

REFLECTIONS IN A ROSEBOWL

**A History of BERU
and the Commonwealth Contest**

1931 to 1996

by

BOB WHELAN, G3PJT

Front Cover

Signy Island	VU2UR
G3FXB	
The BERU Challenge Trophy	VE7CC
VP8GQ	Ascension Island

Back Cover

G6CJ	VK3MR
G5RI	9J2BO
ZL3GQ	
G3MXJ and Eric Trebilcock	G3PJT

© R C Whelan, 1996.

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, on any information storage or retrieval system without written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United Kingdom.

Published by:

Lambda Research
36 Green End
Comberton
Cambridge CB3 7DY UK.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to Rosemary, Rachel and Emma. And not forgetting Annie.

Acknowledgements

The research for this book started in 1994 just after I had myself won the Commonwealth Contest and The BERU Challenge Trophy. As I looked at the list of winners engraved on it, calls and names stretching back to the origins of DX operating and contesting, I realised that there must be many stories the Rosebowl could tell if only I could find the key. The key was the contestants themselves of course.

Many people contributed to this exercise but mention must be made of :-

Pete, G5DQ, Derek, G5RI, Frank, G2QT and Hal, G5MY, for getting me started,

Dennis, G3MXJ / 9J2MX, Peter, G3LET / VP8GQ, and Dave, G4BUO, for more recent memories,

Maud Slater for the contest diaries and photographs of Rusty, G5WP, and Al, G3FXB.

John, G3VDL / MP4BBE and Harold, G2HLU / ZD4AM,

Alan, VK4SS, for sound advice and the detective work which found Madeline Pugh, ex VK4YL, of 60 years ago,

Russ, VK4XA, Mavis, VK3KS, and Ivor, VK3XB, and Ivor's wonderful copperplate handwriting,

John, ZL1AH, and Peter, ZL1AIZ / 5W1BZ,

Brian, 9J2BO, and Mal, Z23JO,

Graham, VE3ST, Mike, VE3VHB and John, VE6OU/VE3EJ

And to the Editor of RadCom, Mike Dennison, G3XDV, for permission to quote liberally from his journal and to the staff of the RSGB Headquarters for allowing free access to the library.

Thanks must also go to those who advertised in this book, namely:-

Super Duper

CDXC, the United Kingdom DX Foundation

Linear Amp. UK Ltd

Finally thanks, to Rebecca Nancarrow for setting the book out as it now finds you.

Photograph credits are to the author or photograph subject unless otherwise stated.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Origins	1
The 1st BERU Contest 1931	2
The 2nd BERU Contest 1932	5
The 3rd BERU Contest 1933	7
The 4th BERU Contest 1934	8
The 5th BERU Contest 1935	10
The 6th BERU Contest 1936	11
British Empire Callsigns 1935	13
The 7th BERU Contest 1937	14
The 8th BERU Contest 1938	15
The 9th BERU Contest 1939	17
Chapter 2 - The post war years 1947 to 1959	21
The 10th BERU Contest 1947	21
The 11th BERU Contest 1948	22
The 12th BERU Contest 1949	23
The 13th BERU Contest 1950	24
The 14th BERU Contest 1951	25
The 15th BERU Contest 1952	26
The 16th BERU Contest 1953	27
The 17th BERU Contest 1954	30
The 18th BERU Contest 1955	30
The 19th BERU Contest 1956	31
The 20th BERU Contest 1957	32
The 21st BERU Contest 1958	33
The 22nd BERU Contest 1959	34

Chapter 3 - 1960 to 1969	36
The 23rd BERU Contest 1960	36
The 24th BERU Contest 1961	38
The 25th BERU Contest 1962	38
The 26th BERU Contest 1963	42
The 26th BERU Contest 1964	44
The 28th BERU Contest 1965	47
The 29th BERU Contest 1966	49
The 30th BERU Contest 1967	50
The 31st BERU Contest 1968	52
The 32nd BERU Contest 1969	55
Chapter 4 - From BERU to the Commonwealth 1970 to 1979	58
The 33rd BERU Contest 1970	58
The 34th BERU Contest 1971	59
The 35th BERU Contest 1972	60
The 36th BERU Contest 1973	61
The 37th BERU Contest 1974	62
The 38th BERU Contest 1975	62
The 39th Commonwealth Contest 1976	63
The 40th Commonwealth Contest 1977	65
The 41st Commonwealth Contest 1978	65
The 42nd Commonwealth Contest 1979	66
Chapter 5 - Modern Times 1980 to 1989	67
The 43rd Commonwealth Contest 1980	67
The 44th Commonwealth Contest 1981	67
The 45th Commonwealth Contest 1982	68
The 46th Commonwealth Contest 1983	69
The 47th Commonwealth Contest 1984	69
The 48th Commonwealth Contest 1985	70
The 49th Commonwealth Contest 1986	70
The 50th Commonwealth Contest 1987	71
The Golden Anniversary	71
The 51st Commonwealth Contest 1988	73
The 52nd Commonwealth Contest 1989	73

Chapter 6 - Modern Times 1990 to 1996 **75**

The 53rd Commonwealth Contest 1990	75
The 54th Commonwealth Contest 1991	75
The 55th Commonwealth Contest 1992	76
The 56th Commonwealth Contest 1993	76
The 57th Commonwealth Contest 1994	79
The 58th Commonwealth Contest 1995	81
The 59th Commonwealth Contest 1996	82

Chapter 7 - Personalities **84**

Eric Trebilcock, BERS 195	84
Madeline Pugh (nee MacKenzie), ex VK4YL	84
Mal Geddes, Z23JO	86
Graham Williams, VE3ST	87
Derek Ritson, G5RI	87
Frank Cooper, G2QT	88
Dud Charman, G6CJ	89
Frank Johnstone, G3IDC, VS1FJ	89
Dr Mike Dransfield, G3JKO, 5N2JKO, 5N2AAF,	91
Mike Groom, VE3VHB	91
Snow Campbell, VK3MR	92
Alan Shawsmith, VK4SS	93
Mavis Stafford, VK3KS	93
Ivor Stafford, VK3XB	94
John Tutton, VK3ZC	96
Russ Coleston, VK4XA	98
Peter Lake, ZL1AIZ, ex-5W1BZ	99
Dennis Andrews, G3MXJ	101
Al Slater, G3FXB	102
Arasu Manohar, VU2UR	102
Brian Otter, 9J2BO	105
Operating in Bahrain, John, G3VDL, ex MP4BBE	105
Harold Owen, G2HLU, ex ZD4AM	106
Dave Lawley, G4BUO	108
Barry Simpson, VK2BJ, G3PEK	109
John Sluymer, VE3EJ	110
Don McVicar, VE2WW, ex VP7DX	112

Chapter 8 - Reflections	113
Winners - Country and Individual statistics	113
All time Winners of the BERU Challenge Trophy	114
Rule changes	114
Adjudication and the checking procedure	116
How to win from G by Dave, G4BUO	117
Some lessons from Al, G3FXB	117
Winners Tactics by Barry, VK2BJ	117
How I go about winning it by John, VE3EJ	118
Lessons for a long running contest	119
<hr/>	
Appendix 1 - Commonwealth Contest rules 1997	120
Appendix 2 - Commonwealth Contest call areas	121

Preface

Zero hour approaches, watches are synchronised, cigarettes stored in, pencils sharpened. The DX bands resemble a country village in their quietude and then - the storm breaks, Dah,Dit,Dit Dit Dit, Dah; Dah Dit Dit Dit, Dit, Dit Dah Dit, Dit Dit Dah echoes across the world, amateurs in foreign countries hastily examine their atlases for a clues to the whereabouts of the mystic country BERU - discovering, if they are lucky, that such a place really does exist.

If we are a G and have contest experience we exercise patience and listen for the elusive Test calls from the remote zones, if we are new to the game then it's ten chances to one that we shall make the mistake of crashing out a Test call which will almost certainly be abortive. Experience has taught those of us who have operated in previous BERU Contests that it pays to answer DX rather than initiate Test calls.¹

The competitive side of amateur radio has always been the spur to improve knowledge of receivers, transmitters, antennas and propagation as well as the quality and efficiency of communication skills.

In the 1920s, the challenge to be the first to achieve world-wide communication spurred the development of international transmission and reception, (DX). Contests became an accepted part of amateur radio in the second half of that decade.

The Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) decided to encourage and support its colonial members in the British Empire through the creation of the British Empire Radio Union, known as BERU. In 1930 a New Zealand radio amateur, Mr. Shrimpton, ZL4AO, proposed that "an Empire Radio Week be inaugurated and that this be held during the period 0000 GMT Sunday, February 22 to 2400 Saturday, February 28 "(1931). This contest proved very popular and became known as the BERU Contest. In 1973 it changed its name to the Commonwealth Contest.

Apart from the period during the Second World War this contest has been held continuously since 1931. The 1997 contest will be the 60th. It has always had the intention of stimulating DX contacts between radio amateurs in the various parts of the Commonwealth. But unlike many contests, stations compete on a more or less equal footing. No favour is shown to the United Kingdom as the sponsoring country.

There are a few articles which attempt to convey the spirit and traditions of BERU². A contest which can attract competitors every year for 40 or 50 years must be something really special.

The purpose of this book is to use the Contest as the linking thread from the 1930s to the present day and explore the competitors, their stations and operating conditions. A few of the pre-war entrants are still competing today, such is the attraction of this unique contest. At the same time the social conditions and technologies have changed out of all recognition. And the political map of the world is very different too.

The skeleton of the book is the annual cycle of the contest. The results and a commentary for each year have been extracted from the journals of the RSGB. Entrants have given me their own stories and views. I have included many comments verbatim since I hope you will gain some feeling of the excitement of being part of the fun.

Comberton 18 May 1996

¹ T&R Bulletin, 13,6,(1937)

² Slater A.J., G3FXB, The history of the Commonwealth Contest, Radio Communication, 60, 598 (1984)

Chapter 1

Origins

In the 1920s the British Empire dominated a large part of the world¹. Seventy years later the UK is confined to being but one Member of the European Union. In the 1920s the British were established in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada. They had a mandate to govern such countries as Egypt, Iraq, India, the Gulf States and Burma. Large parts of this Empire were virtually self-governing, the process of transition from an Empire to a Commonwealth of independent states already well underway. But in many cases citizens of these states viewed themselves as essentially 'British'. Many greatly cherished the 'old country' and indeed expected that their families would return for education, healthcare, or even retirement.

The British of this Empire were of a number of different types :

- the emigrant from the UK forming a dominant part of the local population e.g. New Zealand or Australia.
- the emigrant in a minority yet dominant in the economy e.g. West Africa
- the colonial administrator or commercial manager e.g. India or Ceylon
- a member of the British Military e.g. Egypt or the Gulf States.

In terms of the modern day concept of nation states many of these responsibilities were regional. Nations did not yet exist in many parts of Africa for example. Some of the administrations were for trade security such as the Suez Canal, or the Sudan.

Trade was the glue which held the Empire together rather than military force. London exercised little control over the internal affairs of the colonies. Indeed London was reluctant to provide even for their defence.

Communication across the Empire was poor, some had Long Wave radio, some had cable, many only had surface transport or local telegraph or telephone systems. Electrical power was variable and unreliable.

In the 1920s despite the experiments of Marconi and the development of public radio the UK public only really became aware of the power of broadcasting when the Daily Mail sponsored a broadcast of a concert. The effect stunned the population. Daventry opened in 1925, the largest transmitting site in the world, thus ensuring that 94% of the UK could receive public broadcasting. Over 2

¹ This section was extracted from Robbins. K. The eclipse of a great power, Longmans (1983)

million had receiving licences by 1927 when the BBC was set up.

During the 1920s the radio amateurs in the UK and elsewhere had steadily come to understand the potential of long range, short wave communication, (DX). The London Wireless Club and the Wireless Society of London were founded in 1913. The Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) was formed from them in 1922². The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) was also formed before the First World War. During the 1920s UK amateurs made considerable progress in DX communication between the various parts of the Empire.

The first contact to New Zealand³ took place in October 1924, when Cecil Goyder, G2SZ, made the historic contact closely followed by G2OD to Australia. The first contacts between Nigeria and England took place in 1926 and G2NH claimed the first 14MHz contact between South Africa and England in 1927.



G2NH, G8SM, G5WP, (M. Slater)

Les Moxon, G6XN, recalls that everything was home brew,

My first transmitter consisted of a DER valve in a Hartley circuit using a coil wound with bell wire on a jam jar. I improvised rectifiers using small 'whisky tot' glasses from Woolworths, some household cleaning powder (alkaline) dissolved in water and Al/Pb electrodes made from scrap. A jug of water was required to top them up every few minutes. However before taking part in any contests I had graduated to an LS5 and crystal control.

