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CDXC Committee 2008-2009

President	Neville Cheadle G3NUG Lower Withers Barns Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HY	(01568) 750560 g3nug@btinternet.com
Chairman	John Butcher G3LAS Westlands, Westland Green, Little Hadham, Herts SG11 2AJ	(01279) 842515 chair@cdxc.org.uk
Secretary	Chris Duckling G3SVL Many Oaks, Collington Lane West, Bexhill-on-Sea, E. Sussex TN39 3TD	(01424) 845384 sec@cdxc.org.uk
Treasurer	Nigel Cawthorne G3TXF Falcons, St.George's Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0BS	(01932) 851414 nigel@G3TXF.com
Digest Editor	Martyn Phillips G3RFX 17 Richmond Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1BA	(0117) 973 6419 ed@cdxc.org.uk
Awards Manager	Jim Steel MØZAK 6 Central Avenue, Shepshed, Loughborough, Leics LE12 9HP	(0770) 439 7303 m0zak@ntlworld.com
CDXC Yahoo! Group Moderator	Mark Marsden G4AXX 38 Lambert Cross, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2DP	(01799) 503104 g4axx@ntlworld.com
	Michael Wells G7VJR Belvoir Cottage, The Avenue, Madingley, Cambs CB23 8AD	(0777) 599 7222 michael@g7vjr.org
	Gordon Rolland G3USR The Lodge, 3b Reeves Lane, Wing, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8SD	(01572) 737774 g3usr@btinternet.com

Contest Manager	Lee Volante GØMTN Warnbrook, 25 Baccabox Lane, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5DD	(01564) 822958 contests@cdxc.org.uk
Webmaster	John Butcher G3LAS	web@cdxc.org.uk
Digest Picture Editor	Mark Marsden G4AXX	see above

CDXC Reflector: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CDXC/>

Club News and Views

Editorial

Martyn Phillips, G3RFX

During the month of August the Great British Summer continued apace, with the midday temperature on some days reaching a staggering 17°C. You could also be forgiven for thinking that the natural colour of the daytime sky was grey and not blue. And the SAD lamp manufacturers were doing a roaring trade. But at least we had amateur radio to take our minds off it, with excellent openings to Italy on some days.

Indeed in this month's 60-page *Digest* we home in on Italy. Well, San Marino and T7ØA to be more precise. Nigel, G3TKF, was there. On the other hand Roger, OJØ/G3SXW, reports on an outing of his to... yes, you've guessed it. Heading even further north than that we have Michael, G7VJR, telling us all about a trip to JX-land, Jan Mayen, where by all accounts he had a whale of a time.

In fact there's so much good stuff in this *Digest* that I had a bit of a problem listing it all on the Contents page. For example, in what I suspect could well be a first for an amateur radio magazine we have a fascinating article by Arnold Shatz MD, N6HC, entitled 'Secrets of DXpedition Doctoring'. This comes complete with a detailed list of the contents of his doctor's bag en route to such major operations (as it were...) as K7C, 3B7C and TX5C.

And I could have done with Arnold's advice in July, when Jane and I spent a week in Sharm El Sheikh. No, nothing serious. Merely the seemingly inevitable bout of Pharaoh's Revenge brought on, I suspect, by

eating a dodgy felafel - so called, no doubt, because they can make you 'feel awful'. All of which reminds me of a trip some years ago to Hurghada on the other side of the Red Sea. Here we spotted a government building with a delightfully ornate sign outside proclaiming this to be the 'Ministry of Healthy Affairs'.

More recently we were in Dublin, where it wasn't quite so hot. EI was also a new one for my DXFC, believe it or not. And the inevitable highspot of this trip: a visit to the world-famous Guinness brewery. At the end of which you're 'given' a pint of Guinness. Not that I really wanted mine, seeing as for some strange reason I can't stand the stuff.

In between we also popped up on the train to Newry, just across the border, for another new one for my DXFC. Yes, I'd never been to GI-land before either. And at Newry we were very much looking forward to a wee drinkie or two close by at the 'Railway Inn' or similar. But there was no pub. Eventually we discovered that the nearest such establishment was two miles away from the station in the middle of Newry itself. And when we got there we were surprised to find that it was called 'The Railway Bar'. I'm still trying to work that one out.

But I digress. Coming up in Wyboston, Bedfordshire, from the 10th to the 12th of October: one of the highspots of the UK amateur radio year, the RSGB's HF Convention. As always, I look forward to seeing quite a few of you there.

73 Martyn, G3RFX

Chairman's Chat

John Butcher, G3LAS

Headline news this month is that G3LAS is finally back on the air! After a couple of months watching the rain on all the possible aerial erection days, the SteppIR actually went up a couple of days ago, thanks to invaluable help from G7VJR and G4AXX.

The assembly process is a bit complicated, which adds to the feeling that this thing would be unlikely to work at all. However, I shouldn't have worried. The aerial resonated on the right frequencies and showed an SWR of about 1.2 'straight out of the box' on all bands except 30m, where I couldn't get it below about 2.2. Strangely, although it is supposed to be a dipole on this band, the minimum SWR occurred with quite a bit of tape out on the director and reflector elements. I'll have to get this sorted out in due course. Of course, the real test will be the on-air performance and whether it all stays together in the winter winds. We'll see.

The hot news on the DX front is that there is a good prospect of activity from KP5 later this year. If all goes well, this could mean a breakthrough, not just for those who still need Desecheo, but for relationships between radio amateurs and the numerous wildlife and conservation authorities around the world. In recent years concern for the environment and threatened wild life has, quite properly, increased, making it difficult for anyone to get permission to visit many of the most sought-after DX entities. It is up to the expeditioners to show that radio is compatible with the environment and the various residents of the islands.

The subject of radio being a threat to others brings me to one where there is a threat to our hobby, this time from within. The subject is the old one of deliberate QRM, now often known simply as 'DQ'. If you read the *Digest* in July, you will know that

at last there is a credible attempt from the IARU and the RSGB to do something about it. Sadly, John, G3WKL, has had a very disappointing response to his appeal for help from CDXC members. I'm sure that most people don't really expect the anonymous 'them' to do it all, so what about volunteering to lend a hand. Read John's piece again [*July 2008 Digest, p.37. Ed.*] and/or contact him to see how you can contribute to identifying some of the characters who are such a nuisance on our bands.

The CDXC AGM and Summer Social actually happened this year, after the floods of 2007. There were a few sprinkles on our President's QTH, but nothing serious to threaten the outdoor activities. The AGM proceedings are described elsewhere in this issue and an enjoyable day was had by all. The safari to Neville's aerial field left us in no doubt that he will be a force on the air before long when the installations are complete.

Slightly off-topic, but worth a mention, on the day after the Social Rachael and I went into Wales to see the red kites being fed near Rhayader. Normally it's a thrill to see one of these aerial superstars, but how about 200+, wheeling and diving to pick up the food before eating it 'on the wing'?

Our next event will be the HF Convention at Wyboston on 10-12 October. Always a wonderful opportunity to meet others and to catch up on the latest news, this promises to be better than ever, so get booked in and we'll see you there.

73 es gud DX

John, G3LAS

President's Patter

Neville Cheadle, G3NUG

Friedrichshafen was fun. In my view this is probably one of the two best HamVentions in the world, rivalled only by the Tokyo HamFair - and far better than Dayton with its grubby buildings. There were many CDXC members at Friedrichshafen. I spotted around 40 and said hello to most of them. We also recruited five new members and we welcome them to CDXC. Thirteen of the team of 20 3B7Cers met for dinner. This was a delightful evening and the food was somewhat better than the fish and rice (or rice and fish...) of Saint Brandon!

It was great to see so many members and their wives and partners here at the CDXC AGM and Summer Social on 19 July. Trish and I were delighted to see so many old friends, regulars at Felden, as well as many newcomers. The weather was much better this year and Mark Mann did another excellent job with the BBQ. Thanks, Mark... and thanks to everyone for making the effort to get to the depths of Herefordshire. Many members travelled a considerable distance.

The Raffle raised nearly £800 – this is perhaps a record. The main prize, an FT-897 transceiver donated by Yaesu UK, was won by Tim Beaumont, MØURX ex-M3SDE. Congratulations, Tim. Our thanks to Yaesu and all our sponsors and to several members for donating prizes. I hope those who stayed in the area for the weekend had a great time.

G3NUG will soon be on the air again. The mini-project went generally to plan, although we did hit rock on two occasions and had to hire a heavy pneumatic drill to clear this. We also hit a drain off our neighbours septic tank, but this was easily repaired. Damming the stream proved to be easy. Eight cubic metres of Readimix were poured to form the bases of the two masts.

The masts are now being assembled. My four Warn M8000 lb winches had to be thoroughly serviced – they had been sitting around for four years. This took me about four days and they now all work well. All the elements for the two antennas have been cleaned up and checked for continuity. I'm going to put my Force 12 C31XR on one mast and a Hygain 205 BA on the other. I'm also planning on four-squares for 40m and 80m, although these are definitely Phase II.

I'm looking forward to getting back on the air after about four years, although I suspect that I have not missed too much given the dismal conditions. Let's hope the next sunspot cycle will get underway shortly.

The next RSGB HF Convention will soon be upon us. It's over the weekend of 10-12 October. See you there.

73



Treasury Briefs

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

Subscription reminder

Many thanks to the many UK members who have taken the trouble to update their Standing Orders for the new subscription rate. Thanks also to the many UK members who have paid their 2008-09 subscription online and by cheque.

However, if your 2008-09 subscription has not yet been received you will find there's a Final Reminder notice enclosed with this

issue of the CDXC *Digest*. Please renew your CDXC subscription now. This will be the last copy of the CDXC *Digest* that you will be receiving unless your subscription is renewed.

Digest Colour Pages Donations - thanks!

Many members have commented on how the colour photos have added to attractiveness of the CDXC *Digest*. Unfortunately the colour printing of the centre pages does add considerably to the production cost of the *Digest*. In order to offset these additional costs, members are invited to make a £100 *Digest* Colour Page Donation. We have been lucky enough to find sponsors for most issues of the CDXC *Digest* over the past couple of years. For the record the colour page sponsors for recent (as well as for some upcoming) issues are

listed below. Please contact any member of the Committee if you would like to make a *Digest* Colour Page Donation (£100). They will be gratefully received and you will be added to future listings.

Digest	Colour Sponsor
Jan 07	Mark, G4AXX
Mar 07	Neville, G3NUG
May 07	Nigel, G3TXF
Jul 07	none
Sep 07	Bob, MDØCCE
Nov 07	Bob, MDØCCE
Jan 08	John, G3LZQ
Mar 08	none
May 08	Bob, MDØCCE
Jul 08	none
Sep 08	Chris, G3SVL
Nov 08	John, G3LAS
Jan 09	Derek, G4SOZ
Mar 09	Gordon, G3USR

New Members

CDXC offers a warm welcome to the following new members:

Call	Name	Location
E15GM	Jeremy Sheehan	Kinsale, Co. Cork
E17BA	John Tait	Co. Cork
F2JD	G�rard Jacot	Pugny-Chatenod
G�CGL	Eric Carling	Dorset
G�KDS	Stuart Lindsay	Bristol
G�ORH	Ken Chandler	Thatcham
G�TZZ	Chris Soames	Norwich
G1WMJ	Michael Hudson	Wingham
G3PDH	Malcolm Prestwood	Norwich
G3USE	Steve Down	Bedford
G3YEU	Barry Short	Cheltenham
G4CLD	Gerald Beaver	Reading
G4CMQ	David Stephens	Ipswich
G7SOZ	Simon Jude	Attleborough
G8APB	Chris Plummer	Stoke-on-Trent
G8FMH	Alan Stables	Basingstoke
GM�NBM	John Hayes	Cumbernauld
GW8IQC	John White	Newport
M�HSW	Hugo Whittle	Cambridge
M�ITY	Jiri Culak	Bishop's Stortford
M�RBG	Richard Blandford	Huddersfield
M�XIG	John Wakefield	Romsey
W3UR	Bernie McClenny	Glenwood

Minutes of 2008 CDXC AGM

Held on 19 July 2008 at 1200

Lower Withers Barns, Middleton on the Hill, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0HY
(QTH of G3NUG)

Members Present (43):

5B4AGC/G3LNS, 5B4AGX/G4PFF, EI9FBB, GØLCS, G1VDP, G3BJ, G3IZD, G3JNB, G3KMA, G3KWK, G3LAS, G3LZQ, G3NKQ, G3NUG, G3PQA, G3RFX, G3SJJ, G3SVL, G3TXF, G3UEG, G3WGV, G3XTT, G3ZAY, G3ZVW, G4AXX, G4FKA, G4IUF, G4JKS, G4KIU, G4LDL, G4OBK, G4TSH, G4VSS, G4VXT, G7VJR, G8MKO, MØEHL, MØMRW, MØURX, MØZAK, M1BXF, M1SOM, MDØCCE

Welcome

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

Apologies of Absence

Apologies were received from the following members (42):

5B4AFB, 5B4AGN, 5B4AHJ, 5B4AHK, 9M6DXX, F5VHY, GØMRH, GØOPB, GØPSE, GØTKT, G1DJI, G3KZR, G3NHL, G3MCX, G3PJT, G3PSM, G3RAU, G3RTE, G3SWH, G3SXW, G3UMV, G3USE, G3USR, G3VCQ, G3VKW, G3WKL, G3WYW, G3YBY, G4DYO, GI4FUE, GI4TSK, GM4ESD, GM4FDM, GUØSUP, GU4YOX, GW4BLE, MØAXP/OZ3CF, MØBJL, MØKCM, MØPCB, MMØBQI, VP8NO

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM held on 13 October 2007 were received and approved as read by those present. There were no questions or corrections.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman, John, G3LAS, presented his report. He noted that 2007/8 had been another successful year for CDXC, albeit in a time of extreme solar non-cooperation. We have supported a number of expeditions but at the same time we have taken the opportunity to build up our cash reserves as a precaution against greater demands when the solar flux decides to rise again. John reminded us that, as always, costs, both ours and the expeditioners', are increasing year by year, so we can expect expenditure to increase for that reason too.

The Chairman pointed to the key to our future success being the strength of our membership, currently standing very close to 700. By dint of a lot of hard work, spearheaded by our President, we continue to increase our numbers. This of course means recruitment over and above the number of those who, for various reasons, cease to be members. Everyone should make every effort to recruit any enthusiastic non-member DXer.

Our Annual Dinner this year was held at a new venue – the Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre. This gave the attendance figure a good boost and the event was voted a great success on all fronts: venue, accessibility, food and entertainment. Space is not a problem at Wyboston, so we look forward to breaking more records next year.

A major event in 2008 has been the re-launch of our website. This was achieved thanks to the efforts of Michael, G7VJR. Many compliments have been received about the fresh look and new, interactive facilities that we now offer. An exciting facility, also introduced by Michael, has been the link to his ClubLog site. This enables members to upload their logs and carry out a number of interesting checks and comparisons. This site is still under development, but it has already resulted in a massive boost to the CDXC LF Challenge award, for which there was a record number of 46 entrants. Members are recommended to check out the ClubLog pages.

An innovation of a different kind was the introduction of a new CDXC member's badge. The old one had been around for many years, so we thought it was time for an update. Gordon, G3USR, has done the spadework to make available a very striking callsign badge with a novel magnetic clasp which is secure without destroying the item of clothing on which it is held.

The **Digest** continues to prosper under the Editorship of Martyn, G3RFX, with the splendid addition of the colour pages. Thanks were recorded to Mike, GU4EON, for his work on getting the colour pages started and editing them from the beginning, a task Mark, G4AXX, has recently taken over.

Our club Reflector continues to thrive under the moderatorship of Mark, G4AXX. The level of discussion is satisfyingly high and many nuggets of useful information can be picked up from the postings.

John, G3LAS, thanked the members of the Committee for their hard work and enthusiasm throughout the year and particularly to Jim, G3RTE, who was retiring from the Committee and from the post of Awards Manager, which he has held for many years.

The Chairman concluded with special thanks to Neville and Trish for their hospitality in hosting the meeting which was much anticipated following the flood disaster which caused us to re-schedule last year's AGM.

Secretary's Report

Chris, G3SVL presented his first report as Secretary. He started by complimenting his predecessor, Peter, G3SJK, on the excellent handover notes that he provided – these made the induction processes so much easier.

The Committee met on three occasions since the last AGM. However, there is much Committee communication outside of the meetings, mostly conducted via e-mail. Indeed there have been over 1,200 committee e-mails in the Secretary's mail box in the nine months since the last AGM.

One of the main tasks of the Secretary is new member induction. Since our last AGM, 63 new member packs have been sent out - demonstrating the effectiveness of our advertising campaigns.

The Chairman has mentioned the Annual Dinner, and this year we had a new venue. Judging by the record attendance, 54, and the feedback, the new venue was a great success. We plan to return to Wyboston in March 2009.

The Secretary reported that he was proposing two new initiatives in the coming year. The first, in order to provide more visibility into the work of the Committee, he proposes to write a brief 'in Committee' feature in the Digest – expect the first one in the November Digest. Secondly improving the new member packs such that they can be more of a reference document for new members and produced in a format that reduces postage costs.

Treasurer's Report

Nigel, G3TXF, handed out amended annual financial accounts. The change was due to the closing balance numbers for membership as shown in the July *Digest* being incorrectly totalled. The correct numbers are shown below. All other figures remain unchanged.

Corrected numbers:

Membership	2007-8	2006-7	2005-6	2004-5	2003-4
Closing Balance	695	680	797	685	661

Nigel, G3TXF, commented that the finances of the Club were robust, but a contingency was necessary to ensure we had sufficient reserves for the future. The Treasurer also thanked all of the sponsors of the colour pages and appealed to members to consider sponsoring future editions so that we can continue this excellent approach without depleting DXpedition funds.

Nigel thanked John, G3LZQ, for auditing the accounts.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Don, G3BJ, seconded by Mike, 5B4AGX, and approved by the members present.

Election of Committee

At this point, the entire Committee resigned, as required by the Constitution. Martin, G3ZAY, took the chair. The retiring Committee, with the exception of Jim, G3RTE, were eligible and willing to stand for election. Jim, MØZAK, had been co-opted as Awards manager to replace Jim.

