directly to:

Sort-Code : 60-60-02
Account : 44532385
Account Name : CDXC
Reference : [your callsign]
Bank : NatWest - Kingston-upon-Thames Branch