In 1927 the RSGB was smarting a little at being excluded from the UK delegation to the Washington conference which considered international amateur licensing issues. The ARRL and IARU represented the

² Jessop J.P., The bright sparks of wireless, RSGB, (1990)

³ A good description of the first 25 years of DX operating is given in The dawn of international DX, T&R Bulletin, 14, 12 (1938)

amateur view. The UK official delegation, comprised entirely of representatives from Government Departments, exhibited a lamentable ignorance of the strength of amateur radio both in the US and at home⁴. One of the proposals made by the UK officials was to restrict the permitted wavebands to 100KHz. In the days of doubtful stability and receiver selectivity these proposals must have been alarming to say the least.

The first suggestions for a British Empire Radio Organisation were therefore made in 1927 at the second annual convention of the RSGB⁵. Under the heading 'The General Policy of the Amateur', Capt. H.J.Hampson, 6JV, suggested that 'the time had arrived to consider the possibility of extending the scope of the RSGB to include the Dominions, and to form with them some form of British Empire Radio League which would be worthy of the Empire and stand beside the ARRL and other existing organisations with the IARU'.

The membership of the RSGB numbered 1200, with a further 400 resident in the Dominions and elsewhere. These members were colonial administrators, members of the British Forces, plantation managers, specialists etc. some permanent residents, others on assignment. Hence the idea to form an organisation which better represented this international dimension. Considerable support was received from overseas, from South Africa '...very much in favour...', from Canada, '... awfully keen...' and even from Hungary.

But like many other good ideas the formation of the new organisation had to wait for a champion to emerge. By 1929 that champion had appeared, Arthur Watts, G6UN. Arthur was the new Hon. Publicity Manager and the driving force behind the formation of the British Empire Radio Union or BERU.

BERU represented the Colonial membership of the RSGB⁶. Its object was to link all those having an interest in amateur radio within the Empire. BERU had the important goal to see if 'amateur radio regulations could be framed by the respective Governments viewed through the perspective of the Empire rather than isolated countries'.

The Empire and Dominions were grouped into Zones. Delegates were appointed in as many Zones as possible, early members were New Zealand, Canada, Egypt and South Africa. In order to establish reliable communications amongst the BERU members, special designated UK stations were appointed, the Empire Link Stations. This network of stations were permitted to pass BERU news between each other.

⁴ Editorial, T&R Bulletin 3, 2, (1927)

⁵ T&R Bulletin, 3, 10, (1927)

⁶ Watts A. The BERU, T&R Bulletin, 5, 283, (1929)

To further the cause of BERU, a special certificate, the Worked British Empire (WBE), was to be awarded to members who had been in two-way communication with some part of the British Empire situated in each of the 'five' continents⁷.

The T&R Bulletin now included a section, Empire News, where the news from the BERU members was collated. The July 1930 column contained reports from Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Iraq⁸, Irish Free State and Newfoundland.

G6UN was a master of publicity, in June 1930 he was able to deliver from the BERU members throughout the Empire, messages of greeting to the RSGB Patron, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, on his thirty sixth birthday.

The 1st BERU Contest 1931

Ghandi demands independence for India Thomas Edison dies⁹

At the fifth RSGB annual convention G6UN outlined his own plans for the further extension of the network of Empire Link stations.

For their part, the New Zealand Transmitters Association suggested an Empire Radio Day. To allow the maximum number of BERU members to take part it was agreed that this be extended to a week. Neville Shrimpton, ZL4AO, therefore proposed that 'an Empire Radio Week be inaugurated and that this be held during the period 0000 GMT Sunday, February 22 to 2400 Saturday, February 28 '(1931).

Details of the Week were formally announced in December 1930¹⁰. The rules are shown in the box. A trophy was to be awarded to the leading station. The BERU Challenge Trophy, the current Senior Rosebowl, was paid for partly by the Society but also by asking each UK member of the RSGB to contribute a shilling towards the cost, raising £22 1s 6d¹¹. The Trophy is Sheffield silver. To many it is a priceless heritage of international DX contests.

G6UN suggested the motto for the 1931 BERU Week to be 'Make Empire Friendships'¹². Many would later claim that this motto distinguishes the BERU contest to this day.

⁷ By April 1930 30 members had gained the award

⁸ The UK recognised Iraq in 1930

⁹ These international headlines are taken from the Chronicle of the 20th Century

¹⁰ T&R Bulletin, 6, 154, (1930)

¹¹ T&R Bulletin 6, 318, (1930)

¹² The extent of the countries which qualified for the contest may be judged by a note which said that 'Azores comes under Group 1 (British Isles)'

Rules for British Empire Radio Week

February 22, 0000 GMT to 28, 2400 GMT 1931

1. Any licensed amateur wave-length may be used.
2. One point counted for each station worked, but if the same station is worked on two of the bands, two points are counted , and if three, three points etc.
3. To be valid Stations worked must be in a different part of the Empire from where the Station competing is situated.

For this Competition the Empire is divided into the following twelve groups¹³ :-

- (1) British Isles
 - (2) Canada, including Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.
 - (3) West Indies, including Bahamas,, Bermuda, and British Guiana.
 - (4) South Africa including N & S Rhodesia.
 - (5) Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika.
 - (6) Egypt and Sudan
 - (7) Iraq
 - (8) India, Burma and Ceylon
 - (9) Malaya
 - (10) Hong Kong
 - (11) New Zealand
 - (12) Australia.
4. British stations not actually situated in the British Empire may compete and will be considered as being in whichever of the Groups mentioned in Rule 3 they are nearest to.
 5. The winner to be decided by the points mentioned in 2. Everyone competing has to send to the BERU representative of RSGB a list of stations worked, giving date time (GMT) and Wave-band for each point claimed. (abbreviated notes)
 6. All members of BERU are eligible to compete, and anyone not a member at the commencement of British Empire Radio Week may compete if he sends his application for membership with his entry.
 7. A maximum of 20 contacts on each wave-band will be allowed with stations in any one part of the Empire as defined in Rule 3.
 8. It has been decided to offer a challenge trophy and other awards which will be provided by Great Britain.
 9. The premier award will be known as the BERU Challenge Trophy and will be competed for annually.
 10. The rules as decided shall apply for the year 1931, but the BERU Groups in the Colonies and Dominions will be asked to give their approval and make suggestions in the future.
 11. It is suggested the the last week in February be fixed permanently as the BRITISH EMPIRE RADIO WEEK.
 12. There will be an award for Receiving Stations in accordance with the foregoing rules but with the following additions, the Station called as well as the Station calling must be stated for every point claimed. Only Receiving Stations will be eligible for this award.

¹³ These Groups became known as Zones similar to the BERU zones



The first winner, Trevor Evans, (VK2NS) with the BERU Challenge Trophy
(Sydney Morning Herald)



Louis Varney's G5RV, Worked British Empire Certificate

Two events underscored the role and value that an international network such as BERU could play; the New Zealand earthquake and the trans Atlantic flight of the *Southern Cross*. Although the latter passed off without incident the former illustrated graphically the role a network of stations could play in an emergency. Just before the first BERU Week an earthquake struck Hawkes Bay, New Zealand. ZL3GE had a narrow escape from death but went home to find his home and equipment in ruins. He commandeered a set of batteries from a nearby radio store and thus got his 7MHz portable rig going. With this he raised the alarm in Christchurch and Wellington. He handled hundreds of messages during the emergency, all other means of communication having failed¹⁴. The news of this disaster was passed through the BERU network to G2VQ.

The conditions during BERU Week provided much of the comment in the months that followed. YI6HT (via G6WN) commented that unrest in the north of Iraq prevented a number of stations taking part. However the publicity afforded by the contest resulted in a considerably increased interest in amateur radio. Ceylon and India reported that conditions were poor on 7MHz during BERU week though 14MHz was better. A similar pattern came from Hong Kong¹⁵, 14MHz signals being 'spasmodic'. Kenyan stations complained about the QRN, VQ5NTA worked 3 stations, VQ3MSN, 8 and VQ4CRF, 19. From New Zealand BERU Week was a 'washout', and only two stations sent in logs. In the end 58 stations submitted logs.

The winner of the BERU Challenge Trophy in 1931, the first contest, was Trevor Evans, VK2NS¹⁶. He had 64 contacts, 55 of which were with New Zealand. In view of the oft heard injunction to 'read the rules' Trevor made maximum use of the 20 contacts rule, working 20 New Zealand¹⁷ stations on each of 3.5, 7 and even 15 on 14MHz. He made three contacts with G, two with Iraq, two with Ceylon and two with Hong Kong.

Second placed was John Heine, VK7JK, but he did not make many contacts outside Zone 11. John next entered BERU in 1982 as VK3JF. YI6HT was third and VS7AP fourth. In those days the results were listed in zones, Fred Miles, G5ML, leading Zone 1 for the UK. The Empire Links Stations all did well thus justifying their selection as leading stations for international communication. Even so the adjudicator bemoaned the fact that some of the best equipped stations did not compete or send in logs. Many stations failed to report on finding that their score was lower than another! The contest was of such international significance that it merited publicity by the Daily Mail.

G calls listed in that first contest and still in contention include G6XN and G5RV.

Trevor's station¹⁸ was a 4 stage transmitter, crystal osc., buffer-multiplier, PA running about 100W. Most of the gear was home made, including transformers, crystals, etc. The antennas were Zepps with 1/4 or 3/4 -wave feeders and full or half-wave flat top depending on which band the station was being operated. No details are included of his receiver unfortunately, although it was probably a simple 1 or 2 valve TRF. He was no stranger to success in contests having won the NSW 3.5MHz test in 1929 and three out of the four tests for the Maclauran Cup in 1930. VK2NS was located at Bathurst, 100 miles west of Sydney and at 2000' ASL.

The BERU Challenge Trophy was presented to Trevor by the President of the NSW division of the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA), Phil Renshaw, VK2DE, on the occasion of their Eighth Annual Convention¹⁹. These conventions were evidently meant to include the family, the day before having included a picnic, cricket, swimming, rowing etc.

The 2nd BERU Contest 1932

Opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, world's longest single span.

BBC first Empire broadcast from Daventry.

Ghandi arrested and goaled.

Brave New World published.

Arthur Watts received many suggestions for rule changes for the second contest. The most significant of which was to extend the contest to four weekends. However the method of scoring was also changed to a mixture of radial rings, based on 1000 mile radials as well as the station-band approach of the first contest. Otherwise the rules were unchanged.

As John Clarricoats, G6CL, said in the header to the results of the 1932 Contest²⁰ the contest was 'the biggest and best thing that we've had in amateur radio in the Empire'. 85 stations sent in logs. The winner was Freddie Miles, G5ML. In second place was VS7GT and in third G6QB.

¹⁴ T&R Bulletin 6, 262, 294, (1930)

¹⁵ T&R Bulletin 6, 319, (1930)

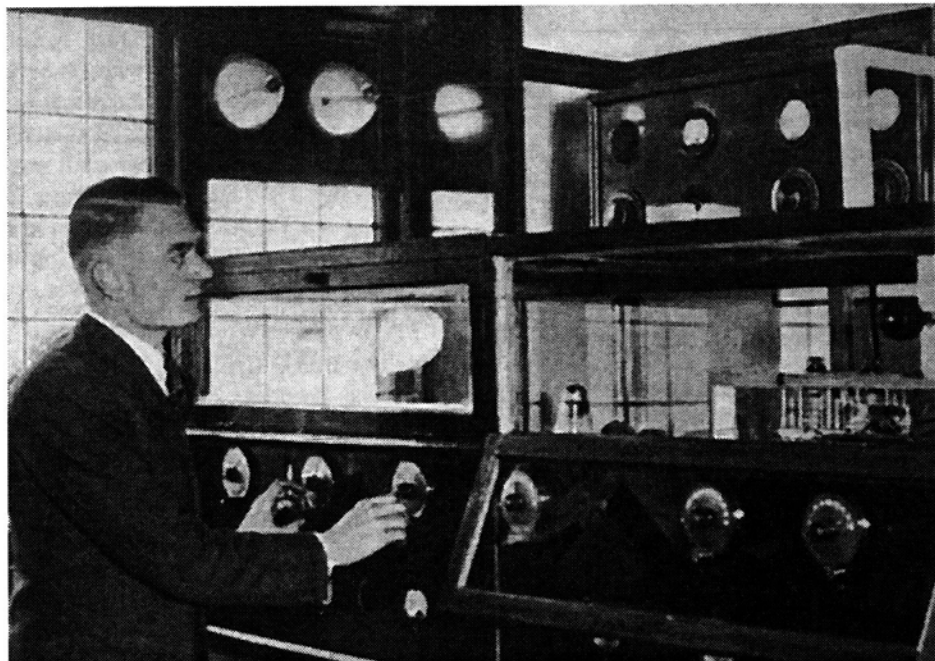
¹⁶ Clarricoats J., British Empire Radio Week, T&R Bulletin, 6, 336-338. (1931)