The Committee were re-elected *en masse*. Proposed by Don, G3BJ, seconded by Victor, G3JNB, and approved by those present. The 2008/9 Committee is thus:

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

The Chairman reported that there was some confusion over exactly which members of the Committee were elected by a vote and which members were co-opted. He said that the Committee would review this and report back.

Election of Auditor

John, G3LZQ agreed to continue to audit the accounts and was duly proposed by G3TXF, seconded by Phil, G4OBK and approved by those present.

Any Other Business

Forums and Reflectors

Michael, G7VJR, presented this item. He reported that Bren, G4DYO, had suggested that CDXC should consider 'internet-based Forums' either as an addition or replacement to the current Reflector. Michael explained the differences and commented on the work involved in maintaining both means of communication. A lively debate ensued during which comments were made supporting the current Reflector, its pro-active style and the all-subjects richness that it provides – a number of members commenting that they would not find the time to search the Forums as they were busy people. It was suggested the Committee should investigate retaining the Reflector, but moving away from Yahoo.

Michael thanked those present for their views and said he would research the matter further, poll the Reflector users and make recommendations to the next Committee meeting.

CDXC Award of Merit

The Chairman awarded the CDXC Award of Merit to the Five Star DX Association for its outstanding contribution to DXing over the years. The award was received by Neville, G3NUG, on behalf of FSDXA.

The Chairman presented a bouquet of flowers to Trish Cheadle and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 1238.

Chris Duckling, G3SVL

Secretary CDXC

CDXC Local Hero Award

The Committee is seeking nominations for this prestigious annual award. It is for a resident amateur in a DX location who has given long-term support to DXers in providing QSOs and QSLs without massive financial rewards. Full details and criteria may be found on the CDXC website.

Please send nominations with a brief citation to either

Chris, G3SVL (sec@cdxc.org.uk) or John, G3LAS (chair@cdxc.org.uk).

DX an' all that

Don Field, G3XTT don@g3xtt.com

HF band conditions remain indifferent, exhibiting what might be described in a technical sense as Changeable Realtime Atmospheric Propagation (CRAP). Those of you who have been licensed in the past four or five years must listen to stories of worldwide propagation on 10 and 12m with a certain amount of scepticism. But at least the 'middle' bands (17, 20 and 30m in particular) continue to provide plenty to work. The IOTA contest in July seemed to have more activity than ever and the GB7HQ gang appear to have done a great job in the IARU contest.

Why am I not at the top of the DXCC Challenge?

(Or do I really need that xxxx (insert K3, IC-7800, Orion II, FTDX-9000, etc. according to your preference)?

Have you ever stopped to wonder why you are sitting where you are on the DXCC lists rather than above, say, G4BWP or G3KMA? If the ads in RadCom and elsewhere are to be believed, it's because you don't have the latest transceiver (although I happen to know that neither Roger nor Fred use one of the 'flagship' models either).

When I look back at those band slots that are missing, which I know have been active and worked from the UK during the time I have been licensed, while I have no accurate figures, my feeling would be:

1. A few slots on 160 and 6m were missed because I wasn't hearing them. On 160m I have suffered severe QRN in recent winters (someone's heating thermostat) and, even when the QRN has been absent there have been some I simply

couldn't hear well. How would I have avoided these problems? A Beverage or other receiving antenna for 160m and some serious efforts to find the local QRN source (and persuade the householder to do something about it!). Fortunately the worst QRN source has now disappeared – I can only assume the unit was seriously faulty and has been replaced. On 6m the receive problem could, to an extent, have been addressed by using lower-loss co-ax (Helix instead of H100) or maybe a masthead preamp, but in most cases it was a problem with my QTH (many of the rarer ones were heard only by those with locations on or close to the coast).

2. Quite a few slots have been missed because the DX station couldn't hear me, again a problem which seems to be worse on the 'edge' bands, Top Band in particular. There are two possible solutions. The first would involve breaking my licence conditions by buying a bigger linear! The second requires me to improve the transmit antenna.
3. By far the most slots have been missed because I wasn't in the shack at the time. During the later years of my working life I was abroad quite a bit and missed out on a number of slots with rare locations like KH4 and KH7, when they were activated near the top of the last sunspot cycle. Even now that I am retired, I haven't the patience to sit by the rig all the time and I book holidays, family get-togethers etc. which I am reluctant to cancel just because a DXpedition is announced. I'm sure many of you

are in the same boat. After all, there are other things in life than amateur radio (well, that's open to debate!).

What about the missing bullet point (4)? Those band slots I have missed because of the limitations of my transceiver? Frankly, I cannot think of any. None. Zero. Undoubtedly in my days of running an early FT-101 there were a few that fell down that particular hole, although I have almost certainly filled the gaps since. But for the past 20 years or more I have run a series of transceivers, all of which I feel have been more than adequate to the task in hand (just in case you were wondering, a TS-940 (with Lowe phase noise mod), an FT-1000D and, currently, an FT-1000MP MkV). But I feel sure that pretty much any other base station rig would have been equally capable (I discount the rigs designed primarily for mobile operation, as they tend to have high sensitivity in order to work with short mobile whips, and therefore overload easily).

I can see the argument for serious contesters to worry about the extra few dB in intercept point, especially if they live close to W3LPL or are themselves part of a multi-multi team. And on DXpeditions I have been conscious of the importance of close-in dynamic range, given that so many callers (especially on CW) are clustered together within the bandwidth of the roofing filter. But for day-to-day DXing from the comfort of the home QTH I frankly don't believe that upgrading a perfectly good base station transceiver will make a blind bit of difference to your DXing success, other than maybe motivate you to spend more time in the shack to enjoy your new plaything!

So who is at the top of the DXCC Challenge?

Arguably, the DXCC Challenge is one of the supreme measures of DXing excellence. Once upon a time it would have been achieving Honor Roll status (ie within 10 of

the maximum possible number of countries (entities)). Then it became getting to work them all (only possible in recent years, with North Korea having been active, along with a few others that had been missing from the air for a long time). But nowadays every Tom, Dick and Harry has them all, at least if he or she has been active for some years (and at least during the last sunspot peak – do you remember sunspots?). But you can work them all on 20m, or certainly on the high bands with a reasonable multiband Yagi.

The DXCC Challenge requires attention to all the bands, including the LF bands where things get a tad more difficult. What's more, it also includes 6m, which has brought some well-known HF calls on to that band, at least when there are expeditions about. Indeed 6m has become absolutely pivotal in the Challenge standings, so much so that the balance has now swung to Europe, as was inevitable given that high 6m scores are significantly easier to achieve from Europe than from the USA (just look at the 6m DXCC listings, dominated by European call signs). So W4DR no longer stands atop the DXCC Challenge listings as he has done for several years now. In the UK the top two are Fred, G4BWP, and Roger, G3KMA, as mentioned earlier. Did they (to go back to that earlier discussion) get there by dint of having the latest transceiver? Well, no. I would argue that (having just been watching the Olympics, as I am sure many CDXC members have too) it is mainly about wanting it enough – single-mindedness and determination. Fred and Roger are very different. Fred is single, with a great station, but has spent probably 50% of his time in recent years outside the UK on business. Roger is married, retired now, with a good but by no means (at least in broader European or US terms) outstanding station. But what Roger and Fred share is a passion to increase their all-band DXCC scores whenever the opportunity arises.

Of course, for many CDXC members there are good reasons why you might never be

near the top of the Challenge standings. Antenna limitations, job and family commitments, and so on. But even if you didn't have those limitations, would you have the commitment, the dedication, to aim for the top or would you be comfortable to sit somewhat further down the listings. There is nothing wrong with that. Even if I was a strong swimmer or cyclist (which I certainly am not!) I very much doubt whether I would have been prepared to put the rest of my life on hold for several years to focus on a possible Olympic medal. Thankfully DXing isn't quite so taxing, but for many of us it's enough to chase the occasional expedition when it comes along or, perhaps, to put a greater emphasis into contesting where there is a very specific start and finish time, rather than the continual commitment that is required to stay at the top of the DXCC listings. And later in life the time might come that you are able to retire to a nice rural location with plenty of acreage and put up those four-squares and Beverages that you have always dreamed about and finally start creeping close to the top of the listings.

Credibility of listings

Which brings me to a final note, while it is fresh in my mind. It is clear that some of those who are near the top of the DXCC listings (and that absolutely does not include any of the callsigns I have mentioned so far!) have got there, to an extent, by devious means. 18 MHz QSL cards changed to 1.8 MHz. Blank cards (easily obtained in various ways) completed and submitted for accreditation (one friend of mine managed to collect blank cards from over 200 DXCC entities in the space of just a couple of years – not to claim credit, just to show how easily it can be done). I have even heard recently of a rather convoluted way in which LoTW QSOs can be 'manufactured' by those with enough cheek and determination. And there was the high-scoring 6m station in Europe who worked one of the Caribbean expeditions this summer when the band was closed to

Europe and when the Caribbean station was beaming stateside – was this a 'friend' making the QSO on his behalf or maybe an Internet-linked QSO? The good news is that ARRL are making some serious efforts to track down these folk. The bad news is that they will, I suspect, always be with us. The good news is that it doesn't matter as each of us knows what we have personally achieved. The bad news is that in the public arena (assuming that actually matters to us) we are being compared with at least a few who have cut corners to get where they are.

PropNet etc.

The PropNet project at <http://propnet.org> is a tool for determining what band is actually open to where. By observing and publishing reception reports on the Web, they're now a lot easier to be used by contesters and DXers. The network doesn't operate below 30m and not at all on 20 and 15m, but it does bracket those bands nicely. The following two URLs are also interesting live websites that display band openings and paths from the DX Cluster:

<http://psk.gladstonefamily.net/pskmapn.html>
<http://maps.dxers.info/gmap/>

They both automatically refresh every few minutes, so are constantly up to date if you leave them running.

Invalid operation list

Tony, EA5BY, says that some members of Lynx DX Group have created a list of 'invalid operations' for the different amateur radio awards; especially DXCC. They are looking for some help to keep the list complete and updated. Any information is highly welcomed and can be sent to: info-dxcc@lynxdxg.com. They would also like to scan every QSL of every callsign that is listed, and help with this is also welcome. The website is fully operational at: www.lynxdxg.com/novalidas/novalidas.htm

73 Don G3XTT

Borneo Bulletin

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX

teleniuslowe@gmail.com

It was a pleasure to meet so many CDXC members and old friends such as DJ9ZB, DL2GAC, F6EXV, OK1TN and others at Friedrichshafen in June. It was my first visit to Friedrichshafen and it certainly lived up to its reputation as being the biggest and best amateur radio gathering in Europe. Although I doubt I'll be able to make it next year, both Eva and I enjoyed our visit to Germany so much that we shall try our best to get there again in 2010.

IOTA Contest

Having not entered the IOTA Contest for the last several years (other than a part-time 'dabble' from my home QTH here on OC-088 in 2007), I thought I'd put in a semi-serious entry this year.

I returned to the Manikar Beach Resort on the island of Labuan (OC-133) that I mentioned in the May 'Borneo Bulletin', hand-carrying a complete station on the passenger ferry from Kota Kinabalu to Labuan. I packed a Yaesu FT-857, Watson 'Power-Mite-NF' switch-mode power supply and Tokyo Hy-Power HL-1.2Kfx 750W linear amplifier in a suitcase, along with radial wires, 25m of RG58 coax, a laptop computer for logging – oh, and some toiletries and a few clothes too. The suitcase must have weighed close to 30kg, but fortunately there is no weight limit on the ferry. I carried a Butternut HF6V vertical separately, fully dismantled and packed (with considerable difficulty) in its original box.

The 3½-hour journey was uncomfortable as we caught the tail end of a typhoon that was causing the Philippines some trouble to the north. The sea was very rough and numerous passengers were seasick, not helped by the all-pervasive stench of marine

diesel that filled the cabin for the entire journey.

The manager of the Manikar Beach Resort had kindly arranged a free pick-up and transport to the hotel, which is at the northernmost tip of the island, with a perfect salt-water take-off towards Europe, Asia and almost perfect to North America.

Having recovered from the rigours of the journey it did not take long to put up the vertical within inches of the high-water mark on a ridge several feet above the ocean. Testing the antenna on 15m on the Saturday morning, five hours before the start of the contest, I made exactly 100 QSOs in 44 minutes, mainly with JA, but also a few Europeans were coming in nicely from as far west as Sweden, Germany and France. This boded well: it is several months since I have heard Europeans on 15m from the home QTH using a 4-element beam.

I closed to get a much-needed shower (the outside temperature was close to 35° C) and a meal, and went back on at 1130 UTC to 'warm up' a frequency on 20m. Once again, a huge pile-up, with callers from Europe (as hoped for and even expected) but also from the East Coast of North America, which was certainly not expected, and even some South Americans. I was obviously getting out really well. This was going to be fun.

Or maybe not. After the first 90 minutes, 20m faded out, much earlier than normal, at about 9.30pm local time. I went down to 40m, but apart from a handful of JAs there was not a lot of action. 80m was even worse.

I had always intended to enter the 12-hour section, because there are long periods of the day when there is effectively no

propagation anywhere in this part of the world (even JA is over 4,000km away), so I closed down for the night and came on again just before sunrise in order to work the Europeans on 40m. This was hard work, and many stations - even those that were S9+ - did not even respond with a 'QRZ?' but continued to call CQ. Having operated many contests from Europe, I *know* how noisy 40m SSB can be, but sometimes you do have to listen carefully - there may be a weak DX station calling. On the other hand some stations that were quite weak heard me well, or at least well enough to copy my call first time. Alan, 5B4AHJ, was operating as P3J and had a good signal on 40m, but also heard me well enough to make an easy QSO for a good multiplier for both of us.

One West European operator, who will remain nameless, copied 'DXX/P' first time, then copied '9M6' correctly, but then asked for the suffix again. I merely said "Roger Roger Roger", hoping he would put the two bits together to make a complete call sign, but this he absolutely refused to do. It took numerous attempts to convince this guy that it really was 9M6DXX/P calling him but, once convinced, he then copied my serial number and IOTA reference easily enough so I really don't know why he had so much difficulty with the call sign, given that he copied it correctly, albeit in two stages, almost immediately!

After 40m faded out shortly after sunrise I was hoping for great things on 20m and then 15m, but this never happened and the whole of the rest of the contest was very slow indeed. It was incredibly disappointing, especially since conditions had been so good 24 hours earlier, but there was no repeat of the 15m opening to Europe on the Sunday morning or the 20m opening to Europe and North America just before the end of the contest.

I ended up with a very meagre 309 QSOs in 12 hours, only twice the number I made in just over one hour of operating before the contest started!

Fortunately the trip back from Labuan to Kota Kinabalu was a lot more pleasant than the one to the island. There had been a major electrical storm on the Sunday night and this cleared the air, leaving the sea a flat calm. No-one was seasick this time.

Spratly2009.com

I plan to operate from Layang Layang, Spratly Islands, with John, 9M6XRO; Pete, SM5GMZ; Jay, W5SL, and James, 9V1YC, in early March next year. Things are still in the fairly early planning stages and we are now getting the required permission from the Malaysian Navy to operate from the island. Col, MMØNDX, and Christian, DL6KAC, have kindly put together an excellent website for us, and this is at www.spratly2009.com. There are many photos of the island on the website that were taken when I was there in 1998 with the CDXC 9MØC team, and Don, G3BJ, has kindly run some propagation predictions which can also be found on the website. I had been planning to go back to Layang Layang almost since first arriving here in 2005, but the operation has twice been postponed. Hopefully it will be third time lucky.

Visitors to Sabah

Once again there have been a few amateur radio visitors here during the last few months. Back in April, three Norwegians - Halvard, LA7XK; Just, LA9DL, and Erling, LA6VM - spent a few days here before and after their trip to Layang Layang. I had previously met Erling at the 2005 LA DX Group Convention in Norway, so it was good to meet him again, this time on my home turf.

More recently, John, 9M6XRO, and I have met Mel, JA2KDL, who at present is living in the Philippines and active as 4F4/JA2KDL. He plans to move from the Philippines to Sabah next year some time and will be QRV here. Meanwhile we look

forward to seeing him again at the SEANET Convention in November.

More recently Vincent, F4BKV, has just spent a week in Sabah with his wife Eulalia, and operated as 9M6/F4BKV from the Langkah Syabas Beach Resort. He made well in excess of 1,000 QSOs in five evenings of very much part-time 'holiday-style' operation, despite the lousy conditions. Vincent has just been posted to Hong Kong for a one-year contract, and he plans to be active from Hong Kong Island as VR2/F4BKV, as well as on expeditions to Macau, Palau and other places. He too is hoping to return to Sabah for the SEANET Convention in November.

SEANET Convention

As well as Mel, JA2KLT, and Vincent, F4BKV, I am looking forward to meeting at least two members of the 3B7C team at SEANET this year, as well as two German amateurs I met at Friedrichshafen.

It is still not too late to book if you fancy some nice warm weather at the end of November, just as winter is really beginning to close in in the UK! See www.seanet.cc for full details. The venue has now changed slightly: it was going to be held jointly in Kudat (at the northernmost tip of Borneo)

and Kota Kinabalu, but will now only be held in KK, although a day trip to Kudat is still part of the itinerary.

The 'official' part of the Convention takes place from Thursday, 20 November, until Sunday, 23 November. We are then inviting those who want to stay on in Sabah to join us on an IOTA DXpedition to Labuan, OC-133, staying at the Manikar Beach Resort for a few days (see the May 2008 'Borneo Bulletin' for more details).

CQ WW DX Phone Contest

Finally, a quick note about the *CQ* World Wide DX phone contest on 25 / 26 October. I am planning to re-activate my 9M8Z call from across the state border in Sarawak. Unlike in the *CQ* WPX contest in March, when I was the only 9M8 taking part, I am likely to have some competition in October from 9M8YY, a Japanese operator with the highly appropriate name of Yagi. One of us may therefore decide to do a single-band entry and the other an all-band one. I look forward to working as many CDXC members as possible - please give me a call if you hear me on. Tim, M3SDE (now MØURX), is the QSL Manager and we have recently had some nice double-sided colour cards printed.

Chiltern DX Club - Aims and Objectives

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

Membership Full details are available from the Secretary.

