

From our Cretan Correspondent

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At the end of February a trip was made out to the new house to 'inspect' the construction and also check with various suppliers that floor tiles, bathroom fittings, and electrical stuff were as planned. Well, that was the plan, however, although a vast amount of building work had been completed, during the time we were there several days were lost due to the heavy rain. Here we are talking about 'stair-rod' rain for well over 48 hours. Impressive, yes, but not conducive to building work!

During the trip I had a play in the UBA CW Contest and had planned to use my J49 call but due to an all-day meeting with our architect and electrician on the Saturday, I never had time when we returned to set up the memory keyer or logging software for the contest and so just worked a few stations with the SV0 call. The only other radio operation was for an hour one afternoon when a couple of Europeans were worked on 20m CW and 30m PSK31. With both morning and evening visits to the architect/builder and suppliers, time for radio was once again in very short supply.

But why evening visits, I hear you ask. Well, most of the non-tourist businesses work 'proper' Greek hours, i.e. 8am to 2pm then they close for the afternoon and most open again at about 5pm and close later in the evening. However, banks do not follow this rule. They shut at 2pm and to hell with everyone! One gets used to these opening hours, but it has caught me out a couple of times when I needed some paint and drove into town only to find the shops shut at 3.30pm!

Our esteemed Editor found a picture of the old village store for the last edition and this shop closed down several years ago. However, there are two Kafeneons in the village and a small café. The Kafeneon is normally a small place, not much bigger than your lounge at home, where you can sit and have a coffee and chat to your neighbours and you can buy the odd 'essential' here, such as loo roll, a jar of coffee, or some Feta. These are usually run by some old dear who is never in this little 'shop' when you want anything, so you just take what you want and leave the cash on the table. The lady who runs the one we use whenever we visit is always in her garden somewhere, so we grab what we want, leave the cash and just shout down her garden. She just waves back, knowing what we have done, and that the cash will be correct.

As mentioned last time, the collection of the Community Charge/Council Tax out here is somewhat different than in the UK. Rather than being based on the size of your house, or its estimated (plummeting) value, it is based on electricity usage.

Out here you get an electricity bill every two months, one is an estimate and the next is an actual reading. For our current house this works out at about €12 a month (This will, of course, rise quite a bit when we are in Crete all the time). Your Council Tax is added to this bill at rate of 8% of the total (Although this rose to 9.5 % in January). Thus our Poll Tax payment on €12 is currently 96 cents a month or just under €12 a year at the 8% rate. Call it 12 quid at the current exchange rate. For this we get street lights, police and a rubbish collection at least three times a week. The dustmen do not come to your door however; instead you have to take your bags of stuff to large green 'Biffa-type' bins that are dotted around the place but this is not an inconvenience as we have to pass one of these bins either when we go to the car or walk down to the shops.

There is no mains gas on Crete and although you can use gas cylinders if your cooker/hob is a gas one, most cooking is done with electricity, or, in the winter, pans of stuff are cooked slowly on the top of your somba. Visiting our current house during the winter, you will often find a large pan of Chicken Stifado slowly cooking on the 'fournos'.

A **somba** is also called a '**fournos**' which basically means furnace or oven.

Most houses have some form of solar panel on the roof and this supplies you with hot water all year round. It is quite surprising how warm the water can get even on cloudy days, thus negating the need to turn on the, expensive, immersion heater. The immersion is usually installed in the cylindrical tank seen on the top of most solar panels.



Prices go up out here as well as in the UK. For example, the Road Tax for your car or motorbike increased by 20% over last years rates and for 2009 the charges are as follows and are worked out on the cc of your vehicle.

