

The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter

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At Last – Jamaica QRV on EME

Being the third biggest Island of the Greater Antilles, Jamaica has been a white spot regarding EME so far and the entire community was eagerly waiting to see it activated. Finally pirates did the job to bring that entity to the moon: the “VHF Pirates”. Using that name for their group dedicated to activating Caribbean countries and rare grid squares in those countries, Ned AA7A, Kenny K2RW, Bud N7CW, Jim W4KXY, Terry N6CW and Larry WO7R joined forces focussing on a DXpedition activity once per year. In 2015 they made many EME stations happy from the Bahamas – and this past June they were QRV from Jamaica.



The VHF pirates with their 2 m antenna: from left N6CW*, K2RW, AA7A*, WO7R* and W4KXY (* = EME operators)

The 2016 activity was scheduled from June 21st to July 5th of which the first week (when moon conds were not favourable) was dedicated to vacation with xyls. The location was in Duncans, FK18CM.

However, they hit a big time customs problem when they got here. The officers took one look at the EME system and thought they were some professional filming crew. They confiscated all the radio gear and it had taken the team four days of work (and some of their cash reserves) to get it back. However, right on time they had all that was needed to build the 2 m EME system.

Then the work began building up the 4 x 9/9 elements xpol, on a home made base aimed to the moon using ropes. The strong sun did not make things easy but eventually everything was ready at moonrise on June 28th. The radio part consisted of a Flex Radio 1500, Down East Microwave transverter and a W6PQL LDMOS amplifier. Right after the moon became visible 6Y5AZ started CQing and was copied well around the globe (at least that part that had moon). At 0555Z Franko I2FAK was the first one in the log followed by Chris PA2CHR and Peter OZ1LPR.



The 4 x 9/9 elements xpol with Caribbean Sea in the background

Then all of a sudden there was no copy any more in Jamaica. After carefully checking the system twice and three times it turned out the Flex radio was the culprit. Most probably as result of the unstable mains voltage the rx had switched to a different frequency while the tx stayed on 144,134 MHz. As soon as that was corrected everything worked smoothly and the log started filling. Sadly, it cost more than one hour of operating time until the next QSO was completed at 0733Z. 6Y5AZ did