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

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

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

Jan Mayen by Sail: JX/G7VJR and JX/SQ4MP

24 June – 6 July 2008

Michael Wells, G7VJR

Jan Mayen background

Jan Mayen is a remote island territory belonging to Norway, at 71°N 08°W. The island is 34 miles long and sits on the Atlantic ridge, between the Norwegian Sea and the Greenland Sea. It's about 400 miles to land in all directions (south to Iceland, north to Svalbard, east to Norway and west to Greenland). At the northern end of Jan Mayen is a magnificent volcano, Beerenberg, which stands 2,277m tall and can be seen from 100 miles away in clear weather (no such luck, I might add!). The volcano last erupted in 1984. Most of the time, like all of Jan Mayen, Beerenberg is shrouded in fog: the fact is, JX is an inhospitable and barren speck in the Arctic.

Jan Mayen occupies a location which is strategically useful, and probably becoming more so considering the rush for energy in the north. Perhaps it is for this reason that Norway maintains a military presence on the south-east side of the island. The Norwegian base is fondly referred to as Olonkinbyen – ‘Olonkin City’ – but there are just 18 permanent crew there. Historically the main purpose of the base is to maintain the LORAN C navigation beacon, which is still in use despite the advent of GPS. A dirt runway brings supplies via Hercules C130 aircraft from Norway, and fuel to power several huge generators is delivered by sea. The LORAN mast is 190m high – such a pity it cannot be re-purposed!

In most years one of the Norwegian staff on the base will have a radio licence, and in good years he or she will also be a DXer. For example Per-Einar Dahlen, LA7DFA, made 20,000 QSOs between 1989 and 2002. Needless to say, Per was a superb source of

information when planning this trip. In 2005 LA9NOA, Ole Martin, was active on 20m SSB, and now in 2008 LA9JKA, Svein, is active on HF and providing a great many SSB QSOs.

The base is entirely off-limits to visitors, and I soon discovered that no amount of persuasion would change this. The golden rule for Jan Mayen is that you may visit, but you must be completely self-sufficient and you must not rely on the base for any purpose. This rule is *unbreakable*. Not many visitors make it to JX, so adventurers may be lucky enough to be invited to visit the base while on location, but never in advance, and permits are not available until self-sufficiency has been proven. For me that meant water, generators, fuel, tents, food and a sailing boat. Well, *so be it!* Jan Mayen was not going to be easy, but the rewards would be great, and I soon discovered that I was not the only one with such a trip in mind.

Getting there

This is the big challenge. You can't fly to Jan Mayen, and there is no port or other scheduled sailing that will get you there (other than for an hour or two if you cruise past on your way to Svalbard).

My plans gained a significant boost in mid-2007, when I made contact with Geir Ulstein of EcoExpeditions, a Norwegian adventure company that was planning a mountaineering trip to climb Beerenberg. They were planning on teaming up with Borea Adventures, an Icelandic company based in Ísafjörður, west Iceland, and between them they were prepared to take 10 people to Jan Mayen by sail on a 60ft yacht. I could hardly resist, and by late winter

2007 Geir and I had produced a workable plan to get my lightweight radio station and generators onto the boat. He was patient and fully committed to the idea – such luck to have his help!

Landing permits are obtained from the police commissioner in Bodø, Norway. The permit has to be approved by the Station Commander on Jan Mayen. Permits are also needed for amateur radio, since JX is not covered by reciprocal licencing automatically (the landing permits must be obtained first). It is quite a short process to get the papers, and I was kindly assisted by Trond, LA8XM, who, until recently, issued licences at NPT. The operation has since been approved for DXCC credit by the ARRL, so I think we cracked it. Cheers, Trond!

Around March 2008 Geir let me know that Wojtek, SQ4MP, was also making his way to Jan Mayen with EcoExpeditions and finally it seemed that everything was coming together. Wojtek is an excellent young contest radio operator and by combining our efforts we could more than double our QSO totals, bring more equipment and work more hours per day. Wojtek and I met at my QTH in Cambridge to do a dry run well before the trip, and tested all aspects of the station (equipment notes later). We get on well and both share a very similar enthusiasm for radio, so I felt extremely optimistic to have a good team mate. I took on the role of planning our joint operation, as Wojtek had not been on a DXpedition before. ‘Travel light!’, I offered. There was so much more to say, but we had time to talk tactics later.

Leaving Iceland – the Aurora

After getting to Reykjavík on 24 June, I transferred to Akureyri on the north coast and met with Wojtek and the others. Excess baggage, buses, customs and about a day of laborious transportation, sneaking a 20kg Peli case onto several flights as hand luggage... well, this all takes its toll, so we

enjoyed a pricey Icelandic ‘Viking’ beer. Or two.

Around 7am the next day Wojtek and I traveled to the tiny fishing town of Dalvík by bus, just an hour from Akureyri, and found the ‘Aurora’ waiting in the harbour. She was dwarfed by commercial trawlers. There too were the generators and oil and fuel containers we’d hired.

The weather was astonishingly good in Dalvík. We both took the opportunity to be QRV from TF by setting up a portable station on the jetty (we had a JA pile-up too). The generators were old, but we changed the oil and they seemed sure to hang together. By 2000z the boat was loaded and we were ready to set sail north, into the Arctic. The sun was still shining at 0200z when land began fading behind us.

The ‘Aurora’ is a 60ft cruiser with a diesel engine and sails, and makes about 8kts. It is cramped but comfortable for 12 people inside, crew included. We were sailing into quite rough waters and the wind was northerly, directly against us. The outbound voyage took 60 hours and to me it felt endless, because the sun never sets and the horizon is blank. Sea sickness took hold, and although the tablets really do help, you must take them before you feel ill. I slept as much as possible for the first day, occasionally being woken by the sound of the hull thumping into the swell or the sails being changed. At least we were on our way!

The voyage became more enjoyable when I had gained my sea legs. We were sometimes surrounded by whales and dolphins, especially near Grímsey island off Iceland. It was a delight to see these beautiful mammals from the deck, diving into the bow waves. Also, with so much spare time, I could study the boat and take a few watches. It was a great opportunity to really meet the mountaineers, who all had very interesting backgrounds and, just like us, strange reasons why they had to go to the

end of the earth. By the time we were 200 miles from land (halfway), we could talk of nothing else.

Landing location and radio site

We sighted land about 8 hours from Jan Mayen. We landed on the north-west side of the island, at a site known as Gamlemetten (literally translated, this means 'The Old Meteorological Station'). Our Icelandic skipper knew we were keen to get north of 71°N and into square IQ51, and now we had done it!

There are a number of abandoned wooden buildings here which used to be the Jan Mayen Radio site, as well as one building that is sometimes used by the crew of the Norwegian base. The Station Commander, Åge-Leif Godø, visited us in a 4x4 (he knew of our arrival as we had radioed ahead). After a brief discussion he indicated that we could use the old Jan Mayen Radio Station building. This building gave us shelter from the aggressive wind, and it was satisfying to re-open the historic site for business. We were extremely grateful, since up to this point we were assuming that we would be in tents.

Although cold and damp, the building had some intact furniture, so we were able to spread out and set up our two stations. The rooms were too large to get warm, staying at around 3 - 8°C depending on the sun, and the windows were missing in places, so it was generally quite a chilly experience. For this reason I went hunting upstairs in the dark and found a small wooden cupboard with enough space to sleep. I found that the combination of true darkness and dry air meant I could rest, but it looked just like the set of a horror movie.

When not on the air, we shared a big driftwood bonfire with the climbers to celebrate their successful ascent of Beerenberg: it took them 18 hours to return victorious. Fewer than 50 people are

believed to have ever made the ascent to the Haakon VII summit.

We enjoyed the spectacular scenery with the team. The mist artfully loitered halfway up the hills in layers. We had favourable weather on several days, although it turned foul near the end of our stay (Jan Mayen claimed the two 10m poles in the end). The view from our site was unbroken to the horizon from south to north; Beerenberg comprehensively blocks any view to the north east. We had a fairly good gap through to Europe to the south-east.

This site really has to be the best on the whole of the island for radio and no doubt that is why the old radio station was sited here. What a difference it made.

Equipment, propagation and operating modes

We operated day and night, continuously in shifts with no gaps, although the bands were tenuous at times.

Our station comprised two radios, my trusty Elecraft K2 and FT-857D, with Power Mite PSUs, Dunestar filters and ultra-light wire verticals. This is the same formula I have used on all my recent trips, and really is the simplest way to work DX as well as cover the possibility of something breaking. Two of everything of course, such as bringing two generators and more fuel than budgeted, just in case.

We carried a superb 6m beam which was designed by John, GØJLL, to pack down into a flight tube. Many thanks to Neil, GØJHC, for sending the beam to me. Wojtek brought his 18m Spiderbeam pole (you might be surprised to hear that this survived gusty 50 mph winds!). Wojtek also brought an Ameritron 811 amplifier. It was rather large and fragile. It needed repairing in Iceland, which we managed to do on the dockside in Dalvík, but eventually the amp broke down in a more explosive way on Jan Mayen. Sadly it could not be fixed a second

time. It would have been great having that extra power, but the complications were not unexpected. We had use of it for about 1 day. After that, I tuned up the K2 for 120W output and prayed that the cold air would compensate. It did.

Why no SSB?

Before our visit it had been six years since the last CW QSO from Jan Mayen by LA7DFA, and Svein, JX9JKA, only operates SSB, so it made sense to focus exclusively on Morse. With limited antennas and power, in a difficult auroral location with poor solar activity, we needed the extra edge of CW on 17, 20 and 30m (the only bands that really open in the summer up in Zone 40). Encouraging e-mails from faraway places were starting to arrive indicating that CW was 'needed'.

The other challenge was to work DX. Almost all radio operations take place from the comfort of the Norwegian base, and this is only suitable for working south, into Europe, and short path to the Middle East and Far East. DX paths to North America and South America are blocked by a considerable range of mountains which loom tall over the base to the north and west – thankfully, absolutely not a problem for us, from our super location at Gamlemetten looking directly over the sea to Greenland and beyond.

HF operation

HF from Jan Mayen with verticals is pretty rough with the SFI around 66. Each day I had a sked with Cris, GM4FAM, to see how we were getting on and whether we had missed any openings; some existed, but they were tricky. Although we could work EU easily, the openings to NA (0200-0600z) and JA (1000-1300z) were often S1, and they were seething masses of overlapping callers who were hard to log. We were weak, so repeats were needed. It was hard going.

Discipline was good and callers were respectful of the difficult conditions. I suppose they knew that the DXpedition was all about working them, and we were not going to bed any time soon. The number of callers on 30m was staggering. Although I tried not to let it spread too far, it had to go to 4 kHz for North America one night when the West Coast and central states finally got their shot. Now I have seen the QSL cards, I can understand the desperation of that pile-up – this was the first time some of those stations had *ever* heard JX.

20m was more reliable (often S9 callers), and full of surprises. We had an unbroken view to South America and logged LU with signals far stronger than Europe. With Cris/GM4FAM's help we eventually logged ZL by calling for VK/ZL in the early morning at around 0730z. These QSOs astonished me; we had just 100W and verticals to make the epic, auroral trip round the globe, and of course Europe had to be strenuously resisted at these times, which they disliked. For VK6 especially the JA opening was concurrent and much stronger, so congratulations to Lance, VK6DU, who somehow pulled it off at 1230z (S zero!).

17m opened into EU and NA, but was much less predictable. 40m stayed shut (even with the linear) and 15m/12m only opened with the Sporadic-E to Europe. It takes a lot of effort to change elements for these bands in high winds, and the poles were getting battered, so Wojtek and I determined it was more fruitful to stay on 20m where a never-ending supply of callers were *always* waiting. Without a beam, and without flux, it was simply not a good use of time to be on those higher bands (but JX9JKA can help you if you still need them!). Maybe in 2012 we'll go back.

Six meters – the magic band

By good fortune our trip was right on the peak season for Sporadic-E, being in the last week of June and the first week of July, so taking 6m equipment and dedicating time to

the band was a high priority for me. There hadn't been a 6m QSO with JX since 2002 (from IQ50). Wojtek adopted RTTY as his specialist mode, incidentally. It all adds spice.

The 50 MHz beam was fixed to the 18m pole approximately 8m up, and set on a fixed heading for EU through the gap in the mountains. With 3 elements up in the air, I set the beacon going on 50.105 as soon as possible, with the volume turned up ready to alert me as soon as someone called. I went back onto HF, with one ear listening out for a trace of activity. Wojtek and I were sleeping with the 6m radio switched on 24 hours (no side tone), and Cris, GM4FAM, had made it clear on the website that the beacon was running. I waited patiently for a call.

On the first day I copied the Svalbard beacon strongly, but the band was otherwise dead. However, at around 1530z an almighty signal smashed the silence – it was G4RRA! He was S9+20dB, and other callers had suddenly emerged (this all happened like a light switch being thrown). A comical dash for the radio was made, and a lot of kit lashed up to get logging on the laptop as soon as possible. I had no idea whether the opening would hold, so every second counted. I acknowledged the callers and boded 'QRX' with my left hand while shoving all the unnecessary stuff on the table out of the way. Nothing got damaged, thankfully.

That opening lasted for an hour or so, which was enough time to work a lot of G and GM stations. I felt pleased that the guys back home had their chance so soon. It was really satisfying to hear many friendly calls, always one after another and with clear, loud signals that rarely overlapped. Such an improvement on the S1 pile-ups of 30m!

On that first day, when conditions had finally gone, I gave it another hour, then put the beacon back on (still listening, of course). I half wanted to spin the beam for

North America/VE, but it was impossible due to the complex guying needed to keep 20m up in the air on the same pole for Wojtek. Tomorrow I would be back and ready and waiting, though. Wojtek and I rearranged our HF schedule to fit.

Things got really interesting on the second day. The band opened at 1700z, but this time it stayed open. I had propagation to EU and AF until 2130z. During this time, other than dashing to the generator to refuel, I stayed by the radio and made sure everyone who called got logged. The openings were desperately short sometimes, perhaps just 20 seconds, while other callers in LA, OY and G let me know I was still S9+ after an hour or more. The Sporadic-E migrated across Europe, north-east to south-west, allowing me to log Finland all the way south to the Azores and the Canary Islands. It was a remarkable, perfect opening, and I'm told some of these QSOs are 'firsts' from Jan Mayen.

On the third day it was nearly the same again: opening at 1630z and there right through to 2000z. I could hardly believe my luck. The signals were fading in and out, but the pattern was the same – all of Europe, a little piece at a time, was making it to IQ51. The spotlight propagation swung round again from east to west. I knew that the cluster and ON4KST were doing their job; I put myself in the shoes of the guys waiting in silence for JX to appear and made sure that any brief opening was worked. With great pleasure I logged our pilot Cris, GM4FAM, and Per, LA7DFA, that day.

Sometimes it went a bit wrong. Here's my feedback:

- Don't send the DX your QRA locator (especially not six figures and twice!). If you faded out sending this unnecessary detail, you might not get another chance.
- A few callers who were dupes cost someone else their QSO by taking their one and only chance away. I

can say for sure this happened on two occasions, which is a great shame.

- Someone in Southern Europe who shall remain nameless kept trying to call me in SSB. That is definitely not going to get a response, and it's selfish!
- Everyone else was marvellous.. Thanks.

Overall, on 6m I spent perhaps 15 hours monitoring the beacon and CQing. I made 300 QSOs, which is more than I'd expected, but in the equivalent time on HF perhaps I would have made 1,500 QSOs. The fact is that I had a rare square to activate, so every QSO was proportionately more 'valuable', and I loved every minute of it.

Results

We made just short of 5,700 QSOs, covering 82 DXCC entities. Notable DX included KH6, KHØ, VK, ZL, LU, JT and OA. Our locals – R1FJ, OX and KL, were super signals! 485 RTTY QSOs were made, and there were 300 6m QSOs (and 34 DXCCs). Our best 'DX' band was 20m, where were found 76 DXCCs, then in second place it was 30m with 56 DXCCs, and lastly 17m with 45 DXCCs.

We were not on the air as long as we'd hoped or planned to be. The northerly wind meant we arrived late, and on our way back we were diverted by an invitation to visit the Norwegian base. To varying extents though, we were QRV between 29 June and 3 July and enjoyed ourselves, despite the gradually creeping lack of sleep.

The logs have been uploaded to LoTW. We did this as quickly as possible to help root out any busted calls and show our appreciation promptly for all the QSOs (there are two sides to every contact, after all). QSL cards are on their way from the printers and will be turned around promptly. Michael, G7VJR, is the QSL manager for both JX/G7VJR and JX/SQ4MP and details

are available on the expedition web pages at www.jx08.eu, along with a log search tool.

Where next? Well, everywhere! After a trip like this it's hard not to feel extraordinary enthusiasm for the hobby. I heartily recommend DXpeditioning to anyone fit and able to do it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following folks, who were so generous with their time and who offered financial support. Thank you very much for helping both of us make this trip and a lot of QSOs; we really cannot thank you enough.

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G4AXX Mark Marsden
KE9L Skip Caswell
F5VLT David Beale
K8FU Mark Schontz.

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Particular thanks are due for the very special generosity shown by the following people:

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LA5YJ Hugo
W3LPL Frank

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Per LA7DFA (JX propagation and licensing)
Neil GØJHC (6m equipment loan)
Trond LA8XM (JX licencing)

Oh-jay Zero

Roger Western, G3SXW

g3sxw@btinternet.com

A team of five operators went to Market Reef to activate OJØA in the IARU contest in July. In total we made nearly 4,000 QSOs in the three days.

Seppo, OH1VR, and Markus, OH3RM, are regular visitors to Oh-Jay Zero, so they invited Olof, G0CKV; Bob, W6RGG and Roger, G3SXW, to make a five-man team.

We discussed some details with Seppo at Friedrichshafen and by e-mail and the plan came together. For my own involvement it all became workable when Olof, G0CKV, offered transport from Stockholm over to the Åland Islands from where we would depart to OJØ. Olof, of course, is Swedish and has a home just south of Stockholm. He knows the area well.

Early Thursday morning, 10 July, British Airways took me from Heathrow to be met by Olof at Stockholm Arlanda airport. The weather was perfect and I hopped into Olof's 'NerdMobile', as he calls it. This is a BMW people carrier kitted out with every RF device known to mankind. I operated SM/G3SXW/M on 20m, making some 30 CW QSOs during the 90-minute drive to Grisslehamn on the E coast of Sweden, where we would pick up the ferry to OHØ. Olof's mobile set-up really gets out extremely well, but I will leave it to him to describe the facilities. He also has 2m and 70cms and is equipped with APRS, so some of our friends back home were tracking our position on a website. That was fun! The very large ferry then took us and dozens of other vehicles across to Eckero in the Åland Islands (OHØ), a 2-hour crossing.