¹⁷ New Zealand and Australia were in different zones

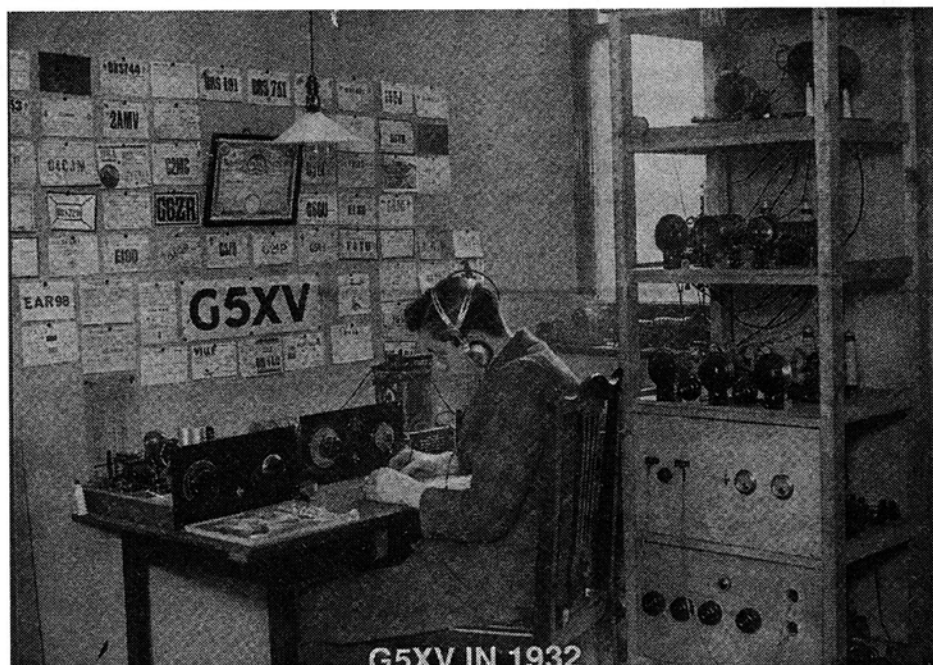
¹⁸ T&R Bulletin, 7, 75, 79, (1931)

¹⁹ T&R Bulletin, 7, 231, (1932)

²⁰ Clarricoats J., The British Empire Challenge Trophy, T&R Bulletin, 7, 402, (1932)



F W Miles, G5ML, Leading British Station in BERU, Senior Contest for four years in succession (1932, T R Bulletin, Midland Daily Telegraph)



G5XV IN 1932
G5XV in 1932

Table 1.1 Leading stations BERU Contest 1932

1	F.W.Miles	G5ML	5060
2	G.Todd	VS7GT	3080
3	L.H.Thomas	G6QB	2970
4	C.D.Connerton	VU2FX	2790
5	A.MacKenzie	VK4GK	2592
6	A.Rahmin	VS7AP	2360
7	G.G.Samson	ZL4AI	2303
8	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	2240
9	H.D.Price	G6HP	2056
10	Trevor Evans	VK2NS	1992

G5ML²¹ was a high powered station²². He used a crystal controlled transmitter on 7 and 14MHz with an input of 420-480W. The antenna was a 67' Zepp, north and south, and a second Zepp east-west. An arrangement that he commented was 'essential for DX working', so that he could select the better orientation as necessary. A two valve receiver in a straight detector amplifier arrangement was used.

The second station, VS7GT, only used low power, 30W, with a similar antenna and receiver. The description of his station²³ illustrated the difficult conditions faced by BERU stations, 'long and anxious periods of QRT owing to the necessity of re-charging batteries for the next big effort'. Given a good location high power was not necessary, VU2JP used 8 watts throughout.

Most of the contestants seemed to have enjoyed themselves greatly. However some of them seemed to find the VK-ZL contacts more difficult than others. VK3WL commented that he spent 22 hours working 10 ZLs on 14MHz, and later 'this BERU contest promises to be the world's biggest and most interesting'. ZL1AR after complaining about static and the worst QRM for years ended up by saying, '...to be a participant was a privilege...'

Many commented on the difficulty in working Canadian stations, due partly to conditions and partly activity. VK3WL commented on the difficulty in working the West Indies. This provoked a letter from VP2YB who had never even heard any stations in Asia or Australasia and only one in Africa²⁴. The QRM from 'thousands of W stations' must have been quite a problem with the receiver technology available.

During the contest J5CC, Japan, was heard calling *Test BERU*. KGEF asked why didn't that guy in BERU reply.

²¹ G5MLs station is described in T & R Bulletin 7, 408,409, (1932)

²² He arranged the mains supply to his house to deliver 230 volts at 60 Amps!

²³ Station description, VS7GT, T&R Bulletin, 8, 192, (1932)

²⁴ Correspondence, T&R Bulletin, 8, 130, (1932)

He heard so many people calling that he got his chart out to try and locate the place!

Les, G6XN, came 12th. Notable in the list of active stations, though not an entrant, was Merv (Snow), VK3MR, still active as this is being written in 1996.

The 3rd BERU Contest 1933

*MCC Bodyline tour is 'just not cricket' protest
Australians.*

Britain to Australia record flight in six days 18 hours.

Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

First showing of 'King Kong'.

During 1932 one of the aims of BERU started to be realised with the granting of Honorary Membership to the New Zealand, Jamaica and Malayan radio societies. BERU membership increased to nearly 400 of the *best type* of overseas amateurs²⁵.

The 1933 contest recognised the inequality of power levels and the transmitting section was split into two parts, the Senior and Junior (power level 25 watts) Transmitting Contests. In addition each part of the contest was to take place over two weekends, the Senior in the first part of February the Junior over the last part. The radial ring scoring was retained²⁶. Propagation information was made available to help stations unfamiliar with the best time to work BERU stations from the UK²⁷.

The editorial in the March 1933 issue made much of the success of the contest, the broader significance of BERU itself and the network of Empire radio societies²⁸. *The Month on the Air* made some pointed observations on operating practices²⁹, including 'What is the percentage of stations equipped with receivers?' and, 'Test calls were most unprofitable'. The best approach was to wait until the DX gang were firmly ensconced in test calls and then *snaffle* the DX station who had been CQing at the same time. Or to call the weaker of two DX stations whilst everyone else was calling the stronger. Uncle Tom commented that conditions were 'very, very good', anyone who claimed otherwise needed a receiver. Uncle Tom revealed that there is after all a place called *Beru* and it is located in Burma³⁰.

²⁵ T&R Bulletin, 8, 210, (1933)

²⁶ Log details were explained in more detail. T&R Bulletin, 8, 196, (1933)

²⁷ A time chart for the BERU tests, T&R Bulletin, 8, 256, (1933)

²⁸ Test BERU, T&R Bulletin, 8, 273, (1933)

²⁹ *The Month on the Air*, 8, 294, (1933) and in the next issue Uncle Tom questioned the utility of contests after listening to the ARRL DX test and continued his exhortation to get better receivers.

³⁰ I looked this up in the Times Atlas and there is an island called 'Beru' in the Gilbert Islands, part of Kiribati. 177E 1.5S. I couldn't locate one in Burma though. Rusty, G5WP,

VS7GT expressed his great disappointment with conditions, 'Terrific QRN and QRM ...'. But the Australian contestants were clearly expecting a good result.

The contest was won by Mr G.G.Samson, ZL4AI. G5ML, the 1932 winner, took second place and VS6AE was third.

Table 1.2 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1933³¹

1	G.G.Samson	ZL4AI	1019
2	F.W.Miles	G5ML	741
3	P.J.O'Brian	VS6AE	660
4	J.Hunter	G2ZQ	622
5	J.J.Alvares	VS6AG	603
6	S.A.Rance	YI2DS	602
7	J.E.DeCure	VK3WL	548
8	A.H.Mackenzie	VK4GK	546
9	J.S.Owner	G6XQ	525
10	G.H.Todd	VS7GT	505

Table 1.3 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1933

1	G.H.Todd	VS7GT	480
2	F.E.Groom	YI6BZ	442
3	E.J.Dunkley	VU2LX	297
4	J.C.Callendar	ZL4BT	250
5	P.J.O'Brian	VS6AE	249
6	H.W.Hamblin	YI6HT	198
7	J.S.Owner	G6XQ	185
8	A.H.Mackenzie	VK4GK	161
9	P.Levenspiel	VK2TX	153
10	L.H.Thomas	G6QB	116

Also competing were David, G6QQ, and Les, G6XN.

The equipment used by ZL4AI was described in some detail³². On transmit he used a crystal oscillator on 3.5MHz, with a series of doublers to reach 7MHz and 14MHz. The PA ran 120 watts into a pair of 852s in parallel. The receiver was an AC coupled TRF, detector and one audio stage. For contest use a vertical and counterpoise system was used and this worked well on 7MHz. For the BERU contest however half-waves vertical and horizontal antennas were used both coupled to the same tank circuit. This worked very well as it was claimed that this antenna possessed both high and low angle radiation. SU1EC was the only station heard and not worked.

noted that BERU Island was described in A pattern of islands, by Arthur Grimble, John Murray, (1952).

³¹ The BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 8, 384, (1933). The Senior section of the 1933 contest was supported by 118 entries, again an increase over the previous year. The Junior section proved very popular with 83 entries.

³² Station description, ZL4AI, T&R Bulletin, 8, 383, (1933)

Through the generosity of Capt.G.C.Wilmott, ZD2A, a trophy was made available for the Junior contest. The receiving contest was won by E.N.Adcock, G2DV, who at the time of the contest had the Artificial Aerial licence, 2BLG.

The 4th BERU Contest 1934

Hindenburg dies, Hitler assumes total power

Britain wins Wimbledon singles titles

Sea passage Britain to Australia, £124 First Class.

During 1933 the BERU network was extended further, particularly in Australia. The PMG of Burma commented that there were *only 148 persons licensed* in that country, rather more than in 1995! VQ4CRH reporting for East Africa hoped that there would be much more activity from them in the BERU Contest 1934. In August 1933, Fred Miles, G5ML, was awarded the first telephony WBE certificate. ZL4AO reported reception of G2LZ on one of the new types of 'single-signal' receivers noting that the 'outstanding' selectivity would lead to the redesign of many receivers in the next few months. A station HLSA was said to be active from St. Helena.

The 1934 President was Arthur Watts, G6UN, the originator of BERU and its untiring advocate. He wrote, 'We hope in the future to view all amateur matters through the aspect of the Empire rather than individual needs. The object of the BERU Contest was to make Empire friendships.'

Table 1.4 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1934

1	J.C.Callender	ZL4BT	1234
2	F.W.Miles	G5ML	1033
3	J.Hunter	G2ZQ	951
4	H.D.Price	G6HP	789
5	G.Pollock	VK2XU	789
6	O.G.Chapman	VK2OC	767
7	E.S.Cole	SU1EC	762
8	R.T.Stanton	ZL3AZ	687
9	A.H.Mackenzie	VK4GK	654
10	L/H.Thomas	G6QB	641

Table 1.5 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1934

1	G.H.Todd	VS7GT	571
2	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	534
3	J.S.Owner	G6XQ	498
4	G.G.Samson	ZL4AI	361
5	E.J.Dunkley	VU2LZ	359
6	G.B.Ragloss	VK5GR	354
7	J.de Cure	VK3WL	340
8	G.A.Shoyer	ZS1H	323
9	T.H.Beaumont	VU2FP	300
10	F.W.Miles	G5ML	291



Rusty, G5WP, at G6BS in 1933 (Cambridge Daily News, M Slater)

HAKING HOUSE, ABBASSIA, CAIRO.

EGYPT

RSGB BERU

To RDO *G2QT* Ur Sigs wkd at *1950* GMT *23.8* 193*8*

REPORT RECEIVER

Ur SIGS OV-2

QRG *7*

QSA *4 R 5*

NOTE T *9*

QSB

QRM

REMARKS *Times going unappreciated.*

Xmitter
TPTG
CO-FD-PA

S. COLE.

(G2QT)

The contest was won by ZL4BT, Jack Callender, who had taken part in the Junior 1933 contest and owing to the poor conditions had decided not to take part again. However ZL4AI was taken ill just before the 1934 contest, and declared that 'ZL4BT must take part in my stead!' As with many of the descriptions of stations used in the 1930s for BERU little information is given of the receiver, save that in this case Jack used a superhet with a regenerative IF to give single signal effect. The TX ran 75 watts from a crystal osc.-mult. set up. The antenna was centre fed 33' horizontal and 33' vertical, 'omni-directional radiation being desirable for BERU'. Notable contacts included working VS6AE on 14MHz in mid-afternoon, hearing the G's breaking through on 7MHz as early as 1445 GMT!

