



RAG CHEW

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G4CIB and G4RHK on Lundy – 30th May to 13th June 2015

Or it wasn't supposed to happen like this!

Brian G4CIB

As many of you will know, our 2015 Lundy stay did not work out as originally planned! For some weeks before I was aware of a pain which came and went in one of my knees. Wretched arthritis I thought – but it comes and goes, so just get on with it. A few days before we were due to go to Lundy the pain came – but didn't go....in fact it got progressively worse.

We stayed in Barnstaple for a few days before sailing to Lundy and looking back I should have gone to get it sorted. But hey - I'm a bloke and we don't seek medical assistance until we start seeing images of the Grim Reaper hovering above us. Well we made it to Lundy – a smooth crossing and on landing; the Warden seeing I was in some degree of discomfort gave Leta and me a lift up to the village in the Land Rover. Leta was petrified – in places the track is literally inches wider than the land Rover with a nasty drop into the sea on one side. I was too much in pain to really care. Somehow we made it to our cottage and in the evening after putting up the vertical HF antenna, I gamely struggled to the Tavern. Actually I feel ok – my appetites good, everything working as it should other than an almighty pain in the leg.

Sunday dawns a dull and dreary day and I decide that amateur radio will at least take my mind of the physical discomfort. Indeed there is a contest in full swing on CW – what better way to take your mind off other matters! In fact I have a ball on 20m, 15m and 10m working some 45 stations. We visit the island shop on the Monday to stock up with provisions and the shop manager, a fellow arthritis sufferer persuades me to dose myself up on Ibuprofen and Paracetamol at regular intervals which I'm only too pleased to do if only to dull this now constant pain. By now all thoughts of amateur radio activity has disappeared from my brain. I want to get medical help and Lundy does not have this kind of facility so in my mind I know I have to get back to the mainland. After visiting the shop we head for the Tavern to check for any messages and we were met by a small deputation consisting of the Island manager and Warden and they have obviously had a discussion about my predicament and are there to persuade me that it will be in my best interest to leave the island and seek medical assistance. I told them that I needed no persuading! The island office administrator was summoned and told to arrange our departure for the following day – one slight problem though – the weather forecast is dire – there will be no ship tomorrow back to the mainland. No problem – the helicopter will be drafted in and we are assured our names will be on the flight list. Tuesday dawns – thick fog. We nevertheless attend the flight briefing in the Tavern at 10.00am. The good news – the fog will lift by mid-day. The bad news – the forecast says that the fog will then descend on Cornwall – where the helicopter is based. Small helicopters don't fly in fog.

However the fog does clear on both Lundy and at the helicopter base at Liskeard and by early afternoon the helicopter is buzzing back and forth between the island and Hartland, taking people and luggage off the island and new stayers on to the island. We are on almost the last flight and when we arrive at Hartland all the ground crew (normally the ship crew – they become the heliport ground crew when the ship doesn't sail) recognise us and immediately offer us a lift in their staff minibus and drop us off at Barnstaple A & E. Without going into the boring details, the staff there was magnificent and confirmed that I had suffered a massive arthritis flare-up. The painkillers I was taking were confirmed as being the right thing to do and soon I was heading in a taxi to Ilfracombe to join Leta where we had arranged a couple of nights in a pub on the harbour to await our return to the island on the Thursday.

Another smooth crossing and I was now anxious to make up for lost time on the radio front.

Things were settling down although my consumption of painkillers did cause the stock-control computer in the island shop to throw a wobbly – fast forward to the day we left at the end of our fortnights holiday and I was amused to hear that a large package of painkillers was included in the shop stock order for the island

coming in on the ship! The computer should have been smart enough to realise we were leaving the island! By this time NFD and the 50MHz UKSMG contest were rapidly approaching and I felt that once again some operating would at least keep my mind off the painful leg. In short I worked some 73 NFD QSOs and a handful of 6m stations in the UKSMG contest. Luckily enough there were quite a few Sporadic E openings during the week so I was able to clock up some 32 squares on 6m. The total for the week was some 210 QSOs, the majority on CW.

Apologies for missing what should have been my normal operating times in the morning and late afternoon – most of my operating was late at night or early in the morning to take my mind off the pain. During the day I often didn't feel like operating very much. Thanks to those who did manage in a roundabout way to work me, in particular Martin G3ENZ for relaying to other members in particular Tom G3XMM and Les G0ULH during the Thursday Club on the Air gathering.

Saturday came round all too soon and luckily enough we had a smooth return crossing.

For the record I took my IC703 (10watts output), a 6m vertical antenna (which worked very well on 20m and upwards) and an 80m dipole.

