

VK9DLX News

News #1 - 21.01.2014

The Lagunaria DX Group is proud to announce their DXpedition to Lord Howe Island in October 2014. The team is a great line-up of fine operators with many decades of DXpedition experience: DF6JC, DJ2HD, DJ5IW, DJ7EO, DJ9RR, DL1MGB, DL3DXX, DL5CW, DL5LYM, DL5XL, DL6FBL, DL8OH, DL8WPX, SP5XVY and VK2IA. It is planned to bring up eight fully equipped HF stations into the air for about 17 days.

As Lord Howe is known for being not a too big island, a lodge with access to nearly five acres of free area for erecting many antennas was booked.

And Lord Howe is also known for having strict baggage limitation on the regular flights. So, most of the equipment will be transported by ship.

No idea who the Lagunaria DX Group is?

Just visit <http://www.lagunaria-dx-group.org/> and learn more about the group, the people behind it and their goals.

News #2 - 28.03.2014

Preparations for the 2014 Lagunaria DX Group DXpedition to Lord Howe Island are ongoing. We have booked our flights (which was not an easy task with so many people going to such a small island at the same time with a small plane). We finalized our station concept, are now putting together all the needed equipment and building also some new equipment.

Equipment

While having all antennas already in our DXpedition stock, we will try to get up the yagis higher than 10m to take advantage of the better radiation pattern. For certain bands (i.e. 40m or 20m) where we expect propagation in both directions Europe and North America (which are 90° apart), we will provide a two-antenna setup combined through a stack-match unit. This allows us to hear in both directions at the same time or switch very fast between two directions. Additionally, we want to try a setup with two radios manned by two operators. This operating technique which already has proven at numerous contests at DR1A, is a great way to increase the QSO rate in a huge pile-up (at least the first days we should have such situations). Also, the two operators will be able to hear in different directions at the same time.

If you haven't already heard of SJ2W, you should visit <http://www.sj2w.se>. Besides a lot of information about this contest station, Mike SM2WMV provides also a PCB service for nice accessories like antenna switches (6 antennas - one or two radios), stackmatches or 4-Square controllers. For our DXpedition Mike generously sent us the stackmatch PCBs for free. Many thanks for your sponsoring!

Sponsoring

Though the DXpedition's location can be reached by plane and includes a lodge, the transport capacities on the flight are strictly limited to 14kg per person. So, we must ship most of the equipment from Germany to Lord Howe Island by sea freight. Therefore, we face transport costs of over EUR 15,000.

We already have granted support from various DX clubs. Special thanks to the German DX Foundation (GDXF, <http://www.gdx.de>) for their generous financial support! We also would like to thank the Chiltern DX Club (CDXC), Clipperton DX Club (CDXC), GMDX Group (GMDXG), European DX Foundation (EUDXF), LA-DX Group (LADXG) and the Danish DX Group (DDXG). Also, some individual sponsors already showed their interest and gave us their financial support.

Working together on DXpeditions for more than 6 years now, Spiderbeam (<http://www.spiderbeam.com/gate.html>) has always been and still is a very reliable and invaluable partner when it comes to antenna work. They are supplying us with masts made of glass fiber or aluminum, with antennas like their monoband yagis and many small accessories, but also their technical advice whenever needed.

In the past we already were using VHF handhelds made by Wouxun (<http://www.wouxun.com/>). These small and cheap devices were not only reliable equipment on our last DXpeditions and enable operations on 2m and 70cm, but also work on Marine frequencies (which was very helpful when going on DXpedition by boat). This time we got a special sponsorship to use some new devices.

Team

Originally planned with 15 people, our team size increased to 16 members. Michael, DL6MHW, a professor in informatics found some time in the winter semester 2014/2015 to join our group. Being a ham for over 30 years now, he is mainly active from his station at home or at club stations like DF0HQ, DR1A or DP9A. But also, regularly on the road together with his family in the small bus, you can hear him from places all over Europe. Welcome Michael! Now we can say that the lodge on Lord Howe Island is fully booked with radio amateurs.

Callsigns assigned

Thanks to the efforts of our team member Bernd, VK2IA, we received confirmation of our callsigns.

For the standard DXpedition operation we will use VK9DLX. Funny suffix, isn't it? Of course, there is a story behind it. The first three DXers who send us the correct history about the special suffix (information can be found in the internet), will receive a photo book of our DXpedition ZL8X to Kermadec Island 2010.

