

# The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter

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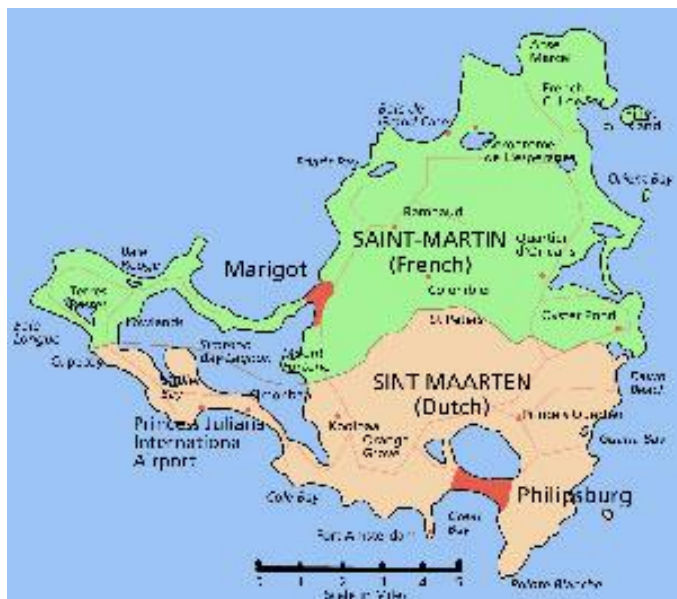
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Issue 12/2015 12 Dec 2015

## One Small Island - Two DXCCs: TO2EME and PJ7/PE1L

From October 22nd to November 1st Johan PA3FPQ, Jurgen PE1LWT, Marshall K5QE and René PE1L were QRV from Saint Martin (DXCC FS) and Sint Maarten (DXCC PJ7), two DXCC entities sharing a small island in the Caribbean. The Southern half is an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Northern half is a French overseas territory. The island was discovered by Columbus himself, on Nov 11<sup>th</sup>, 1493. Since that was the day of Saint Martin the name of the island is easily explained.



It was not quite easy for the team to find a good QTH on either DXCC. On the French side there were some trees around the location, on the Dutch side it was necessary to set up the antennas on a roof garden.

The equipment on 144 MHz was the same as with 7Q7EME earlier this year: 2 x 8 elements cross yagi and “good” power by ITALAB.

October 20<sup>th</sup> the team arrived in Saint Martin. Surprisingly they had no problems with the flight or customs, very much unlike experiences from different dxpeditions. Without delay they went straight to the rented house where everything looked

promising except for the trees and the hill to the West. The following day they put the station together – slowly, as the temperatures were rather high and the air was very humid.

At moonrise the following day everything was assembled and ready to go. However TO2EME needed to wait until the moon was high enough to get over the surrounding trees. That meant some 20 deg minimum elevation. The same was the case at the moon-set direction which was partly blocked by a hill, making them lose the final 15° or so of the moon pass. Anyway, around 1940Z on the 22<sup>nd</sup> their signal became visible via moon and the usual pile-up built up. Since there had been no activity from FS for 10 years there was a huge demand for this rare DXCC.



The team was QRV on four bands, 2 m, 70 cm 23 cm and 13 cm. The first QSO via moon was completed on 70 cm however. It was made in CW with Jan, DL9KR. Jan is 80 years old now and still an excellent cw operator who dug out the TO2EME signal from the noise. Another special contact was made with Serge VE1KG. Serge was scheduled to travel to St. Martin the following Sunday and had promised to drop by for a hello. Since the food in the restaurants

close by was not just very expensive but also not very mouth-watering they all hoped he would bring something to eat. Luckily Marshall K5QE has a special gift to make delicious sandwiches which helped everybody through the day.