From/To	Cost per year
Up to 300cc	€18 (Such as your 50cc moped or 250cc Yamaha)
301 to 785cc	€46 (Your 650cc Honda fits nicely in here)
786 to 1357cc	€112 (small cars like Daewoo Matiz up to 1.2 Fiesta)
1358 to 1928cc	€202 (Normal 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8 models)
1929 to 2357cc	€446 (Your 2.2 litre jobs)
Over 2357cc	€580

There seems to be no account taken of carbon emissions or anything like that. Your 1.2 litre car can be one year old or ten years old but the road tax price is still the same despite the fact that your new car is more eco-friendly than a 10-yr old one. Road Tax is purchased at either a bank or the post office and this **must** be done between 1st November and 31st December for the following year. If you are late, even by a couple of days, you pay double! If you buy a car in August, you pay a percentage of the road tax for that year. The first 'MOT' is due on you car after four years and this costs around €35. After this, MOTs are due every two years.

At the existing house we do not have a TV but we still pay for a licence. This too is added to your electricity bill at the rate of 1.5% of the total (excluding the Council Tax levy) so using the figures above, our TV Licence cost us less than €3 last year. While on the subject of bills, your water rates are paid twice a year, usually in February and October. Every house has a water meter, and there are no exceptions.

Just before our February trip, I called my mate Mike, who lives just down the alleyway from us, and was told that we had water running off our roof. This is nothing much to worry about in the normal course of events as it is usually the tank on the roof overflowing a little. Thumping the ball-cock is the usual cure and all is then well... However, this time it was not the usual problem, but our solar panel that was the cause of the water. The copper panel had sprung a leak and water was dripping from the unit and onto the roof.

A plumber was called and the diagnosis was not good. The panel was corroded and we really need a complete new unit. The two quotes we got were for over €800 plus around €50 for fitting. This we will have to get done when we return at the end of April.

That will be a very busy week again as we also have to sign for the new place and 'She who must be obeyed' wants to order the kitchen, bedroom furniture and other useless stuff while I need to get the carpenter in to 'build' the shack, and a TV aerial man to come and put up some poles and brackets...

Ymmas (Cheers)...

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These words are being written a day after returning from our most recent visit where we have had to put a stop to any further work on the new QTH until our UK house is sold. We are waiting to exchange contracts as these words are being scribbled and the XYL, being an accountant, does not want to get into (more) debt through finishing the new place, and would rather halt any further work until we have the readies to pay for it. If all goes according to plan, this cessation of work should only be for a few weeks.

Our trip at the end of April was disappointing to say the least, as little had been done to the build during the previous seven weeks and so construction was well behind the original schedule. However, after the XYL 'spoke' to the architect in her own inimitable way, work on the place gathered pace, weekly reports were sent, along with pictures on the Interweb thing showing what had been done.

During the April visit we also managed to get the new solar panel fitted on the current house and so now have constant hot water again. This meant we could wash and shower once more, which pleased the locals no end...

Although we were very busy during this visit, I did manage a few QSO's on 30m. Best DX on PSK was with VR2XLN and, along with J28KO in Djibouti, both adding nicely to my 'Million Mile' total. A new ZLP interface was tried with the Icom7k and you can read about the problems with it elsewhere in the mag. At this point I will say that the actual interface is neat but the 'instructions', such as they are, would be more understandable if they were written in Ancient Mesopotamian Script. A few CW QSOs were also made but no DX worked.

During our July visit, I managed some PSK software trials and added just over 10,000 miles towards my Million Mile target, but still have over 900,000 miles to go!

Also played in the CW section of the European HF Championship Contest. This is a nice simple 12 hour contest where you only have to work other European stations and so most signals are nice and strong. I was on the key but those of you who use a 'microphone' could find this an easy contest to enter. No funny exchanges, just the year you were licensed, i.e. 599 65.

Other Stuff:

Last time I mentioned the cost of things like the Council Charge and other bills and this probably gave the impression that it is very cheap to live out here. This is not the full picture as, being on an island, everything from paper clips to petrol has to be shipped over from mainland Greece and this adds to the price of everything. Also, VAT, in Greece is 19% which adds to the costs.