More Welsh David's

He drives a Korean car – Hyun-Dai

Simple Cable Tidy

Graeme G0EEA

Lay and coil the cable to and fro in the grasp if one hand, squeeze the resulting loops tightly together with the other hand and push the coils inside a cardboard roll. Depending on the sizes, use the cardboard centre of a toilet roll or cut off a length of the centre of kitchen foil roll, cling film, etc...

It's low-cost because it's all free, you have paid for it and its direct re-cycling.

RSGB Low Power CW contest G4AYM/P 'Field Day'

by Gary M0XAC

I am not sure how it started but from about the middle of June the words 'Low Power Field Day CW contest' were being bandied about and it became clear that Bob (M0NQN) and Dave G4BCA were going to take part on behalf of the club. I am not a CW operator, yet! But I am good at lifting reasonably heavy weights and taking orders so I resolved to help out where I could.

And so the planning started and over the following weeks we got everything together had some practice runs at the club, we done a reconnaissance of the site, operators familiarised themselves with the transceiver and the final practice set up at Dave's house went particularly well and we were then ready. Already a lot of work done and the event still to come! It became obvious early on that you cannot just throw these things together.

On the morning of the contest, Sunday 19 June, we arrived on 'site' at 08.00 local. I say 'site' but actually it was at the home of Chris M0OLO and Janine Rennie. They had very graciously allowed us to occupy the back lawn area at their lovely house in a very picturesque location at Newnham. This is your actual countryside idyll with superb views over open country down towards the River Severn and beyond.

We immediately started setting up the /p contest station only interrupted by tea and bacon butties. The station consisted of the clubs Yaesu FT-857d, my MFJ949e antenna matching unit and the club's 132 ft. doublet in an inverted V configuration, atop Dave's 10 metre aluminium mast. All powered by a battery provided by Les G0ULH. Not forgetting Dave's Kent Morse paddle (most essential). We could not be accused of not trying! Everything was housed in Bob's gazebo which he managed to dig out for the occasion. We could not have managed the clubs gazebo. Anyone who has helped put that up knows it is not for the faint of heart and needs about 20 people to do it!

Everything was up and ready by 09.40hrs local. Bob and Dave, having contest experience, had brought their laptops so that logging could be done via N1MM software and we could also use the reverse beacon network to see who else was out there. A very professional looking set up altogether. There was just time for a quick picture and then the contest started.

The contest was either 10 watts fixed or portable or 3 watts fixed or portable. We operated on 10 watts and the contest ran on 80 and 40 metres. Bob and Dave proved to be superb CW operators as expected and alternated operating throughout the day. I was in awe of their skill and it was an excellent learning experience for me. The weather was kind although in the morning it gave us a scare as the clouds darkened and the wind got blustery and it did actually rain for a short period, thankfully not

heavy! As the day went on it got better and finished in warm sunshine, just right to get hot and sweaty packing up



Station set up and ready



The view from Chris and Janine's house



Dave hard at work



Bob hard at work

Everything went well until late morning when Bob's laptop that was being used for logging, decided to expire and Chris very kindly deployed his generator for charging and Dave's laptop took over logging. This was the only fly in the ointment for the morning session.

This contest is unusual in that it has a lunch break! So operations stopped for an hour and we had a leisurely lunch. It continued promptly at 14.00hrs local time and the going was a bit slower than the morning but Dave and Bob were still managing to pull out the contacts. The strategy for the day had been a combination of search and pounce as well as running a frequency for a time and it worked well. The beacon mode was activated on the transceiver so that we could keep sending our call-sign out at the touch of a button.

We still had to manage the laptop battery situation so that the log did not get too disjointed but apart from that the only annoyance was the over active Corn Thrip, (some kind of midge anyway). Now that the sun was out and it was quite hot. It continued in this vein until the end of the contest and it was nice to see some visitors from the club throughout the day.

Tear down (a technical term) went quickly if a little sweaty as the sun was now beating down. It all came down quicker than it went up as is usual with these things. It was a long but fun day on a typical British summer day. The club can be very proud of Bob and Dave's operating and I think they enjoyed themselves!

Our very grateful thanks go to our hosts, Chris and Janine and thanks also to the club members who visited us. Special thanks go to Tom (G3XMM) for working the station on each band and giving us some valuable points. The final QSO count was 74 and at the time of writing this, the club stands second in our section as regards number of QSOs with only a few more days left for logs to be submitted. Only the final points tally is left to be learned – so fingers crossed.

Thank you to those who have contributed to your issue of Ragchew
If you have an article to share; projects, old stories, jokes or cartoons, trips, interesting non radio interests - email it to me or give it to me on paper at the club brian.millard60@gmail.com