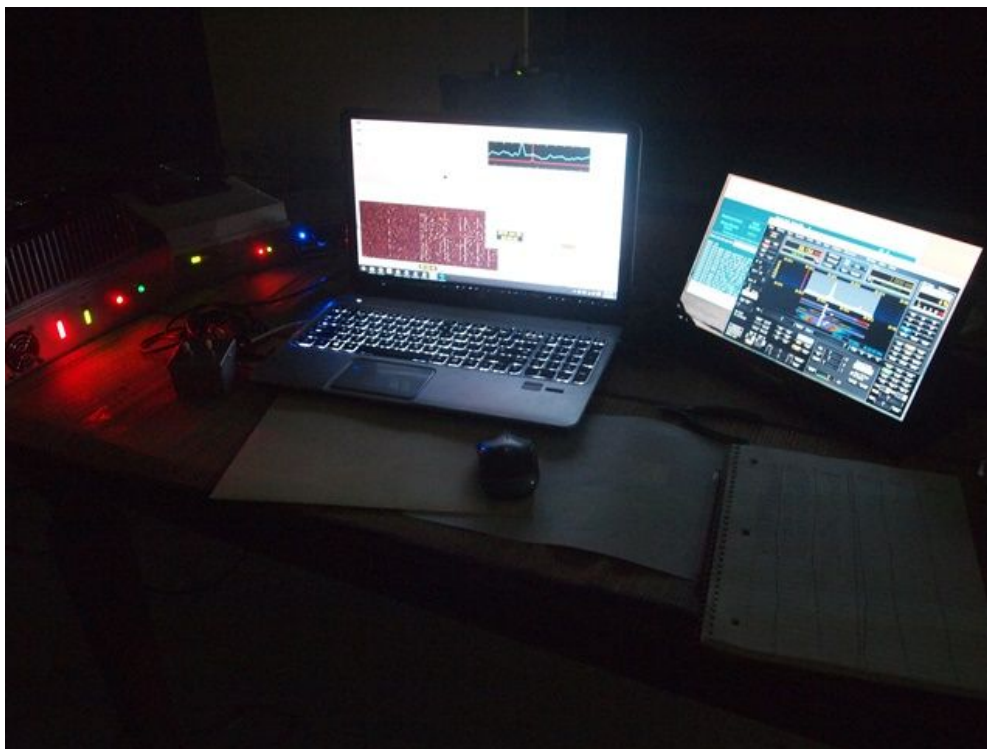


Shack view 1: Ned AA7A in the outdoor shack on the veranda.

not run full output as the mains voltage was too unstable so it was wise to keep some reserves. However, from then on it was the usual working down a pile-up. The main "QRM" was from mosquitos plaguing the EME operators in their shack on the veranda.

The first day ended with 49 QSOs as the team QRTd at 1145Z. The next day then was a full day, i.e. with Asian window and added another 71 QSOs. 50 QSOs were logged June 30th. Highlight on July 1st was a QSO with CO8LY – via tropo and not EME -24. However, it is promising to see some JT65 activity from Cuba. 67 EME contacts were added to the log that day, 33 QSOs the following day.

On July 3rd only 9 contacts were completed. The the dxpedition came to a sudden stop: The sdr transceiver broke and was beyond repair on site. S57M who completed the contact at 12.19Z was the lucky one who made the last QSO before rig failure. Currently the VHF Pirates are planning for 2017's DXpedition to the Caribbean, having two islands in the focus. Let's see which surprise they show up with next...



Shack view 2: Pile ups at night - by syncs and by mosquitos. (photos AA7A)

JT0YTX QRV from Mongolia

It is nearly seven years now since Jeremy W7EME was active from Mongolia. Consequently it is no surprise that many hams still need this DXCC. From this perspective it came as a nice surprise when a Russian team – UA9YPS, RA9YTX and RA9YGC – reported about firm plans to be QRV on 2 m EME from NN58AO for the period July 19th to July 24th. Theoretically this was not a time with optimum moon conds but as this activity was meant as HF dxpedition with EME on top there was no choice.



The dxpeditioners with their set-up close to lake Tolbo-Nuur.



A real fieldday like atmosphere in the shack (Photos RA9YTX)

The equipment reported (2 x 9 ele hpol and 400 W out) should have been good for many QSOs though. And it indeed was. The first contact was established on 19 July 19.52 Z with RK3FG. Then the “usual suspects” followed, such as UA3PTW, ES6RQ, I2FAK for instance. 78 initials were logged until the end of the DXpedition. *This* is an excellent result for a first *time* EME activity at all, particularly with less than optimum conditions and a declination which did not allow QSOs with North America. We all hope that more DXPs by this team are yet to come ...

Upcoming DXpeditions

For more information on current and upcoming DXpeditions please have a look at www.mmmmonvhf.de from where most of the information here was gathered.

E44CM: Chris PA2CHR and Jos PA3FYC will be QRV from Jericho (KM71RU), Palestine from November 15th to 24th. Setup on 2m is 144 MHz: FT857 / 2 x 20el. X-pol. ant: 16.0 dbd / Italab PA.

S9YY: Peter DL1RPL will be QRV from S9 (Sao Tomé & Príncipe, locator JJ30) from October 8th until October 23rd. Peter He will be part of a German HF-expedition. Flights and location are booked and paid. Call sign will be S9YY. More information will follow on www.dl1rpl.de when available.

XT2AFT: Hermann DL2NUD got the license for Burkina Faso! The flights and accommodation are booked. From October 14th to 24th he will be QRV as XT2AFT in IK92. More information to follow.