Much of the prepared stuff sold in supermarkets, i.e. packets of washing powder, cereals, tins of veggies and the like, cost more than in the UK, but there are savings on fresh food. Although you can get fruit that is 'out of season', such as strawberries during December, one tends to buy only that which is in season and grown locally. Tomatoes, oranges, lemons, potatoes are all cheaper than in the UK and available all year round and are often grown in plastic 'greenhouses' that are dotted around the island. Oranges here taste far better than anything you can get in Tesco's or down Walthamstow market as the growers refuse to spray the trees with any sort of insecticides or chemicals, and, because of this, the fruit cannot be exported to other parts of the EU.

However, should you want fresh orange juice, you can go to your local supermarket (we use Halkadakis in Aghios), grab a handful of local oranges, hand them to an assistant and they put them through a juicer for you and you walk away with a plastic bottle of the best tasting orange juice you have ever had – well, apart from the stuff they gave us kids back in the late 40's and early 50's.

One of the best locally grown greens that is only available for about 8 months of the year is a thing called *Horta*. This resembles spinach and grows amongst the olive groves and often by the sides of the road and, to the uninitiated; this can look just like a weed. This is picked and the hard part of the stem is removed. The resulting leaves are then boiled, often for several hours.

Served with a little garlic and a squeeze of fresh lemon – beautiful!



More vehicle stuff: Last time we mentioned Road Tax for your car. Having bought your car, there are fines if you do anything wrong on the roads, just as there are almost anywhere. For example, if you are caught speeding by up to 20kph above a particular speed limit, the fine is €40 but only €20 if you pay the fine within 10 days and fines are paid at the Post Office.

Doing more than 20kph above the speed limit and the fines jump to €100 or €50 but doing 30kph above the limit, the fine comes out at €350 or €175 and you loose your licence for 60 days. They do not put 'points on your licence' out here but it is an offence not to carry your licence, insurance



certificate, vehicle registration documents and your ID card or passport, with you when driving.

It is also an offence to drive a vehicle without displaying a number plate – just as it is in the UK – but when they take your licence away, they also remove the number plates from your car and keep them at the police station for you to collect at the end of your 'time'. If you own two cars, they take both sets of plates.

Drink driving:

In the UK the current limit for blood in your alcohol system is 35 'milliWhatsits' per pint, or something or other. In Crete there are different levels and thus different penalties. If you are stopped and have up to 20 'milliWhatsits', the fine is €200 or €100 if paid within 10 days. For between 21 and 40 'milliWhatsits' the fine jumps to €700 or €350 and you lose your licence for 90 days.

Now, if you are 40 'milliWhatsits' or over, the fine is €1200 or €600 and you not only loose your licence for 180 days, but you go to jail for two months. You do not pass Go or collect £200, if you are caught over the 40 'milliWhatsits' limit, you appear in Court the next day and from there, straight to jail. **No exceptions.**

Methinks this would work quite well in the UK. No hanging about for weeks waiting for a trial, no 'celebrities' getting off with the help of Mr Loophole, and just think, some overpaid footballer being in jail instead of helping his team win promotion just because he had a few too many bebies at some nightclub or other... What a brilliant idea!

Ymmas (Cheers)...

Yassas.

It was good to see some of you at the Robin Hood for our last visit a few weeks ago. Good too to see Beryl, Frank's XYL, as it gave the Missus someone to talk to while important radio stuff was discussed. Pity our erstwhile Editor could not be there, but he was doing important Editorial stuff and visiting Dresden. Still, he did manage to 'phone the pub while negotiating the local tram system on his way to visit a brewery.

Well, at last we have arrived. As expected, the new QTH is not finished and so we are shackled up in the other QTH. We eagerly await the delivery of some 17 large boxes and an aerial. These were deposited at a warehouse in Peterborough a couple of days prior to us leaving and we hope to see them around the middle of November. Radio-wise I have not done much since arriving. I have set up a small vertical for 20m at the Kritsa QTH, just to keep my hand in. I would like to get things started on the new QTH but there is a lot to do 'first', the XYL says. Still, we will get there within the next couple of months – with any luck.

