



Southeastern DX Club W4NT

THE SOUTH'S PREMIER DX CLUB

President's Report:

The 50th GQP celebration is now in the books, and I'd like to thank those who helped with the N4G SEDXC special event call support. N4GG handled 80m and 160m. Actually I don't know how Hal did it so well as there was quite a bit of QRN coming from far-flung climes. KT4MM held forth on 40m and put in a good signal at my place. Jim Nail, WA2MBP, who has an intensity and concentration that has resulted in his Jimmy The Nail moniker, held forth on 20m cw for one day, with our youth award winner, Mike Almeter, W4MJA, working 20m cw on the other day. Dick Bentley, K2UFT, held down 20m SSB and 10m cw. Bob Allphin, K4UEE, handled 15 cw and Gary WB4SQ performed some daredevil feats to get a new antenna up to cover 15m SSB after his quad developed a mysterious high SWR disease two hours before the start. 10m SSB was handled by The Emperor of EZNEC, K4DLI, Jim Streible, and Greg, NM2L, handled 6m. The GQP is always a fun event and this year's special version made it even better. Mike Condon put together a very effective team to make the whole thing a wonderful experience. Thanks to the SEDXC participants, the N4G participants, and NE4S and the team.

As you may have seen on the SEDXC website, we have a very special EZNEC program coming up for our April meeting. KT4MM will provide all the details, but be sure to let your local clubs know as I am sure there will be local club members who will want to attend this program.

I am looking forward to the almost-here SEDXC Dayton pre-hamfest dinner, held at the Dayton Stockyards on the Thursday night before Dayton begins on Friday. You still have time to sign-up for this dinner. If

you are going to Dayton, you don't want to miss it. The sign-up link is on the SEDXC main page (SEDXC.org). We need more people to sign-up to hold the private room.

I look forward to seeing you at the April 21 meeting.

73

Bob W2WG

Vice President's Report:

Establishing a well performing radio station starts with having a good receiver followed by deploying a good antenna system. A station's transmitter power is important but many low power QRP operators have proven that many QSO can be made provided you can hear the stations and have a good antenna system.

This month's program will be on the EZNEC-ARRL antenna modeling software furnished with the last several editions of the ARRL Antenna Handbook. Jim Streible, K4DLI, and Chuck Catledge, AE4CW, will walk us through the rudimentary steps in designing basic antennas using the EZNEC-ARRL software.

If you have a copy of the EZNEC-ARRL or full version EZNEC software please bring your copies and a laptop computer to this month's meeting and learn the basic steps for designing antennas and some finer points for improving your own antenna farm. Users of EZNEC-ARRL versions 3 or 4 should get the latest updates for their program. Also, if you do not have a copy of the EZNEC software you can go to Roy Lewellen's, W7EL website and download a free demo EZNEC version 5.0.

Best of all you do not necessarily need to bring a computer to the meeting to learn about the advantages of modeling antennas. So, don't miss this opportunity to add to your learning experience and have another tool that will help you optimize your station on-the-air.

73,

73, Jim KT4MM

Secretary's Report:

SEDXC meeting March 24, 2011

Program:

Seldom in this writer's experience has a more interesting and exciting presentation been offered to the worthy attending this month's meeting! George - N4GRN and Wes - W3WL regaled the attendees with sparkling and pithy remarks on the VP8ORK DXpedition. They were supported with stunning photographs of the adventure, many of which were recorded by the Sony A55 official "Camera of the Year". Many comments and questions from the audience supported the overwhelming interest this Program generated. Well done, George and Wes!!

Other items of interest noted during the course of the meeting include:

How's DX?

Andamans: Bob - W2WG - reported they were weak but workable on 15. Stick with it! 10 and 15 open often; 160 is good in the early AM.

Georgia QSO Party

Bob - W2WG explained the one suffix call sign system being used for the Party. 18 stations will be active for spelling out GEORGIA. We need more volunteers for the special call signs. This is year number 50 for the Party being held the weekend of the April 9/10.