The Senior Trophy was presented to Jack in New Zealand, by the President of NZART at the Otago branch meeting. Jack in his reply said that the 'contest was in every way enjoyed'.

Madeline Mackenzie, VK4YL, was just 11 years old and came 19th in the Junior section. She was awarded a special certificate of merit (see Chapter 7).

Art Grant, VE1EP, had his first DX contact with VO8AW in 1932. During the 1934 contest on February 4th he notes contacts with G6CJ, his first BERU contact, G6PY, G6QK, G5WP, G6CW, G2ZQ and G5ML. Art entered in 1936, 1937 and 1939.

The account of the contest³³ reported some of the possible rule changes envisaged for the fifth contests, a reduction to 24 hours, with a 1700 GMT start, as 48 hours was felt to be *too long for one man*.

The 5th BERU Contest 1935

'Europe begins to beat the drums of war''

Hitler takes possession of the Saar

Mao's Long March

Radar invented

The rules were again modified for the 1935 contest, the transmitting contest taking place on alternate weekends, reduced to 24 hours, a zone multiplier for 7 and 14 MHz and a power limit of 250 watts would apply. In January Eric Trebilcock exhorted the listeners to make a serious entry for the 1935 contest.

As most used crystal control there were a set of Q codes in general use such as QLH (tuning Low to High), QLM (tuning Low to Middle) etc. It was recommended that these codes be used during the 1935 contest. At the same time VU1AA who had been active in the early 1930s reported that he would be back on Bahrain Island for the 1935 contest using a VS8 prefix. As VS8 had been allotted to the

Straits Islands (Malaysia) in error members were urged to check the QTH of VS8s worked during the contest. Bahrain counted as a contact with Iraq!

The T&R Bulletin, March 1935, carried first reactions following the contest, (compare that with the situation in 1995), leading with the phrase ,

First round of the Heavy weight Championship of the British Empire.

Start time arrived with some stations halfway through their first QSO, plus ca change, a profusion of VKs who vanish as the test starts, ZE1JN calling with no DX replies only locals, VQ4CRL saying 'next' to a long queue, the usual people with dud receivers, people wasting time calling 'Test', SU1EC with a consistent signal at most times of the day, the loud Aussies like VK3MR and some stations still calling 'Test BERU' at 1710.

Case for the blue pencils ?

Victory in round one looked like with the SUs. Australia put in a strong entry and had high hopes, but even they saw victory resting in SU or VU. They all had a great time. The report from Egypt exuded confidence with the very favourable conditions in both the Senior and Junior events. Canada found the contest somewhat of a failure despite the efforts of the 'big guns'. They being unable to break in to the ZL-VK-G contacts. The BERU notes showed that very much more activity was taking place from Malaya, India and even Mauritius. The list of Empire callsigns in use is shown in the below.

The winner as expected was Lieut. Col. Eric Cole , SU1EC, leading the Senior event³⁴ by 2000 points, achieved by working most of the 22 zones and hence having a large multiplier. The highest placed G was H.D.Price, G6HP, in 17th place, Rusty, G5WP, managed 30th place, Dud Charman, G6CJ, 36th and David, G6QQ, 84th.

Table 1.6 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1935

1	E.S.Cole	SU1EC	4246
2	G.Merriman	VS6AH	2300
3	S.Conway	VS6AQ	2160
4	N.F.Olliver	VK6FO	1989
5	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	1936
6	W.A.Wilson	ZL2CI	1751
7	N.I.Bower	VU2JT	1512
8	G.G.Samson	ZL4AI	1482
8	F.M.Gray	VK5SU	1482
10	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	1474

³³ The Fourth Annual BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 9, 431, (1934). The Senior section attracted 150 entries. The Junior section proved very popular with 106 entries.

³⁴ The Fifth Annual BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 11, 13, (1935). There were 100 entries in the Senior and 85 in the Junior.



Madeline MacKenzie circa 1935

The Junior section was won by Nic, VU2JP³⁵, with Eric Cole, SU1EC, in hot pursuit. The highest placed G was A.G.Lapworth, G6DL, in 14th place. Frank Cooper, G2QT, was in 43rd place.

Table 1.7 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1935

1	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	3406
2	E.S.Cole	SU1EC	3340
3	F.J.Fenner	ZC6FF	1520
4	E.J.Dunkley	VU2LZ	1440
5	M.Campbell	VK3MR	1292
6	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	1224
7	D.L.Martin	VU2BL	1218
8	R.A.Andrews	ZL3GM	1116
9	R.L.Belstead	VK4EI	1100
10	O.A.F.Spindler	VU2FY	1020

The equipment used by the leaders shows a trend towards the use of commercial receivers. SU1EC used a Hammarlund Comet Pro, VU2JT and VU2JP used the Eddystone Ham Band Two and VU2FY used an A.C.National S.W.3. All of the transmitters used by the leading stations were home brew. The antennas were usually some form of Zepp, centre fed, but VK5SU used a 14MHz paraboloid beam aligned on Southern Europe.

The results of the contest were passed through the BERU network by such stations as G6CJ who passed the good news to SU1EC.

Andy, G2QY, was first licensed in 1934 and has put in an appearance in every BERU Contest since. He remembers tuning up on a 'dead' 20m band before going to breakfast and being called by VQ8A on Ascension Island. A hurried examination of the atlas was required to find out where Ascension was!

It is suggested that should any further prefixes be required under the heading America that VM or VN might be used. India does not appear in the above list as negotiations were still underway with the Indian authorities.

The 6th BERU Contest 1936

George V dies

First Spitfire on display

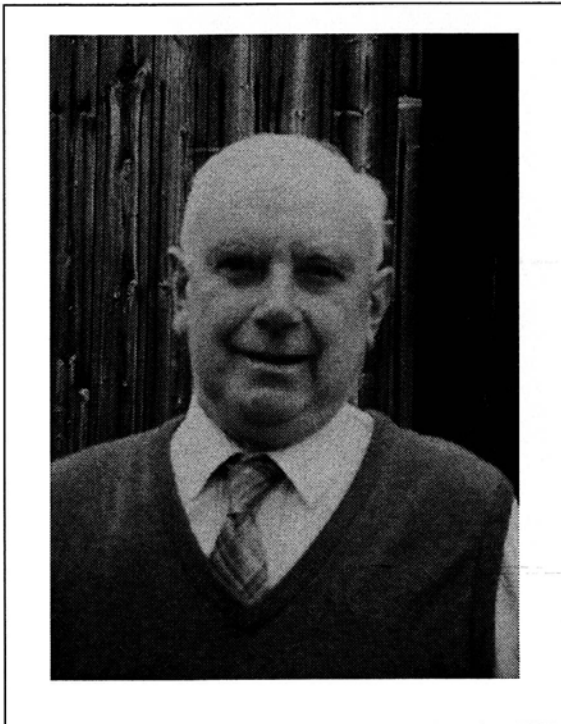
BBC transmits the first TV talking pictures

Jesse Owens, star of the Munich Olympic Games

Despite their success in 1935 the SUs clearly decided to upgrade their receivers to single signal superhet, three Comet Pros, and RME9D and an HRO being ordered. They had had a change in their license conditions to one with a fee of £2 plus one shilling for each valve used.

The Canadians commented on the consistency of Merv, VK3MR and generally conditions seemed to be good. The good conditions showed up the poor harmonic filtering of some transmitters, F7CGV on Nauru when on 7MHz was being heard in VK and ZL on 14MHz.

³⁵ T&R Bulletin, 11, 120 (1935)



Frank Cooper, G2QT, first entry 1935

In those days BERU amateur stations were often used for routine commercial traffic, VU7AB being used as a wireless sub-station when the telegraph line became damaged by elephants.

ZL4AI published an excellent article on the new requirements for amateur receivers caused by the increasing problem of band congestion³⁶. This contained detailed selectivity curves of superhets and a discussion of the nature of the band congestion experienced under various amateur conditions.

VQ4CRH reported from Kenya that VQ4CRL had won the Davidson Trophy which was awarded to the highest placed station from East Africa in the Senior Contest.

At the Tenth RSGB Convention in August 1935 it was announced that a 'well known member' (G6QB) had donated £10 for the purchase of a silver challenge trophy which would be awarded in future to the leading station in the UK and Northern Ireland zone. This was to become known as the Col. Thomas Challenge Trophy

For 1936 the committee changed the scoring method yet again as the radial ring especially favoured the UK, VK and ZL. The new scheme allowed for contacts with the same station on different bands but the zone only counted once. Ten points being counted for the first contact, nine for the second etc. It was believed that this scheme would give greater incentive to work DX and encourage the working of as many zones as possible.

³⁶ G.G.Samson, ZL4AI, A study of amateur receiver requirements, T&R Bulletin, 11, 88 (1935)

Some of the UK districts ran their own contest within the BERU Contest. District tankards were awarded to G6CW and G5KG, leaders of the 13 local stations who entered from the Eastern District. Elsewhere in the Empire the Canadians reported good conditions for the contest with numerous G, VKs and ZLs on both weekends. QRM from W stations was a problem. The VS7s reported variable conditions in the contest. Floods in Malaya kept VS2AG busy but he managed a little time in the contest. Most of Malta's amateurs took part in the contest but conditions on 14MHz were only fair and poor on 7MHz.

The sixth contest³⁷ was the best supported thus far but the vast majority of the contacts took place on 14MHz, 7MHz being neglected because of poor DX conditions. The new scoring system was judged 'successful'.

The Australians made a clean sweep, Ivan Miller, VK3EG, D.J.M.Adams, VK2AE, and Eric Trebilcock, BERS195, winning the Senior, Junior and Receiving respectively. Eric Cole, operating then as G5IW, came 26th.

Table 1.8 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1936

1	I.V.Millar	VK3EG	757
2	M.R.Campbell	VK3MR	648
3	J.Hunter	G2ZQ	645
4	A.H.Mackenzie	VK4GK	582
5	F.Charman	G6CJ	517
6	H.A.M.Whyte	G6WY	512
7	R.T.Manuel	VK5RT	502
8	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	501
8	F.E.Frame	ZL4BQ	501
10	P.Pennell	G2PL	490

VK3EG used a 'V' beam and Zepps for 14 and 7MHz³⁸. Dud Charman, G6CJ, had built himself a Crystal Gate Super-heterodyne receiver. However it is Dud's antenna which is of considerable interest, being possibly the first use in BERU of an antenna with a parasitic reflector. The results to Australia were 'astonishing', and a typical comment, 'Well OM, the others all faded out half an hour ago; you surprised me'³⁹.

The Junior section was won by VK2AE, who was not a member of the RSGB and could not therefore hold the trophy which was retained by VU2JP.

³⁷ The Sixth Annual BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 12, 6, (1936). There were 148 stations in the Senior section, 123 in the Junior and 37 in the Receiving.

³⁸ Around the Empire No.1, VK3EG, T&R Bulletin, 12, 97, (1936)

³⁹ Charman.F. Reflector and Directors, Research and Experimental Section, T&R Bulletin, 11, 225 (1935)

British Empire Callsigns 1935⁴⁰

Present Assignments		Suggested Assignments	
AMERICA			
VP4	British Honduras	VP1	British Honduras
VR1	British Guiana	VP2	Leeward & Windward Isles.
VP4	Trinidad	VP3	British Guiana
VP5	Jamaica	VP4	Trinidad & Tobago Isles.
VP6	Barbados	VP5	Jamaica, Cayman Isles., Turks & Caicos Isles.
VP7	Bahamas	No change	
		VP7	Bahamas
		VP8	Falkland Isles. & South Georgia
VP9	Bermuda	No change	
AFRICA			
ZD2	Nigeria	ZD1	Sierra Leone
		ZD2	Nigeria & Cameroons
		ZD3	Gambia
		ZD4	Gold Coast & Togoland
		ZD5	Free
		ZD6	Nyasaland
		ZD7	St Helena
		ZD8	Ascension
		ZD9	Free
ZU9	Free	ZU9	Tristan da Cunha
VP1	Zanzibar	VQ1	Zanzibar
VQ2	North Rhodesia	No change	
VQ3	Tanganyika	No change	
VQ4	Kenya	No change	
VQ5	Uganda	No change	
		VQ6	Somaliland
V8	Mauritius	VQ7	Free
VQ9	Seychelles	VQ8	Mauritius & Chagos Archipelago
		VQ9	Seychelles & Dependencies.
ASIA			
VS1	Straits Settlements	No change	
VS2	Fed. Malay States	No change	
VS3	Unfed Malay States	No change	
		VS4	Sarawak & North Borneo
		VS5	Labuan & Brunei
VS6	Hong Kong	No change	
VS7	Ceylon	No change	
		VS8	Bahrain & Kuria Muria Isles.
		VS9	Maldive Isle.
ZC1	Trans-Jordan	No change	
		ZC2	Cocos Isle.
		ZC3	Christmas Isle.
		ZC4	Cyprus
ZC6	Palestine	No change	
OCEANIA			
VP1	Gilbert & Ellis Isles	VR1	Gilbert & Ellis Isles
VP1&2	Fiji	VR2	Fiji
VQ1	Fanning Isle.	VR3	Fanning Isle.
		VR4	British Solomon Isles.
		VR5	Tonga Isles.
		VR6	Pitcairn Isles
		VR7-9	Other Pacific Isles under British Govt.
EUROPE			
VP3	Malta	ZB1	Malta
		ZB2	Gibraltar

⁴⁰ British Empire Callsigns, T&R Bulletin 10, 459, (1935)

Table 1.9 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest
1936

1	D.J.M.Adams	VK2AE	547
2	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	527
3	C.Vernon	VK6KZ	483
4	A.H.Heath	VK5ZX	481
5	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	473
6	W.E.Lane	VQ4CRH	467
7	E.J.Dunkley	VU2LZ	463
7	Miss M.Mackenzie	VK4YL	463
9	M.Campbell	VK3MR	443
10	A.F.Frame	ZL4BQ	431

Hal Mee, G5MY, appears in the Junior entry as does Derek Ritson, G5RI, of which more later.