Buying a car during the current economic climate you would think that the dealers would be falling over themselves to flog you a motor and giving huge discounts. Not out here. A small car, say a Daewoo Matiz 1 litre, would set you back about much the same as in the UK, say just over eight grand. So, you say to the dealer, how much off for cash – the actual touchy-feely folding stuff? The answer will be 'nothing'. Why? Well, Crete is a cash-based society and virtually everything is done using hard cash. Very few people use credit or debit cards as very few shops and businesses accept them, so when something big, like a fridge/freezer is bought, the folding stuff is taken from the pocket, the notes peeled off and offered in payment.

Oh, and just to add insult to injury, there is no car scrappage scheme out here. There was to be one, but the recent General Election has stopped all that. Maybe the new Government will put it back in place, but we will have to wait and see. I said last time that if your car was, say, a 10 year old 1.2 ltr Corsa, the road tax was the same as a brand new one, despite the fact that the new car would be more fuel efficient and more 'green'.

Well, the powers that be over in Athens must have read that last edition as they have decided that newer 'greener' cars will now get a tax break from next January – one month after you have bought your new road tax – and this will be a whole €15 discount if your car's emissions fall below a certain level. No one is quite sure what this level is, but it's a start...

One other thing about vehicles that may surprise you is that from the end of this year they are introducing an 'MOT' for mopeds, scooters and motorbikes. It seems that until now these have been exempt from any sort of MOT check. It will run on the same lines as for a car, i.e. a new bike or moped will have its first check after 4 years and thereafter every two years. It still won't stop a whole family, Dad, Mum and two kids riding into town on a Honda 50 moped, but at least within a year or so, the moped will have been MOT'd – well, maybe.

So, now we are here, who and what am I glad to be away from, even after a few short weeks?

Well, the first has to be Dotun Adebayo – the prat who is on Five Live when I used to leave work at two in the morning. The man cannot interview, does not listen to the people he is talking to, has no sense of humour and has one of the most annoying voices on the radio. What he thinks is funny, no one else does. He cannot announce properly and calls his show "Uh all Ni" instead of 'Up all Night' and should return to local radio. Orkney FM should do. How he got the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list beats me. Maybe he saved up enough Nectar Points.

Next has to be Mark Commode, that idiot who talks about films on Five Live. He is someone else I am very glad to be away from as he suffers from verbal diarrhoea (hence his name?) Why does he have to mention every film he has ever seen in every review he does and why name-drop at every opportunity? The man should really move to TV – Mongolian TV would be my choice.



Then there is that Robinson woman who does the Weakest Link programme. She just needs a good slapping, but this would probably damage her facelifts. I rarely caught any part of her show, but when I did the TV just had to be turned off. She should keep that Commode fellow company in Mongolia.

Jonathan Woss is another candidate. I rarely caught his TV programme either (thank goodness) and here we have another one who is full of his own self importance. He cannot interview in any shape or form as the so-called 'interview' always ends up about being about himself and not the guest. He should also have been sacked for his comments regarding Andrew Sachs' family.

Fortunately, the car radio had an 'Off' button which was used very frequently on the first two.

I do not miss the weather forecasts either, and how wrong they can be. Take this simple test. Look at the latest synoptic charts on the Metcheck web site. Then look at the same chart on the Met Office site. You will note that the Met Office one is somewhat simpler, although dumbed-down would be more accurate. This is strange as the Met Office produce both sets of charts - anyway - even with your limited knowledge of weather forecasting, look at the charts and predict the WX for the following day. I will bet money that you are more accurate than the idiots who stand up on TV and wave their arms about. Out here they keep the maps very simple (a bit like ITV) and use very few symbols. However, they are correct about 95% of the time as against the BBCs 30%.

Things I miss:

Although we have only been here just over a month, one of the things I miss already is a good pint of Beer! I enjoy the local Mythos, but could sometimes do with a pint of AK or Harvey's.

Yammas!



