

Ham Radio 2005 – Friedrichshafen Rally

June 2005 Rally Report

By Dave Aldridge G3VGR

I was unable to find any cheap air tickets to Boston for ARRL Field Day this year, so decided to go back to Friedrichshafen to enjoy better food and beer with no mosquitoes. As before, I followed a devious route, flying from Stansted to Stuttgart (£34 return), then train to Oberstdorf for 10 days camping & hiking in the mountains of the Kleinwalsertal. This was an excellent place to visit, with much time spent up in the snow and ice above 2000 metres.

After the hiking trip, I again based myself in Bregenz for commuting to the exhibition hall at Friedrichshafen. John, G8DZH and the Colchester boys were staying in Lindau. On arrival in Lindau on the Thursday, a historic contact was made by DL/G3VGR from the shore of the Bodensee to John DL/G8DZH who was on a ship returning from Mainau. Yes, my HT did not have a flat battery for once and this milestone in the history of LEFARS was duly reached. Marconi must have been spinning in his grave.



Dave waiting at Lindau Harbour for DL/G8DZH and party to arrive

Last year, I spent only one day at the show, which definitely wasn't long enough. I decided to visit on all three days and thoroughly enjoyed myself, due especially to the humour of the good company I was with. There are many regulars that visit annually, all with exotic nicknames: Landrover Dave, Babbling Brook, Blind Pew, Drunken Willy and the Mayor of Leeds amongst them. This year was also the 30th anniversary of the Ham Radio exhibition and was celebrated with an open-air concert at the fairground on the Saturday night.

It seems the show was bigger than last year with two halls devoted to the flea market, which was reassuring, as most rallies in the UK appeared to be in decline over the past year. More worryingly, I believe I've caught the dreaded "Deez Disease". This is easily diagnosed as the main symptom is of the uncontrollable desire to buy eccentric items, often totally unrelated to ham radio, at bargain prices. Proud acquisitions made in the flea market include a watchstrap, wrist compass, €1 toolkit, and an adapter for a radio I don't own or am ever likely to. However, I did manage to resist the €18 Gas Cookers as well as some of the more exotic bric-a-brac from the various Turkish traders, but at times, the temptation was almost irresistible.



The weather was extremely hot, but the building has excellent air-conditioning, so it was very comfortable inside. Outside were long benches with sunshades, just right for enjoying some Weizenbier and Bratkartoffeln, so lunch was a highlight of the day.



Weizenbier and trusty 2M handie – Dave G3VGR is ready...

Drunken Willy was complaining about the heat as it wasn't conducive to whisky drinking [evaporation rate was too high – Ed.], so he went off to find some shade.





Bratkartoffeln – just what you need when 32C in the shade

As before, the hall with all the national societies, major dealers/manufacturers, and clubs was very interesting. We saw a stand with a demo of PLT, where a jpeg file was sent between two laptops over a PLT network. Horrible QRM was generated by this technology, which was very strong on a portable receiver, tuned to 40 metres a few feet away. It's fortunate this garbage doesn't seem to be catching on in the UK, as it would surely sound the death-knell of HF Radio.

We visited many of the stands of the national societies, which gave lots of free info, such as repeater lists, awards/contests rules, and touristy brochures. In contrast, the RSGB stand was very disappointing again, being basically, just a stall for selling books.



Notice the RSGB staff at the back of the stand...

Yaesu was displaying the FT9000, which one could touch and feel, whereas Icom kept their IC7800 in a glass cabinet.



The hand belongs to John G8DZH.

One new radio was the IC7000, which is a replacement for the IC706. It looked very pretty, with a TFT display on which it's possible to watch NTSC TV channels, plus IF DSP as standard so no extra filters need to be purchased. It will be interesting to see how it is accepted when released, as it seems to have too many bells and whistles for a mobile/portable rig, whilst being somewhat fiddly as a base station.



EH Antennas were also on display, including a triple-combination version, somewhat resembling a candelabra that Liberace would have been proud to own.



The Sunday visit was a little sad, because the place was shrinking as many of the stands were packed up. After lunch, the flea market was disappearing quickly and we were frantically scrabbling around for "must have" items, which, of course, we had completely ignored during the previous 2 days. Near the end around 3PM, John & I were offered apples by someone on the Swiss stand, who also asked if we'd like to finish off their beer. We obligingly helped them out with this dilemma and were happily quaffing our free beer whilst they were dismantling their stand. We were rudely interrupted when a flying champagne cork from the REF stand hit John on the head. It seemed the French were going to close the show in style.



Champagne for all from the REF stand

The REF President had opened the 'fridge and was pouring champagne for one, and all. People from the other countries' stands turned up with their own goodies and everyone toasted the success of the show. The RSGB must have flogged all their books, because they'd packed up and gone before 1130 and their deserted stand looked a very lonely place.



To finish the day, we had dinner at a restaurant at Lindau harbour, sitting outside in the warm evening. At another table were the Irish contingent led by Drunken Willy and the Mayor of Leeds. After John, Adrian, Brian, and Colin departed, I enjoyed a few beers with the Irish boys before returning to Bregenz on the last train. So that was Friedrichshafen for another year. I'm already trying to plan which direction to approach it from next year. Maybe I can walk there along the Querweg from Freiburg or the Maximiliansweg from Fuessen. It's definitely a "must do" rally.

73

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Links

Official Website

<http://www.hamradio-friedrichshafen.de/html/en>



Dave G3VGR and the Colchester Boys... Adrian G0APP, Colin G0LIN and Brian G0GGM

