

The 144 MHz EME NewsLetter

©DF2ZC

...since 2003

www.df2zc.de



Issue 7/2017 16 July 2017

PA2CHR travelling Southern Italy

Chris PA2CHR is well known as an avid DXer, having been QRV from quite a number of rare squares and DXCC entities such as Palestine, Monaco, Albania, Vatican State to name but a view. In recent years he took joy in bringing rare squares on the air: In 2016 for instance he was QRV from much wanted squares in EA6 land, both on meteor scatter and EME. All this was and is done with a – for EME - comparably modest setup: IC 7100, powerful SSPA amp and a 26 ele xpol antenna.



I8/PA2CHR in JM87AX: a portable QTH at last!



Past May and June Chris travelled to Southern Italy. There is quite a number of rare squares which many stations are looking forward to work on EME.

The project started off in JN81 after a long travel by car from the Netherlands to Southern Italy. When preparing for the trip to that square some weeks ago, Chris had selected four possible locations. One was in the North part, near the coast and three more in the South, in the mountain area. When he arrived at the first one it looked very good: easy access and a good take-off. From 250 to 120 degrees azimuth free take off and in other directions a maximum of 4 to 5 degrees.

Left: The QTH in JN81AW

Happy with this one, Chris went to a nearby camping place to stay for the night and relax on the following day. Thursday, the third day after arrival, was meant to be the first day of operation. So he got up early and went to build up the station. Unfortunately the road was closed then because of maintenance. Big trucks were unloading concrete, so no possibility to pass.

Chris had to make a decision: travel about 300 km further South (5 hours of drive) to one of the three other locations or going back to the camping place where he had noticed a reasonable good place on the highest part of it. The best option was the camping place. With some luck he got permission to park on the highest point and operation could start within a few hours. The maximum current at this camping site was 6 A so PA2CHR had to ask for two outlets, one only for the amp. But when testing the transceiver there was no output on the Bird meter. Chris tried some time with changing cables and connectors, but without result. Fortunately he had brought a second transceiver planned for 50 Mhz operation. It was easy to switch to this one for 144 MHz also, but he had to make a PTT connection for the PA (as on 6 m he works without PA). This all required time: soldering a PTT cable, re-routing the other cables, checking data from the laptop, etc.

In such a situation the worst mistake you can make is working in a hurry and then destroying essential parts of which you have no spares. Eventually Chris succeeded and everything was finally working o.k. Around 1500 UTC he made the first QSOs on 2 m.

Being on a camping site quite close to fellow campers ham life is not always easy. When Chris started assembling his 6 m antenna there were some complaints that the antenna was too big and also above neighbouring areas so he better canceled this and stayed on 2 m. Moreover at one time there was a power blackout in the camping site which Chris easily could have rectified but the management insisted on calling a professional company. So hours of inactivity passed. At least wx was fine with about 30°C. Anyway, 2 m was very successful and until May 22nd 102 stations were worked via EME from JN81.

Then Chris travelled further south to reach JM87 square. That one is mainly a wet square with only little parts of Italian mainland. It is very much wanted also within meteor scatter reach as it is blocked to North by high mountains. And it is particularly hard to find a good location - as Chris had expected. When planning in Google maps and street view as well as with altitude maps he had decided four possible locations to set up the station. When arriving in JM87 all of those were not good. Also the QTH used by DH7FB in June 2004 and DF2ZC in October 2005 was not good: there was no road anymore, rain and mud had destroyed it completely.

Luckily Chris had contacted Frank IZ8DWF some weeks before his departure. With his help they found a reasonable good location 'in his backyard' about 100 m asl. A good location for EME, but meteor scatter to the North was still difficult. During the ARI EME contest on May 27th and 28th I8/PA2CHR completed 136 QSOs. Then he packed everything back into the car and continued to JM79 square.

Monday May 29th the late afternoon Chris arrived in JM79XN and started to build up the 2 m antenna. When he started meteor scatter activity the next morning it took only some ten minutes and a forester together with a local policeman arrived. They had a look at everything and told him it was no problem to operate radio but it was absolutely not allowed to use a generator because of the danger of wild fires. It did not help much they saw his six plastic jerry cans with spare petrol.