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Greetings once more from the Island of Crete where we have survived our first winter relatively unscathed. Winter out here is very quiet when compared to the summer months – there being no tourists! We managed to get back to the UK for a couple of weeks over the Xmas period but all our time was taken up with visiting parents and other family so there was no time for a quick visit to the Robin Hood. Unfortunately, the XYL's Mother died the day after we got back and so the XYL flew straight back to the UK and stayed for just over three weeks, while I returned just for the funeral, some time later.

Within days of our initial arrival, way back in October, temporary aerals were put up at the old QTH and, despite the little Icom 7000 dying on me after a couple of months, DX was worked using the IC-735 with the Idiom CMOS-4 keyer. I had also been trying to have at least one CW QSO a day to help improve my rusty CW.

In February we started to move stuff up to the new QTH. I had the aerial poles fitted by a local aerial man (who turned out to be SW9MOB, a Greek VHF only call), put up the H-422 trap dipole and got the 735 set up. Everything was plugged in, the keyer started up, sent 'OK' as it should, and then died. There were some expletives mumbled and so I then dug out a very old K-20 PIC keyer from K1EL. Took a couple of hours to get the beast rewired but I succeeded in the end.

Way back in the Nov '09 edition of RadComic, there were 'reviews' of some 'LFA' antennas by this G3LDO fella. I say 'some' reviews but he only got to look at one antenna and never did review the 2m one and I'm sure he just fills his allotted page count with graphs and charts just so he gets paid for two pages worth of drivel - but I digress. In the Nov/Dec issue of SV NEA, there are 4 page articles on the LFA antennas by the chap that designs them, G0KSC. Now, I do not understand much of what it says as it is all in Greek but being a 'G-designed antenna', wouldn't it have been better to have the article published in RadComic first? However, perhaps it was too technical for them, I mean, what with proper pictures of the aerals and not pictures of cats on lawns. Also, the SWR plots in the Greek magazine make more ruddy sense than those stupid antenna analyser graphs that Dodd's puts in RadComic where they are so small no one can read the information on them anyway...

I also see that the 'LDO was pulled up in the March edition for not doing his test correctly. 'bout time someone called his bluff.

I think I have said this before but I do not like this IOTA business – these idiots chasing bits of rock everywhere. The IOTA contest in the summer must be the rudest contest around these days and if I am on the bands during that weekend I do not play in it despite being asked for serial numbers and some weird reference number. But I digress, the main thrust of this moan is the article in March RadComic about three guys going to some out-of-the-way islands to give these rock-chasing idiots some perverted pleasure. So why did the RSGB, and YOUR subscriptions have to pay for most of it? Also, with only 19,000 QSOs in the log and over 8,000 unique calls worked, this means that most of these selfish idiots worked the stations twice, leaving those who have yet to work any P29 station at all, out in the cold. Selfish? I would say so...

While having a pop at RadComic, have you noticed the 'Management Speak' creeping in? Things like "Well motivated team" and "Membership Focus". I had enough of this sort of thing while I was at work!

Something else that is bugging me at the moment is the way that no one wants a 'normal' QSO. Nearly every contact is just a report and name, one exchange, a 73 and then a QRZ. No QTH details unless you ask for it, no other info such as RDA, if working a Russian, no rig details, no WX, in fact it is hard to even have a 'rubber stamp' QSO now. Why is everyone in such a rush?

In an earlier missive I mentioned about buying your car halfway through the year and said I would try and find out what car tax you might have to pay as Greek car tax runs from January to January. Well, if you buy your car in November, you pay car tax as if you had the car from January 1st that year - so you pay 12 months tax for 2 months use. Needless to say, our new car was registered to run from Jan 1st and not a day earlier.



This proved difficult for the Insurers to deal with as we ordered the car at the end of October but did not drive it away until Jan 5th. They wanted proof that the car we drove away was new and not second-hand or one of these 'dealer licensed' cars. Got it all sorted after a couple of weeks but car insurance is expensive out here, probably due to the casual way the Cretans drive. Our fully Comp insurance has set us back some €340 for 6 months, premiums being paid half-yearly.