Oh Aitch Zero

There Olof, with his customary efficiency, had booked a log cabin for the overnight stay and we repaired for dinner. We then

strolled back to the countryside location of our cabin, very peaceful, and fired up on 20m again, this time stationary. I made 30 CW QSOs as OHØ/G3SXW/M and was called in the mini pile-up by 7Z1HL and A61Q. That mobile whip really does perform well!

Åland (pronounced 'Awland') is a large holiday island with lots of space and water everywhere, very green and all terribly civilised. It belongs to Finland, but has a lot of autonomy. Surprisingly, the local language is more Swedish than Finnish.

At the last minute we learned that the other three operators would arrive in Eckero at 2am and we would leave for Market Reef, OJØ, early in the morning. So they just wanted a floor to rest their weary heads for a couple of hours. I'm glad to report that I slept through their arrival, but poor old Olof had to navigate them into our hideaway at nearly 3am!

Two cars then drove to a jetty, where we had breakfast and then met the speedboat. We lugged a rather large amount of gear from the cars to the boat.

Märket

The seas were almost flat, with just some bumps on our 30-minute crossing. The boat was making about 33 knots sitting up at an angle of about 30 degrees with a huge wake astern. (See, I'm learning the lingo already!). The prevailing winds are West or South-West and upon arrival we saw that there were some small waves crashing on to the island. But on the north side it was absolutely flat. This meant that the speedboat could nudge right into a tiny inlet and tie up, so we didn't have to go through the agony of transferring all the gear by dinghy.

Many hands make light work, as they say, and with the help of the captain and his wife we soon had everything ashore, and then man-handled it all the 100 yards to the lighthouse. We met the four members of the Finnish Lighthouse Society, volunteers who spend a week of their summer on Market Reef renovating it – a huge task after many years of dereliction. This team swapped the following day, so we actually got to know eight of them, mostly women - but with excellent construction and DIY skills!

Market Reef is known locally as ‘Märket’, pronounced Marekett, meaning ‘The Mark’. It consists of mostly flat but irregular rock slabs, easy to walk on, and reaching a maximum 2-3 metres above sea level. It took about 20 minutes to walk the whole way around the shore line, being about 600ft long (N/W to S/E) and about 200ft at its widest point (S/W to N/E). There’s very little vegetation, just some scrub grass and daisies and lots of rock pools where the sea has washed over the island. A large number of seabirds, mostly gulls and some sort of wagtail, keep up a racket. They had two preferred sites, presumably nesting, which they defended by dive-bombing and screeching at intruders such as humans! There was one place referred to as the Swimming Pool, where the water is refreshed from the sea, permitting bathing and washing. The sea here has no tide and the water is only brackish, not nearly as salty as normal seas. OJØ is at the Northern tip of the Baltic Sea where the Gulf of Bothnia starts. I saw very little life in the water, also hardly any sea-weed.

The lighthouse itself is three connected buildings. An automated weather station occupies one roof with three small wind turbines which fire up whenever needed. The main lighthouse building is some 50ft tall and this is where we set up camp, on the first floor. The lighthouse is apparently still functioning, but seldom switched on – it is no longer part of the maritime navigation network.

Actually it was a bit like camping. We took our own sleeping bags to put on cot beds. There was a chemical toilet for number two’s and a large sign which said: ‘Gentlemen, please pee on the daisies’. Fresh water was in seriously short supply. They desalinate for cooking and bring in fresh water from Åland for drinking. You wash in rock pools. However, such deprivations are not a problem for only a three-day stay.

We each paid 100 Euros for the three nights accommodation and this included excellent food prepared by the Lighthouse Society volunteers. Naturally we had taken our own ‘refreshments’, mostly wine and Aquavit.

As OJØ is located midway between Sweden and Finland we could actually connect to Telia (Sweden) from the West side of the island and to Sonera (Finland) from the East side. So we had mobile phone connectivity, which I hadn’t expected. It’s around 15 miles to both.

The reason that Market Reef counts separately for DXCC is that the lighthouse belongs to Finland but is separated by a strip of Swedish land. The map showing the border is really bizarre. The island is shared between the two countries but after the Finns had finished building the lighthouse they discovered that it was on Swedish territory. So they had to redraw the borders whilst maintaining exactly 50% of the land each *and* 50% of the shore-line. Something to do with fishing rights, I believe. See this weird map, like a lazy letter ‘S’ at

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A4rket>

The RF Side

When we arrived Seppo erected his tent, tied a sloping window to the top of the lighthouse and was on the air within an hour, pounding 17m with his IC-7000. We already had a 2-ele SteppIR in place for 20 - 10m, left behind by OH2BH and OH2PM,

requiring us only to hook up a control box. Olof had brought three Spiderbeam poles, two 60' and one 30'. These became an inverted L for 160m, a GP for 80m and a GP on the shorter pole for 40m, each with a ground mat of eight radials. The wind was gentle but fairly constant and we had a lesson in physics as the 60-footers grew exponentially harder to raise with each 4ft section. A couple of hours later and we were all ready to roll.

Inside we set up an IC-746 and an IC-7000. Most of us had to puzzle over the menus in the 7000 as we were unfamiliar with this rig. We also had an Expert 1KW amplifier which performed perfectly, and a TL-922 as back-up. Olof also set up his boxes of tricks: band decoders, all-band bandpass filters and antenna switching, all automated from the laptop. We used Win-Test for logging, again performing perfectly. Three laptops were wireless networked.

By mid-afternoon on the Friday we were running pile-ups on three bands, operating with OJØ/home call. The 7000s generated some broadband hash, but not too severe, mostly suppressed with a bandpass filter on the TX. During the weekend, before and after the contest, Seppo and Markus each made around 1,000 QSOs and the other three of us each made 200 or so. These were nearly all on CW and covered all nine bands, although there was precious little to be heard on 12 or 10m. We also raised a 5-ele 6m beam, but couldn't even hear any beacons. Of course, Market is a long way north, at over 60°, equivalent to the latitude of the Shetlands. This made, we felt, for poor propagation on all bands, especially for DX. Proximity to salt water and the absolutely clear take-off promised much, but actually we were quite disappointed with the limited propagation.

IARU Contest

Three pm local time on the Saturday came around and we were off and running. Not being a HQ station, the only multi-op

category allowed is multi-single with one transmitted signal and no option for single-mode. All five of us were CW operators, so apart from a short session on SSB right at the beginning we didn't bother with the microphone much! During the contest we used OJØA, the contest callsign belonging to Markus. What a good guy, quite young too!

We had a rota: three hours on the spotting RX followed by three hours on the TX station, so each operator had about 9-10 hours. The rules call for a minimum of ten minutes on a band, so apart from the main money bands, 80, 40 and 20, we would only make brief QSYs to other bands. The spotter would listen on a different band, find multipliers, hit Ctrl-Enter to add them on to the band map. Then, when he had five or more lined up, we'd quickly switch the TX station to that band and whiz through them. Clicking on a callsign in the band map takes you straight to the spotted frequency, and you just work 'em. When it was within the same band we were effectively SO2R, nipping off to work a fast mult (spotted by the RX station) and straight back to our own pile-up. This was fun and Olof's clever engineering worked flawlessly.

There were only brief openings to the USA and Japan, so almost all contacts were with Europe, some 93%. Our score of 1,842 QSOs and 203 multipliers was certainly not competitive, but we had a lot of fun nonetheless.

Band	CW Qs	Ph Qs	Zones	HQ
160	55	0	5	22
80	358	3	15	23
40	426	11	16	29
20	755	30	22	23
15	184	0	8	26
10	20	0	3	11
Total	1798	44	69	134

Claimed Score: 1,101,072 points.

After the Event

Travelling home is always boring, both to do and to describe. Again we were lucky with the weather, flat sea allowed easy loading of all the gear onto the speedboat. We retraced our steps back to Arlanda, without the need for an overnight stop this time. Having allowed an extra day for a delay getting off the island which I now didn't need I had to re-book my British Airways ticket for the previous day, Monday. I had paid a reasonable £120 for the return trip but was then charged £220 for the one-way return, equivalent to a penalty of 300% and very nearly the full one-way economy price. Immoral. And the darned plane was nearly empty. Grr!

For QSLing, OJØA and OJØVR (Seppo) already have a stock of blank cards, but the rest of us needed a shared card for our OJØ/home call operations. So we ordered 1,000 cards from Gennady, UX5UO. What a star that guy is. I e-mailed him late the night after getting home and the drafts were waiting for me when I woke up. With a couple of tiny amendments the 'Print' button was pressed some 18 hours after first contacting him and within less than three days of the operation ending. His service

and attention to detail are second to none! The cards will be here in 2-3 weeks. Fast QSLing gives pleasure and it is so easy to arrange these days. And thanks to Markus, OH3RM, for the great digital photo of the lighthouse to go on the card.

Next we submit the entry to IARU and upload to LoTW. All really easy-peasy these days, done and dusted within a few days of getting home.

In summary, this was a really fun weekend. All I had to take was my keyer and headphones. All members of the team were experienced and just knew what to do to set up stations and antennas, and to operate.

Plus of course the all-important DXFC scores: one new DXFC point for OJØ and no less than three DXFC+QRV points (SM, OHØ, OJØ). This puts me now on 68 DXFC+QRV points, only one behind the second-positioned K5VT. Go to www.dxfc.org/index.php to see these tables.

Thanks indeed to Seppo and Markus for organising this project and to Olof for magnificent transportation - and to Markus for a full education on Aquavit!

3X5A Part Deux

Roger Western, G3SXW

Last November the VooDoo Contest Group won the CQ World Wide CW contest, Multi-Multi section, as 3X5A and we intend to do it again! We are in full planning mode for November 2008, so here is a sit rep. We will mount our seven 1KW stations in Conakry, the capital of Guinea, along with a dozen or more antennas and WILL win the contest yet again, that's a promise! Before, during and after the contest we will make

some 18,000 CW QSOs. A bit of diddle-diddle is also on the cards.

A brief history of our group: we have been active in the CQ WW CW contest for the past 19 years continuously. This November will see our 15th straight year as Multi-Multi from West Africa. We have signed (in date order) 9G5AA, TY5A, 5V7A, XT2DX, 5U5Z, TZ5A and 3X5A. Our modus operandi is to operate from a country for

two years and then to move on. This seems to be the ideal balance: new and exciting adventures plus a second year to improve on what we have learned, but then to move on before it becomes boring. The trick is to store our 1 tonne or more of equipment locally in a safe location. We can then fly in each year with rigs and computers and set up.

3X5A 2008

So here is an outline of our plans, as at August '08:

Team

Ned, AA7A; Roger, G3SXW; Don, G3XTT; Fred, G4BWP; John, G4IRN; Rob, GM3YTS; Vince, K5VT; Mike, KC7V.

Stations

Seven Elecraft K2/100s + 1KW Alpha amplifiers, one per band plus one for multiplier hunting. AA7A is RF captain.

Antennas

Monoband yagis for 40, 20, 15 and 10m plus verticals and dipoles for 80 and 160m, plus receiving flag LF antennas. G4BWP is LF antenna captain and KC7V for HF.

Computing

Eight laptops all running Win-Test through a wireless router, Win-Key, plus always-on Internet. G4IRN is our Computer captain.

There are two significant risks this year: civil unrest and hotel refurbishment. Recently there have been sporadic riots in Guinea every few months, so our fingers are crossed that all will remain calm before and during our visit. Secondly the Camayenne Hotel has recently been sold to a Libyan investor and will be closed for refurbishment at some stage. If this happens before our visit we will have to re-locate to

another less suitable hotel. Again, fingers are crossed.

2009?

As this will be our second time in 3X we will move on next year. Should we go south or north? Look at the map: to the north is J5, 6W, C5, 5T. To the south is 9L, EL and TU. To optimise propagation we should move north a little, but we have decided for a variety of reasons to move to 9L.

So immediately after the 3X5A operation G3SXW, G4BWP and K5VT will drive the 250 miles from Conakry to Freetown, Sierra Leone, with hired mini-bus and driver in order to carry out a reconnaissance for a couple of days. In that time we will select the best hotel for our purposes and find out about 9L transmitting licences. The journey itself will prove instructive: the state of the road (the middle 50 miles are unpaved), the border crossing and in Freetown the way of life, some eating places etc.

One big advantage will be that in Sierra Leone the first foreign language is English. For the past seven years we have been in French-speaking countries! Another big plus will be that we will again, as in Conakry, have the advantage of salt water nearby, being right beside the Atlantic Ocean. For several years we have suffered the sub-Saharan sand, which is not conducive for RF!

CU in the contest!

We intend to be QRV as 3X5A for the full 48 hours of the contest, on 29-30 November, on all six bands whenever they are open to anywhere. An operating rota will ensure that there are bums on seats at all times. There are many questions still unanswered, but using our experience of setting up large-scale operations in West Africa we are confident that we can do it again and will succeed. Failure is not an option!

Having already bought our airline tickets, Air France via Paris to Conakry, we are committed. Next we get visas; check that our yellow fever certificates are in date; renew our stock of anti-malaria tablets; reserve hotel rooms; renew 3X licences plus a myriad of details about the logistics, station and antennas etc.. Hundreds of e-

mails will zoom around the world over the next few weeks. We all look forward to working you in the contest from 3X5A. QSLs are assured efficiently via G3SXW and LoTW upload within days of getting home.

Good luck in the contest, CW forever!

A day trip to the San Marino club station, T7ØA

Nigel Cawthorne, G3TXF

CDXC members with long memories will recall that the Republic of San Marino used to use the unofficial prefix M1. Yes, that's a UK prefix these days, but in the early 70s the most active station on CW from San Marino was Tony, M1C. Since the mid-80s San Marino stations have used their own prefix T7, and the same highly active CW operator, Tony, is now T77C.

The small land-locked Republic of San Marino with a population of just 30,000 lies about 15km inland from the Italian Adriatic coastal resort of Rimini. Although the active radio amateur population is quite small, the local San Marino radio club (ARRSM) has its own self-contained club house with several operating and meeting rooms in an excellent location on a ridge out in the countryside. The Adriatic can be seen on the horizon from the club station. The club callsign is T7ØA.

Ever alert to the possibility of adding another 'new one' to the countries visited total, a family holiday in Italy seemed like an excellent time to try to arrange for a short side-trip to San Marino and a short operating session from the club station. Following on from a brief flying visit made by Roger/G3SXW, Ian/G3WVG and Lionel/G5LP to the San Marino club station in May 2007, contact was made with both

Tony, T77C (ex-M1C), and Julian, T77J (ex-M1J). Julian, T77J, is President of the ARRSM. The planned visit to T7 was also timed to coincide with the WAE CW Contest.

The trip to San Marino was not quite in the fly-in and fly-out style. As we were staying for our holiday near Rome, the round-trip drive to San Marino and back was over 900km. We arrived in San Marino on the Friday evening before the WAE CW Contest. We had arranged to meet Tony, T77C, early on Saturday morning.

Before coming to San Marino I had asked Tony to suggest a hotel which would be convenient for getting to the club station. Tony suggested the Hotel San Giuseppe. Nothing special here, you might think, but it turned out to be the same hotel which had been used by delegates to the IARU Region 1 Conference which had been held in San Marino in November 2002. There had even been the T71ARU callsign in use from a special station at this hotel for the IARU Conference.

CDXC members will also recall that several years ago Tony, T77C, was awarded the Club's 'Local Hero' award. Over the years Tony's activity at putting T7 on the air on CW has been phenomenal. Tony has close to 500K CW QSOs in his M1C/T77C logs.

As planned, Tony collected me from the hotel early on Saturday and took me on the short drive to the club station. In order to simplify things, I had brought along my own small IC-7000 transceiver as well as the usual accessories for CW and contest logging. Once we got on the air we found that the WAE CW Contest was in full swing with massive UA9 and other Asiatic Russian stations to be found on both 20m and 15m. San Marino (T7) is a much sought after multiplier in the WAE Contest. Calling stations in 'search and pounce' mode often resulted in an immediate request for a QSY to another band for the multiplier.

The main HF antenna at T7ØA is a multi-band log periodic HF beam. With this antenna it was simple enough to hop between 20m and 15m. Also there was an occasional QSO to be had on 10m. It had never been the intention to operate full time in the WAE Contest, but rather to make a small entry in WAE CW as well as run some pile-ups on the WARC bands during the short visit. 17m provided a good

opening to JA in the afternoon. The time was spent hopping between the WAE Contest and running a non-contest pile-up on 17m.

By the time it came to leave the T7ØA club station in the early evening some 600 CW QSOs had been put into the log. During the afternoon several T7 operators dropped by at the shack to say hello, including Julian/T77J, John/T77CD, Rene/T77GR and Nazzareno/T77NC.

The IC-7000 with the laptop, keyer and other accessories were duly packed up at the end of the day ready for the drive back to Rome. It had been great fun operating from one of Europe's rarest countries: San Marino, T7. Special 'guest op' T7ØA QSLs are being printed and will be sent via the Bureau to all the stations contacted.

Many thanks to Tony, T77C, and Julian, T77J, for an excellent day's operating at the T7ØA club station.

Secrets of DXpedition Doctoring©

Arnold I. Shatz MD, FACS N6HC *n6hc@aol.com*

Ever since my first CW contact with Danny Weil, who travelled the world in his sailboat *Yasme*, the thought of going to an exotic isle to set up an amateur radio station and talk to the world intrigued me. It was only after I 'retired' from active medical practice that the opportunity presented itself and I could spend six weeks away from home. But there was a proviso that was proffered with the invitation to join a fully fledged, world-class DXpedition: providing medical coverage for the team in addition to the usual activities that everyone is expected to do. I knew that going to medical school had a golden lining! This was my ticket into the world of the DXpeditioner.

How does one prepare for this responsibility? There is no hospital, pharmacy or surgical supply warehouse on a deserted island to call upon, should a contingency arise. What type of medical/surgical situations could present themselves that might require my expertise? What should a DXpedition doctor bring along to adequately deal with these situations? Here is how I decided to provide health services for my teammates.