View to Chris' car shack.

Hence, Chris had to leave this location. A nearby camping place, which was planned as 'spare QTH' was closed, so it was rather hard operating from JM79 at all. He continued driving along the coastline and eventually found a small parking place for campers. It was not ready yet, no 'sanitary-things' but good enough to stay a few days. The owner permitted to park the car and put up the 2 m antenna. 103 QSOs were made via EME from there, sometimes with very strong signals because of 'sea-gain' during moon-set.

The final location of this trip was in JM89FG, on a hill in a winter sport area about 1900 m asl. It had a very nice view around and yet again a local amateur, IZ8JHD, had advised Chris to use this location.

He also dropped by bringing wine and water! The EME conditions during these days were very strange, however. This was maybe due to high MUF over Europe. Lots of EME signals rapidly changed from horizontal to vertical and back. Also the degradation was on the rise now. 78 stations were worked via EME though. The most remarkable experience these days however were two very nice E_s openings; one to France and Spain and the other one to Russia.

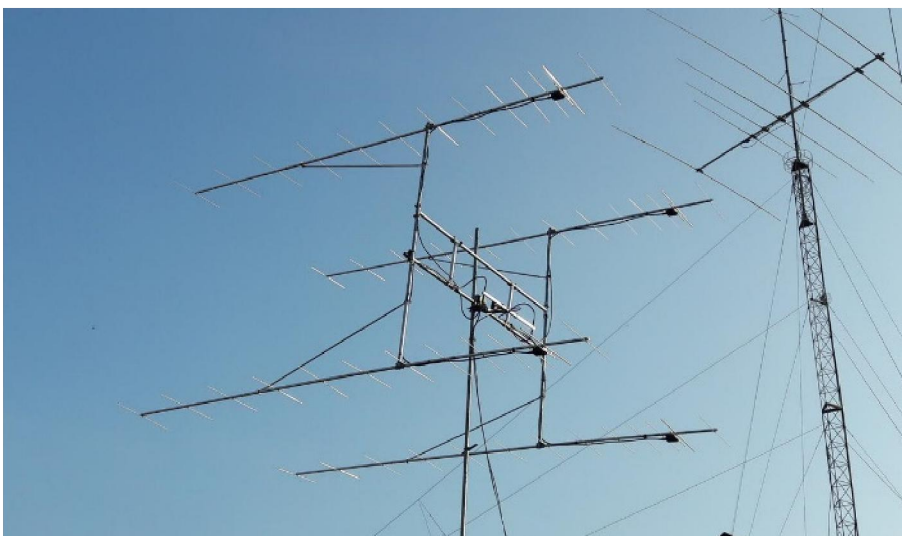


All in all Chris is very happy having worked 419 stations via EME in total. The only disappointment were the just nine stations from USA in the log. This came as a surprise. Presumably “square-hunting” is not very popular in the States.

Now Chris is busy with preparations for the upcoming big trip to Swaziland in October....

Left: The last location of Chris’ Giro d’Italia 2017: JM79XN straight at the beach. (Photos © PA2CHR)

Indonesia QRV via Moon!



Bint YC2MDU has just started to work moon bounce. He is QRV from OI53KD, running about 100 W out to 4 x 13 ele yagis (see left ©YC2MDU). So far he has completed with nearly 20 stations. Currently he is busy trying to upgrade the station with a sspa and a lna. If you have a spare lna please contact him direct or DF2ZC for relaying.