No less than eight of the twelve licensed Southern Rhodesians were active. Unfortunately only five Canadian stations entered for reasons unknown. No entry was received from the Irish Free State despite having their own trophy.

The BERU Contest could be really tough for the station with limited antennas⁴¹. In 1936, G6XL only had 14 contacts in the Senior for 46 hours at the key. Half of these contacts were 'local'. The Junior 'nearly broke the operators heart, 19 hours before the first contact!' This was the stimulus for the development of simple directive antennas for 14 and 7MHz.

The 7th BERU Contest 1937

Hindenberg airship explodes
Amelia Earhart lost over the Pacific
Japanese bomb Shanghai
George VI crowned

The origin of the BERU rumour that the 'Cairo trams proceed in jerks when he keys' is contained in the station description of SU1RO⁴². His station was situated in the tramway depot of Abbassie, midway between Cairo and Heliopolis and, 'High tension for transmitting is obtained from the 575 volt tramway line, and resistances have been provided to avoid a several thousand amp short !'

The rules for 1937 were little changed except that due to changes in the zoning, 15 points were awarded for the first contact in each zone. Due to the need to make 'adjustment of circuits containing high voltages' and the wish to avoid accidents, the contest was limited to 24 hours of continuous operation. The Senior and Junior were on the same weekends. The Junior contest started two hours later than the Senior to help the competitors who 'having to work late on Saturday evenings felt handicapped'. To help

⁴¹ Garnett, G6XL, Experiences with a simple directive aerial, T&R Bulletin, 13, 355,(1938)

⁴² Around the Empire No.3, SU1RO, T&R Bulletin, 12, 184, (1936)

in the calibration of receivers the committee asked every entrant to include their crystal frequencies on their entry form. By this means everyone should have been able to calibrate their receivers accurately when the frequencies were published after the contest⁴³. Entrants were also reminded that they had to request special permission to use 25 watts during the contest if they normally were limited to 10 watts.

However not all was well⁴⁴. Merve of Australia commented that when BERU started he could recognise the G signals, 'clean and well-behaved'. Alas by 1936, G signals had a little character of their own, a bit of AC perhaps. And from Bob in ZL with 589 G signals calling 'Test BERU' a dozen times before giving their call. He recalled the G in 1936 who sent a five minute CQ BERU after every contact. Frank out East complained against the man who put out a call on 14.020MHz but tuned from the top of the band down.

Preparations for the contest were well underway in VK and the VK4s had their own cup. VU2DR was experimenting with a rotary beam⁴⁵, the shape of things to come?

Ivan Miller, VK3EG, won the Senior⁴⁶ contest for the second year. and John Hunter, G2ZQ, retained the Col. Thomas Challenge Trophy for the second year also. Rusty, G5WP, came up from nowhere to take third place.

Table 1.10 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest
1937

1	I.V.Millar	VK3EG	1193
2	J.Hunter	G2ZQ	997
3	W.E.Russell	G5WP	934
4	M.R.Campbell	VK3MR	884
5	J.Wyllie	G5YG	883
6	D.J.M.Adams	VK2AE	831
7	W.E.Marsh	SU1WM	822
8	J.Mead	VK6LJ	804
9	F.Charman	G6CJ	782
10	G.Brown	G5BJ	755

Conditions were not good for either the VK's or the ZLs, though based on the above results the conditions were far poorer for ZL. VK4YL came 14th.

G6RH won the Junior event for the first time for the UK. This result was a surprise because G6DH was a well-known DXer and was not known as a contester.

⁴³ I have been unable to find any further reference to this list and can only conclude the idea was abandoned.

⁴⁴ Contest time, T&R Bulletin, 12, 287, (1936).

⁴⁵ A photograph of this beam is shown T&R Bulletin 12, 513, (1937). ZS1H was using a 4 phased horizontal array on 28Mhz with 1/2 wave vertical spacing between 2 two element full wave yagis fed with transposed open wire feeder.

⁴⁶ The Seventh Annual BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 13, 6 (1937). There were 132 entries in the Senior and 113 in the Junior.

Table 1.11 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1937

1	R.G.D.Holmes	G6RH	768
2	M.R.Campbell	VK3MR	722
3	F.Charman	G6CJ	708
4	T.Martin	G2LB	702
5	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	693
6	G.W.Slack	G5KG	686
7	O.A.F.Spindler	VU7FY	663
8	H.J.Buckley	ZS5U	661
9	F.H.Cooper	G2QT	660
10	A.J.Frame	ZL4BQ	644

Frank, G2QT, noted in his experimental book,

During the BERU contests the consistency of ZLABQ was remarkable, his signals were audible from 7.30 GMT to 2000 on 14 MC, showing that during the night with him he was able to contact G. To contact ZL during the night in G is impossible even during the corresponding summer period in G.

Fred, VK4RF⁴⁷, took part in 1937-9. Fred recalls,

The pre-war era was the most enjoyable era for me as we got a lot of pleasure out of building our own gear. My favourite antenna was 33' Windom Vertical, impedance matched with a single feedline, 4 feet 4 inches down from the centre. Mac MacKenzie, VK4GK, and his family used to put on a Highland fling for us, dressed in full costume!

Pete, G5DQ, was first licenced in 1937 and started with a single 59 valve TX. The receiver was a PM2DX with a 2HL detector with a Pye variable capacitor, regeneration and lots of hand capacity! Eric, G3GC, joined the RSGB as a school boy in 1936. He listened to the 1937 and 1938 contests '...to a young school boy it was a terrific thrill'.

The 8th BERU Contest 1938

*Logie Baird demonstrates large screen colour TV
Orson Welles broadcast of "The War of the Worlds",
listeners report sightings of Martians.*

*Hitler enters Vienna, annexation of Austria
"Peace in our time"*

Egypt and Iraq were both removed from the Empire list for the 8th BERU⁴⁸. To try and stimulate interest in Canada and other quiet zones it was decided to award a second zone certificate if more than ten entries were

⁴⁷ Fred has all countries on SSB and 322 on CW, his favourite mode. He is active today with a Icom 735, a Yaesu FL2100B and an old TH6DXX. Fred was first licensed in 1936, aged 18, and he served every day of WW2 in the R.A.N. as a 'sparks'. He has been a member of FOC twice.

⁴⁸ Editorials, T&R Bulletin, 13, 233 (1937). Although the mandates for both regions had expired (Iraq 1930) the UK had a military presence until 1935-6.

received for the zone. ZL was divided into 2 zones, ZL1&2, ZL3&4. The editorial also asked those who normally use phone on the DX bands to keep their transmissions to a minimum during contest hours!

Two articles described experiences in the 1938 Contest⁴⁹. The first by G6XL described the use of fixed beams, W8JK etc. His results on the VK/ZL paths would, with the benefit of 50 years or so, seem to show that both short and long path propagation was occurring. The second article discussed the conditions and activity whilst the contest was still fresh in the minds of the competitors.

With mixed conditions everyone made a beeline for 14MHz making for plenty of competition. There being quite a few South Africans on offer. The starting time was just a bit too late for VK, 'better wait and catch them tomorrow'. G attention was focussed on VE, with VP2AT 'on velvet' with a band full of calling stations. 7MHz was likened to a 'War zone' with a great deal of phone QRM. Later VU2FV appeared to join ZB1P and VP6RB. Unfortunately the latter was unable to hear anyone being not BERU-minded. The early morning opening to VK/ZL duly appeared but the openings were short. By 1030 the 'big noises' had moved up to 28MHz though it was not open. After lunch the VK's appeared and then the Far East, VU, XZ and VS7 and finally the ZSs with some 'wonderful' signals to round off the day.

The second half of the Senior suffered poor conditions with the situation being virtually a re-run of the above with weaker signals. Due to a clash with the REF Test there was plenty of competition for the DX when it appeared. G6CJ, 6NF and 6XL were outstanding as was GM6RV.

The ZS stations were expected to provide the winner. As serial numbers were not exchanged it was quite difficult to judge who might emerge as the victor. Reports from VK⁵⁰ supported the above. Several VK4s tried to run up a good score but many dropped out before the end. 14MHz dropped out completely and 7MHz was full of phone carriers. VK4YL made 450 contacts mostly VK/ZL and G's. VS7RP had to wait for 11 hours before making his first contact. VQ4CRI echoed the sentiments on conditions. VS1AA only heard VS1AI in the test and not many too from XZ, VS6, and VS7.

ZB1E added that the Junior Contest provided the poorest conditions for months. The Test was preceded by an 8 hour rain storm and an 80mph gale. Amongst the blown down poles were the ZB1E aerial and the mains that supplied his district.

The 'vein of hearty good sportsmanship' ran through the event except for the amateur who played music through the peak hour of the ZS-VK opening. Notwithstanding the

⁴⁹ Garnett, G6XL, Beams for BERU, T&R Bulletin, 13, 470, (1938) and Around the Zones in the Senior Contest, T&R Bulletin, 13, 471, (1938).

⁵⁰ British and Empire News, T&R Bulletin, 13, 517, (1938)

above, most zones reported increased entries, particularly from VU, ZL.

G2QT's diary says;

Feb 19th-20th From 2100 GMT band exceptionally open and VP2 to VP9 heard up to 2400 but no contacts could be made with them. VK worked at 2115. VU worked at 0058. And on Feb 20th; VU contacted at 0058 GMT through heavy QRM from western signals. Conditions good on 14 MC at 8 to 900 VK, ZL and VE being worked. On 10 metres conditions were best for some weeks and VU, ZB, VK5 and VK6 being contacted. 14Mc conditions were only fair later in the day.

On the second weekend, Feb 26, Frank comments,

Conditions fair but not good. VK, VE and VU being worked between 21 and 2300. On Feb 27; '14 MC band appeared to be very good at 0800 GMT, VK worked with R6 both ways. VK, ZL, VE and VU being worked up to 1500. 10 metres no good for DX, none being heard. At 1730 VQ8 and VS1 worked and at 2000 VK signals exceptionally good.

Despite the predictions of the likely winner coming from South Africa, in fact F.J.Mustill, XZ2DY, was the big surprise, with a commanding lead over W.R.Hamilton, ZL4DQ⁵¹. XZ2DY only had 90 contacts but succeeded by looking for the maximum points from new zones. ZL4DQ had 150 contacts but persisted in working VK and G past his 15th contact. XZ2DY used a home built 120 watt transmitter and a single signal superhet. He hailed from St.Ives, Cambridge, and G5RI remembers visiting him with G2PL sometime during the summer of 1937. The transmitter was already built to take with him to Burma. The final amplifier was an RK20.

Full use was made of 28MHz and 7MHz provided some good DX too, VU2FV, working 13 G's with an average report of S6. Many of the rarer zones were active.

Table 1.12 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1938

1	F.J.Mustill	XZ2DY	951
2	W.R.Hamilton	ZL4DQ	882
3	R.G.Henwick	ZT2Q	870
4	W.F.Meyer	ZU6P	812
5	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	797
6	Miss M.Mackenzie	VK4YL	784
7	J.G.McIntosh	VU2LJ	756
8	F.Charman	G6CJ	749
9	A.D.Gay	G6NF	744
10	W.A.Wilson	ZL2CI	717

⁵¹ The BERU Contests, 1938, T&R Bulletin, 14, 87, (1938). There were 101 entries in the Senior and 90 in the Junior.

The Junior contest was won by a UK station again, G2LB, who only used 14MHz. He worked six EI stations to give him the edge over G6CJ. Dud erected another rhombic specially for VK/VU and was rewarded with nine VU contacts.

