

Contesting in Africa

Foreword

Ambition, seeking new thrills, thirst for knowledge, the competitive instinct – all of these things drive us forward in our lives, inspiring us to climb ever higher mountains. Within our wonderful world of amateur radio there are many opportunities to drive ourselves forward, to set ourselves new challenges and there are two important ways in which we can measure our achievements through competition. They are DXing and contesting.

We say 'competitive instinct'. To compete is to try to do better than someone else. But very often in DXing and contesting we are 'competing' against ourselves. So, in our amateur radio world we can, rather unusually, choose to compete against others (like in athletics or tennis) or against ourselves (more like in fishing), or both at the same time. Our activity and our performance can be measured over time and progress can be tracked in many quantifiable ways.

All members of our team, the VooDoo Contest Group, have been contesting for many, many years. During the most recent ten years we have travelled to West Africa to enter the CQ World-Wide DX CW Contest together as a multi-operator team. And it is that competition, that competitive spirit, which has provided the cohesion, the glue that binds us together as a group. But once that is in place, there are then all manner of other motivations - brotherhood, camaraderie, experiencing new and very foreign cultures, making new friends, learning new tricks and striving for ever bigger scores. There are so many benefits, so many life-enriching opportunities.

We have taken part in CQWW for a whole sunspot-cycle, in the multi-multi category, and have seen the ups and the downs, operating from the equator, in various West African countries. During this time we have won the contest four times, and also we have been awarded the DXpedition winner's plaque. To contesting and operating skills we have added many of our personal strengths: resourcefulness, staying calm under stress, quickly learning ways to overcome new difficulties, sense of humour, team-building, relying on each other's strengths. This is all based on a common foundation: to compete effectively while at the same time enjoying a fantastic holiday each year.

So why write this book? It is a jolly serious undertaking which has cost us a lot of time. Answer: it is not to make money (but we do hope that it will not cost us money either). It is not really to do with money at all. Instead, the reason is that we feel a genuine desire to share our wonderful experiences. What we have done in the past decade has been truly memorable in so many ways. It deserves to be recorded for posterity. Who knows, it might also act as input to help other contesters and DXers to mount ever-more successful projects.

For readers who are non-competitive, non-DXer, non-contester we feel sure that many sections of this book will serve to entertain. Any one of our bus-journeys or encounters with exotic local-colour will provide exciting insights to a world that is almost entirely unknown to most people. They say that 'Africa gets under your skin'. Many of our group would immediately identify with that.

Hopefully it will prove to be entertaining, but also informative. A certain amount of hard-fact is included but we have also tried to put across the more subjective feelings

and the funny anecdotes. In a nutshell, we have tried to describe what makes this dynamic group tick and the reasons behind our success over the years. We would all be so delighted if as a result of reading this small book some other folk might feel a little more inclined to join in with this exciting activity: contesting and travelling. It is such a thoroughly ideal combination.

Members of the VooDoo Contest Group:

Call-Sign	Name	Known As
G3PJT	Bob Whelan	Mister Prezz
G3SXW	Roger Western	Chef
G3XTT	Don Field	PR Guru
G4BWP	Fred Handscombe	Meesta Frad
G4PIQ	Andy Cook	Sodder Chief
G0MTN	Lee Volante	Mini-Lee
GM3YTS	Robert Ferguson	Robbie the Noo
K5VT	Vince Thompson	Doctor Wince
KC7V	Mike Fulcher	Mikey Baby
KY7M	Lee Finkel	Maxi-Lee

This book is dedicated to contest sponsors and log-checkers all over the world who volunteer their time to provide the administrative back-up, without which there would be no contesting. They are truly the unsung heroes. We especially pay tribute to 'CQ Magazine' whose CQ World-Wide contests are the biggest and best.

See you in the next contest
73 de
Roger Western, G3SXW.

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