KB7Q: Gene KB7Q is planning to be QRV from Nevada from Oct 15th to 17th. Locator will be DN21PW. Please check <http://kb7qgrid.blogspot.de/> for latest updates.

Time Table

24/25 Sep	00Z-24Z	ARI EME Contest
3 Oct		October issue of the 144 MHz EME NewsLetter ready for download at http://www.df2zc.de
22/23 Oct	00Z-24Z	ARRL EME Contest (50 MHz and up)

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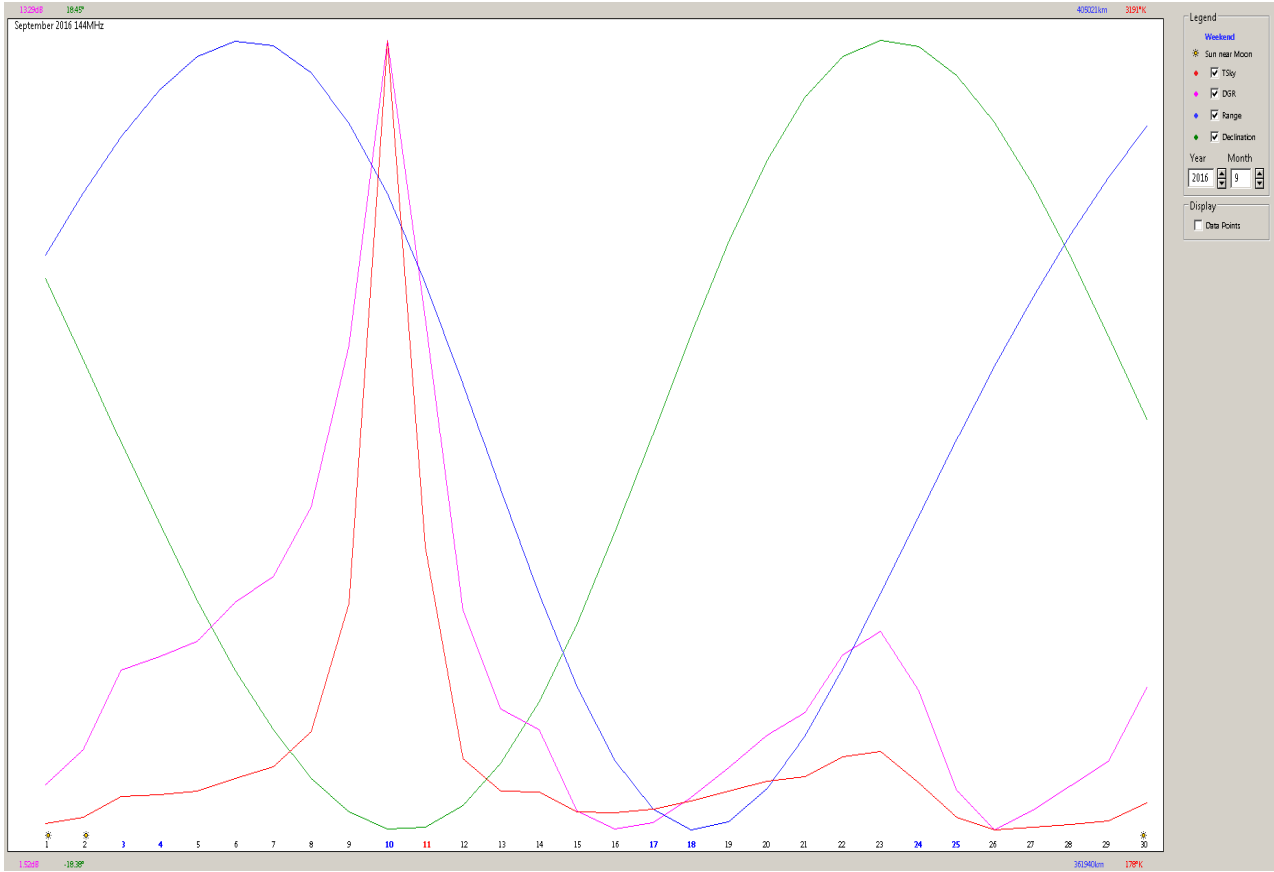
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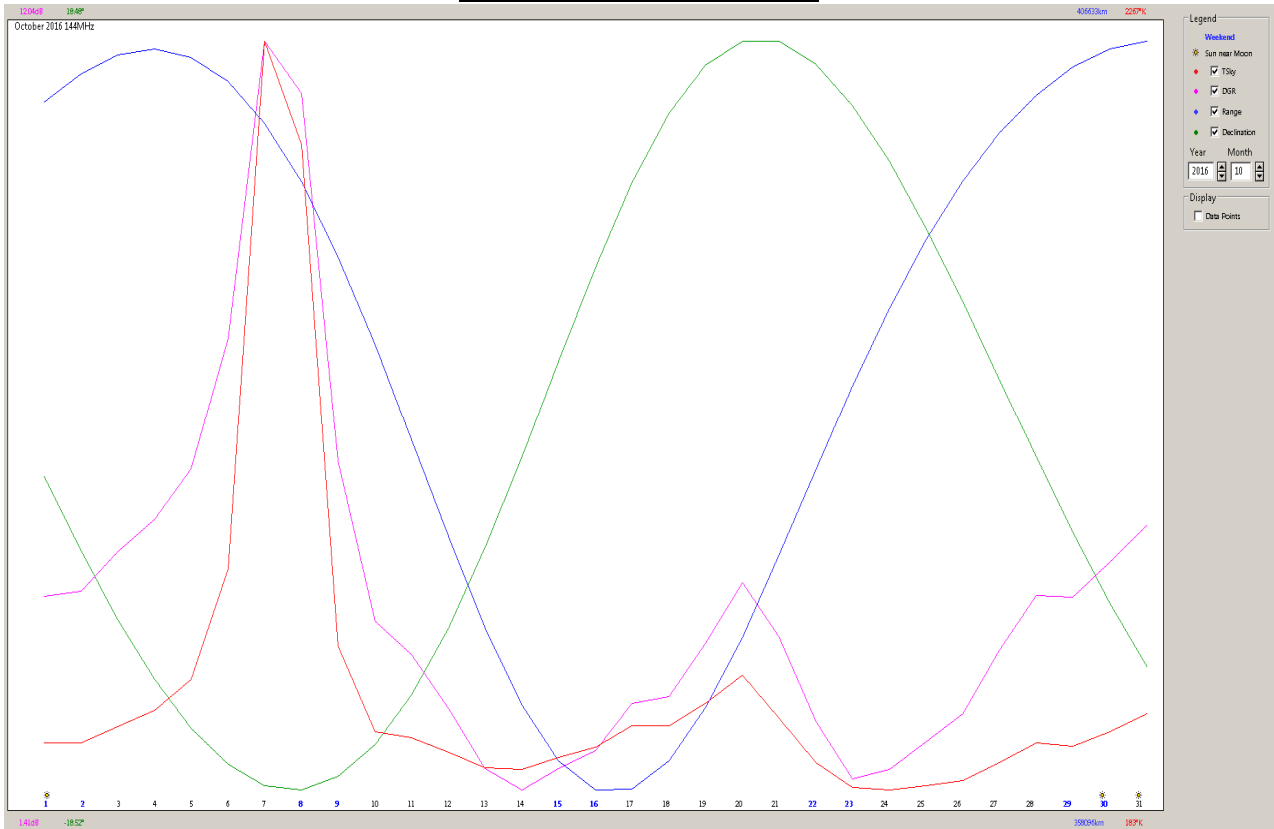
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Latest DXpedition Info:
www.mmmmonvhf.de

Moon Graph September 2016:



Moon Graph October 2016:



(Courtesy of David GM4JJJ (www.gm4jjj.co.uk/MoonSked/moonsked.htm))