Here are two Public Service Announcements:

When buying the 10m patch leads from Waters and Stanton, be aware that the ferrule on the PL259 plugs is short and does not always engage with the thread on the SO259 socket you wish it to connect to.

A word here about the H-422 antenna: This is the one advertised by Nevada and is usually shown as being in the 'V' formation. First read and then re-read the instructions as the Japanese English is a bit confusing. There are instructions to tape over several unused holes in the elements to keep the water out but there are no plastic caps for the ends of the elements and so the water can get in anyway!

Yammas...

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Greetings again from a warm and sunny Crete where we have finished getting the new QTH 'Organised'. We don't normally use the 'O' word in our household but the XYL has now got things as she wants 'em, especially in the garden, so I guess we will have to use the 'O' word just this once.

Good to see that the higher bands are beginning to show signs of life, albeit intermittently. I tried 24.890 (12m) the other day and worked Z21BB for a new one. Also put out a CQ on a 'dead' 12m a few days later and worked several stations one after another, so there are people out there. Also worked a few Russians on 10m (and not in a contest) so maybe we will get some decent condx soon.

PSK Musings:

For many years I have only been using PSK on 30m but recently I have been going on 15m in the mornings as 10.1 has been dead here. I have managed to catch some of the rarer Russian Districts way over in UA0 and as such I have added quite a few new RDAs and have also added nicely to my Million Mile Award total.

Then, following some 50 or so PSK QSOs on World Amateur Radio Day I cracked the half-million mark and, after several JAs in quick succession the following weekend, the mileage I needed dropped considerably. As of the beginning of July I now only have some 215,000 miles to go! Of course it helps your mileage total when you work the Chairman (tugs forelock) of the Club at a distance of just over 1,600 miles. I was honoured to work John on 18.100 and nearly spilt my beer when I saw his call appear on my screen and so I am also now the proud possessor of one of the famed 'VEH QSL cards.

Also on the PSK front I have been trying out the UR5EQF software. This does logging and several PSK variants. The best thing about it is, some of the macros are in Russian and, after getting some of them translated by a Russian waitress we know from UA6, I have added a few well chosen Russian phrases to my macros for when I work them thar Ruskies. Still trying to work out the logging part as there are no English help files.

Listening:

Frank, 'LWI, and Dave, 'VGR, will understand this more than most, but why don't people '*listen*' any more. It seems that unless a station is bending the S-meter needle, or is rare DX, no one wants to work 'em as it is too much trouble. Back in April, I worked a G station on 80m. (80m is not a good band for me as my aerial is not very good and really needs improvement). However, this was just before the start of the Club Championship contest, so it was about 7.45 local UK time. He was not 599 and neither was I but we worked each other – not because it was easy, but because it wasn't. The G-SV9 path on 80m at that time of day is pretty marginal anyway, so we both had to '*listen*', but more satisfaction is gained by such a contact than by the usual "UR 599 PSE QSL" type of QSO.

And talking of 'listening', back in June there was the E4 DXpedition to Palestine. E4X was working on 14,025 and listening up. When Field Day started, a G5 two letter call, stroke P started calling CQ on 14,025. He just could not have listened at all, and with an old call like that, he should have known better!

Tuning through 40m back in May, I though I heard 'my' call being sent. A quick listen (there's that word again) revealed RA3XBN/3 so I just had to call him. Took him a couple of calls to realise that it wasn't a wind up but then we had a nice chat. It really confused a YO who was not sure who he was calling afterwards!

Mention of the RDA Awards earlier reminds me to say that some of the Districts changed earlier this year. Some have been re-named, as some towns have been split into two administrative districts, while some have been deleted as places have become smaller and districts have been merged.

