

GD6UW ON THE ISLE OF MAN

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL
DX-PEDITION

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FIVE times in the last seven years members of the Cambridge University Wireless Society have spent part of their Easter vacation on the Isle of Man. Regular readers of *SHORT WAVE MAGAZINE* will have seen accounts of previous expeditions, which have included details of almost every form of disaster. Determined that everything should go as smoothly as possible this year, we started planning soon after the start of the University year, last October. Our first discovery was that rather more people were interested in going than in previous years, so it was decided that we should split into two parties, each of which would spend about ten days on the Island.

Manufacturers responded with generous loans of gear for the expedition. It appeared that we should be able to set up two LF band stations, one on single sideband on 80m. down to 10m., and the other on 160m. and 80m. AM and CW, as well as portable stations for Top Band and twenty metres.

We were fortunate in being able to use an ex-Govt. Land-Rover belonging to one of our members, G8AXS. Those of us who went last year had not forgotten how heavy even the lightest of transceivers can seem when being carried under one's arm across Liverpool, and the vehicle certainly made it possible for us to take a lot more gear than in previous years.

What could have been a disaster for the trip came just a week before we were due to leave—the SSB transmitter which we were going to borrow disappeared in mysterious circumstances. This turned out to be

something of a blessing in disguise, however, for a few frantic phone calls brought Mr. J. B. Lowe to our rescue with the loan of one of his transistorised FT-100 transceivers.

After that everything went smoothly enough, and the last day of term saw a heavily-laden Land-Rover set off for Liverpool, where we descended on the long-suffering family of G3SKT for the night. The crossing the following day was calm compared with that which the second party were to experience, and just over twenty-four hours after leaving Cambridge we reached our boarding-house overlooking Douglas.

Top Band

For 160 metres we had borrowed a Codar AT-5 and an Eddystone EA-12 from the manufacturers. This was an excellent combination with which we had no trouble at all, and we were never short of calls. The aerial was a 300-foot long wire, strung from skylight to skylight across the square, about forty feet above the ground. We spent almost all our time on CW, with occasional Phone sessions during the afternoon. Our best DX contacts were W1BB/1, W2EQS, and K1PBW (twice)—the first time we had worked Stateside stations on Top Band from the Island.

We had been given GPO permission to operate two stations simultaneously during the first ten days, using the callsign GD6UW, but after March 29 we had to use this call on the HF bands only. From then on we used GD3VBL and GD3VNQ on 160m. Total number of 160m. contacts was 370, of which 250 were by GD6UW.

HF Bands

Now to the HF bands. The FT-100 fed a Mosley trap vertical sitting on the window ledge of the top floor operating room. In the first few hours of operation we discovered that ten metres was wide open to the U.S.A., and from then on we were kept more than busy working W after W for hours on end. Occasional forays on to Fifteen and Twenty brought forth a reasonable crop of DX, but nothing really exotic was heard or

The HF-band station for the GD6UW expedition, with G3UDD (left) and G3VCR seeing to things. Their gear consisted of a Sommerkamp FT-100, an Eddystone EA-12 and a Swan Transceiver. Well over 1,000 contacts were made, with another 350 by GD3VBL, using the same equipment in the "CQ" SSB Contest.



worked. A few days after our arrival we decided to put up the 80m. dipole that had been rolled up on an old cable drum since the previous year, and with this aerial we had no trouble in working into Canada.

In order to raise the American Phone stations on Eighty, we borrowed the EA-12 from the Top Band rig downstairs, and once we had got the aerial change-over sorted out we were able to operate split frequency quite satisfactorily. Best DX on this band was W1FZJ/KP4.

Later on, when the second party had arrived, 15m. and 10m. closed down somewhat, and it was decided that a simple ground-plane for 20m. might perform more satisfactorily. After some hasty improvisation, we were rewarded by getting the SWR reading on to the scale of the bridge; as a result, we found that performance into the U.S. had improved a little. The radials presented rather a problem, but we found the aerial worked quite well with them draped over the roof and across the room.

VHF from Snaefell

In any radio club a certain proportion of the members will deny the existence of any form of electro-magnetic radiation below 70 mc, and the C.U.W.S. is no exception. Once again the Ministry of Aviation—now the Board of Trade—had given us permission to operate on VHF from their repeater station right on the summit of Snaefell, 2030 feet above sea level. This year we decided to take gear for 2m. and 70 cm.



During the Easter expedition to the Isle of Man by the Cambridge party, some portable operation was essayed on 20m. The aerial was the ex-Army type that can be operated as a ground-plane. The Tx/Rx was a Swan Transceiver, with DC/PSU, and good results were obtained.



The first party for the GD6UW operation of the C.U.W.S. just before leaving Cambridge on their Easter expedition. Left to right: G3RCB, G3TGY, G3RUZ, G3SKT, G3SUC—and the Land-Rover, which was found to be an almost indispensable element.

During the winter months there is no public transport to the top of the mountain, but the Ministry runs a small railcar up once or twice a day, to change over their duty officer, and we were able to make use of this.