For the CQWW SSB we will use the well-known callsign VK9LM. In memory of Rudi DJ5CQ (silent key 1995) who was active from Lord Howe Island with this callsign several times in the 1980s and 1990s. And two of our team members already operated with this callsign together with Rudi: Dietmar DL3DXX and Joe DL8WPX.

News 01.04.2014

Competition Winners

Sometimes it pays off when you read the DX news. So, it did with the latest news on the 2014 Lagunaria DX Group DXpedition to Lord Howe Island. We asked about the correct history behind the suffix of our assigned callsign VK9DLX.

If you apply for a 3-letter-suffix callsign in Australia, the first letter must show the license class. And the second letter (of the VK9ers) stands for the territory. We made the first experience when we went to Norfolk Island in March 2007: VK9DNX. Somehow, we found it funny afterwards. In October 2008 we were on Willis Island: VK9DWX.

For the first three DXers who would send us the correct history (that includes also the complete history) about the suffix, we promised a ZL8X photo book as a reward. These three DXers were:</p>

- Gary DF2RG
- Val LZ1VB
- Markus OE6MDF

Congratulations! In total there were five postings. Thanks for participation! The winners will receive their books in the next days.

News #3 - 07.07.2014

It has been a while since the last news about our DXpedition to Lord Howe Island in October 2014. But that doesn't mean that nothing happened since then. OK, the experience we gained with the last DXpeditions in preparing and packing the sea freight makes it easier with the time. But nevertheless, it was again a huge amount of work to get already to go.

Nearly the whole team met in Goch at the great station of DR1A where we packed all our equipment. Though we already have a good selection of radios, amplifiers and antennas on our stock, there are always new ideas coming up with each DXpedition which lead to even more equipment. So, it was this time. For the planned contest operation as well as for the normal DXpedition we plan to set up two-radio setups which are sharing the available antennas. Also, the antenna planning needed some brain power. For the high bands we will use both horizontal and vertical polarized monoband antennas for each band, because they were available and because they minimize interferences between the bands. Having a big field to set up antennas is good but having the shack at one end of the property, you need long cable runs to feed all the antennas. Therefore over 1,500 meters of coax cable and another 1,400 meters of control cable went into the boxes. At the end of the weekend we had over 3 tons of equipment packed in nearly 60 different boxes. They will now be shipped from Germany to Australia mainland and further on to Lord Howe Island.

We had one sad moment when Felix DL5XL had to tell us that he had to cancel his participation due to his job commitments at that time. With him we lose an excellent operator buddy!

By chance we got in contact with Joerg DF7TH. He has already been known to Dietmar DL3DXX and Gerd DJ5IW. They shared the operating seat at XF4DL in 2006. Being a CW enthusiast, he has been active from EI, TK, LX, OD5, EA8 or IS0 in the past. Working as a freelancer in hardware and software

development, he found the time to join our group to follow to Lord Howe Island. Having now three Joerg in the team, we decided to name them after their callsign numbers: Joerg-6 (DF6JC), Joerg-7 (DF7TH) and Joerg-8 (DL8WPX). Sounds like fun when calling for a Joerg. So welcome to the team, Joerg-7!

News #4 - 17.09.2014

In less than four weeks VK9DLX will be QRV. All systems are still on go and the team cannot wait any longer to start. Our cargo of over three tons was cleared by Australian customs and is now on the way to Port Macquarie. On September 25th, the Island Trader will take it onboard on its regular round trip to Lord Howe Island.

The main team will arrive on October 12th on Lord Howe Island. Some of our team members will arrive some days earlier. Robert (SP5XVY) will arrive on October 5th, Joe (DF7TH) on October 9th and Gerd (DJ5IW) and Mathias (DJ2HD) the day after. So, don't be surprised if you hear VK9DLX some days earlier than expected; and not on all bands simultaneously :-). The focus of this advance operation will be RTTY.

News #5 - 14.10.2014

VK9DLX is QRV!

To make it short: We went QRV yesterday evening on 80m, 40m, 30m and 17m and already made the first 2,500 QSOs. Today we will continue antenna work to have also the high bands running until tonight.

Onlinelog will be uploaded when we finished the major antenna work.

More will follow later the day.

News #6 - 16.10.2014

Sorry for being inactive on the news site. The last days we were very busy in erecting all the stations and antennas. But now we have a setup which produces good signals around the world and allows us to work on some bands parallel in two modes. Especially having two stations on one band is not an easy task on a "limited" property of 5 acres.