HAM JAM Scholarship Awards

The Ham Jam co-sponsored by the SEDXC and the North Fulton Amateur Radio League (NFARL) last November generated \$1400.00 for worthy students whom are also hams, and \$700.00 each was awarded to two outstanding young people. Mike Almeter - W4MJA was present to receive his check and offered his heartfelt thanks for our support in his college career. Francis Doyle - AJ4JQ received her award at the recent NFARL meeting. Both are active DXers and great examples that ham radio is alive and well!

Kennehoochee Ham Fest

Volunteers are still needed to man our booth. Let Gary - WB4SQ know when you can help. We will be serving up coffee and donuts as we did at the Stone Mountain hamfest last November.

Dayton DX dinner

See Gary for tickets to the dinner. We have reserved a block of tables and will be sitting with the K4D and VP8ORK guys.

Dayton SEDXC Dinner on Thursday PM

Sign up at the SEDXC web site. It will be held at the Stockyards as in the past.

DXpedition Support

The Club voted to send \$400.00 to the Andaman expedition. Our Club logo will be on the web site and on the QSL card.

Nominating Committee

The Committee has a full slate of recommended officers for the upcoming year. The election will be held at the regular June meeting (see the slate listed elsewhere in this bulletin).

SEDXC Bulletin

Jim - K4DLI requests input for the bulletin! Send him stuff he can use for the good of the order!

Treasurer's Report

We have \$4,300.00 in the treasury, as reported by Mike - ND4V. Mike also noted that dues are due!

Respectfully Submitted,

Wes - W3WL

Secretary - SEDXC

Treasurer's Report:

The balance on hand in the operating account at the end of March was \$4,172.23

Activity in the month:

Receipts:

Membership, Raffle, IRC's
SW Ohio -Dayton Dinners \$592.00

Disbursements were as follows:

VU4 – Nicobar and Andaman \$250.00
VK9/C – Christmas Island \$250.00
Intrepid DX Group – T6PSE \$400.00

Membership: We are in the bonus period. First Time New Members get a bonus. Their \$12.00 pays their membership until June 30, 2012. Talk it up!

Get your iron on patches, hat pins, and name badges to be properly attired in Dayton! Also, I will have IRC's available at the club meeting for \$2.00 each.

73 es dx
Mike, ND4V

Activities Manager's Report:

A BIG THANKS goes out to W2WG(Bob), K4PI(Mike), The self proclaim rookie K4WK(Wayne), N4NX(Bill), W4GKF(Chaz) and WB4SQ(Gary) for helping man our table at the past Kennehoochee hamfest. Much less indoor flea market items but the outdoor boneyard was much the same as the past.

We still have a few Friday night Dayton DX dinner tickets left. If you can't make the April 23rd meeting, then drop me a \$40 check (per seat) along with an SASE. Good in qrz.com...

See everyone at the next meeting.

Gary – WB4SQ

Slate of nominees for office:

After much searching and discussion the following are the nominees for officers of the Southeastern DX Club for the year 2011 to 2012. The election will be held at the June meeting.

President: Jim Cummings KT4MM
Vice President: Mack McCormick W4AX
Secretary: Newton White K0NWT
Treasurer: Mike Weathers ND4V
Activities Manager: Wey Walker K8EAB

If anyone else would like to have their name placed in nomination for any office, please advise Jim Streible, K4DLI, at k4dli@earthlink.net

DXpedition to T32, Kiritimati:

Bob, W2WG, has received a request from Neville Cheadle, G3NUG, for funding for the upcoming operation from T32C to take place in September-October 2011. Neville is the Team Leader of this DXpedition and the details of the operation will be presented at the April meeting. They will have On Line Log Search and a team of 16 QSL managers using the internet-based StarQSL system to ensure rapid and efficient QSLing.

This month we have a report on one of the DXpeditions the SEDXC had help fund. Phil Whitchurch G3SWH and AD5YS has sent a

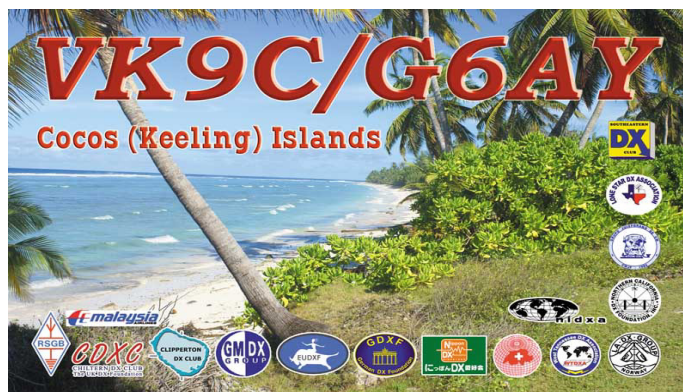
report , with pictures, on the VK9C Cocos Islands Operation.