It is really worth checking out; <http://rdaward.org> and getting the latest list and also reading the #10 press release which gives all the details. I have well over 350 districts now and so spent some time checking my spreadsheet and updating things. Talking of Ruskies, those of you who have



been round a bit will remember the old Russian call series. In this, UB5 was the Ukraine. Recently I worked a UB9 which had me confused but they are using the UB series again in Russia itself, as some prefixes have run out. I first noticed these in the UA9C area around Ekaterinburg in the Sverdlovskaya Oblast region and I've also worked several R5 stations from around Moscow.

Good to know that at least one person read the HRD reviews in a recent edition and acted upon it. I hear that Richard, 2E0XRS, now uses AirLink Express and finds it infinitely better than HRD. Another convert!

Also good to see some of you at the Robin Hood recently - Made two quick trips back to the UK in the past couple of months and popped in for a quick pint. It is really nice to be able to sit and 'talk radio' once in a while as my nearest club is 75km away and I have yet to make the trip and make myself known.

As you may know, April 18th each year is World Amateur Radio Day and the Polish equivalent of the RSGB, the PZK, and QTC Magazine get together each year and issue an award for contacts made on the 18th April only. On HF you need 20 QSOs and on VHF you need 10. Send 'em a log extract and 5 bucks and the award is yours. This year it was quite easy to work the required number of stations as the 18th was on a Sunday, but next year (2011) the 18th falls on a Monday, so fewer people will be on the bands during the day. Still, it's well worth a go... I will apply for my J49XF call for that day and will stir up some activity on the bands on the key, or maybe PSK63, for a laugh.

This year my WARD Award arrived after just three weeks which is a very quick turn round.

Time for another cold one...

Yammas!

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Greetings once again from a warm and pleasant Crete where the tourist season is over and we now have just a few 'out-of-season' travellers wandering about. Our summer was hot as usual but for most of August the temperature rarely dropped below 30c, even at night.

Did you read the 'review' of the MyDel SB-2000 interface in September RadComic? Pity the reviewer kept on abt HRD but that aside, if you are thinking of buying one of these interfaces, take a look at the Wimo site on Tinternet. They do exactly the same one (Chinese made SB-2000 but with no MyDel label) and cheaper than Lynchie. In early October the interface from Wimo cost €82 or **£69.50** with the interface lead costing €20 or **£16.90**. Lynchie price is **£102** plus **£18.95** for the lead. Also, if you own an Icom 7000, the SB-2000 will NOT do CW as well as CAT. No info about this on the Lynchie website but a full warning on the Wimo site.

Just as an aside, Wimo do a 28A PSU for €77.25 or **£65.50** which is cheaper than anything W&S, Lynchie or Nevada can do and is ideal for your 100 watt rig.

I have ceased my subscription to the CDXC – The Chiltern DX Club. Some years ago this was a decent club to join and they contributed quite a bit to DXpeditions and operating in general. This has now changed and it seems to be a club run by the very rich, for the very rich. The Chairman moved to a new QTH last year and we were regaled with pictures of cement lorries pouring tons of concrete into large holes in fields so he can erect his 100ft towers. Excavators were employed to dig trenches to run cables for half a mile across fields and streams and the whole saga has been reported in the CDXC Digest. This is not what the 'average' amateur can aspire to, or wants to read about.

There are also reports in the magazine from DXpeditions which only about a quarter of the readers would ever hope to work with their 75 watts and bent dipole which again makes the point that those with money, and thus kilowatt linears and 4 element beams, can work these DXpeditions, while the average guy does not get a look in. Add to this the CDXC support and management of the very rude IOTA contest and I decided that enough was enough.

Question: Did any of you understand any of the 'Start Here' articles in RadComic about Logbook of The World? Come on now, be truthful - I bet you didn't.

I read both articles, twice, but am still none the wiser. It would seem that it was written for those with a PhD in Computer Science and a double-digit IQ as all the instructions seem to be confusing in the extreme. I really like the way the author says, "If you've managed to do it correctly..." which gives anyone like me with little computer knowledge a real sense of being able to understand it all. The articles emphasise how accurate everything has to be – pity then that spelling of 'Herstmonceux' is incorrect in the example given. How do I know this? Well, I used to live there and have had to spell it out numerous times on both CW and SSB. So much for accuracy!