Table 1.13 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1938

1	T.Martin	G2LB	880
2	F.Charman	G6CJ	827
3	K.Rudkin	VK2DG	810
4	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	761
5	J.S.Nicholson	VU2JP	734
6	C.J.MacClelland	G6AG	672
7	C.B.Dowden	VE1HK	658
8	W.B.Stirling	GM6RV	632
9	F.H.Cooper	G2QT	624
10	L.A.Deane	VK5LD	605

Barc Dowden, VE1HK, remembers the reason for his poor performance in the 1938 Test,

Living next door to us in Halifax, Nova Scotia, were two old ladies, one a spinster and one a widow. One day across the garden fence the spinster said to me, "Barclay, do you have a radio that sends out things from that aerial?" "Yes, I do", I replied. "Do you think it would make the light in our bathroom go off and on?" "Well I suppose it could." "Barclay, I hope you keep on doing that because my sister thinks that it is her dead husband communicating to her, and she has never been happier!" When my parents heard of this (in the middle of the BERU) I was closed down!

Barc must have solved the problem by next year because he was the leading station for the Canadian Zone (VE1 and VE2) in the 1939 Senior BERU Contest.

The receiving contest was won by M.G.Rourke 2AOU, Eric Trebilcock, BERS195 the winner in previous years was second. EI6F won the IRTS BERU Cup.

The technical advances which had appeared in the literature were used by all the leading stations. Most used some sort of directive antennas and paid careful attention to transmitter matching. Much of this technical progress was claimed to have arisen from contest work, especially stable transmissions which could be directed to any part of the globe. None the less five British Isles stations were disqualified for 'off frequency operation', operating outside the amateur bands. On the receiver side, high selectivity was now the norm⁵².

⁵² US receivers such as National HRO, Hammarlund, Hallicrafter and even US components were advertised extensively in T&R Bulletins

The 9th BERU Contest 1939

Preparing for War with Germany *Nuclear fission demonstrated*

There was again considerable debate at the Annual Convention⁵³ as to the timing and duration of the 1939 contest. Proposals were made that it should run over a 9 day period others favoured week ends.

For the 1939 contests the following changes were proposed⁵⁴:

- serial numbers will be exchanged,
- Senior and Junior will run over two four day periods.
- operating limited to 30 hours
- listeners 15 hours per contest
- limit on posting dates.

These changes were intended to reduce the strain on the competitors and the impact on other band users.

Contest entrants could use contacts with other entrants to qualify for the WBE awards without QSLs being required. An idea way ahead of its time. With the changing status of the Empire a fresh listing of the British Colonial Areas was provided⁵⁵.

In the *Empire News* the VK6s reported that the contest was not well supported. Changing the rules and timing can't have helped much. ZD4H reported power problems, he was using a hand generator. No information as to who was cranking. ZD4AB's first contact in the 1939 contest was VK4BB which gave him WBE and incidentally the first ZD4-VK contact. Malta reported that they again had poor conditions during the contests, sunrise and sunset being the best times. The ZLs reported contacts with ZC6EC, Eric Cole, in Palestine in the Senior Contest, otherwise few rare Empire stations. Many more VE stations appeared all of which augured for a good BERU.

The winner was R.G.Henwick, ZT2Q⁵⁶, who used an 80 watt three stage transmitter, a commercial single signal superhet and a doublet antenna with a reflector. Eric Cole, ZC6EC, out in the Middle East again after a spell in the UK used a very similar arrangement. Eric's call, ZC6EC, is on the Rosebowl as ZT2Q was not a member of the RSGB. Rusty, G5WP, used three antennas, a rotatable W8JK, a 138' Windom and fixed horizontal W8JK. Even so he obtained all but two of his contacts on 14MHz. Notable results were those of VU2LK and VU2FO (G2DC) who both used 10 watts.

⁵³ These Conventions were attended by a very wide spectrum from the military, Director of Signals, RAF, from overseas, SU1WM, ZS1TH, VQ4CRC etc.

⁵⁴ The BERU Contests, 1939, T&R Bulletin, 14, 292. (1938).

⁵⁵ RSGB Certificates and Awards, T&R Bulletin, 14, 519, (1939)

⁵⁶ Allen W.J., The Ninth Annual BERU Contests, T&R Bulletin, 14, 30, (1939). There were 134 entrants in the Senior and 103 in the Junior.

Table 1.14 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1939

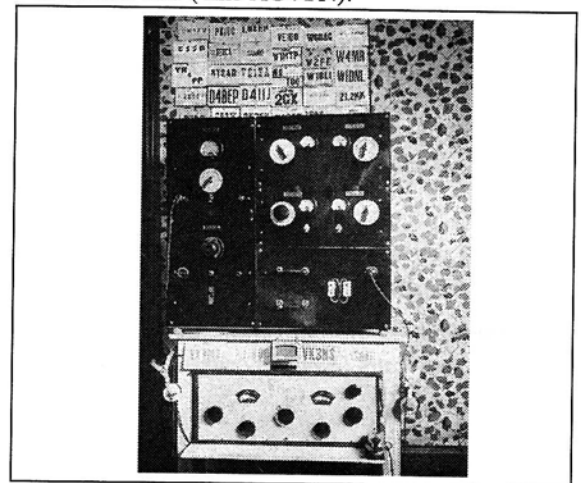
1	R.G.Henwick	ZT2Q	1410
2	E.S.Cole	ZC6EC	1193
3	W.E.Russell	G5WP	1079
4	F.J.Mustill	XZ2DY	983
5	B.M.Tanna	VU2LK	959
6	J.M.Drudge-Coates	VU2FO	892
7	N.Shrimpton	ZL4AO	832
8	S.G.Taylor	ZL2GW	811
9	A.D.Boyle	ZL2VM	795
10	A.D.Gay	G6NF	785

VU2FO repeated his effort for the Junior almost precisely and this was sufficient to win. VK4BB was second, improving his position from 4th in 1938. He received T9 reports for an ECO transmitter and used 14MHz exclusively.

Table 1.15 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1939

1	J.M.Drudge-Coates	VU2FO	891
2	R.J.Beatson	VK4BB	872
3	B.M.Tanna	VU2LK	797
4	Chas. Miller	VK2ADE	781
5	A.S.Smith	VK4SA	746
6	R.Holmes	G6RH	721
7	K.Rudkin	VK2DG	710
8	G.B.Butler	ZL2FA	629
9	A.F.Frame	ZL4GA	620
10	R.E.Barnes	ZL1MR	613

G6XL⁵⁷ raised the problem of congestion at the top end of 14MHz during the 1939 contest. He showed that the chance of working a station at the bottom end of 14MHz was better than three times the chance at the top end. He also made the point that it took him 18 mins. to obtain a contact at the low end but 67 mins. at the High! DX should stick to the low end (like AC4YN).



G5MY in 1939

⁵⁷ Letters to the Editor, T&R Bulletin, 14, 555, (1939)

Hal, G5MY, recalls,

It was 1939 when I managed 2nd place (second highest G) in the Junior BERU. I had no public supply mains, my power source was car batteries and 10 volt accumulator blocks (lead acid) for HT. My TX was typical of the time home brew of course. CO/FD & PA, most stations were xtal controlled. The procedure was to call test and end with QHM or QMH to indicate which end you would start to search. No pile ups as we have today. The RX was an 'Eddystone All World Two', a kit set and very good too, with Browns 'A' headphones -balanced armature which adjusted with a nice 'plonk' for maximum signals. The antenna was a long wire tapped end on for matching. I remember G6QB saying "he who hasn't seen a red hotcroc clip hasn't lived"! (I never had mine red hot, I hadn't got enough power!)

I recall many G's calling 'TEST BERU' in the small hours like G6CJ, G6QB, G6WY, G5WP and many, many others. And strong support from all corners of the globe. I recall during a QSO (3 way) with SU one of them joked that during BERU "Cairo trams went round in dots and dashes".

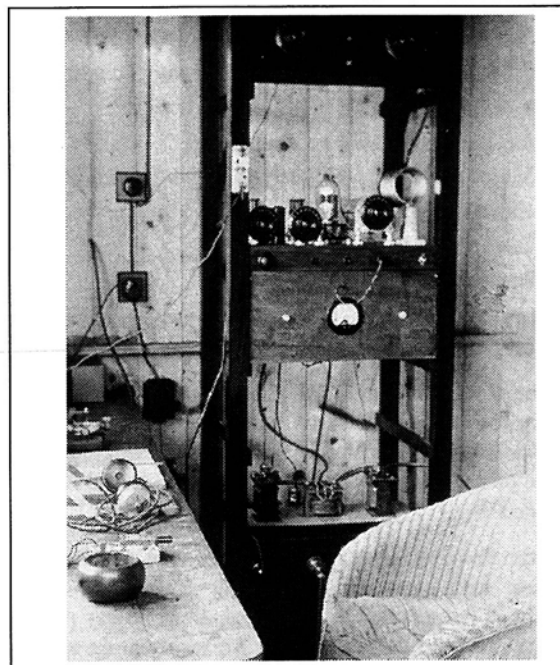
Ivor, VK3XB, writes,

I first heard of the RSGB in 1936 when I received a letter from VK3EG who invited me to join. But it was depression time and I could not afford it. Rules of the BERU contest caught my attention in 1939 and being of British extraction, I naturally entered. The equipment was all QRP and battery operated. By 1939 the rig was a 19 crystal osc. a 19 push-pull doubler and a pair of TCO3/5 four volt 5 watt Philips tubes in bi-push with 10 watts input from dry batteries. The antenna was a V beam 500 ft on each leg pointing east/west. I was boarding on a farm in the country. In the 1939 BERU I managed to make two contacts on 7/8 February and twelve contacts on the 11/12th. Among those contacted were VP1AA, VU2LK, ST6KR, ZL1MR, ZL2FA, ZL1JI, ZL4GA, VS2AL, XZ2LZ, VU2FO, VE3KP, VS7MB, and ZL1CK. Then the war intervened. Mavis, VK3KS, and I were married in 1943.

John, ZL1AH, also started in the 1939 event but as G3AH. John recalls that,

Most of the activity was from stations in the "old" Commonwealth (Empire) countries - G, VE, VK,

VU, ZL, ZS, but one which caused a lot of excitement was VU7BR, operating on the island of Bahrain. The reason for the strange prefix was that at that time, the areas of the Gulf under British control were under the jurisdiction of the authorities in India.



John G3AH, later ZL1AH, in 1939 TX 6L6 CO/ECO, TZ40 PA. Rx was Hallicrafters Sky Champion, Antenna inverted L.

The receiving contest was won by Eric Trebilcock, reversing the previous years result with Martin Bourke, 2AOU, of the Channel Isles.

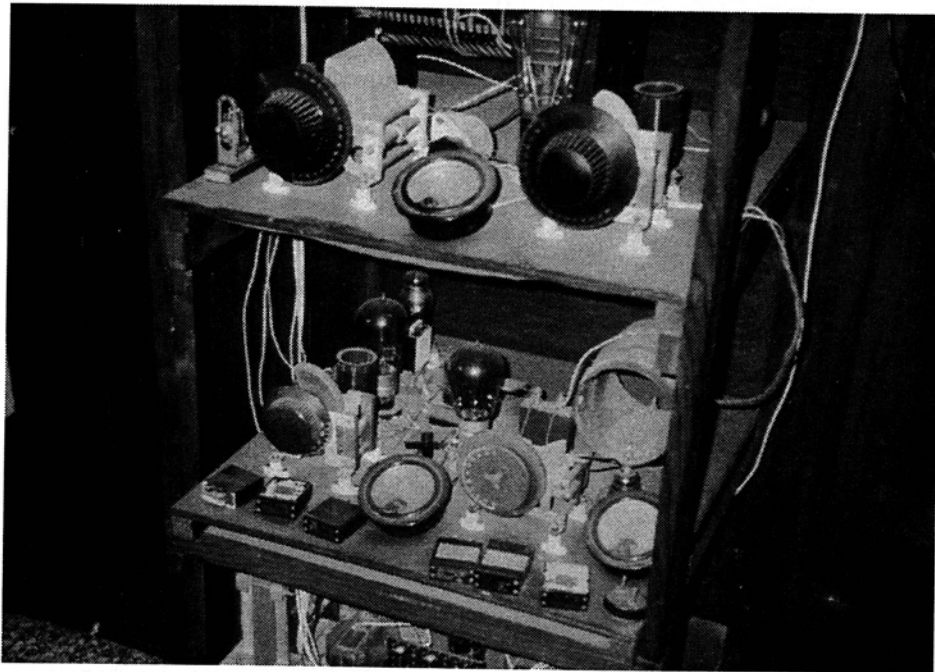
Summary

The onset of the Second World War represented the effective end of the British Empire Radio Union. It was never resuscitated post war. The 1939 contest was the last BERU contest until 1947.