VK9C/G6AY

A DX-PEDITION TO THE COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

BY

PHIL WHITCHURCH
G3SWH



After last year's DX-pedition to Christmas Island as VK9X/G6AY, our next logical step was a DX-pedition to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in 2011. If my memory serves me correctly, Jim, G3RTE and I discussed it whilst we were in VK9X, although no decisions were made until a few months after we'd returned home. Initially, Jim declined the trip as his XYL and he was planning a trip around the same dates. Richard, G3RWL expressed an interest but we were unable to agree on mutually convenient dates due to our other commitments. Fortunately, Jim's plans for a family trip fell through around September 2010 and planning then started in earnest for an operation between 22nd February and 5th March 2011.

Licensing would be no problem as Australia is now covered under the CEPT T/R 61-01 system arrangements. Our concerns of last year in not strictly complying with the 2009 requirements of the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA), the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) in terms of callsigns had been nullified on Christmas Island, so we decided to use VK9C/G6AY.

History

In 1609 Captain William Keeling was the first European to see the islands, but they remained uninhabited until the nineteenth century. A Scottish merchant seaman named Captain John Clunies-Ross from the Shetland Islands explored the islands in 1825, aiming to settle on them with his family. Alexander Hare, also landed and settled with his slaves. Clunies-Ross set up a compound on South Island consisting of his family and some other settlers. Hare's severely mistreated slaves soon escaped to work under better conditions for Clunies-Ross. The workers were paid in a currency called the

Cocos rupee, a currency John Clunies-Ross minted himself that could only be redeemed at the company store.

On 1 April 1836, HMS *Beagle* under Captain Robert FitzRoy arrived to take soundings establishing the profile of the atoll as part of the survey expedition of the *Beagle*. The naturalist Charles Darwin, who was on the ship, studied the natural history of the islands and collected specimens.

The islands were annexed by the British Empire in 1857 and Clunies-Ross' son John George was appointed as Superintendent. In 1867, the islands administration was placed under the Straits Settlements. Queen Victoria granted the islands in perpetuity to the Clunies-Ross family in 1886.

On 9 November 1914, the islands became the site of the Battle of Cocos, one of the first naval battles of World War I. The wireless and cable telegraph station on Direction Island, a vital link between the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, was destroyed by sailors from the German light cruiser SMS *Emden*, which was in turn surprised and destroyed by the Australian cruiser, HMAS *Sydney*.

During World War II, the cable station was once again a vital link. Allied planners noted that the islands might be seized as a base for German raider cruisers operating in the Indian Ocean. Following Japan's entry into the war, Japanese forces did occupy neighbouring islands. To avoid drawing their attention to the Cocos cable station and its islands' garrison, the seaplane anchorage between Direction and Horsburgh islands was not used. Radio transmitters were also kept silent, except in emergencies.

After the Fall of Singapore in 1942, the islands were administered from Ceylon, and West and Direction Islands were placed under Allied military administration with a small garrison. Despite the importance of the islands as a communication centre, the Japanese made no attempt either to raid or to occupy them and contented themselves with sending over a reconnaissance aircraft about once a month. Later in the war, two airstrips were built, and three bomber squadrons were moved to the islands to conduct raids against Japanese targets in South East Asia and to provide support during the planned reinvansion of Malaya and reconquest of Singapore. In 1946 the administration of the islands reverted to Singapore.