There are many websites available that provide guidance regarding necessary vaccinations and precautions that should be taken by visitors to various parts of the

world. It is prudent to ask each team member to consult the website and consider their own health and immunisation status against the precautions defined by the experts in travel medicine, see www.travmed.com. A thorough check-up by their primary care physician and dentist prior to embarking on long distance travel should be considered mandatory. It is far better to discover a pending problem at home than trying to deal with that same problem with very limited medical resources.

As the medical officer for the trip, I ask for an outline of each team member's vital statistics, medical and surgical history, the name, dosage and frequency of administration of all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) as well as allergies to foods and medications. This information gives me some insight into what problems I may encounter with each individual and what special medications or supplies may become necessary. Each individual is responsible for bringing their own medications including their treatment of choice for motion sickness. I encourage each member to put a personal first-aid kit together. This should include an extra pair of eye glasses, sun screen and sun glasses, SPF lip balm, band-aids, antibiotic ointment, insect repellent and analgesic of choice.

My medical kit contains specialised supplies that may become necessary in specific situations. Much of the contents of this kit are available only to a licensed medical practitioner. Please see Appendix 1.

Notice that there is no cardiac monitor, defibrillator, oxygen tank, Ambu bag or pulse oximeter. I am not in a position to provide advanced cardiac life support on an isolated ocean isle. Fortunately I have not needed these supplies in the past, but there have been DXpeditions where fatal heart attacks have occurred, eg the Aves Island DXpedition in April 2006.

Each individual should have current medical insurance coverage. It is prudent to purchase evacuation insurance should an emergency situation occur and a swift exit from the island becomes mandatory. I have purchased coverage through DAN (Divers Action Network) for \$29.00/year.

On my last two DXpeditions I have utilised almost everything in my medical kit! Fortunately I have not been lacking anything... yet. Since all my trips have included air and sea travel, I have treated motion sickness quite frequently. Prophylactic use of a 'scope patch' is highly recommended because sea-sickness can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite and dehydration. Being in that state makes you useless as a team member, once landfall is made. Recovery may take a day or two and a valuable set of hands and a strong back are lost to the team setting up the camp and equipment.

Dehydration can occur from plain hard work in the hostile environment of an exposed ocean island. It is mandatory to take frequent work breaks with water consumption, salt tablet supplements or electrolyte solutions. Proper clothing should include long-sleeved shirts and pants made from lightweight and quick-drying material as well as a broad-brimmed hat to protect your ears, nose, lips and neck. Work gloves protect the hands from lacerations and blisters. Failure to heed this recommendation usually results in a first or second degree sunburn which can incapacitate an individual and make for a very uncomfortable and less than memorable trip. If ice is not available for topical treatment of the burn, then sedation and analgesics are the only relief available.

Gastrointestinal disorders are a common problem. The diet on a DXpedition is usually quite different than what one's system has become accustomed to. It may be quite salty due to the use of ocean fish as the main entrée. Dehydration can lead to constipation and local water, unless it is

bottled, can result in traveller's diarrhoea. Food and drinking water safety is key to maintaining a happy intestinal tract. This also includes hand washing prior to eating and after using the 'long drop'.

Marine hazards present unique opportunities for medical care. Jellyfish, ray or urchin stings can be quite painful and result in infection. Insect bites by mosquitoes, spiders, bees or ticks present their own set of nuisances. Avoid contact with dangerous marine life, wear protective/aquatic foot covering and liberally use insect repellent.

On two of the three major expeditions in which I have participated, lacerations of the extremities were sustained that required sutures. It was gratifying to both the patient and the physician that we were well prepared.

A case of earwax occluding the external auditory canal resulting in impaired hearing was one of the more unusual maladies that I have managed. A fractured ankle was probably the most serious occurrence that befell one of my teammates.

Accepting medical responsibility for 12 to 24 DXpeditioners can be daunting but very satisfying, especially when you are well prepared and everything goes smoothly. I have played a part in the K7C, 3B7C and TX5C DXpeditions. I'm looking forward to my next radio and doctoring adventure.

Appendix 1

Suture set (1) with needle driver, forceps, scissors, hemostats (2) and scalpel (#15 blade)
Suture removal set (1)
Bandage scissors (1)
Sutures: Chromic 4-0, 3-0; nylon 3-0, 2-0 (3 of each size)
Ophthalmic hand cautery (2)
Band-aids of various sizes (1 box)
Steri-strips of various sizes (multiple packs)
1% and 2% lidocaine (50cc vials)

Isopropyl alcohol (1 pint) and box of individual packets (1)
Betadine (1 pint)
Cotton balls (1 bag)
Gauze pads – Sterile – 4x4 (1 box)
Sterile cotton tips (1 box)
Adhesive tape (plastic) 1” roll (5)
Ace Bandage 2” roll (4)

Syringes:

20cc (3) luer-lock
10cc (30) luer-lock
5cc (30) luer-lock
2cc (30) luer-lock
50cc irrigation - catheter tip (2)

Needles:

18G - 1 ½” (30)
22G - 1 ½” (30)
25G - 1 ½” (30)

Foley urinary catheter – 16F (1)
Sterile latex gloves (10 pkgs) size 7 ½”
Sterile Barrier sheets (box of 10)
Sterile saline bottles – 500cc (5)
Sterile water bottles – 500cc (5)
Sun Block
Insect repellent
Hand sanitizer foam or pads
K-Y jelly (3 large tubes)

Medications

Transderm Scopolamine patches (25 doses)
Phenergan injectable – 25 mg dose (multi-dose vial)
Phenergan tablets – 25 mg dose (50)
Phenergan suppositories – 25 mg dose (10)
Benedryl tablets – 50 mg dose (25)
Cipro tablets – 500 mg dose (50)
Bactrim D-S tablets (20)
Ampicillin capsules - 500 mg dose (50)
Vibramycin – 100 mg dose (50)
Keflex tablets – 500 mg dose (50)
Prednisone tablets – 5 mg dose (25)
Prednisone injectable multi-dose vial (1)
Kenalog cream (5 tubes)
Epinephrine 1:100,000 (1 multi-dose vial)
Toradol injectable (2 multi-dose vials)
Aspirin 325 mg (200)
Ibuprofen 200 mg (200)

Tylenol 650 mg (200)
Vicodin
Neosporin ointment (2 tubes)
OTC “cold” medications
Pepto-bismol tablets (1 box of 48 tablets)
Lomotil tablets (50)
Cortisporin otic ear drops (one bottle)
Gentamicin ophthalmic ointment or drops

Stethoscope (1)
Blood Pressure cuff (1)
Otoscope / Ophthalmoscope
Thermometer oral strips

Air Cast
Eye patches (10)
IV starter kit with a liter of NS and
D5/1/2NS with IV cannulas

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Arnold I. Shatz, MD, FACS
N6HC@aol.com

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GBØSI: IOTA DXpedition to the Summer Isles, EU-092

Gordon Rolland, G3USR

Where do you go for an interesting EU IOTA after St Kilda and the Shiantis? Perhaps Treshnish (EU-108) or maybe the Summer Isles (EU-092), given that EU-008 (Inner Hebrides) and EU-010 (Outer Hebrides) are both regularly activated. Orkney, EU-009, has some very active resident amateurs and the author had just returned from Yell in Shetland, EU-012. These were the immediate options for the Grantham Radio Club’s 2008 annual IOTA DXpedition. June is not a good time to visit Treshnish due to The Hebridean Trust’s concerns about disturbance to birds nesting on Lunga Island. So we opted for Tanera Mor in the Summer Isles off Achiltibuie, north of Ullapool, with the special callsign GBØSI.

The boat journey and island arrival.

We arrived at Achiltibuie on Saturday, 14 June, ready for a week of IOTA operation. Due to depart from the Badentarbat Bay pier at around 0900, we unloaded our equipment. The island’s owner, Bill, had already arrived with his motor boat and we stowed our cargo for the short sea crossing. Twenty minutes later we landed at the old pier.

Fortunately the sea was slight and the weather dry, although it was quite cold.

No tents or seldom used, infested cottages (as on the Shiantis last year, the home of *Rattus Rattus*), but a warm welcome from Bill and Jean to their comfortable holiday cottage, complete with real beds and hot water! We were seven DXpeditioners in total, all itching to set up our stations and get on the air.

Setting up

Having taken a short break to allocate sleeping quarters, we set about setting up our four planned stations.

Station 1: The main station was principally for 20m, with an Alinco DX-70TH transceiver plus Yaesu FL-2100 linear and a 3-element Mosley TH3 JR tribander.

Station 2: A Kenwood TS-2000 running barefoot (100W), principally for 40m plus 17 through 10m. Antennas were a 5-band Spiderbeam (20 to 10m) with a multi-band vertical for 40m and HF as required.

Station 3: A Yaesu FT-450 running barefoot (100W) into a Cushcraft A50-3S 3-element yagi for 6m. This station was run as a listening watch on 50.150 MHz, beaming SE. We planned to activate the station should there be any sign of Es, with regular CQ calls to check for any other propagation.

Station 4: An FT-100 with a full-size G5RV antenna for casual operation of PSK31 and SSTV, operating mostly on 40m.

Experience ‘in the field’

On our first two days conditions were very poor across all the HF bands, with deep QSB and periods of apparent complete silence. On Day 3 band conditions were much better and this was to be our best day with 1,150 QSOs. On the remaining three days conditions were just fair. Accepting the inevitable, we set about making as many SSB QSOs from EU-092 as was practicable at this stage of the cycle and achieved 4,415 QSOs in our six days of operation, working 99 DXCC entities.

6m

Only one brief 6m Es opening occurred during our whole week and late one afternoon we made seven non-UK QSOs, the furthest contact being with 9A, with 4X4 as a got-away. Although better than nothing, this was disappointing as the island location at IO78HA is well placed for openings to the SE, our preferred VHF direction from the island. And on 20m one surprising feature was that there was very limited inter-G short skip which had been prevalent during the previous two weeks. HF DX openings were rare, although a continuous daylight presence netted occasional DX including DS, HS and Z21.

Other aspects of the Summer Isles group

Apart from amateur radio, the Summer Isles are a very attractive location at which to spend a few days. The main and only

inhabited island in the group is Tanera Mor, which is about 1½ miles from the mainland, off Achiltibuie in NW Scotland. The other 13 IOTA listed islands in the group are located in the immediate vicinity and are uninhabited. They are only accessible by small boat and are complemented by a number of mini-islets and minor stacks.

During rest periods from operating radio, I explored the pathways of Tanera Mor. This island has just a handful of occupied cottages, most being either on long rental or utilised as holiday cottages. There are no roads and the main pathways are narrow, often steep and unpaved. Much of the island is heather-clad hills or wet moorland with some trees and bushes in more sheltered areas. There is historical evidence of the cutting of peat in many scattered locations which was traditionally dried and used for fuel, but the majority of the island is original and unspoilt. There are no sheep or indigenous fauna, with only two highland cattle being kept by the resident owner to ‘maintain’ the single, sheltered fertile field.

Overall comments and conclusion.

Endowed with fabulous scenery, Scottish islands are a fabulous place in which to gain low-risk experience of DXpeditioning in general and IOTA operations in particular. It is also quite ‘close to home’ and has no language, currency or licensing issues.

This certainly was a fun week for us. Judging by many of the numerous on-air and DX Summit comments, the DXpedition was also enjoyed and appreciated by many IOTA-interested stations throughout the world. If you needed EU-092 I hope that it provided ‘a new one for you’.

[Gordon plans to present a topic ‘IOTA for Starters’ at the next HF Convention at Wyboston, where you will hear more about Scottish islands and other IOTA trips. Ed.]

The Comet H-422 Rotary Dipole

Brendan McCartney, G4DYO G4DYO@aol.com

Having almost abandoned the idea of re-assembling my 5-band monster quad, which still languishes in our garage, I looked around for something which might be more effective than the pieces of wet string hanging from various structures in the garden – such as something I could get high in the sky. The position of my Versatower makes big beams undesirable (even if I could afford one) as even those with a fairly small turning circle would end up over neighbouring gardens. (We used to live in an open, rural area, but now we are surrounded on three sides)

The Comet H422 was worth a second look: by amateur radio standards it was reasonably priced and it covered 40m, a band for which I had never had a commercial antenna, plus 10, 15 and 20m. There was the usual advertising bit: '*VSWR: Less than 1:1.5 at centre frequency*'. But just how wide is the usable bandwidth? Well, as it is only just over 10m long, probably not too much on 40m. It is an interesting design, using three traps on each side, which may be configured as a straight dipole or as an inverted-V with the elements pointing upwards, something I had not previously encountered. The turning radius in the inverted-vee configuration is only 3.8m, well within the limits of my smallish garden.

I purchased one from Nevada. Assembly was quick and straightforward, with several options to provide resonance at different parts of the four bands it covered. However, the only band which may be individually tuned to an exact frequency is 40m. Mechanically it looks fairly good, with a stout mounting plate, stainless steel bolts etc. The only niggle: the traps are attached with rivets rather than screws, so access is impossible without raising warranty issues.

I erected the antenna on my tower at around 40ft. The SWR curves were close to spec and it provided me with a good few DX contacts, including VP6DX on 40m CW and SSB with first calls. I run barefoot from the FT-1000MP Mk V Field, except when necessity demands QRO – which is not very often nowadays.

Unfortunately after very little use the antenna developed a high SWR on 20m and 40m, but 10m and 15m remained perfectly OK. An inspection revealed no mechanical or visible electrical problems. The element sections were still clean and shiny and connecting bolts all tight. Co-ax and connecting plugs were checked and a smaller length of co-ax was employed for further checks but the high SWR on 20m and 40m remained. I always use liberal amounts of Vaseline on outdoor antenna connections, so corrosion was unlikely, especially as the antenna was almost new. I blew through the drain holes on the traps, but no moisture was forthcoming.

GDO check of the traps revealed not a lot so the antenna was returned to the dealer for investigation. They checked the traps, although I am not sure how, but could find no problems. It was pronounced 'OK' and returned to me with a new balun – "just in case that was the cause of the trouble". Upon re-assembly at home with the new balun the situation was unchanged, so it was again returned to the dealer. This time they removed the rivets and stripped down the traps. A (sterile?) spider was found in one trap, but otherwise all appeared normal, with no sign of electrical damage. Upon re-assembly and return to my tower the antenna behaved as new, although I made very few contacts on 20m and none on 40m during the ensuing weeks. However, the high SWR on 20m and 40m returned and again the antenna was returned to the dealer.

A few weeks later it was decided to replace the antenna under warranty with a brand-new one. I raised the question regarding power-handling capability with the dealer and with Comet Electronics in Japan. The specification says "*Max Input Power: 1KW /SSB*". Er, say again? Is that 1KW input to the antenna or 1KW input to the transmitter; there is a subtle difference. I e-mailed Comet Electronics in Japan and also queried this with Nevada. Comet did not respond. Nevada said that it was a 'high power' antenna and manufacturers' specs are usually conservative. However, the traps might be susceptible to damage if the antenna was operated at high power well away from the resonant frequencies. There was no suggestion that any trap(s) on the first antenna had been damaged by RF, but the fact remains that many of us run 1KW input to linears, so a more precise definition of power handling would be useful. I had a TA-33JR (trapped tri-bander) many years ago and I ran QRO to that a great deal with no problems.

When I opened the box containing the new antenna I noted that Comet had uprated the supplied balun to 2.5KW. The old balun was moulded plastic with the usual connections and no access for servicing, but it was rated at "*2KW SSB*". The new balun is much bigger and assembled with screws, so can be opened for inspection, although I have not done so. As before I assembled the antenna in accordance with the instructions. This time the SWR curves did not follow spec on 40m, where it was somewhat LF out of band. I reduced the length of the 40m section in accordance with the instructions in the leaflet and soon had it resonant at around 7.050 MHz when up at 50ft. Both 10m and 15m have wide bandwidths, but unfortunately 20m is particularly narrow. As before it seems to work fairly well, but cannot compare with any form of monobander at height. For someone with a small garden who is happy with 'bread and butter DX' it would suffice.

I have no other antenna with which to compare the H422 and I cannot rotate it. However, during June and July there were (apparently) some good openings on 20m to Hawaii around 0700-0800. Typically, one morning M1WDK in Lincoln was reporting KH7XS at 59+. The KH7 didn't even move the S-meter at my QTH and I could never have worked him. I frequently checked when KH6 stations were reported on the Cluster, but not once was there any sign of movement on the S-meter here. There was also an IOTA DXpedition to two Canadian islands which I needed, but 90% of the time they were inaudible with me, although EU stations were working them fairly easily.

In conclusion, anyone who has worked with monoband antennas would probably not be satisfied with the H422, but those who are used to compromise antennas at low level may be pleasantly surprised if they can get an H422 up in the air.

Low Power Contest, by G5LP

I guess it's best to check out exactly what is happening when you select a site for the Low Power Contest when running /P. The local rugby club car park is ideal – a good site and this time of year rarely used on a Sunday.

"Have you anything booked for Sunday the 20th?" I asked. "Some folks having a 'Fun Day' shouldn't bother you as there's plenty of room"

Thankfully the serious QRO didn't start until the contest had closed at 1600 UTC. Oh yes, the details: K2, 10W, W3DZZ on the fishing pole, 131 QSOs on 40/80. Theakstons from the rugby club bar to wash down the Sunday roast from their Carvery. What a very sociable contest: time for lunch included!

The Flex 5000A – a DXer’s dream?

Stan Rudcenko, GØKBL

rudcenko@aol.com

I have a suspicion that new radios are to a DXer what new golf clubs are to a golfer. Every new set of golf clubs promises a better game ahead. But while it feels good to have new clubs, one’s handicap stays mostly the same. Every new radio raises hopes of better performance, but when you go back to the old radio, the more often it strikes you how good it actually was. I have been comparing the three radios that I have connected to my computer – a Flex 5000A, Orion I and Icom IC-756 Pro.

The main radio I use is the Flex, but the other two are connected via HRD to my computer, so I can change quickly. Each time I go back to the Orion I am surprised how good it is, and even the Icom does not sound too bad. Like those proverbial new golf clubs, there is not that much to choose between them. However, from a purely DX-chasing point of view the Flex seems to have a distinct edge on several counts.