My estimate is that only about 2% of the UK Amateur population uses LoTW and that after these two articles this figure will not change one bit. I have written to the chap who wrote the articles and I also complained that he also did a 'Start Here' on the DX Cluster instead of promoting the use of ones ears to find the DX rather than some fellow in Europe at the end of a phone line... Needless to say, the 'gentleman' (Mr Editor says that I am not allowed to call him a Prat) has yet to responded to my letter.

As I was back in the UK three times during the summer for various family commitments as well as a funeral, all radio activity ceased, and thus my Million Mile total ground to a halt. However, back in September the 19m long wire was put back up and within a couple of days and after a few of these new Rusky callsigns, we added quite a bit to our total and now have just under 55,000 miles to go. With any luck I would hope to have the required mileage by the end of the year.

The long wire is currently my only antenna as the H-422 trap dipole developed a high SWR problem which I think is a faulty trap. Running very low power, say 5 watts, was ok but any more and one of the traps would suddenly go open circuit. The only band not affected was 28 Mc/s which, after showing signs of life earlier, is now dead anyway!

News Reporting:

In the August RadComic there was a report on Friedrichshafen. At the time, I read it and that was about it. However, in the September/October issue of SV NEA, the bi-monthly equivalent of RadComic from the R.A.A.G there was the Greek report on the same exhibition.

The space given to each magazine report was about the same, two and a half pages of typeface as well as, in the case of the RSGB, some 9 pictures. However, the Greek report also had an extra two and a half pages of pictures, some 24 in total. A good example of the difference in reporting is the Hilberling rig. The RSGB show the rig along with its designer but the SV report shows two pictures of his rigs, one with a matching PSU (not seen before) and one without. The pictures also show that the screen slopes backwards within the front panel thus allowing better viewing. I did not know the rig had this feature and would not have known this from the RSGB report.

Other extras from the SV magazine show the new Emtron Linears. These must be designed for the Italians as the DX-3 runs 4KW while the DX-5 runs a cool 8KW on CW and 9KW on SSB. No mention in RadComic though as linears and powers levels are a no-no subject up in Bedford.

Also mentioned in SV NEA, and not RadComic, was the new Optibeam 2 element beam for 80m. Yes, I know we all don't have beams but I am sure there are more people in the UK who would be interested in an 80m beam than in Greece. There were also pictures of the Luso towers but without RSGB personnel in attendance. In RadComic, why do we have to see Mr Kirby with two JA YLs in a report about a DL Rally?



Other 'extras' in the Greek mag, including pictures were: The new Worldwind rotator, the SAMS aerial matching system, D-Star stuff from Icom, Ultra Beam and the Bavarian Contest Club. Ultra Beam is an Italian version of the SteppIR series of beams and verticals – again, no mention in RadComic. The SAMS aerial matching system is an automatic ATU from HB9 that can cope with very high power. Details will be available at www.Hamware.de but as of mid-October, details were yet to appear on their web site.



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I think next year I will make a resolution to dig out a

microphone for one of the rigs and in the first major SSB contest of the year just sit here calling

“CQ Sport Radio, CQ Sport Radio” and see how many answers I get. In the mean time, why not try this yourself in the next RSGB sponsored contest? Can be HF or VHF, SSB or FM, just try it and see what response you get.

Did any of you play in the CIS DX QPSK63 contest back in September?

Reason for asking is that I wondered what mode you used. I had a look at the Waterfall during the contest and saw abt 30 or 40 stations working each other, calling CQ, or generally causing QRM. However, none were using QPSK63 – all were on QPSK31. Wonder if they will all be disqualified!

If I don't catch you before, have a Cool Yule!

Yammas!

Dick SV0XBN/9

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Editor's Note:

Dick made the One Million Miles and now just awaits the Award from the US.