The following day they were QRV on the higher bands only but on the 24<sup>th</sup> also 2 m was active again. The pileup from Europe was still big, even with the antennas beaming through the wet tropical trees. The score after two moon passes was 172 stations in all continents, some highlights were KL7UW, FW5JJ, LU7FA, ZL3NW and EA8TJ. The following day, October 25<sup>th</sup> ended with a total of 235 inits on 2 m. The pile-up from Europe gradually became smaller then. Some hours before moonrise the team went to a creole restaurant for dinner with plenty of time before they had to be at the station. However, time is different in the Caribbean. One hour after they had ordered, food still had not been served so they asked the waitress for the reason. Apparently she was very surprised by the impatient dxpeditioners. After some more waiting time dinner was finally served but time was running up. Thanks to Johan's driving skills they still made it to the shack on moonrise. Luckily Johan easily adapted to the local way of driving...

At moon-set on the 26<sup>th</sup> the balance sheet showed 296 inits. That day Serge dropped by, as he had promised. Together with his wife Francoise he was on vacation and – just a nice coincidence – not only worked the DXCC from home before he left but also could get an impression of the team operating at TO2EME.

The TO2EME activity ended with unique 464 QSO's, 346 inits on 144 MHz, 25 inits on 432 MHz, 73 inits on 1296 MHz and 20 inits on 2320 MHz. Oct 28<sup>th</sup> started with disassembling the antennas, then a short lunch, packing all the stuff and transporting it to the other house in Sint Maarten. It was a penthouse on a 6 story building. At 1600 hours local the dxpeditioners arrived there and quickly set up the 1296 MHz station on the roof as well as the shack. 2 m was given lower priority as PJ7 had been activated only four years ago. So the focus was on 70 cm, 23 cm and 13 cm.

Setting up 2 m was not quite easy anyway: only the washer/dryer was connected to 220 volts (all other voltage in the house was 110 volt). As the ITALAB amp runs at 220 volts they lads had to get a local plug to connect it to the mains. They were successful to find a solution and PJ7/PE1L became

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QRV also on 2 m. At the end of the activity they had made 314 QSO's, 215 inits on 144 MHz (during just two moon passes), 27 inits on 432 MHz, 58 inits on 1296 MHz and 14 inits on 2320 MHz.

New destinations for a dxpedition were already being discussed before leaving the island...



The TO2EME&PJ7/PE1L team: PA3FPQ, PE1LWT, K5QE, PE1L (all photos PE1L)

### **And Yet Another Grid Square Activity by VK5APN...**

Most of the readers probably know that due to his work Wayne has to travel to different areas of Australia from time to time. Since he is a very dedicated EME ham he always does what is possible to bring his portable EME gear when works calls him to a rare grid square.

His last trip brought him to Pt Pirie at the end of September. The Pt Pirie township is situated across the [PF86/96](#) border, so it was obvious he wanted to activate both. Wayne had been there before at the end of August. However, then the degradation was very bad. Also high solar activity made it a tough job to complete QSOs at all. Then only five contacts were made from PF96BS. PF86 even had to be cancelled altogether because of bad weather (wind and heavy rain).





On Sep 28<sup>th</sup> Wayne set up his portable station in PF86XT. With his usual 2 x 9 ele YU7EF, IC-706MK1, preamp and a small SSPA he operated from the car and completed with 34 stations in 14 DXCCs and three continents (VK was made via meteor scatter).

As it was one month closer to Southern summer, the weather was a lot kinder to Wayne than in August. Also the moon conds were very supportive this time.

**Operating position in the car; no front passenger possible due to ham radio**



**View to moon and ocean: antennas in PF96XT**

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The following day VK5APN was QRV at the boat ramp on Weeroona Island (PF96AV). Weeroona Island is not quite a normal island: only at high tide it is surrounded by water. When Wayne arrived at 2 am local time (low tide) he did not know how far the tide would come in. As the pictures below show, the water came in pretty close to his setup when he finished operations.



Luckily the tide did not get any closer to the antenna setup (*Photos VK5APN*)

Within the few hours of operation Wayne completed with 36 stations from PF96XT in 16 DXCCs and three continents, plus two more stations worked via meteor scatter: Yet again two stressful days with work, ham radio and little sleep – but a lot of joy being successful via the moon. Very regrettably the QRV times (i.e. the work hours) did not permit to be QRV also for America.