Overall, the Flex is much easier to use than the other two radios. Everything is on the screen or just a mouse click away, unlike the Orion with its relatively complicated menu system, or the cumbersome menus on the Icom. This is especially true about AGC settings and filter settings, but changing most settings is simply faster with the Flex. The Flex is also much easier to tune than a normal radio. I have the following options: I can point and click on the panadaptor, which is ideal in a pile-up as you can see where people are calling and find a quiet spot in between or call on the spot the DX has just worked. I can use a mouse wheel, or I can use the keyboard to tune the radio at any speed I choose. I also have a knob, which is a weighted programmable wheel used for program editing (Contour Shuttle Pro) and which works very well just like a real tuning knob.

A major asset from a DXing point of view is that the Flex has a panadaptor, which shows up even weak signals quite clearly. Even better is the waterfall, which shows traces of even weaker signals as they get temporarily lifted out of the noise. The panadaptor/waterfall are extremely addictive and sometimes it is tempting just to watch the screen, which covers a big (30-40 kHz) segment of the band, depending on the settings, for signal traces, rather than listen up and down the band.

The Flex also handles itself very well on crowded bands. I remember when I bought the Orion I marvelled at its selectivity – now I mostly keep wondering whether something has gone wrong with the Orion when I have switched from the Flex. On the Flex you can see a big signal next to a weak one on the panadaptor and click on the 25 Hz filter, with no ringing and no trace of the big signal, assuming it is clean. Also, while the Orion can pick a weak signal out of the noise, the Flex can do it just a little better. The narrower the filter, the better it gets. Like the Orion you tune with the AGC gain, which works like RF gain, and suddenly a signal which is impossible to read becomes clear as noise disappears with the added advantage of the 25 Hz filter switched in. Analogue radios just cannot do this. And if you can hear the DX when others can’t, you can work it. Last but not least, you get a large number of updates to the SDR software on almost a weekly basis, and many are a real improvement, not just bug fixes.

There are a few things one has to learn to live with. For one thing the computer is as important as the radio and something close to the top of the range in terms of speed and RAM is needed. A desktop version is preferable. Which adds anything up to £1,000 to the nearly £2,000 spent on a new

Flex, but then again, a good computer can be used for other things as well. The only connection between the computer and the Flex is a firewire cable, which can be 10ft long or more, so the radio does not have to be on one's desk. This is an unexpected bonus in my case as the XYL never knows whether I am playing with the radio or working while sitting at my desk staring at the screen.

Another issue is that the marriage between computer (and Microsoft Vista) and the Flex is not perfect and the system crashes at fairly regular intervals. There is no problem getting started again, but it can be annoying. There is also a residual latency problem, which makes CW operation sometimes uncomfortable as CW sending can become

slightly irregular. This has improved dramatically, and depends on the computer one has, but is still there - especially when trying to key Flex direct. I use MIXW and US interface Navigator and have no problem with CW or the digital modes. The latency issue also makes the Flex at best a semi-break-in operation, nothing like the fantastic QSK on the Orion. Unlike the Orion, the Flex does not have a second receiver – that costs about US\$ 500 extra and is not even available here yet.

To sum up, the Flex 5000A is definitely a bonus for DXing, but like the new golf clubs, it probably improves one's handicap only marginally. Now if the XYL ever finds out how much I spent on the radio, will she insist on £2,000 golf clubs for Christmas?

Micro-DXpeditioning Uncovered

by Roger Western, G3SXW

A new book to entertain and thrill every DXer and traveller and armchair DXpeditioner.

Tales of derring-do to over 20 mostly European DXCC entities, all done on the cheap, mostly just day trips or overnights. Low-cost airlines have ushered in a new era, along with modern technology which provides us with high-calibre 100W transceivers for less than three kilos.

Read how we have made these amazing journeys, how we've got on the air from many countries, how we've met so many new friends. Day trips to T7 San Marino, C3 Andorra, SP Poland, ISØ Sardinia and many more. Anyone fancy lunch in Bratislava or Monte Carlo? Here is the 'How To' kit, all packaged ready to go, for the discerning reader. During the past 2-3 years SXW has visited (in this order) ZB2, EA9, ISØ, YL, 9H, OM, SP, T7, HV, LY, C3, YO, LZ, HA, OE, OM, 1A, TF, JW, CT3, 3A, 4U.

Just lob a tenner at G3SXW and your 100+ page tome will wing its way to you, providing hours of Micro-DXpeditioning entertainment.

Send a cheque to: Roger Western, G3SXW, 7 Field Close, Chessington KT9 2QD.

or transfer to: Barclays Bank 20-90-69, A/c 80953636, with a suitably explanatory reference.

Much mirth is guaranteed! Plus an introduction to the new game of 'DXFC'. Now what on earth does that 'F' stand for?

IOTA News

Roger Balister, G3KMA

Update of data in IOTA Directory (2007 edition)

New IOTA reference numbers issued

NA-229	VYØ	Nunavut (Hudson Bay - Quebec Coast) North East group (Canada)
NA-234	KL	Islands of Four Mountains (Alaska)

Operations which have provided acceptable validation material

AS-068	RWØBG/P	Morzhova Island (July 2008)
AS-149	RIØF	Moneron Island (August 2008)
AS-149	RV1CC/Ø	Moneron Island (August 2008)
EU-145	CT/EA7TV/P	Culatra Island (November 2007)
EU-162	RZ3AMW/1	Ryashkov Island (June/July 2008)
NA-042	K7A	Hinchinbrook Island (May/June 2008)
NA-087	K7A	Popof Island, Shumagin Islands (June 2008)
NA-191	TI7/DK6AO	Capitan Island (May 2008)
NA-194	VO2A	Finger Hill Island (August 2008)
NA-205	VO2A	Paul Island (August 2008)
NA-229	K9AJ/VYØ	Diana Island (July 2008)
NA-229	KD6WW/VYØ	Diana Island (July 2008)
NA-234	KL7DX	Chuginadak Island, Islands of Four Mountains (July 2008)
NA-241	K7A	Neragon Island, Sand Islands (June 2008)
OC-142	VK2IAY/4	Great Keppel Island, Keppel Islands (December 2007)
OC-160	VK2IAY/4	South Molle Island, Whitsunday Islands (January 2008)
OC-223	VK1AA/2	Montague Island (April 2008)

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

Roger Balister, G3KMA
RSGB IOTA Manager

20 August 2008

E-mail: IOTA.HQ@rsgb.org.uk
Personal website: www.g3kma.dsl.pipex.com
RSGB IOTA website: www.rsgbiota.org

The Tokyo Ham Fair 2008

Bob Barden, MDØCCE *bardenbobb@aol.com*

Since moving to the Isle of Man and becoming active, I found that I was the first GD for many Japanese stations, in particular on the lower frequency bands. The result was quite a lot of e-mail traffic, thanking me for QSOs/QLSs, asking for skeds and so on. Earlier this year, I received an e-mail from Aki-san, JH2RMU, asking whether I was coming to the Tokyo Ham Fair in August. I had lived in Tokyo in the 1990s and had not been back within the last few years, so it was an appealing idea. In addition, as I had been to Dayton in 2007, and not wanting to go to Dayton two years in a row, it seemed like a good suggestion. He then made some contacts within JARL and several DX groups, and I was invited to give a talk about 3B7C and also DXing from the Isle of Man at the DX Dinner on Saturday night.

The 3B7C PowerPoint presentation was shortened somewhat and simplified for the expected multi-lingual audience, sent to Neville, G3NUG, for approval and editing, and a new PowerPoint was created about DXing from the Isle of Man. The two presentations were sent to Yoshi-san, JE2EHP, who added Japanese subtitles to all the slides, and who would act as my translator and guide extraordinaire for the event.

Arriving in Tokyo

I arrived in Tokyo on the Wednesday before the Ham Fair and spent two days meeting old friends and visiting the neighbourhood near Shinjuku where we lived in 1994-1996. On Friday I changed hotels to be in the Washington Hotel, across the street from Tokyo Big Sight, where the Ham Fair would be held. Tokyo Big Sight is truly a big sight; the building is a striking modern complex connected to rapid transit by covered walkways, with multiple halls so that

several events can be conducted simultaneously. The Tokyo Ham Fair was one of three events taking place at the same time.

Yoshi-san met Ed, AH2L, his wife Frances, and me in the lobby of the hotel at 3pm on Friday and took us across the street to get Exhibitor badges for the event. Yoshi-san explained that these would be helpful in avoiding the one-hour queue for tickets on Saturday morning, as more than 30,000 visitors were expected to the Ham Fair over the weekend. (It turned out later that more than 30,000 attended, a larger crowd than last year's)

We then went into the hall, where vendors and exhibitors were setting up their booths, and went straight to that being set up by the Far East DXploiters (FEDXP), a 40-year-old DX club numbering about 70 ops. There I met a number of DXers whom I had worked previously, including JA1WPX, JA1BRK, JA1OND, JA1HGY, JE1SYN, JA4LKB, JA1CCO, and JP1IOF. After chatting for a while it was announced that it was time to quench our thirsts (the hall had minimal A/C running) as a prelude to dinner, so we went to a local beer garden and got to know one another better. Then it was a monorail ride for a few stops to an enormous complex of restaurants overlooking the waters of Tokyo Bay for a buffet dinner. I was told that normally there would be a spectacular view of the setting sun from the restaurant, but clouds and rain precluded that treat on that particular Friday night. During the dinner Eddie, DU1EV, and Hiro-san, JA4DND, joined us, having just flown in from his home with a special bottle of sake for me. Hiro-san always has a great signal on any band, and was one of my first JA QSOs on 160m. Domo arigato, Hiro-san!

On arriving back at the hotel we were greeted by a contingent of HL DXers who had just arrived, including 6K2AVL. We sat and chatted for a while, took pictures, then headed off to bed with keen anticipation for Saturday morning.

Saturday at the Ham Fair

Saturday morning came easily (my not-fully-adjusted body clock was getting me up at 0530) and we met in the hotel lobby to enter the Ham Fair early with the vendors, one hour ahead of the public. This allowed us to tour around the exhibits, meet people and see the offerings without the throngs of people who would arrive later. Yoshi-san seemed to know just about everybody and very kindly spent an enormous amount of time introducing me to most of them!

During the morning I was introduced to Mr Jun Hasegawa, President of Vertex Standard, and presented him with a 3B7C polo shirt and DVD in recognition of Yaesu's role as Principal Sponsor for the expedition. Of course their stand was one of the largest on the floor.

Yoshi-san also introduced me to Mr Tokuzo Inoue, JA3FA, the Founder and Chairman of Icom (who wanted to know all about the motorcycle races on the Isle of Man), Mr Yoshi Kato, JA8CDT, the Director of JARL, and the officers and members of a number of DX clubs.

Some of the interesting things noted during several tours of the exhibit area (several were required because crowds were sometimes too big to see some things on the first or second attempt!):

- A current focus of JARL is to bring young hams into the hobby. There were several areas aimed directly at young people, and they were well attended. These ranged from demonstrations to kit sales to a youth workshop with table after table of soldering irons, tools, and instructors

helping would-be young hams to build circuits from scratch. 7K4PTY of the Top Gun Club introduced me to his 12-year-old son Abe-san, JF1FDS, who had passed his third class licence that day, giving him access to 17m and CW on various bands. Abe-san seemed keen to get on the air with his new licence!

- Quite a few hams seemed to rent exhibit booths simply to show pictures of their expeditions, past call signs and operations, and to meet and greet old friends or those who remembered working them.
- It was a joy to see several established dealers with visually beautiful (and, one hopes, solid-performing) old equipment for sale: Collins, Drake, Yaesu and local rigs that I was not familiar with.
- Kits were in evidence in a number of booths, ranging from simple circuit boards to whole receivers and transmitters, some in colourful cases to appeal to the younger hams.
- An interesting array of mobile antennas, including a mobile whip for 160m – the loading coil was colour-coded in iridescent gold and most impressive in size! Other members of its family included glow-in-the-dark purple loading coils for 80m/75m, and other brightly coloured coils for 40m, 30m, etc.
- Several booths offered new light-weight amplifiers: Tokyo Hy-Power's new HL-1.1KFX provides 600W CW output, full QSK, auto VSWR protection, and other features in a package weighing less than 10kg, including the internal power supply. Another local manufacture demonstrating his wares at the FEDXP booth had 500W amplifiers for 160-80-40m weighing only 3kg including power supply; two could be combined for 1KW in an external power combiner. Each of these amplifiers was offered at the show at

about £400, and the combiner was about £250; he said that 100 were already sold and in use.

- Several dealers were showing motorised crank-up towers of substantial size; one most impressive display of photos of JO1DZA's Luso Tower installation showed the tower with a full-sized 3-element 80m yagi, next to a second one with a full-sized 6-element 40m yagi. The 40m yagi used a 3-inch-diameter thick-walled aluminium boom, while the 80m beam used triangular tower sections as a boom; in each case the two halves of the boom were hinged in the middle to fold down against the side of the tower for assembly, disassembly, and in case of high winds. The other tower offerings, while less adventurous in showing large arrays, were very impressive in their construction and perhaps more suited to the pocketbooks and gardens of more DXers!
- The JARL booth included a large section set aside for DXCC card checking, staffed by Dave, NN1N, from ARRL and a team of six or so JA card checkers. They were busy for almost the entire two days, with hopeful DXers sitting watching each card as it was checked.
- Jim Nakajima, JA9IFF, manned the RSGB IOTA booth, answering questions and checking cards. Jim-san, whom I have worked a number of times on a number of bands and both SSB and CW from GD, was also kind enough to sell a number of 3B7C DVDs in his booth.

Harry-san, JA1BMA, invited me to a delightful traditional Japanese multi-course lunch in a private room in a local restaurant and showed me some of the QSLs from his collection as well as photographs of some of the mountains he has climbed. One of the cards he showed me was from an Isle of Man station whom I didn't know – the card

was 20 years old. Oddly enough, the day that I returned home, I saw this same station spotted on the cluster on 20m SSB, but couldn't hear him because he is at the southern end of the island; I am at the northern end and there is a mountain in the middle!

Ross, 9M2AX, who has a great signal on Top Band and a great sense of humour, told me he was very glad to meet me as it was nice to see someone fatter than him! We got past that unconventional greeting and had a long conversation about dealing with EU callers while trying to work DX on 160m. He told me that there were only a few days in any given year when he could work the US East Coast, or even more difficult, W8/W9, on Top Band and it was very frustrating when he did get an opening to have EU callers covering the weak US signals.

DX Dinner on Saturday Night

Saturday night's DX Dinner was well attended by members of the groups jointly sponsoring the event, including the FEDXP (Far East DXploiters), the Yokohama DX Club, the Nippon DX Association, the Top Gun Club (TGC), and the Shizuoka DX Radio Association. The pre-registered attendance published the week before was 237, but 262 came on the night. Yoshi-san, JE2EHP, introduced me and I gave an introduction and greeting in Japanese, Manx Gaelic, and English that drew applause before the presentations started. The extent of my Japanese ended with the introductions, but Yoshi-san's Japanese sub-titles were apparently excellent (I can't say for sure!) as the audience reactions came at the right time even though I gave the talk in English.

After the talk many people came up to say thank you for the QSO from 3B7C or from GD, cards were exchanged, and

skeds were made for future QSOs on 40, 80 or 160m. In return, I was able to thank many, including club representatives, for their donations and contributions to the 3B7C expedition fund. Using the pre-registered attendance list as a guide, I had identified 80 stations in my log from MDØ, and had cards filled out and ready for any who had not sent a card and received one back already; almost all of these were given out during the meetings afterwards. Many of the attendees also purchased 3B7C DVDs in NTSC format, with the proceeds going to the FSDXA fund for The Next One.

After the formal banquet, introductions of all the DX ops attending (including 6K2AVL, 6K2GVK, 6K2GVL, 6K5YPW, 9M2AX, 9M2GCN, AH2L, BU2AI, BU2AO, DS4NMJ, DS5ANY, DU1EV, HL5BMX, HL5FUA, K6SV, K7BV, NN1N, OH1VR, and Z29KM. Mak Takazawa, JA1XS, of the YDXC and Chairman of the Dinner's organising committee, gave a nice speech in both English and Japanese, and the meeting was adjourned.

After the banquet a group of perhaps 30 Top Gun Club members met outside to enjoy the night air (although under a canopy, as it was drizzling) and local sake, rice wine, and beer that each had brought from their own districts. More introductions were made and more skeds set up for September on 40m and later in the season on Top Band.

Sunday at the Ham Fair

Sunday's crowd at the Ham Fair was larger than Saturday's. There were more introductions, more cards exchanged, and a presentation by NN1N, Dave Patton from ARRL, who talked about the need for the training of operators for emergency response operations, and the

role that contesting can play in that training. It was pointed out that contests can be intimidating to new operators, who need some sort of formal training and/or mentoring to foster correct operation. Dave pledged to put video clips on the ARRL web in advance of key contests, demonstrating proper contest exchanges and practices. That sounds like a good idea and it will be interesting to watch that project unfold.

Monday was spent unwinding, assessing the meishi (business cards), QSL cards and mini-QSL cards received, and meeting with other non-ham friends before flying back on Tuesday.

An interesting footnote was that I had lunch on Sunday with Ed, AH2L, and his wife Frances. We had just QSOed on 20m a few weeks before and had exchanged cards without realising that we would meet at the Ham Fair. After arranging to set up a sked on Top Band (we both need each other on 160m), it turned out that Ed and I grew up only a few miles from each other on Long Island, NY, went to the same beach as kids, and had similar highly specialised technical careers in the 1960s and 1970s (cryogenically cooled microwave parametric amplifiers). He then travelled west to live on Guam, I travelled east to live in the UK, and we met and became friends for the first time 40 years later in Tokyo. Isn't ham radio a great hobby?

Thanks especially to JE2EHP, JH2RMU, JA1XS, JA1DOT, and all the members of the FEDXP, TGC, YDXA, NDXA, SDXRA and all the Dinner attendees for their most generous hospitality and warm welcome in Tokyo.

73 Bob, MDØCCE

The RTTY Column

Phil Cooper, GUØSUP *pcooper@guernsey.net*

In the last issue I started by saying that the summer Es season had begun. Around the time that issue hit the streets, I think the summer Es season had all but died, and the higher bands were as quiet as the proverbial grave.