Upcoming DXpeditions

LB6GG/P QRV From KQ50IG

Hans will soon run portable EME on 144 MHz from KQ50 square. He has nearly completed assembling the station and plans for July 21st for his first activities. Hans will stay up in the North until November this year and he will be QRV when work schedule and moon conds permit. Rig is about 450 W into 2 x 2.4 w/ DK7ZB. On the rx-side he uses a LNA with 0.5 dB nf. More info is on his dedicated website <https://lb6gg.wordpress.com/>

Gene KB7Q Making Another Rare Grid Available: DN56

On July 26th Gene will be QRV from DN56CK near Harlowton, Montana. He will start this one day activity around 16Z and will stay the full moon pass – depending on activity and conds, of course. Gene will CQ on his usual frequency 144.138 MHz +/- QRM and KB7Q is always tx 1st. Gear is 2 x 9 ele yagis, 800 watts, K3 w/ internal xverter, excellent pre-amp, 2 kW generator. Updates are on Gene's blog <http://kb7qgrid.blogspot.de/>

More nice DXpeditions later this year and in 2018

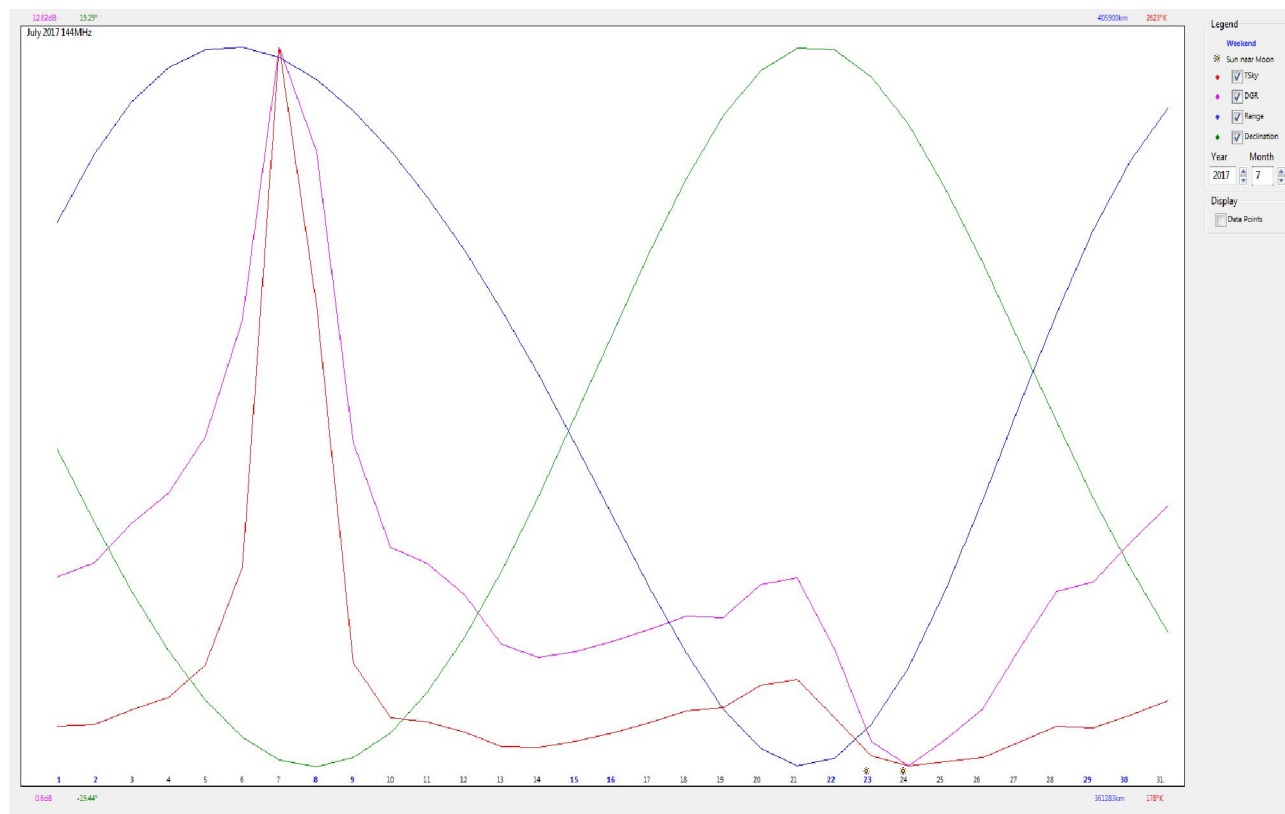
A lot of interesting DXpeditions to rare DXCCs and/or squares are in the pipe already: RI1F (KR80) in September, CN2R (IM63), T8EM (PJ77) and 3DA0MB (KG53) in October, DX7EME (PJ19) and V31EME (EK57) in November, 3Y0Z (JD15) in January and T46 (EL93) in April – plus maybe some surprise activities. More news when we get closer to the dates.