On 23 November 1955, the islands were transferred to Australian control. In the 1970s, the Australian government's dissatisfaction with the Clunies-Ross feudal style of rule of the island increased. In 1978, Australia forced the family to sell the islands for the sum of A\$6,250,000, using the threat of compulsory acquisition. John Cecil Clunies-Ross now lives in Perth, Western Australia although his son, John George Clunies-Ross still lives on West Island. Amazingly, the 2004 earthquake and tsunami

centered off the western shore of Sumatra caused no casualties

Geography



The Cocos (Keeling) Islands is located in the middle of the Indian Ocean some 2750 km north-west of Perth, and 900 km west south-west of Christmas Island, its closest neighbour. Cocos lies approximately 12° south and 96.5° east, locating the islands in the humid tropical zone. Twenty-seven islands form two atolls. The main atoll comprises twenty-six islands encircling a horseshoe shaped lagoon. Some 25km to the north is a single uninhabited island, Pulu Keeling.

Only two of the islands are inhabited, West Island (population circa 100) and Home Island (population circa 500). 80% of Cocos Islanders are ethnic Malays and Sunni Muslim.

Climate

Cocos experiences two main seasons which tend to overlap: the trade wind season from April / May to September / October and the calmer doldrum season from November through to April. Higher rainfall is experienced between March and July. Between January and August the occasional low-pressure system may occur, usually between February and April. Rain usually falls in the evenings, bringing glorious sunny days, although the average annual rainfall is 2,000 mm! Temperatures are fairly consistent no matter what the season, remaining around a comfortable 29°C with a minimum evening temperature rarely dropping below 20°C. We monitored the weather forecast before we went and were somewhat disheartened to see two tropical cyclones in the area and a daily forecast of thunderstorms, which did not bode well for our LF band activities

The economy

There is a small and growing tourist industry focused on water-based or nature activities – not to mention amateur radio - but this cannot increase greatly due to a limited potable water supply. Small local gardens and fishing contribute to the food supply, but most food and most other necessities are imported from Australia or elsewhere. The Cocos Islands

Cooperative Society Ltd. employs construction workers, stevedores, and lighterage worker operations. Tourism employs others. The unemployment rate was 11.3% in 2006.

Getting there and away

There are no direct flights from the UK to Western Australia and the most economic flights I could find from London to Perth were with Malaysia Airlines with a change of aircraft in Kuala Lumpur. Bookings were made and Malaysia Airlines were receptive to a request for an additional free 10 kg of baggage allowance each in exchange for some publicity

Virgin Blue, a subsidiary of UK's Virgin Group, serves Cocos with two passenger flights a week from Perth's International Airport. Flights on Tuesdays go to Cocos, then on to Christmas Island, then back to Perth. Saturday's flights do the reverse. Virgin Blue are the equivalent of Easyjet, and thus everything possible is charged for as "extra". The return fare from Perth / Cocos / Perth was almost 40% of the London / Perth leg! My request for an additional free baggage allowance was not even acknowledged!

Flight timings required an overnight stay in Perth on the outward journey and I contacted Kevin, VK6LW and Steve, VK6VZ with a view to a recommendation for a suitable hotel and the chance of an eyeball QSO (plus maybe a drink and a meal together). Steve advised that the traditional hotel used by DX-peditioners on route to Cocos is the Sanno Maracoonda Motel, close to the entrance to the Perth Domestic Airport and a booking was duly made.

Accommodation

The islands' Tourism Association web site gives a number of possible places to stay, but by far the best location from the amateur radio point of view is the Cocos Beach Motel, located on the west side of West island, very close to the beach and with a good take-off over the ocean. There are 28 rooms in seven blocks of four, together with a restaurant. Again, a booking was duly made together with an explanation of what we wanted to do in terms of erecting antennas etc.



Publicity

With all the hotels and flights booked, in October 2010 we issued an initial press release and created a new page on my web site. We also started to approach various DX clubs and organisations for sponsorship towards the extremely high cost of mounting the DX-pedition.

Almost immediately, I received an e-mail from Tim, NL8F, who had operated from the Cocos Beach Motel as VK9CF in March 2010, offering to help with background information. Naturally, we jumped at the chance and Tim explained that, together with Lionel VK6LA aka VK9CB and Ron Grant, the manager of the Island Co-operative, which runs the Motel, he has been trying to set up a permanent ham station in a spare room next to the restaurant. Introductions to Lionel and Ron were invaluable, although the idea of the permanent station seems to have stalled for lack of investment. Lionel even sent us a DVD and lots of still photographs of the motel layout. We were also given to understand that Bernd, VK2IA aka VK9AA had left some coax and antennas on the island, but when we contacted him Bernd explained that he'd since removed them. Bernd very strongly recommended us to operate from room 28, which is in the most northerly block, closest to the ocean, so we particularly asked Ron to allocate rooms 28 and 20 for our use, so as to be able to maximise the physical separation between our stations.