Now our setup consists of 9 stations (yes, we already lost one transceiver; investigations are ongoing). Each station is equipped with a Elecraft K3, amplifier, notebook, microHAM MK2 interface and a lot more accessories. The antenna field consists of 16 antennas: Titanex vertical V160E for 160m, a full size 4-square for 80m, a 4-square and a VDA on 40m and 30m, 2 3ele yagis on 20m and a yagi and a VDA for the bands from 17m to 10m. Also, the first beverage to Europe is up for low band operations.

On 160m we still have a RX problem. Of course, the conditions are not the best for the low bands these days, but with a S7 noise level it makes it even harder to copy those weak signals. We try to locate the source to make a serious low band operation.

Yesterday morning we had a heavy rain fall. 20 cm of rain came down within one hour. We even had a water ingress in one of our shacks but were able to fight against it with towels and buckets. The main thing: The antennas did survive the storm.

Regarding 6m we try to put up the antenna the next days. No special plans for this.

Online log will be uploaded twice per day as internet connections permits. So far there are over 33,000 QSOs in the log.

News #7 - 22.10.2014

Yesterday our last team member Bernd, VK2IA arrived on the island. Due to business commitments he was not able to stay with us the full length of the DXpedition.

QSOs are running good on all bands, though we observe a decrease of daily QSO numbers. Due to the relative low ranking in the Most Wanted list (#59 clublog.org), we expected this. And the latest solar flare doesn't really help. We will see how conditions develop until the CQWW SSB.

Of course, we are also preparing ourselves and the stations for the CQWW SSB contest. We are planning to participate as a Multi-Multi effort with the callsign VK9LM. Even if you already worked VK9DLX, please call us in the contest. Many thanks!

We made some good progress of finding local noise sources which make life very hard on the low bands. One main source was a small power supply of a TV distribution network amplifier. Fortunately, we could replace it by one of our notebook power supplies and the noise has almost gone. But meanwhile we have a new noise source, showing up at North America prime time on 160m. We try everything possible to find the source to get a better RX situation on the low bands.

On 80m we are aware that South America is looking for an 80m QSO with us at their sunrise. We try to be QRV just before Lord Howe sunset (around 0700z to 0730z) the next days.

6m was definitely a highlight the last two days. With a 5 Element Yagi on a 10m mast, pointed to JA, we were able to make about 260 QSOs. Mainly with Japan and some VK's. We also observed the opening from North America to FK but heard absolutely nothing from them. It is still 1200km from FK8CP to VK9DLX. We will continue to observe Magic Band on DX-Cluster. We will also temporarily operate a beacon on 50.114 with antenna directed to Japan. If you notice anything please send the info to the DX cluster network or to our contact form on our homepage.

We still get e-mails and guestbook entries to change this or that callsign in the online log. We will not do that during the DXpedition. If the online log doesn't show your callsign, just work us again. Regarding LOTW: We will upload our log to the Logbook Of The World within 3 months after the DXpedition.

News #8 - 24.10.2014

This is to inform the contest community that there will be a Multi-Multi operation from Lord Howe Island in the CQWW SSB 2014. Our callsign will be VK9LM. We will operate all six contest bands from 160m to 10m and man the stations when there is propagation from Lord Howe Island to anywhere in the world. Normally you will get DXcluster spots where we are on each band. But especially on the low bands it may be possible that we will not always find a running frequency (especially when we have to compete against European stations). But don't be shy to contact us to ask for a QSY frequency on 160m, 80m or 40m. In most cases not only we are the multiplier, but also you!

There will be no CW operation on the contest bands during the contest. But we will have two stations which can be operated on 17m and 12m during the contest.

Please note and understand that there will be no upload to Clublog for the contest log as long as the official log checking takes place. Of course we will also upload the QSOs with VK9LM to LOTW later.

News #9 - 30.10.2014

We are just about to take down the last antennas (160m vertical and beverages) and pack the last cases. Last night there was another 160m operation, but conditions are still bad for low bands. So only a few QSOs made it into the log. Most of the equipment was packed yesterday while we were having a fantastic weather with beautiful sunshine. So we were able to pack everything in a dry condition.

After we packed most of the stuff, the main team will leave the island today at 1400 local time. Joe DF7TH and Robert SP5XVY will stay on the island for more few days. Joe will depart in November 4th and Robert on November 8th. They will continue limited operations on some high bands. So please don't ask for anything more. There will be no more low band operation. Neither there will be a 6m station left.

The online log will be uploaded when time permits. After the end of operations, we will upload it completely to Clublog. We will also open the OQRS then.

Meanwhile thank you very much so far for your participation in the pile-ups! We had a real good fun working the crowds of people.