Time Table

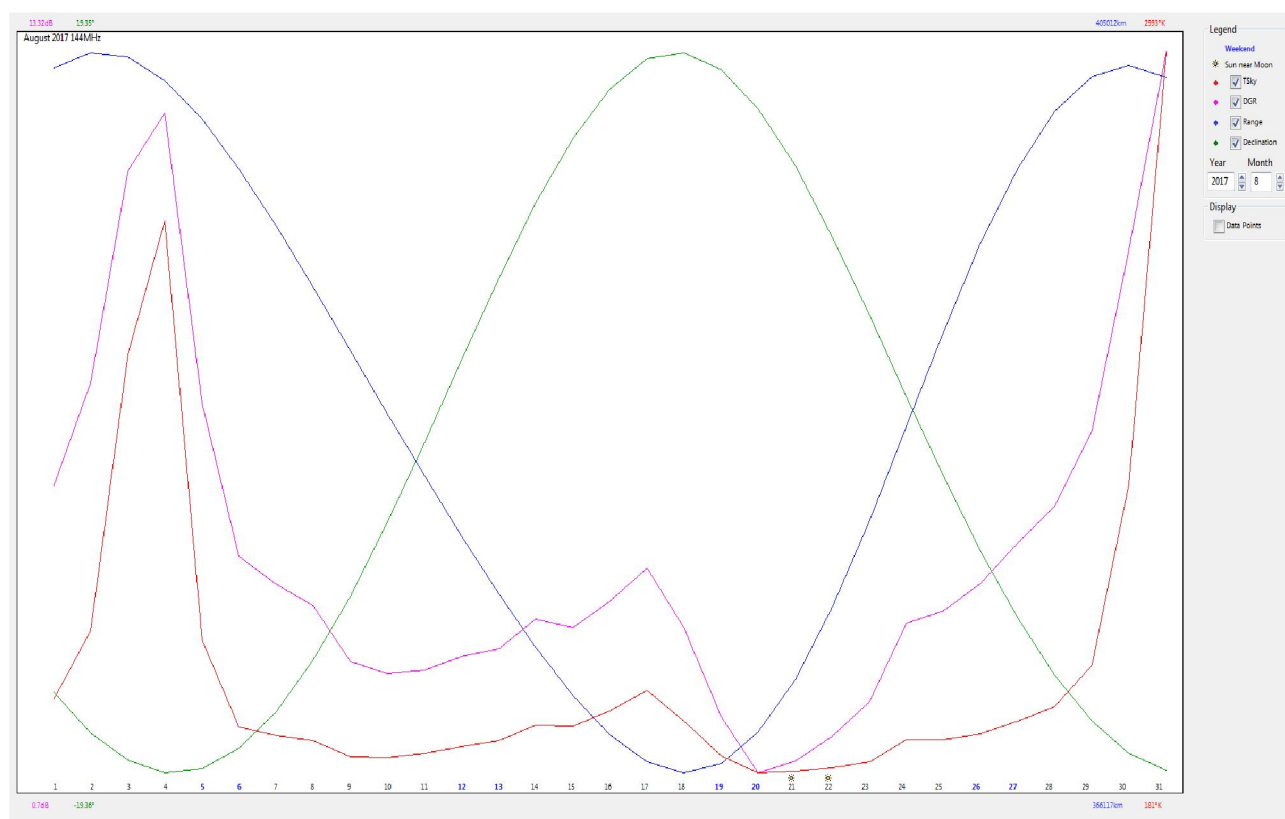
7 August 2017

August issue of the 144 MHz EME NewsLetter ready for download at <http://www.df2zc.de>
Main story: VC2EME activity from zone 2.

Moon Conditions



Moon Graph July 2017



Moon Graph August 2017

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