Antennas and equipment

Jim is a great lover of dipoles and was very keen to use vertical dipoles close to the ocean. He also took a 12-metre telescopic, fibreglass Spiderbeam pole. I prefer to use a 30-metre long top doublet fed with 300-ohm ribbon cable. With a small ATU, the doublet covers all bands from 80 to 10-metres and it's easy to change bands without leaving the shack whereas, even in daylight, changing Jim's dipoles tends to be a two-handed operation.

Jim took his Elecraft K2 and laptop running Wintest under Windows 7 in his hand luggage. I put my Kenwood TS-570D in the hold for the outward journey and carried a laptop running N1MM under XP in my hand luggage.



The outward journey

We met at Heathrow's terminal 4 on the morning of Sunday 20th February for the flight to Kuala Lumpur, connecting with a flight to Perth and arriving there at around 3 p.m. the following day and checking into the Sanno Maracoonda Motel. Quick phone calls to Steve and Kevin and a couple of hours sleep set us up for a very pleasant evening at a local restaurant. Check in for the Virgin Blue flight the following morning was simple but as expected, we were charged for 22 kg of excess baggage. We later learned that they don't weigh hand luggage! The flight was uneventful and the plane less than half full, so we had plenty of room, arriving on the island shortly after lunch. Clearing Customs and Immigration was easy and we then walked across the road to the Motel only to find that we were in rooms 26 and 28 instead of 20 and 28 as had been booked. Nothing could be done that day but the following day Jim was able to move to room 16, which was even further away from room 28 and also very close to the beach.

Rigging the antennas

From Lionel's video and photos, we had a fair idea of what to expect was available as far as trees to use as antenna supports, although we had floated the idea to Ron Grant of him supplying some scaffolding tubes in the same way that we had done on Christmas Island, but this proved unnecessary. I rigged my doublet between two conveniently placed but not very tall palm trees about 5 metres from the beach. Jim rigged two vertical dipoles for 12 and 17 metres from two separate, conveniently placed palm trees that literally overhung the beach. He was then able to lower these and change them for 40 and 80 metres as he wished. We also borrowed a 6-metre scaffold pole and strapped Jim's Spiderpole to it before lashing it to a convenient concrete post of the beach. This was used as the support for Jim's 80-metre antenna.

On the air





To minimize duplicate QSOs, we agreed to allocate individual bands to operators. Jim had 12, 17, 40 and 80-metres and I had 10, 15, 20 and 30-metres. Jim made the first QSO with JR1GJP on 40-metres at 12.40 UTC on 22nd February, which was just after local sunset. My first QSO was with YB1RGK on 30-metres at 12.52 UTC. The bands didn't open until around 04.00 UTC on most days, which meant that we had a fairly leisurely morning and a hectic afternoon and evening running the pile ups, which were quite fast and furious. We always broke at around 12.00 UTC for a beer in the Cocos Club before dinner in the motel restaurant, which was dry, being run by Muslims.

Conditions were not great by any means, following a large CME the week before but 10-metres opened to both Europe and Japan. However, there was a lot of SSB QRM and I was forced to work "up 5" on most occasions to avoid it.

12, 15, 17 and 20 were our "bread and butter" bands, and we made respectable numbers of QSOs on these bands. Jim also battled with 40-metres to make another respectable total.

30-metres was a big disappointment for me, mainly due to an apparent lack of activity. Logic would have dictated a move to 30-metres after 20-metres closed around 1600 UTC, but when I did, I just called CQ with no takers - except the occasional W6 or W7 who would say that we were the only signal on the band. The Reverse Beacon Network was definitely not working to our advantage! The only time the band started to open was on our last night, when I had to QRT early in preparation for the long journey home!

80 metres was also disappointing, mainly due to the high levels of QRN created by the local thunderstorms and we made a much smaller number of QSOs than planned.