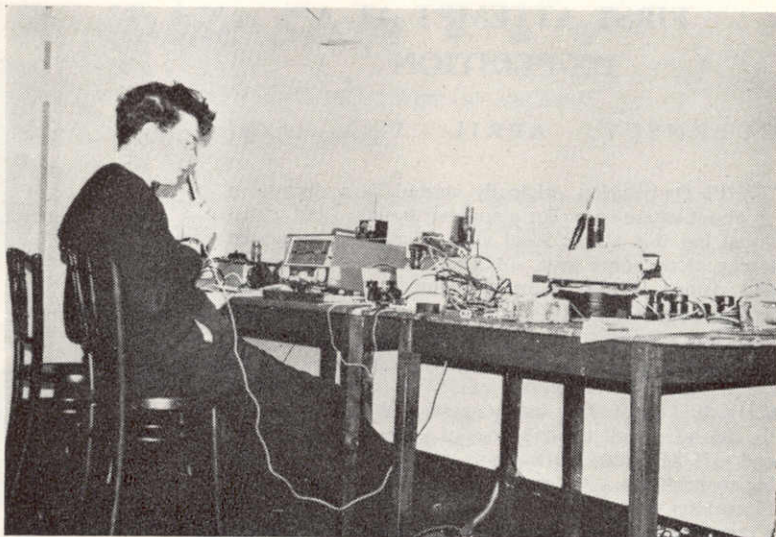
On the first day, when the time came to put the aerials up, the wind was metered at 60 knots continuously, and we were very lucky in having a ready-made mast to which we could lash our own pole. We decided that the wind was much too severe for us to go out to turn the beams after dark, so we fixed them temporarily to the South-East.

On 2m. we used an 8-element Yagi, and on seventy centimetres a Parabeam, borrowed from J-Beam Engineering Limited. The two-metre transmitter, running a QQV03-20 in the PA, was on loan from the Pye Amateur Radio Society in Cambridge. G3SKT's 2m./70 cm. rig ran about 10 watts RF output from a QQV06-40 tripling on to 70 cm. and also did duty as a standby on two metres. Luckily, we never had to use it as such, and in fact the VHF station was completely free from faults throughout our stay. The 2m. converter used an E88CC in the front end, and the 70 cm. converter an AF139, sharing as a tunable IF a BRT-400K loaned by G.E.C. (Electronics) Limited.

We had a full sked list on VHF bands, with dates almost every 15 minutes from 1930-2230 BST on two metres and from 2230-2345 on 70 cm. We managed to make the vast majority of 2m. skeds first time, and everyone was very helpful in keeping to our standardised procedure. Seventycms was rather surprising: We were getting extremely strong signals from stations up to about 120 miles away—well out of line of sight—but beyond that we worked only four stations, the best being G3LTF in Chelmsford, at 275 miles.

Unfortunately we once again missed working ON4FG on Two, although we did hear a short burst from him on one occasion. Best DX on this band was in fact G3BHW in Margate (322 miles), with G3DAH in Herne Bay just a little closer. Activity was at its peak on the first Monday

The 160-metre station when operated by G3VBL under callsign GD6UW, from Douglas, I.o.M. The gear consisted of a Codar AT-5 and an Eddystone EA-12, with which 370 contacts were made, including W1BB/1, W2EQS and K1PBW.



night we were there, March 20, and we were able to work Home Counties stations with no trouble at all. During the rest of our stay conditions were rather flat, although it was only on a few occasions that the Wrotham beacon was inaudible.

The first party used the call GD3SKT, and made 129 contacts on 2m. and 39 on 70 cm. The other party used GD3STQ and their totals were 34 on two metres and 15 on seventy centimetres.

Out Portable

Down in Douglas the weather could be very different from that on Snaefell, and on several occasions we decided to go out portable. We had an ex-Army "golf-bag" aerial, which was ideal for our purposes, as it can be made to operate either as a ground-plane on 20m. or as a thirty foot whip for 160 metres. We had two portable rigs—a CSE 2A10/2AR combination for Top Band and a Swan transceiver with DC power supply for 20 metres.

For Top Band we went down to a pebble beach on the eastern side of the Island and worked a number of stations on the key. On Twenty we went to Sartfell, high up on the western side, where we found that performance was much the same as from the base location in Douglas.

The total number of contacts made by GD6UW was just over 1250—in addition GD3VBL worked 350 stations in the CQ World-Wide SSB Contest.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted once again to the GD's, particularly GD3EGF, for helping us out with all the bits-and-pieces we had forgotten, and also for entertaining us at their Club meeting.

QSL's are being handled by the "Dx-pedition of the Month" organisation, c/o Stuart Meyer, W2GHK, P.O. Box 7388, Newark, N.J., U.S.A., who also lent us the Swan and the vertical aerial assembly.

Our thanks to all the firms who lent us gear: Day-

strom Limited, Codar Radio Co., Contactor Switchgear (Electronics) Limited, Eddystone Radio Limited, G.E.C. Limited, J-Beam Engineering Limited. Thanks also to J. B. Lowe, to the Civil Aviation Dept. Staff—and to our landlady Mrs. Teare for tolerating our activities for three weeks.

Plans are already being made for next year's trip, with talk of 20m. beams and 23 cm. We hope it will be as successful as this year's foray.

The first party consisted of G3's: RUZ, SKT, SUC, TGY and UBW, and G13RCB. The second group were G3's: STQ, UDD, UUY, VBL, VCR and VNO, and G8AIY.

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