News #10 - 07.11.2014

The original plan was that Robert will stay until November 8th on Lord Howe Island to do some more RTTY operation and to have an eye on the sea freight when it leaves the island. But plans are there to be revised. Robert had to depart for home for business reasons. So, the last man on the island is Joe DF7TH. He extended his stay until November 11th. He will operate until November 10th on the remaining bands 30m, 17m, 12m and 10m we left antennas up. As he is a one-man-show now, don't expect more than one station at a time in the air. Also, he must do organizational stuff beside operating. Therefore, he will be QRV when time permits mostly in CW to give out a new one on the mentioned bands. Meanwhile signals are all equal and very low. So it seems he is digging out the QRP stations with some wire in the air.

By now we have over 115,000 QSOs with over 28,000 unique callsigns. We tried hard but were not able to get more than 26% NA into the log. Europe with 47% of the QSOs is the dominating continent. We are a bit surprised that Asia with 23% has not more QSO's as it is our neighbor. We are very happy about the great number of over 2,200 QSO's with Oceania. And not to forget over 1,100 QSOs on 6m.

During the DXpedition one of our goals was to take part in the CQWW DX Contest SSB as a Multi-Multi operation. And so we did. Using the well-known callsign VK9LM we finished with over 11,000 QSOs and 23,582,880 points. On the unchecked raw score table VK9LM places on place 1 in Oceania and place 4 worldwide. Many thanks for the numerous callers!

Of course, we were asked when we will upload the online log for VK9LM. We will do that together with the complete log of VK9DLX after the end of the operation. We also got numerous requests to correct callsigns in the VK9DLX log. We will check those requests and will do the changes where applicable.

When VK9DLX operation will be closed, we will open the Online QSL Request System (OQRS) on our website. We ask you to be patient and wait until November 10th. We will inform you when the system is up.

News #11 - 12.11.2014

VK9DLX is QRT and OQRS for VK9DLX and VK9LM is online!

VK9DLX finally went QRT. On November 9th, 2014 Joe DF7TH made the last QSO before he took down all antennas with local help. The QSO counter for VK9DLX shows over 116,500 QSOs, combined with over 11,500 QSOs in the CQWW SSB Contest with VK9LM, we end up with over 128,000 QSOs in our logs. More detailed statistics for both callsigns when we merged and cleaned the logs and uploaded them to Clublog. We know that still some VK9DLX QSOs are missing in Clublog right now.

Meanwhile our Online QSL Request System (OQRS) is online to apply for QSL cards for VK9DLX and VK9LM.

News #12 - 27.11.2014

The QSL design was finished and cards were ordered today. I am not sure if they will arrive before Christmas, but for sure we should be able to send them in January next year. If you still didn't request for your QSL card, please go to our OQRS on our homepage.

And we uploaded our logs of VK9DLX and VK9LM to the Logbook of the World last week. So, you should see your QSOs confirmed there. If not, just let us know.

News #13 - 24.12.2014

The first QSL cards arrived from the printer. After the Christmas holidays the first batches of cards will be sent to the QSL services of the DX clubs who supported us. Afterwards the cards applied

through OQRS and direct mail will be sent. We will have our OQRS form on our homepage open until December 31st, 2014. Due to organizational reasons after this date there will be no OQRS available anymore. Then the only route to get our QSL cards is via our QSL manager Mario DJ2MX. So, take the chance to apply for the QSL cards during the Christmas holidays through our OQRS.

Meanwhile all QSOs for VK9DLX and VK9LM are uploaded to LOTW. We also made some corrections to busted calls we discovered in both logs. If you are still of the opinion that one or another QSO is missing in LOTW, don't hesitate to contact us through our contact form.

Especially during the Christmas holidays our thoughts will be with Joerg DL8WPX. At the age of 54 he was taken from our midst on Tuesday last week. The memories of our common DXpedition are still so fresh, and this makes the whole thing so unreal. Our thoughts are also with his wife and his four children. We lost a great buddy!

Nevertheless, the Lagunaria DX Group including the VK9DLX team wishes everybody around the globe a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2015!

News #14 - 08.02.2015

Finally, the direct QSLs which were applied through the OQRS on our website were sent by our QSL manager Mario DJ2MX. The reason for the delay was a discussion with the German Post about bulk mail, holiday of the contact persons and so on. So those letters should arrive somewhere next week. So, if you did Direct OQRS and you haven't received your QSLs after around 1.5 weeks, just let us know through our contact form on <http://www.lordhowe2014.org>. Mario will now work on the direct QSL cards which were sent by standard mail.