In June 1940, Leslie Mellars, ZL1AR, who was one of those responsible for suggesting the idea of the annual BERU Contests died at sea. He lost his life whilst yachting off the shores of New Zealand. In attempting to ride out a fierce storm the yacht capsized causing his death and his three companions.



The series of BERU Trophies Senior, Junior, Receiving and Miniature.
A miniature was presented to each winner (T & R Bulletin)



An existing '30s style, transmitter at G5RI, LS5 xtal osc., LS5 Buffer, T55 PA.
1937 original components, works fine.



John Tutton, VK3ZC, in 1939. TNT TX 20-40w to a 45,Rx TRF audio

CDXC

Chiltern DX Club

United Kingdom DX Foundation

Offers sincere congratulations
to Bob Whelan on the publi-
cation of this history of BERU

For full information about CDXC apply to CDXC Secretary: Dave Mann, G0HXN, 106 South Meadow, Crowthorne RG11 7HP, England

Chapter 2

The 10th BERU Contest 1947

India and Pakistan declare independence
Crisis austerity plan for Britain, rations cut, beer cut by 50%

US plane breaks the sound barrier

Benelux customs union formed

Princess Elizabeth marries Duke of Edinburgh



Left to right, G2ZC, his daughter, a friend and Snow, VK3MR, 1947

After the war some of the pre-war leaders found themselves in strange places. Eric Cole, SU1EC, was back in the UK as G2EC. Jack Drudge-Coates was a VU in 1939 when he won the Junior Trophy but 1947 found him in Japan and unable to enter. At the District 12 Dinner and Dance on June 30th 1945 he received the BERU Junior Trophy which had been stored underground for the last 6 years. In December 1945 the 28MHz and 58MHz bands were made available to radio amateurs. G6CJ received the BEM in January 1946. It was September 1946 before the first announcement was made that contests were to restart. No announcement was made of the BERU rules, just the date in 1947.

The RSGB announced the Empire DX Certificate¹ and recommended working as many different parts of the Empire on as many bands as possible during the up-coming first post-war BERU contest.

Due to post-war restrictions prevailing in most areas it was not possible to give the 1947 event the publicity needed and indeed much of the UK was under an obligation to conserve fuel. No awards were therefore made to British Isles stations, their logs being treated as checks.

¹ RSGB Bulletin, 22, 137, (1947) and full details in September 1947 issue page 52.

Being close to sunspot maximum, the conditions for the Senior event were extremely good, with most of the activity centred on 14 and 28MHz. An unprecedented number of ZLs filled 28MHz for several hours on the Saturday morning. The winner was R.G.Henwick, ZS2AL, who made 332 contacts with 21 out of a possible 29 zones. 159 UK stations were in his log. Equipment was a home built ECO with 8 crystals and a separate PA for each band. Receiver was a National NC100. Three antennas were used, an end fed for 7MHz, a dipole on 14MHz and a three element rotary on 28MHz.

H.V.J.Powell, VQ3HJP, used a VFO-6L6-6L6-813 feeding a 67' near vertical wire, with an 8 valve superhet on reception. W.A.Wilson, ZL1BY, who was third, made all his contacts on 14MHz.

Table 2.1 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1947^{2,3}

1	ZS2AL	1864
2	VQ3HJP	1350
3	ZL1BY	1225
4	VK2EO	1118
5	ZS6CT	1104
6	VK2ADE	1101
7	VK2DI	1063
8	ZS5U	1054
9	ZB1AD	1044
10	VU2LR	1010

Despite the fuel restrictions there was a good entry from UK. Rusty, G5WP, was the leading G station, he would have been second overall.

Table 2.2 Leading UK stations BERU Contest 1947

1	G5WP	1558
2	G2PL	1514
3	G6RH	1428
4	G6ZO	1409
5	G6CJ	1349
6	G5VU	1167
7	G2EC	1145
8	G5VB	1076
9	GW3ZV	1047
10	G2WW	1044

Alan Frame, ZL4GA, won the Junior event, again largely on 14MHz. He used a three stage osc.multiplier arrangement into a V beam, an end fed Zepp and a vertical for 7MHz, with an AR77 receiver. Unfortunately he had to wait rather a long time for his trophy⁴. Due to a technical point on his membership of the Society the replica of the BERU Junior Trophy was only sent to him in January

² The BERU contests, 1947, RSGB Bulletin, 23, 30, (1948)

³ Total Senior entries 162 and 37 in the Junior including UK.

⁴ RSGB Bulletin, 40, 46, (1964)

1964. Better late than never. Alan first entered in 1932 when he was 14 years old.

Table 2.3 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1947

1	ZL4GA	828
2	VS9AN	732
3	ZB1AD	658
4	ZD4AB	647
5	XZ2EM	440
6	VK4RC	353
7	VK5RX	305
8	VP8AD	302
9	VE1EK	279
10	ZS2Y	273

Pete, G5DQ, remembers,

I was re-licensed in 1945-6 on 28MHz only, but as it was the sunspot maximum I had a good time. My rig was a 6L6 on 7 doubling to 14 followed by an 807 PA doubler. I used a 28MHz dipole and a AR88 RX. HRO receivers caused very bad TVI in Cambridge. TV started from Alexander Palace in 1936 on 45 MHz and as Cambridge is about 45 miles away the signal was very weak. The antennas were hung between two 40 foot poles with 28/14/7 dipoles in 'series', with a second 14MHz dipole at right angles held up with 2 garden canes.

The impact of the war on the types of equipment used was quite apparent. Many used commercial ex-WD receivers such as the AR77/88 or National HRO. The VFO was starting to be in common use, the adjudicator commenting that,

Many of the rarer stations soon dropped into the practice of listening on their own frequency only, never appearing to alter the receiver tuning, and whilst the stock of VFOs piled up, remained there. Those with crystal control ... just wasted their time calling.

The 11th BERU Contest 1948

Ghandi assassinated

Burma gains independence

Palestine situation deteriorates

Berlin blockade

Transistor invented at Bell Labs.

With complete freedom from the previous years fuel restrictions and good DX conditions again many hundreds of operators took the chance to work the rarer DX that the BERU contest encouraged⁵. Over 400 British Isles stations

participated, most being more interested in the DX than the contest as the results show.

Some of the operating left something to be desired such as,

The sending of CQ on the frequency of a rare DX station after a QSO with him had been completed, sweeping the band with the PA switched on and bad notes generally. Operators are advised not to reply to stations calling on your frequency, and announce this fact when calling CQ.

D.H.Duff, VK2EO, won the Senior event. He had won six major DX contests in a row. He used a 100 watt transmitter, VFO and crystal controlled, a 4 element rotary beam on 28MHz and a 67' Zepp for 7 and 14MHz. The receiver was an AR88.

Rusty, G5WP, was the leading British Isles entrant as he had been the previous year. He made use of all of the DX bands, one of the few to do so.

Interesting stations active included MI3ZJ, (G2ZJ), in Asmara, Eritrea, who came 17th and MD5KW, (G5KW), Ken Ellis who came 12th.

Table 2.4 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1948⁶,

1	VK2EO	2914
2	VK2DI	2854
3	G5WP	2809
4	VQ3HJP	2777
5	G6CJ	2768
6	G6RH	2764
7	ZL1MB	2286
8	ZL2FA	2210
9	G6GN	2096
10	G5DQ	2041

The Junior event was run concurrently with the Senior as many of the Junior entrants in 1947 had found that the higher power stations were not active in the second Junior weekend so limiting the number of stations available to work. The Junior event was won by R.G.Cracknell, ZE1JV.

⁵ The rules contained a clause stating that contest operation was forbidden during hours of restriction in the use of electricity.

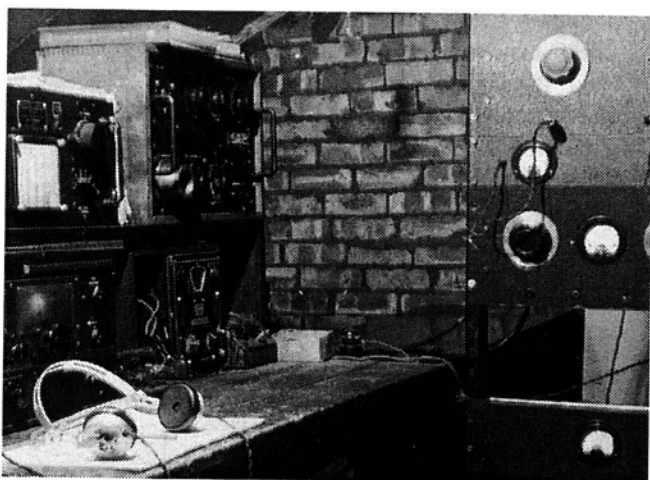
⁶ The BERU Contests, 1948, T&R Bulletin, 24, 64, (1949). Senior entries 93 and Junior 20. Senior and Junior concurrent.

Table 2.5 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest
1948

1	ZE2JV	1709
2	VK4EL	1602
3	VS9AN	1379
4	ZB1Q	1372
5	VK5RX	1122
6	VK4TY	1069
7	VU2JP	1043
8	VK3NC	910
9	VS6AE	843
10	VE5QZ	811

Like many others, John, ZL1AH, after six and half years in the RAF, had to resurrect his career, move house etc. and it was not until 1948 that he got back into BERU as G3AH,

There was a big increase in activity from places that had previously been poorly represented - VQ2, 3, 4, 5, 6, VQ8, VS1, 2, 9, VP2, 4, 6, plus operations using the military "M" callsigns - MD2 in Libya, MD5 Egypt, MB9 Austria, and MI3 Eritrea. This year (1948) the contest took a marathon 96 hours over the first and third weekends in April. Can you imagine it nowadays ?



John, G3AH in 1948

The 12th BERU Contest 1949

NATO formed

UK recognised Ireland

Comet airliner reaches 500mph

Pound devalued 30%

TV starts to displace cinema as medium of entertainment.

In July 1948 RSGB Council requested the Contests Committee to give consideration to a phone section for BERU. The Empire societies included VE, VS6, 9Y4, 9H, VE2, VO1, ZL, ZE3, VQ3, ZS, VK and the Irish Radio Transmitters Society. The benefits of competitive activities were extolled in the Editorial⁷.

The contest was moved to the beginning of March for the first time and was reduced to a single weekend. Activity from the military bases was already falling off as personnel returned to civilian activity.

As always an ability to 'read' the ionosphere is a must for the leading contenders conditions favouring 14MHz in the Northern hemisphere but 14 or 28MHz in the Southern. Those who slept through the night found that they were in some cases as much as 30 QSOs behind those who had operated all night. Africa and the West Indies were poorly represented in the logs.

The change to March seemed to improve the chance of world-wide DX working, especially on 28 MHz. But it is also clear that slowly contestants were using all the DX bands for points, especially bonuses. Several DX stations were working large numbers of G stations and few bonuses and hence ending with moderate scores. The contest tended to die away rather than end on UK Sunday night because activity dropped off as the Australian and New Zealand stations went to work on their Monday morning.

The Senior contest was won by Gordon Cole, VK2DI, who had been amongst the leaders for a few years. He used an 813 TX into a long-wire antenna and a home built receiver. Second place was again held by Rusty, G5WP. During 1948-9 Rusty had expressed the opinion that the contest could not be won from the UK. Yet he only needed a single 7MHz contact with VK2 to disprove his theory. Dud Charman, G6CJ, was third using a pair of large V beams.

⁷ RSGB Bulletin, 14, 189, (1949)

Table 2.6 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1949^{8,9}

1	VK2DI	2365
2	G5WP	2352
3	G6CJ	2266
4	ZL1MB	2215
5	ZE2JV	2064
6	G6RH	2048
7	GW3ZV	2043
8	VE3KE	1977
9	ZS6GI	1950
10	G8KG	1908

The Junior event was again concurrent with the Senior and was won by A.E.Seymour, ZB1Q, of RAF Signals. He was fourth in 1948.

Table 2.7 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1949

1	ZB1Q	1355
2	VK2QL	1156
3	ZD4AB	1115
4	VS9AL	1079
5	VK4TY	1066
6	ZL1MR	1049
7	VR2BJ	916
8	ZB1AR	909
9	VK3UM	868
10	VK5RX	849

The Receiving Section was won by William Ely using an HRO, 'with all modern additions'. Second was Ken Ellis, G5KW/MD5, who sent in a listening log as the MD5 stations were not allowed to operate.

A feature of these years seems to be the large number of late or disqualified logs. Some 68 logs fell into this category compared with a total of 200 accepted. Entries had to be posted within 7 days of the end of the contest.