### **Time Table**

3 Jan 2016      January issue of the 144 MHz EME NewsLetter ready for download at <http://www.df2zc.de>

#### **The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter**

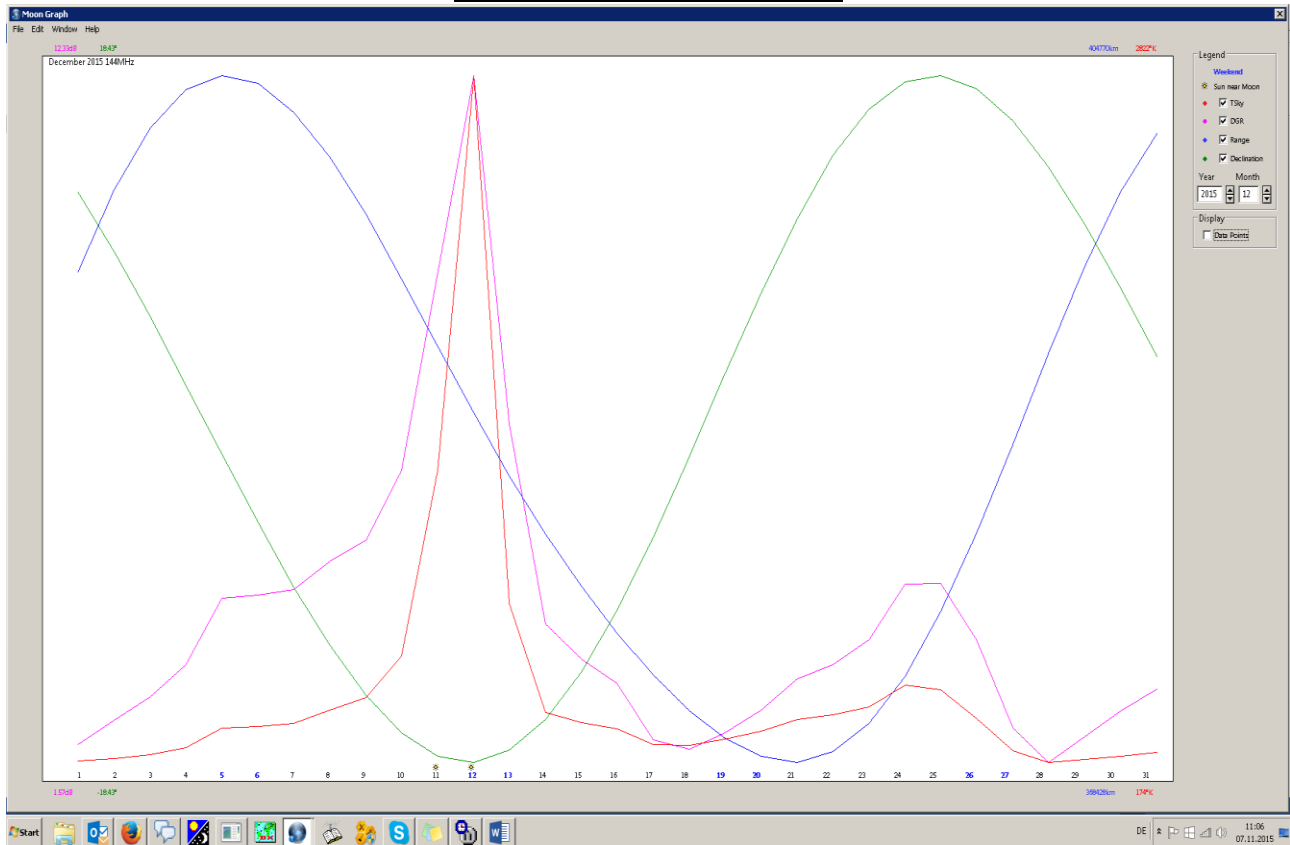
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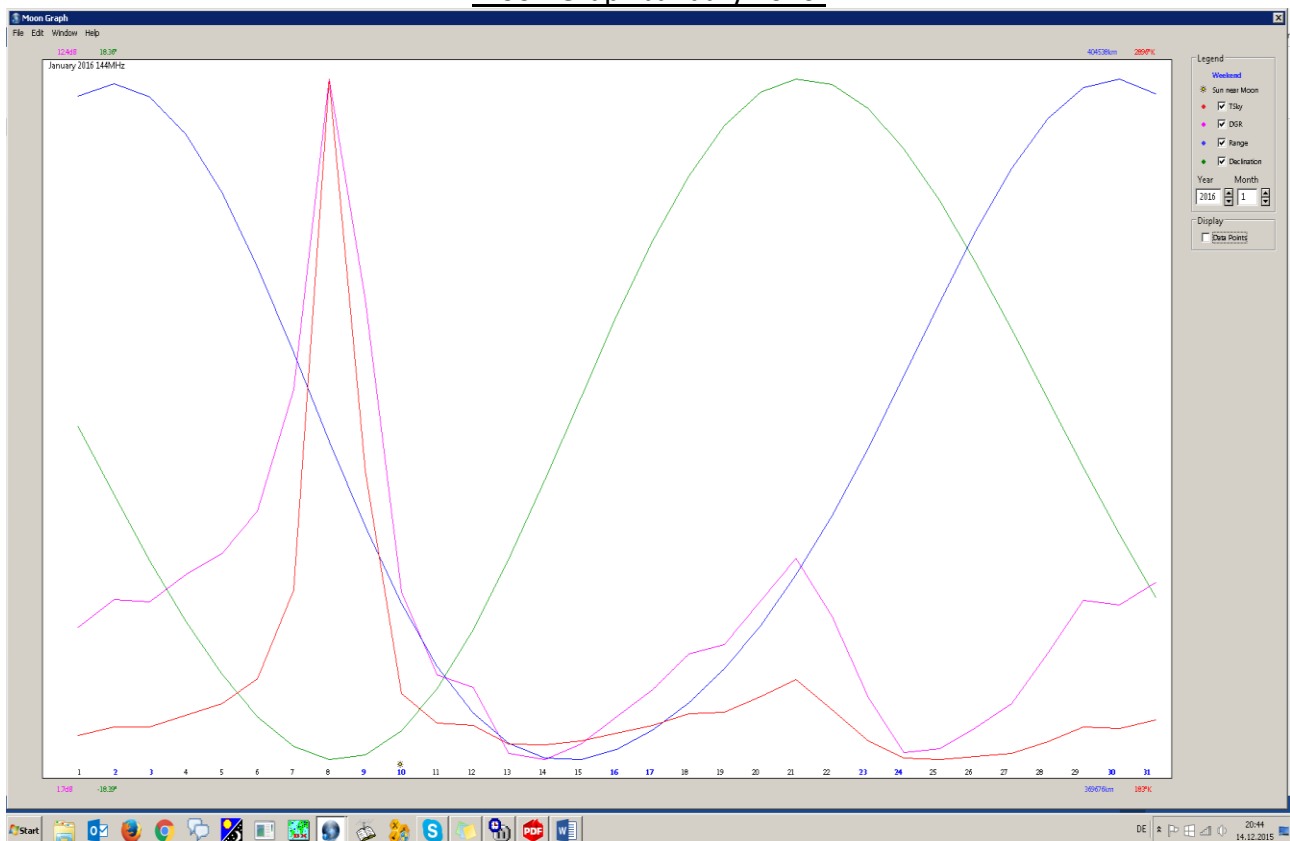
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Latest DXpedition Info:  
[www.mmmmonvhf.de](http://www.mmmmonvhf.de)

## Moon Graph December 2015:



## Moon Graph January 2016:



(Courtesy of David GM4JJJ ([www.gm4jjj.co.uk/MoonSked/moonsked.htm](http://www.gm4jjj.co.uk/MoonSked/moonsked.htm)))