

Ham Radio 2006 – Friedrichshafen Rally

June 2006 Rally Report

By Dave Aldridge G3VGR

The first sight to greet me as I came out of Lindau Train Station on a Thursday afternoon in late June was the eccentric “Mayor of Leeds” resplendent in his heavy wool three-piece striped suit, bowler hat, and umbrella. The temperature was about 35C. Yes, it was summer in the Bodensee and the weekend of Ham Radio 2006 at Friedrichshafen was here again. I had just arrived from Austria and the 2 Johns, G0VEH and G8DZH were already in town.

After checking in at the excellent Hotel Adler, which Deeze had found in Oberreitnau, a suburb of Lindau, I made my way back to Lindau harbour to wait for the 2 Johns to arrive back on the boat from Bregenz. Getting around Lindau by bus is a little odd. There are 4 circular routes and all the busses meet up at one common stop called “Zup”. Everyone changes to the bus they need and all 4 busses leave together. It seems a strange system but works well.



The impressive entrance to the Ham Radio 2006 rally

As we were going to the rally on all 3 days, it was decided to adopt a leisurely pace, so we didn't get up too early on the Friday morning to avoid the usual long ticket queues. On the train, we compared shopping lists and concluded it would be most unlikely to find all the items we wanted. I was taken aback when I managed to find everything I wanted within 30 minutes in the first flea market hall. There were 2 full halls and one half-full hall dedicated to the flea market as well as the large hall with all the big traders, manufacturers, national societies and various clubs. This year it was noticeable that the contents of the flea market had changed since last year. There were quite a few stands selling surplus QRO components from Eastern Europe – very useful for building high power amplifiers or ATUs.



I was also pleased to see many surplus Collins S-line and Drake C-line transmitters, receivers etc in good condition on various tables. Noticeably missing were the stands containing portable gas stoves and other exotic bric-a-bracs.



Anchors aweigh! A fine collection of Collins S-Line rigs



John G8DZH delivering LEFARS QSL's direct to the German bureau



After a trawl through the first flea market hall, we headed to the main hall. We were too late to get any bags from the Yaesu stand, but took time examining the new FT2000. This is a very nice looking rig and sure to be a big success as a replacement for the venerable FT1000MP.



The new Yaesu FT2000 looking far more elegant than the appallingly ugly FT9000

We made the obligatory pilgrimage to Conrad's stand, which resembles a small shop in the centre of the hall. As usual, they had a good stock of very cheap electronic and electrical items. All the national societies were present and this year the ARRL folks had time to meet and greet visitors. In previous year's they were far too busy checking QSL's for DXCC, which isn't an enjoyable way to spend the weekend.

We visited a few stands that were promoting Software Defined Radios (SDR). This new concept looks very promising. Presently, the only available commercial rig is the SDR1000, although there were some prototype radios on the WoodBoxRadio stand, enthusiastically demonstrated to us by IOCG.

Since returning home, I've bought 2 Softrock kits and hope to play with the technology soon.





Dave and John G0VEH getting interested in Software-defined Radios



Another SDR, finished in the traditional Drake colour scheme





Dave meets Piero Begali, manufacturer of fine Morse keys



Lunchtime at Friedrichshafen, with our staple diet of beer and bratkartoffeln





John G0VEH checking if this loop will fit on his caravan

The remaining two days were spent at a leisurely pace visiting the other flea market halls. We noticed Saturday afternoon was quieter than usual and wondered why until we realized many of the German hams had left to watch Germany's World Cup qualifying match against Sweden.

When we arrived back at the village, there were many happy Germans in the biergarten celebrating their win. After dinner, we found out there was a local fete, so we made a visit. There was plenty of beer, sausages, and a genuine German Oompah band playing.



The Oberreitnau village fete with Weizenbeer and an Oompah band

I had to leave immediately after lunch on Sunday to catch my flight from Zurich. The two Johns upheld the club's relationship with USKA, the Swiss national society by again helping them to drink all their remaining beer.

On reflection, this was again an enjoyable rally. It is also very well organized by DARC, the German society. They are definitely the most progressive national society in Europe.

73

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The RSGB stand attracts great interest as usual with its dynamic presentation



Swiss football supporter spotted at Lindau station, not wishing to attract attention