Operating standards

Operating standards have definitely declined in the past 12 months. I blame this primarily on the use of Skimmer and Decoders by operators who can't read

Morse by ear. I was not troubled greatly by DQRM on my transmit frequency, (although Jim complained of someone putting a strong carrier on his receive frequency on several occasions), but by strong stations who obviously couldn't hear me when I replied and just continued to call, those who would not stop calling whilst I was trying to make a QSO and those who tuned up on top of the pile up. The enjoyment of working the pile up was greatly reduced as a result of such poor operating and I came back feeling very disillusioned and de-motivated about making another DX-pedition. Hopefully, that will change in a few months.

Steve, VK6VZ e-mailed me the following when we'd returned home: "After I worked you on 14MHz CW I spent about an hour listening both to your frequency and the behaviour of callers above it. Three things stick in my mind – the jaw-dropping inability of some of the callers to do what you politely asked them to do (including some JAs, who definitely used to be the politest operators in the world); the stations who called CQ nearly on top of you and, despite being challenged about their behaviour, seemed distinctly disinclined to move away (including one experienced G station, of whom describing his behaviour as a LID is being unkind to LIDs the world over); and your incredible patience and ability to pull stations out of the mire."

The journey home

We left the island at around 10.00 UTC on 5th March facing the almost contiguous flights, arriving back in Heathrow at 16.00 UTC on 6th March. By the time I'd collected the car and driven home, I'd been travelling for 36 hours non-stop and was quite exhausted!

Armed with the advice about hand luggage on the Virgin Blue flight, I hand carried the TS-570D and reduced the excess baggage charge to a mere 14 kg. Unfortunately, when we checked in for the Malaysia Airlines flight in Perth, the clerk claimed that, even hand carrying the radio, we were 3 kg over the enhanced baggage allowance and made us pay extra again, which we felt was rather miserly, although heaven only knows how much we were overweight on the outward flight without being charged!

Statistics

OP	BOTH	G3RTE	G3SWH	G3SWH	G3RTE
BAND	80	40	30	20	17
QSOs	73	1,410	690	3,163	3,141
DXCC	21	64	38	84	100

G3SW H	G3RT E	G3SW H	TOTAL
15	12	10	ALL
2,242	1,931	615	13,215
79	80	38	116

Logs

The log was uploaded to LoTW and my web site on a daily basis whilst we were on the island. Unfortunately, some of the earlier uploads to the web site were corrupted due to the poor Internet connection available, which led to lots of attempted duplicate QSOs and much angst amongst the Deserving. As Roger, G3SXW wrote in a recent article "real-time DX-pedition on-line logs are sometimes more trouble than they are worth if reliable Internet connectivity is not available". The final log is fully searchable at <http://www.g3swh.org.uk/vk9c-g6ay.html>, showing the operator's callsign against each QSO. Special, colour photo QSLs have been printed and are available either via the OQRS facility on my web site

<http://www.g3swh.org.uk/decision.html> (recommended) or direct with SAE and adequate return postage. Bureau cards can also be requested from the web site and will be processed as quickly as possible. Cards are also available via the traditional bureau route

Our particular thanks go to our XYLs, Cheryl and Jan for allowing us to go; to Lionel, VK9CB / VK6LA for invaluable information, to Ron Grant, manager of the Cocos Island Co-operative for logistical support and to the management and staff of the Cocos Island Motel for making this DX-pedition possible; as well as to all of our sponsors (RSGB, Chiltern DXC, GM DX Group, EUDXF, GDXF, NCDXF, Clipperton DXC, LA DX Group, CWJF, Swiss DX Foundation, Lone Star DX Association, NIDXA, West Tennessee DX Association, SEDXC, Nippon DX Association and Malaysia Airlines)

How all good DXpeditions end!



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The SEDXC Newsletter is published monthly by the Southeastern DX Club . All opinions expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, officers, or club. We welcome your opinion

DX COMMUNICATION FREQ.

Simplex 147.54

K4JPD Repeater (tone 85.4 Hz) 147.195 +600

SPECIAL NOTE:

The club is now using the Repeater on 145.410, down 600, for chatting and real time DX announcements.

Join the group there. No tone required.

SEDXC WEBPAGE

www.sedxc.org

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