However, I have just taken part in the SARTG RTTY Contest, and for that 10m was more than a little active, with some big QSO totals being claimed for that band. I managed 60 contacts in 27 DXCC entities in just a few hours, including D4C and 7XØRY. The rest were just EU, but it was still fun, and very good to see such a large amount of activity on the band. Also, 15m was quite active, but again no DX, just EU, although once more, I logged D4C and 7XØRY. On 20m conditions were varying from hour to hour, and I worked W6/W7 and VE6 quite easily, but failed to even hear any W5s, and then I was working Gs and GMs! Very strange, but all part of the fun.

I should update you on my DXCC and DOK applications too. Having submitted the paperwork in Friedrichshafen, I was pleasantly surprised to receive my DOK award about four weeks later! It came in a presentation card folder, and really is a very pleasing award.

Around 18 August I then received the paperwork from the ARRL for my DXCC submission. This now confirms my CW DXCC, plus the additional tally for my ongoing RTTY DXCC. I now have the stickers for 200 on 15m, and 150 on 10m. I guess I will have to wait a few more weeks for my CW certificate to arrive.

Another award landed on my doormat this week, and this was the Digital WPX award. I submitted data for over 1,000 prefixes worked and confirmed, and my certificate is No. 5.

In an earlier issue I mentioned the lack of a card for VP6DX. Eric, K3NA, kindly e-mailed me after reading about my concerns, and told me just why the delay had occurred. It was partly my mistake, as – like many others – I didn't fully read the QSL info pages, and posted a card containing enough for postage, plus a bit more. I had sent a 'donation' before the trip took place, but this may have been lost in the postal system, and I can't really blame the VP6DX crew for that. Happily, my card did arrive some time after that, so all's well that ends well.

Not too much to report on the world of RTTY, as nothing startling has happened, but I can see from some postings that quite a few CDXC members are now having a serious go at RTTY contesting. I worked some, and saw many operating in SARTG, and there have been some good scores posted. Once you get used to the fact that the rates are somewhat slower than in CW contests, you can have some serious fun. RTTY contesting is a laid-back event, unless you are really going for a win, and I guess that is the crunch. Some of you must have stations that are capable of putting in a winning score, and it is just a matter of application.

I know I am never going to win a contest, or even be a continental leader, but for me it is just good fun, a few keyboard chats along the way, the hope of a new DXCC entity, or even just a new band-slot that keeps me going.

I also like my bed too much, so I find it difficult to stay up through the night, although I often do get up early and try to catch the greyline. Even if you are just spending a few hours on a wet Sunday afternoon (aren't they all just now?) you can still have some fun.

I always find it amusing to see the pile-ups begin in the first hours of a contest, and I often wonder what the likes of HC8N, D4C and other big contest stations think when they see an endless pile of DL-IK-SP stations in the first hour or two. I make a point of avoiding such stations till the latter stages of the contest. By then the pile-ups have usually gone away, and I have found the likes of HC8N calling CQ over and over, without response, in the last hours.

OK, you can make quick 'in and outs' with some stations, and this can be a matter of timing. How many times have you seen something like this:

HC8N HC8N HC8N DE G1XYZ G1XYZ
G1XYZ ?

This is a complete waste of everyone's time, and is almost bound to fail. Firstly, sit and watch their style for a few minutes. You may just see some sort of pattern to the way they operate. This may be just that they work the very last call they see, or they may be noting who has called, then working them in turn. Most RTTY contesting software will do this for you, so watch and see if this is the case. If they don't come back to you immediately, you may want to send once more, but then sit back and wait your turn. It can sometimes help to have

your callsign in a buffer just once, with a CR+LF at the beginning and end. If there is a huge pile calling, just hold your nerve and wait till the last possible moment, then hit that buffer. If they are good RTTY ops at the other end, they may just get enough of your call to try.

Thinking ahead a little, the WAEDC RTTY contest is at the beginning of November, and this always causes some grief for those people who do not understand the concept of QTC traffic. Have a look at my website, and you will find a link to a page all about the WAEDC Contest and QTCs. Check out www.guernsey.net/~pcooper/waedc.html.

Forthcoming contests:

CIS DX RTTY	Sep 20-21
CQ WW DX	Sep 27-28
Makrothen	Oct 11-12
JARTS (Japan)	Oct 18-19
WAEDC (QTC)	Nov 8-9
TARA RTTY Melee	Dec 6
OK RTTY	Dec 20

That's it for this time, so see you in the pile-ups!

73 de Phil GUØSUP

Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX, wins June QST Cover Plaque Award

The winner of the QST Cover Plaque Award for June is Steve Telenius-Lowe, 9M6DXX, for his article 'The FSDXA 3B7C St Brandon DXpedition'. Congratulations, Steve!

The winner of the QST Cover Plaque award - given to the author or authors of the best article in each issue - is determined by a vote of ARRL members on the QST Cover Plaque Poll Web page.

[Needless to say, Steve is a CDXC member! Ed.]

Contest

Lee Volante, GØMTN

This will be a slightly shorter than usual 'Contest' due to the rather poor timing of my latest hard disk crash just days before the editorial deadline. I do seem to wonder as technology improves, why do I seem to suffer ever more failures? The old PCs I own have, touch wood, kept on working after over a decade of use. The more

modern units I've used have on average lasted less than two years before needing re-installing, or as I've just done, swapped out for new hardware. I'm only sending e-mails and browsing the Internet to keep up with the latest contest info – hardly the most taxing of tasks. So let this be another reminder to keep back-ups of your data – even if we're lucky enough to have online log back-ups courtesy of LoTW and eQSL.

Murphy seems to be abound outside the shack as well. The ever-increasing rain seems to have penetrated the waterproofing I have around the balun connected to my windom, leaving me from time to time trying to radiate RF from just the coax. Even stranger was a failure mid-contest of

my yagi, which was eventually traced down to a failed electrical connection between two element sections. Why it failed on a calm, dry day, with 100W being passed through it I've yet to work out.

Contest University – RSGB HF Convention

After the success of the Contest University (CTU) programme held at the Dayton Hamvention for the past two years, CTU will be coming to the UK this October at the RSGB HF Convention. The USA CTU is organised by Tim, K3LR, who gathered some of the most respected US contesters to give a variety of presentations. Our own

Mark, MØDXR, has also presented there, giving a European perspective. Mark also arranged a couple of contesting lectures at last year's HF Convention, as a prelude to a full programme for 2008. Whilst a lot of the content will be geared towards new and future contesters, there will be material for the more experienced contesters too. Presentations include the Joy of Contesting, Contest Operating Procedures, Antennas for Contesting, Contest Categories, Propagation, Contest Strategy, and Station Equipment & Layout. The CTU lectures will be in their own stream at the Convention, and of course everyone is welcome to attend. As an extra incentive, a participation certificate will be awarded to those who attend at least 4 of the 7 lectures. There is a large pool of Foundation, Intermediate and recent Full Licensees who may not have been properly introduced to contesting – CTU aims to provide that introduction. See you there!

RSGB Sprints

As I write this, the new season of RSGB Sprint contests have just got underway. There has been publicity in RadCom explaining the rationale and the QSO format, and similar on the UK-Contest reflector. Paul, EI5DI, has added support for the events in SD, with easy colour coding to help any entrants who have their transceiver connected to their PC know how far they need to QSY after making a QSO. The contests have kept the mid-week, 90-minute format of the 80m Club Championships too. An extra facet added since last year's Sprint experiment is to add a club element. It's thought likely that a lot of the participation in the 80m CC is due to contest secretaries or managers at local radio clubs reminding and cajoling their members to take part. Every little helps

towards boosting your club's score in the league table.

But at this early stage, the activity levels seem to be much lower than the 80m Club Championships which concluded for the year just a few weeks previously. I hope the participation levels will build over time, just as the 80m CC did. It will be disappointing if the fun and challenge of a more unusual QSO format stops a large percentage of the potential entrants from taking part. Sprints can be a lot of fun.

Skimmer – CQ WW makes a decision

The 2008 CQ WW rules for the Phone and CW contests have been published, with an addition to the rules to disallow Skimmer for unassisted entrants. The rules text reads:

Single Operator categories: For all single operator categories, only one person (the operator) can contribute to the final score during the official contest period. **QSO alerting assistance of any kind (this includes, but is not limited to, packet, local or remote Skimmer and/or Skimmer-like technology, Internet) places the entrant in the Single Operator Assisted category.**

It was not obvious if the 'Skimmer-like technology' referred to the ability to decode CW automatically per se (eg an MFJ Morse reader) or the ability to decode perhaps hundreds of CW streams simultaneously, which is presently done using Skimmer and an SDR. I've raised a query with the CQ WW Committee who will hopefully be able to elaborate.

After all of the hype regarding Skimmer, it was useful to see an experienced contester recount his experiences of using it in anger during the IARU HF Championship. Incidentally, for this year at least, Skimmer was allowed for Single Op entrants where the DX Cluster is banned. This is an excerpt from Scott/W4PA's online blog from his entry from K4TD's station:

"Rick has a network of 6 Skimmer receivers hooked up to a network and a DX Engineering vertical antenna a few hundred feet away from the towers. The receivers on each band feed into a network and were delivering spots on CW all weekend. Does it work? Absolutely. The Skimmers populated band maps on all 6 bands with no problem. HQ multiplier stations outlined in red, new QSOs blue, already worked QSOs grey. It looks just like packet spotting. The callsign quality was good, I'd say 90% of the calls spotted were correct, and even if they were not correct the Skimmer handily decodes the right callsign next to it. Example at one point the Skimmer had (in red) spotted EW1AW/9 as a new multiplier, but right next to it in grey had spotted W1AW/9 correctly. The Skimmers also alerted me to the 10m opening in progress, as at the top of the screen there were band decode totals for each band for multipliers and QSOs needed. The 10m total was 0/0 most of the time, and then at one point it said something like 7/18, so I went up there and sure enough, band open to Europe.

There were hundreds of available callsigns to work during the peak times. On 20m early on I had 600 available calls to be worked at one point spotted by the Skimmer. Some of those were CQing, some were people that had answered CQs on someone else's run frequency and sent their call a couple of times. Even when I was transmitting at 1,500W on a given band, the Skimmer had enough time in between my working people on that band to continue decoding calls - this came in handy on 40 CW when I didn't want to leave my run frequency but the red HQ stations kept popping up on the Skimmer and I just popped them into the other VFO and toggled them to work them without leaving my run.

Is it an advantage over unassisted single op? No question. Does it look and feel like packet? Definitely. If I didn't know what it was, I would have assumed I was looking at

packet spots. Is it different than unassisted traditional single op? Sure. It may even be better than packet, because it gives you ALL the callsigns for the whole band.”

CQ WW Results

Thanks to Roger, G3SXW, for these results of UK stations appearing in the Top 10 boxes of the SSB and CW CQ WW DX Contests for 2007. Congratulations to these high scorers, and to anyone who improved their scores or their table placings.

SSB

Single Op, All Band

M6T (G4PIQ), World 9th, Europe 2nd
MIØLLL EU 7th
GW4BLE EU 9th

28 MHz

GØAEV EU 3rd

Low Power, All Band

G4BUO EU 7th

QRP All Band

M3RCV World 4th, EU 2nd

CW

High Power

All Band

M6T, EU 8th, Zone 14 3rd
GM7V, Zone 14 8th

14 MHz

G3TXF, EU 5th
GW8GT, EU 6th

Multi-Multi

3X5A, World 1st

Low Power

21 MHz

9G5XA (G3XAQ), World 1st

3.5 MHz

GU4YOX, EU 6th

1.8MHz

G3WPH, World 5th, EU 4th

Once again the CQ WW logs are open to all, so get studying before this October and November. For your own entry last year, new-style UBNs are available which will tell you about errors found by the adjudication process. Password access to these has been e-mailed to the entrants in the last couple of months.

On the Air

IARU HF Championship - GB7HQ

Thanks to everyone who called the GB7HQ stations over the IARU HF Championship weekend. Many of the improvements made this year paid off, with 7 of the 12 band/mode stations making QSO records. Having different stations around the UK able to take over a particular band/mode slot was useful, as propagation can vary significantly between Cornwall and the Orkney Isles – and a host of stations previously lost in the skip zone then become workable. Poor Clive, GM3POI, was frustrated with a power cut during most of the night. Further improvements are planned for next year to maximise the team's ability to make DX QSOs, although there are rumours that the contest rules may be changed regarding HQ stations that may limit the progression.

IOTA

For my summer holiday this year I spent a week in the Polish countryside. As the break was going to cover the IOTA Contest

weekend, I packed my FT-817 and took along a 20m and 40m dipole and an 8m fishing pole. During the few days before the contest I tuned around the bands and tried to make a few contacts. With my work and personal schedule it's rare for me to find time to tune around the bands outside of a contest. I'd read a number of gloomy reports about the low levels of weekday activity. Admittedly my antenna system was not very efficient, and propagation continues to be mediocre, but it was a big struggle to make any contacts at all.

During the contest itself I was able to make contacts far more easily. The loudest IOTA stations normally had high volumes of callers, and I found myself making most contacts with World stations. So whilst any thoughts of a competitive entry quickly evaporated, I just focussed on making as many QSOs as I could. It was a pleasant surprise to see so much life on 10m and 15m, and the post-contest reports from many groups afterwards were very complementary.

WRTC Qualification

We are now nearing the end of the qualification for WRTC 2010, with just this autumn's DX contests, and the Russian DX Contest in 2009 to go. There have been some changes in the top placings, notably as the operators who make just two or three serious entries per year start to catch up those who were more active, but overall less successful, in the earlier qualifying events.

The drive to qualify for WRTC has led many contesters to take part in events they may not ordinarily have been so serious in. For example, the poor band conditions can make the DX QSO only Worked All Europe events a real test of stamina. Another recent qualification event, the EU HF Championship, seemed relatively quiet, though, especially on SSB. High band conditions were poor for this event, more so in the UK than other parts of Europe.

73 Lee, GØMTN

Most Wanted Country Survey, DX Magazine

Roger Western, G3SXW

As we know, DX Magazine runs by far the largest worldwide annual survey of Wanted countries. The 2008 survey is now under way. For the first time the survey will also capture data about countries Needed on the LF bands, as well as reporting the different modes as always and of course the continents.

All we need to do (at no cost) is to go to www.dxpub.com to access the on-line survey form, then tick your Needed boxes. Please do so, even if you did it last year. We need an up-to-date picture.

This is vital data to help DXpeditioners target their future projects and to help sponsoring clubs to decide who to support. It's not just for the so-called 'Big Guns' - the Needs of ALL DXers are important.

A big thank you to Carl, N4AA, of DX Magazine for running this survey every year, and especially to our very own Tim/G4VXE for handling the Data Processing.

E-mails to the Editor

from ZL2IFB

via the CDXC Reflector

July 2008 Digest – QSL!

Having received my CDXC *Digest* this afternoon, I'm sitting here in the shack with a large beverage reading it intently. Jolly good show!

The usual DXpedition reports are, as always, anything but usual. I'm full of admiration for those who journey to exotic locations, braving variously arduous conditions, expenses and risks just so we can snag a new one.

I'm particularly impressed by Phil/G3SWH's piece on DXpedition practices, with his point-by-point response to Roger/G3SXW's comments on Phil's Guyana report in an earlier issue. Both gentlemen have a wonderfully British way of expressing themselves with such restraint and decorum, despite being clearly passionate about the subject. It's like watching a boxing match, gloves on, Marquis of Queensbury's rules don't you know.

For what it's worth I agree with Roger that LoTW (and online log) updates can and should be rapid (daily is really not too frequent for an active ham, weekly or monthly is fine for those who find it a chore, annually is *much* too slow, Phil), and with Phil that it's reasonable to recommend, but not demand, direct QSLs for anyone who really needs to confirm a QSO. Both Roger and Phil are known to respond diligently to direct QSLs and I certainly have no complaints in that department. I personally log *all* completed QSOs including completed dupes, as per the old UK licence conditions and just in case previous QSOs were lost or incomplete, but if I'm not too

busy I sometimes send QSO B4 and hope that a dupe goes away to check his log (if he comes back quickly, I'll work and log him again to be sure and move along).

On the question of funding DXpeditions and DX ops in general through 'excess' QSL money, my feeling is that US\$2 or 1 IRC plus an addressed return envelope is the accepted norm today for a direct QSL: any more is a generous donation, any less is an invitation to return a card via the bureau system. Despite not being particularly exotic, just a ZL, I get one or two direct QSL requests a week. US\$2 or 1 IRC doesn't quite cover my costs, but I'm always flattered by the requests and routinely return any extra \$ or IRCs with a little 'thank you' note and 'please send the extra to the next DXpedition you work'. Anyone who needs a confirmation from me can get it for free via LoTW too, but I'm old-fashioned enough to like swapping cards with hand-scribbled comments.

If - or rather when - I travel somewhere exotic for a DXpedition, I'll gratefully accept donations towards my costs, but I certainly won't demand them. That means I won't travel 'beyond my means', in other words I budget assuming no input from donations and sponsorship. At the same time, I accept that I'm lucky enough to be able to fund my trips fully, whereas a lot of hams can't. I'd probably support a CDXC policy preferentially to fund DXpeditions by low-income individuals or groups to wanted locations, provided there were suitable controls in place to guard against abuse, and speaking as an auditor I realise how difficult that would be to police in practice.

Nigel/G3TXF's comments about DXpedition funding often coming from sources other than clubs ring true: many a trip has benefited from commercial sponsorship from antenna and equipment

manufacturers keen on the publicity - that's fine, but I treat the rather biased reports of the quality of said gear with a big pinch of salt. Still, I'm glad for the new ones.

I might moan a little after Phil/GUØSUP's RTTY column comments about summer Es on 28 MHz (18 MHz openings are rare enough at this time of year in ZL!) and Lee/GØMTN's comments on CW Skimmer... but all too soon the *Digest* is finished and I'm looking forward to the next thrilling instalment.

Well done to the Editorial team and authors. Outstanding!

73 Gary ZL2IFB

Congestion Charging for Contest Operation

from G4DBW

No, I am not about to suggest levying a £10 congestion charge to enter a contest, to follow the example of former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone!

There has been much debate about 'incorrect mode' encroachment into band segments during contests. This seems particularly prevalent on the 7 MHz band during phone contests, with SSB operation below 7.040 MHz. The allocation of the segment 7.1–7.2 MHz 'shared' with commercial broadcasters has not surprisingly done little to improve this situation.

My proposal to attempt to reduce this problem is for contest organisers to consider the introduction of a form of congestion charging on the the more congested bands. As an example, I initially looked at the available spectrum to telephony on each amateur band. By introducing QSO multipliers for each amateur band, proportional to the allocated bandwidth for

that mode, operators are encouraged to use bands where spectrum is more abundant.

Band	Phone bandwidth allocation	QSO Multiplier
1.8 MHz	150 kHz	x 3
3.5 MHz	200 kHz	x 4
7 MHz	60 kHz	x 1
14 MHz	250 kHz	x 5
21 MHz	350 kHz	x 7
28 MHz	1500 kHz	x 25

The multiplier for 28 MHz may seem excessive, but given encouragement this underused band will support ground wave contacts during sunspot minima years. Presently this allocation is seriously under-utilised.

Carrying out a similar exercise with the 'telegraphy' (CW) and 'narrowband' (RTTY) modes yields the following:

Band	CW allocation	CW mult	RTTY allocation	RTTY mult
1.8	28 kHz	x 1	20 kHz	x 4
3.5	80 kHz	x 2	20 kHz	x 4
7	35 kHz	x 1	5 kHz	x 1
14	70 kHz	x 2	30 kHz	x 6
21	70 kHz	x 2	30 kHz	x 6
28	70 kHz	x 2	120 kHz	x 25

Maybe something along these lines would encourage contest operators to review their strategy and reduce pressure on the scarce spectrum, particularly on 7 MHz?

Bob Hammond G4DBW

from GW4MVA

Hi Martyn,

I thought your readers might be interested in the following, copied from the latest Post Office Handbook, on International Mail dated February 2008.

"5.17 International Reply Coupons

International Reply Coupons (IRCs) are sold in all Post Office Branches. Because they are recognised by the International Postal Union, they can be exchanged in the country to which they are sent for stamps to the value of the minimum international airmail postage rate to any other country, including back to the UK.

They are exchangeable in all countries except Taiwan. In effect, sending an addressed envelope and an IRC abroad, is the equivalent of sending a stamped addressed envelope in this country.

When you redeem an International Reply Coupon for a customer, there are three important things to remember:

You may not make a cash refund.

The time limit on the validity of coupons with the item code IRC0706 is 31 December 2009 (International Reply Coupons that were issued before 2002 DO NOT HAVE AN EXPIRY DATE AND MUST CONTINUE TO BE ACCEPTED AS NORMAL. (my capitals)

The value of the coupon is the same as the minimum airmail rate for a letter sent to a destination **outside Europe**.

So if a customer presents an International Reply Coupon to exchange for stamps for a letter or postcard being sent at the minimum airmail letter rate within Europe, or the purchase of an Airletter, the difference in the cost should be given to the customer in other stamps, as appropriate.

ACCEPTANCE OF COUPONS

When a customer presents an International Reply Coupon at the counter:

Datestamp the paying office space on the right hand side of the coupon

Please Note If this space has been used in error by the issuing office, datestamp the issuing office space.

If the issuing office has not datestamped the coupon on the left hand side, you may still accept the coupon as it is valid indefinitely."

I wonder how many of us realise that old unstamped or wrongly stamped IRCs are valid for ever if they were issued before 2002?

Anyway, just quote the above at the local post office. NOT all post offices sell them, it depends on the postmaster. They can order them for you, but this can take a week or so.

Great mag, Martyn. 73 Glynn GW4MVA

M1SOM, SK

Dear CDXC friends,

It is with some distress that I inform you that Pete Weymouth, M1SOM, passed away today, 18th August 2008.

Although licensed only since 2002, he had been involved with and loved the hobby of amateur radio for over 25 years. Only a few weeks ago I joined Pete at the CDXC AGM & Summer Social, where we laughed and joked and talked.

Pete was regularly at his /Portable location up on the Somerset Hills which he shared with his lifetime pal Pete, MØILT.

Pete, M1SOM, you will be so dearly missed. RIP.

Kindest regards, Tim Beaumont, MØURX and M3SDE.

An addition to the Q Code

Gill B.

OK, so we know about QRM (interference), QRX (wait), QSB (fading), QSL (confirmation), QSO (a 2-way contact), QSY (shift frequency) and QTH (location).

Now we have QPQ.

The QPQ (quid pro quo) is the abbreviation denoting the equivalent amount to be factored in whenever new amateur radio equipment is purchased or an expensive expedition is planned.

The QPQ for a new linear is a week's holiday. For a transceiver it's a weekend break. And for a transceiver plus linear the QPQ is a new kitchen and/or bathroom or equivalent. Other QPQs are as follows:

A 100' tower = gardener's wages for a year.
A 50' tower = gardener's wages for six months.

A 6-element beam = luxury weekend at a health farm.

A 4-element beam = dinner and a theatre outing.

A weekend contest = a new dress.

Participation in a 5-star DXpedition = a complete new wardrobe.

A large coil of coaxial cable = flowers and a box of chocolates.

Just remember the old saying, "Marriage is grand – divorce a hundred grand". The above QPQ guidelines offer excellent value for money.

Lower Withers Croquet Club

for possible future reference, courtesy of G3NUG

A Synopsis of the Game

Croquet is in essence a tactical struggle, with each player trying to manoeuvre both their own and opponent's balls to make points for their side, whilst restricting their opponent's chances of doing the same by careful positioning of the balls at the end of the turn.

Croquet is played with four balls; black and blue versus red and yellow, on a court containing 6 hoops and a centre peg. The game can be played as singles or doubles, each player in doubles playing with a particular ball throughout the game.

Each ball must run the set course, going through each hoop twice in a specified order and direction and then hitting the peg. The side which first completes this course with both balls wins the game. Thus the winning side has 26 points to score - 12 hoop points and the peg point with each ball.

A ball scores a hoop point when it passes right through each hoop in its correct order (**runs a hoop**) in one or more strokes. The point is scored whether the ball is struck directly with the mallet or with another ball.

The sides take alternate turns. In the first four turns the balls are played from one of the starting lines (**baulk lines**) at each end

of the court. There is a strict order of playing the balls.

A turn consists initially of one stroke only, but extra strokes can be earned in two ways:

1. If the player's ball runs its next hoop, they are entitled to another stroke.
2. If the player's ball hits another ball (**makes a roquet**), they place their own ball in contact with the other ball where it comes to rest and then strike their own ball so that the other ball moves (**takes croquet**). After this the player is entitled to one further (**continuation**) stroke.

Every turn the player may roquet and then take croquet from each of the other three balls once, however each time their ball runs its next hoop they may roquet the other balls once more. Thus by a combination of taking croquet and running hoops, many hoops can be run in a turn (**making a break**).

A turn ends when a player has made all the strokes to which he is entitled, or if a ball is sent off the court in a croquet stroke, or if he makes a fault as defined in the Laws. A turn does not necessarily end if a ball is sent off the court in any stroke other than the croquet stroke.

After each *shot* any ball which has been sent off court is placed a yard inside the boundary (**on the yard-line**) nearest to where it went off. Any ball lying between the boundary and the yard-line, except the player's own ball, is also replaced on the yard-line. At the end of a *turn* the striker's ball is brought on to the yard-line if it lies within the yard-line or had left the court.

When a ball has scored its last hoop point (**become a rover**) it can score the peg point either by the player hitting it on to the peg or by being hit on to the peg by another rover ball. The ball is thus pegged out and removed from court.

Several of the rules are commonly misinterpreted; please note:

1. You do **not** start play a mallet's length away from the first hoop.
2. You **can** roquet balls before they have been through the first hoop.
3. The balls must be played in colour order.
4. You **can** place your foot on a ball during the croquet stroke.
5. You may only use the faces of the mallet to hit the ball.
6. You go through the final hoop in the direction away from the peg.
7. Only balls which have been through all twelve hoops (**rover balls**) may be pegged out.
8. A rover ball may not be pegged out by a ball which is not a rover.
9. In the croquet stroke, the ball which has been roqueted must move or shake.
10. You may not touch any part of the mallet head during a stroke.

[If you haven't fully understood these rules, there's no need to worry. I gather that Neville will be hosting regular croquet demonstration sessions at this year's HF Convention. Ed.]

CDXC
CHILTERN DX CLUB
The UK DX Foundation

Not the GB2RS News

- Guaranteed DXpedition QSOs
- Amateur radio airport courtesy lounges all the rage
- London tube map in German
- An exciting new WAB award

In these increasingly difficult financial times, some DXpeditions are now offering what they describe as guaranteed QSOs to those willing to pay for such services. QSO prices start at \$US10 per band/mode. On receipt of the money via PayMate the DXpedition will then give you an exact time at which they will call you and give you the usual 59 report. However, should the contact not work out due to poor conditions, Italian QRM, Russian kilowatts or whatever, then your money will not be refunded. *[Sounds like a right con to me. Ed.]*

Dedicated airport courtesy lounges for roving radio amateurs keen to notch up a new one for their DXFC and/or DXFC+QRV have been taking off in a big way. The cost for a stay of up to three hours, including as much food and drink as you can cope with, is 30 IRCs. In July G3SXW was seen making the most of the amateur radio courtesy lounge at the newly opened Market Reef International Airport, whereas more recently G3TXF took advantage of similar facilities at San Marino International.

With a view to making it easier for native speakers of German to find their way around the British capital, amateur radio enthusiasts included, London Underground has produced a new tube map with the names of the stations all translated into German. Somewhat predictably Heathrow is *Heidenreihe*, Waterloo is *Wasserklo* and Knightsbridge is *Ritterbrücke*. Those of you with a smattering of German might like to

see if you can identify the following: *Westschinken, Leberbeckenstraße, Ganz geboren, Polstertonne* and *Totenschinkenhofstraße* (answers on p. 57).

Those of you with a penchant for cheese will be particularly interested in the exciting new Worked All Bries [WAB] award. This is sponsored by the French Cheese Board and based on the names of British towns and cities which immediately remind you of Brie, that famous French cheese. All you have to do is contact five stations in any of these 'cheese' locations, for example Ale's Brie, Canter Brie, Glaston Brie, Saul's Brie and Shrew's Brie – not to mention the ripest of them all: High Brie, close to Islington in North London.

Special event station news:

Listen out for ON2008HERCULEPOIROT on CW, celebrating what you'd expect really. Station identification on the hour only, with a bit of luck.

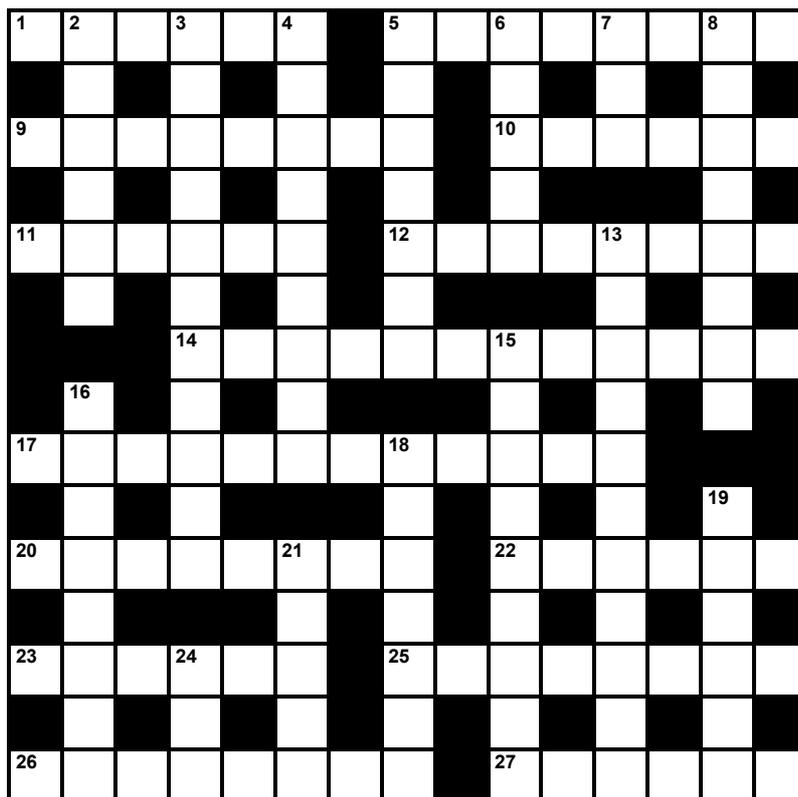
Solution to Prize Crossword 29

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

Digest Prize Crossword 30 *by RFX*

I can't believe this is my 30th *Digest* Crossword. Although some years ago, when I was teaching English Phonetics at university in Berlin, I used to compile cryptic crosswords for a local cultural magazine, one each time in English and one in German. Mind you, compiling (good) cryptic crosswords in German can be quite a challenge, seeing as the more 'formal' grammar of that language tends to cramp your style. Nor are the Germans quite so used to playing around with language as we are.

The winner of Prize Crossword 29, July 2008, and that legendary £10 note: Les Styles, VK4BUI, Weyba Downs, Queensland (via e-mail).



ACROSS

- 1 Brides abandoned? Rubbish! (6)
- 5 Records attempt to reveal wall-hanging (8)
- 9 Iris's relatives happy to acquire instrument with sides missing (8)
- 10 Changes what happens at noon (6)
- 11 Tell where the pupils are (6)
- 12 Customers who 11? (8)
- 14 Musical ability ideal for the match? (7,5)
- 17 The Rev. Spooner's take on the chefs to falsify the accounts (4,3,5)
- 20 Remaining bit of greenery on the other side (8)
- 22 Area needing herpes treatment (6)
- 23 Provide girl with weapon in the navy (6)
- 25 A pope XYL treated for stroke (8)
- 26 Girl in the paper starts to indiscriminately offer oral stimulation (8)
- 27 That woman on Greek island following strict rules (6)

DOWN

- 2 The East End doctor's job in part of West London (6)
- 3 Plant producing the very latest card game? (3-3,5)
- 4 Possibly charm owls to produce music (4,5)
- 5 Attempts to elect leaders in Italian city (7)
- 6 Instrument featured in utopian opera (5)
- 7 Understand Gibraltar in Europe, say (3)
- 8 Type of university for the communist good guy? (8)
- 13 Hiding-places unconventional poets relish (6,5)
- 15 Reviewed what the shoplifters did (4,5)
- 16 Poetry written by a criminal? No, the opposite (8)
- 18 Stopper at end of line not high enough, we hear, in New York city? (7)
- 19 Crafty-sounding girl (6)
- 21 Old Bill's spot on (5)
- 24 Something boring everybody heard (3)

Deadline for entries: 20 October

DX and Events Calendar

Compiled by G3XTT

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

till 30/09	4L7OA: Georgia
till 30/09	9A73AA: special callsign
till 08/10	JX9JKA: Jan Mayen (EU-022)
till 22/10	AT25MY and AT25RG: special callsigns
till November	YE2IPY: special callsign
till 31/12	9AØ8P: special event station
till 31/12	9A6ØA: special callsign
till 31/12	9M1Cxx: special callsigns
till 31/12	AYØDX: special callsign (Argentina)
till 31/12	C4EURO: special callsign (Cyprus)
till 31/12	DR8M: special event station
till 31/12	HG1848I: special call (Hungary)
till 31/12	HG55ØREX: special call (Hungary)
till 31/12	ON1ØØØNOTGER: special call (Belgium)
till 31/12	ON17Ø8M: special event station
till 31/12	ON4ØBAF: special event call
till 31/12	ON7ØREDSTAR: special event station
till 31/12	PY1ØØJA: special call
till 31/12	SB1658OZ and SC1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till 31/12	SH1658DK and SH1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till 31/12	SK1658DK and SK1658OZ: special callsigns (Sweden)
till December	HFØPOL: Henryk Arctowski Station (South Shetlands)
19-Sep GMDX AGM	(with 3B7C presentation)
26/08-30/09	9V1F1: special event station (Singapore)
26/09-03/10	V4/AH6HY: St. Kitts (NA-104)
01/09-28/09	PA9ØCORUS: special event station
15/09-28/09	TM2NN: special event station (France)
20/09-21/09	PA66AW: special station
23/09-06/10	A25/DL7DF: Botswana
23/09-02/10	VO2/GMØTQJ: Labrador
27/09-04/10	W4PL: Hatteras Island (NA-067)
27/09-28/09	ZF2DF: Cayman Islands (NA-016)
02/10-29/10	PJ2/PAØVDV: Curaçao (SA-006)
03/10-04/10	PAØ8DWN: special event station
09/10-27/10	VK9DWX: Willis Island (OC-007)
10/10-12/10	RSGB HF Convention
20/10-26/10	P29VLR: Garove Island (OC-181)

21/10-30/10	PZ5Z: Suriname
23/10-26/10	C6AXD and C6APR: Crooked Island (NA-113)
25/10-26/10	CQ WW Phone Contest
28/10-03/11	P29NI: Hermit Islands (OC-041)
01/11-07/11	CQ4IPY: special callsign (Portugal)
04/11	P2: Manus Island (OC-025)
17/11-06/02/09	9M2MRS: Penang Island (AS-015)
26/11-01/12	J49I: Crete (EU-015)
17/01-31/01/09	VP8YLx: Falkland Islands (SA-002)
25/01-13/02/09	9L: Sherbro Island (AF-056) by I2YSB and others
01/03-14/03/09	9M6: Spratly Islands (AS-051)

Asia Pacific DX Convention

Dear Fellow DXers and Contesters,

You are cordially invited to the Asia Pacific DX Convention from 7 - 9 November 2008.

Please take a look at the website below to see some photos and presentation videos from the first APDXC which was held in 2005. The many DXers from all over the world who attended enjoyed it very much.

In addition to the usual presentations of recent DXpeditions, technical sessions etc., this Convention offers something special. Since it's being held in the country from which most of the modern amateur radio equipment comes from, you'll have the opportunity to tour the Icom factory, participate in a Q & A session with Icom engineers, tour the electronics district, and more besides.

We would appreciate your introducing this convention to your DX/contest club members. Please see our website for more details at www.apdxc.org/. For convention updates, please visit the website and send an e-mail to subscribe to the APDXC newsletter.

We look forward to welcoming you at the APDXC in Osaka, Japan.

APDXC Committee / JA3USA

Not the GB2RS News (page 54)

Those London Underground stations:

West Ham, Liverpool Street, Holborn, Paddington and Tottenham Court Road