The 13th BERU Contest 1950

First kidney transplant

Kon Tiki expedition publicised

North Korea invades South

BBC makes first overseas TV transmission

Jan Smuts dies

The dates for 1950 were early, in January, partially to avoid clashes, partly to balance up band use. The contest was two operating periods of 24 hours spread over two weekends with a separate Telephony Contest, running concurrently. This was the first telephony contest organised by the Society.

The 1950 event coincided with very poor conditions with very little propagation at all, noisy low frequencies and low MUF. VK/ZL found 28MHz nearly blank and QRN was bad for all three weekends.

The winner of the Senior contest was Rusty, G5WP, disproving his own theories. He used a pair of 35Ts with a rotary W8JK for 14 and 28MHz and a long wire for 3.5 and 7MHz. Second place went to W.R.Joss, G2AJ, who nearly won both the Senior CW and the new Senior Telephony which he won. C Herbert, ZL1MB, placed third had an impressive antenna farm, a 500' V beam, an 8 element Sterba and a 3.5MHz Zepp were particularly effective when the conditions were so poor.

Table 2.8 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1950^{10,11}

1	G5WP	2254
2	G2AJ	2192
3	ZL1MB	2185
4	G6CJ	2167
5	GW3ZV	2132
6	ZS5YF	2123
7	VK2DI	2096
8	G6RH	2069
9	ZL2FA	2060
10	MP4KW	2059

Sydney Clark, VS1CW, was the surprise winner of the Junior contest just using an 807, modest antennas but a rarer location. He was especially congratulated on his 7MHz contacts. The second placed station, J.C.Van Wyk, ZS6QF, also used an 807 with a long wire for 7MHz, a folded dipole for 14MHz and a quad for 28MHz.

Table 2.9 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1950

1	VS1CW	1749
2	ZS6QF	1257
3	VK4RC	1231
4	VK5OU	1203
5	VU2JP	1192
6	VS2CN	899
7	ZD4AM	763
8	VK3UM	670
9	ZB2I	472
10	VP1AA	358

The Telephony section was an innovation for BERU and reflected the changing nature of DX operating. Many of the leading stations could put out a significant AM signal which together with the improved receivers, antennas and good propagation, especially on 28MHz, lead to the growth of telephony for DX contacts. G2AJ won the Telephony

⁸ The Twelfth BERU Contest, RSGB Bulletin, 15, 45 (1950)

⁹ Senior entries 87 and Junior 18.

¹⁰ BERU 1950, T&R Bulletin, 26, 58, (1951)

¹¹ Senior entries 89, Junior 17 and 20 were in the Phone section.

section ahead of John Ellery, G2DPZ, who used an Eimac 100TH with eleven antennas from rhombics to dipoles.

Table 2.10 Leading stations Telephony BERU Contest 1950

1	G2AJ	1294
2	G2DPZ	1277
3	G6RH	1250
4	VQ4ERR	1008
5	VK3HW	830
6	VS1DZ	829
7	VQ4SC	814
8	ZE2JV	573
9	G3A00	534
10	ZL1HY	527

No awards were made in the Junior Telephony section as only two entries were received.

Harold¹², G2HLU, was in West Africa and first entered BERU as ZD4AM in the Junior Section with 16-20 watts from DC mains.

The transmitter was (of course) home brew, for 14MHz only, the RX an ex-army R107, and I had two dipoles at right angles, suspended from 40' bamboos (I could do with those now). I managed 75 QSOs in the first period and 29 in the second. The TX was fairly typical for those days a 6L6 doubler driving a pair of 807s in push-pull. The VFO started on 3.5MHz. Heaters were from a 12 volt car battery. I was proud of my great circle map centred on Tafo in the Gold Coast, because I made it myself - the hard way. Hours and hours of work, using four figure tables, and the formulae in the first edition of the Amateur Radio Handbook (1939, price 2s/6d!!). That book still occupies an honourable position on my bookshelves.' I returned to the UK later in 1950.

There were further comments by the committee on the quality of the logs received,

Some are beautiful; others come in miscellaneous shapes and sizes; one was stitched on the right; two were over five feet long with nowhere to cut; another appeared in grease pen on something like blotting paper!

As is often the case with BERU contests the number of participants was far greater than the number of logs actually submitted. The repeated changes of the weekends and the length of the contest made it important to communicate the rules early, many of the magazines did not print them until it was too late. January was really too early for the Southern Hemisphere due to possible ionospheric disturbances. The Northern hemisphere loses in April. It was concluded that a return to February-March

would be best, provided that interference from other contests could be avoided.



ZD4AM, Gold Coast in 1950 (G2HLU)

The 14th BERU Contest 1951

Festival of Britain opens

Egypt rescinds alliance with UK

Abominable Snowman's footprint found

Best Film, 'A Streetcar named Desire'

The rule changes introduced in the previous year were judged to be unsatisfactory so the contest date was moved to February and March. British Forces in Europe were added.

Conditions were very poor especially in the phone section due to an aurora.

The CW section was won by Frank North, VP6CDI, who made 380 QSOs using 150 watts and 'simple antennas'.

¹² Harold is the current Commonwealth Contest adjudicator, since 1993

Table 2.11 Leading stations Senior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1951¹³

1	VP6CDI	2506
2	G2AJ	2435
3	G6CJ	2383
4	G5WP	2239
5	GW3ZV	2126
6	MP4KW	2072
7	ZL1MB	2048
8	G5DQ	1928
9	VE3KE	1892
10	VK6RU	1727

Table 2.12 Leading stations Junior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1951

1	ZS6QF	1577
2	VU2JP	1576
3	ZD4AB	1550
4	VK4QL	1472
5	VP1AA	1020
6	VS1DZ	943
7	VK6LJ	920
8	ZL4JA	797
9	VK3RJ	750
10	ZC4TF	730

Table 2.13 Leading stations Senior Telephony BERU Contest 1951

1	G2AJ	1363
2	G2DPZ	1350
3	VQ4RF	1103
4	G3RH	1098
5	MP4KW	981
6	VQ4ERR	938
7	ZS6JS	712
8	VE3KE	674
9	VQ2HW	613
10	VS9AH	611

The adjudicators concluded that the best weekends for world-wide communications probably on balance occurred in February. Conditions were so poor that VE4MF did not make a single contact.

The 1950 contest was the last for John, G3AH, from the UK. By the time the 1951 event came round he was up and running as ZL1AH. He continues,

...and what a pleasant change! Instead of having to scramble for the crumbs, I was able to put out a short CQ and run a string of Gs. It was most interesting to hear the technique and signals of the stalwarts of those days - G6CJ, G6ZO, G5WP and G3FXB.



John, ZL1AH operated BERU in 1951 from ZL1MP. Collins TX and RX with 3el. Yagi for 14/28 and dipoles for 3.5/7 at 80ft

The 15th BERU Contest 1952

Flying Enterprise sea drama, Captain Kurt Carlsen, W2ZXM/MM stays with his ship

George VI dies

Artificial heart tried for first time

N.Rhodesia, S.Rhodesia and Nyasaland federated

Diary of Anne Frank published

Only minor rule changes were proposed, one weekend of 24hrs for each, dates in March-April favoured 7-14 and were expected to be poorer on 3.5, use of 21MHz was permitted if it became available in time and VE2 was a zone by itself.

The contest was won by Dud, G6CJ, but because he was involved in the organising and judging of contests he could not accept any award. Dud used an old pair of large Vs for transmission but used a 'special/secret' receiving antenna giving a much better DX/local signal strength ratio. ZL1MB used 100 watts to a 550' V, 3el on 14 and 132' Zepp.

¹³ BERU 1951, RSGB Bulletin, 27, 164, (1951). There were 103 Senior, 21 Junior and 21 Telephony entries.. 207 total logs were submitted.

Table 2.14 Leading stations Senior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1952¹⁴

1	G6CJ	1963
2	ZL1MB	1846
3	VP6WA	1820
4	G5WP	1710
5	VQ4HJP	1674
6	G5RI	1607
7	VK2DI	1594
8	VE3KE	1547
9	DL2RO	1530
10	VK9XK	1527

Table 2.15 Leading stations Junior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1952

1	ZS6QF	1198
2	VU2JP	982
3	VS6CG	745
4	ZD6DU	720
5	VK3RJ	708
6	VP1AA	705
7	ZB2I	531
8	VS2CN	517
9	GW3AHN	487
10	G3FDV	477

Table 2.16 Leading stations Senior Telephony BERU Contest 1952

1	VQ4AQ	1232
2	VQ4RF	1114
3	G2PDZ	1049
4	ZS6BW	943
5	VQ4BU	914
6	VP6SD	807
7	GW3FSP	714
8	ZS6Z	649
9	VK2AWU	485
10	VK9GW	457

G5WP's, 'gruff fist could be heard plodding through the thickest QRM and pulling out the plums.'

It seemed that over the years it was the 'Aerial farmers' who won all the prizes. Thus leaving the Contest Committee in a quandary as to how to help the 'small man' on whom the success of the event depends.



The Senior Mechanics Residence (Russ, VK9XK) 1952 on Samaria Island, Papua New Guinea. The convenient coconut palms for wire antennas (VK4XA). New Guinea

The 16th BERU Contest 1953

UK East coast floods. Radio Amateur Emergency Network formed

Polio vaccine successfully tested

Watson and Crick propose the double helix. Sanger synthesises a protein for the first time.

Conquest of Everest

A number of changes were again made to the rules in an attempt to balance the different propagation conditions and the population of zones. One interesting innovation was the start time. The phone and CW contests ran over the entire weekend, but the start was the entrants own Saturday noon and the end local Sunday midnight. Out of that 36 hours entrants could work any 24. Rusty noted in the margin of his Bulletin that he planned to sleep 0200 to 0500.

Table 2.17 Leading stations Senior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1953¹⁵

1	VQ4AQ	2299
2	DL2RO	2102
3	ZS2A	2099
4	VS9AP	2081
5	VE3KE	1614
6	VE7VO	1548
7	G5RI	1535
8	VK2ANN	1480
9	G6GN	1433
10	ZS2HI	1396

¹⁴ BERU 1952, RSGB Bulletin, 28, 313, (1953). Senior 86 Junior 18. RSGB Bulletin, 28, 257, (1952).

¹⁵ BERU 1953, RSGB Bulletin, 29, 127, 278, 495, (1953). Senior 80, Junior 23.



John St Leger, MP4BBE, 1953 (G3VDL)



Russ, VK9XK, Rx homebrew superhet, modified RA10, Hallicrafters S27 VHF, Tx 100w pair 807s modulator pair 807s, antenna rotatable W8JK and 80m Zepp (VK4XA)

Table 2.18 Leading stations Junior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1953

1	ZS6R	1508
2	VE1BV	1390
3	VU2JP	1207
4	MD5XZ	1199
5	ST2AR	1181
6	VK2GW	1039
7	ZD2DCP	1001
8	ZC4XP	964
9	5A2CA	847
10	VS7XG	805

Table 2.19 Leading stations Senior Telephony BERU Contest 1953

1	VQ4AQ	2079
2	VQ2DT	1538
3	VQ4RF	1476
4	G2DPZ	1130
5	ZL1AIK	630
6	VS1ES	581
7	VK3XK	538
8	G3DO	498
9	VU2JP	415
10	G8SC	401

Dud spent months analysing the results to get a 'fair' scoring system. The idea being that every entrants should have the same chance with regional bias being minimised. 1953 was probably Al Slater's first entry, he came 32nd.

MP4BBE Bahrain by John G3VDL Part 1.

My first acquaintance with BERU was on 28 March, 1953, when working in Bahrain and operating as MP4BBE. I stumbled across it on the Saturday evening and found that MP4BBE was in some demand. After being requested to give a serial number and getting the general idea of, what to do, I made my first BERU QSOs, which included VS1, VU, VQ3, & 4, ZS, MD5 and a few G's, all on 14. I sent in a check log.

Going back a bit now: I had arrived in Bahrain towards the end of 1951, something of a tyro in the amateur radio business. I had been a keen CW SWL, using a home brew O-V-1 Rx, for three years, knew my way around the bands and was familiar with the procedure of a QSO; but I had not joined the RSGB (too expensive) and I had never heard of BERU.

I emerged from university as a graduate petroleum engineer (PE) and had been accepted as a PE by the Bahrain Petroleum Company. Naturally I was keen to transmit from such a rare spot so, before I left the

UK I had built a single 6L6 crystal oscillator from an article in Short Wave Magazine. It had one crystal and only worked on 7MHz. I arrived in Bahrain in September 1951 with my amateur station comprising a 9w input CO and O-V-1 RX. Not a very impressive set-up but I was very keen to see how it performed on 7.

Obtaining a licence was no problem: there was no theory exam. or Morse test then and one just applied for it. It wasn't long before I was one the air, with a 30' piece of wire as an aerial, and making my first ever QSOs. But QSOs on 7MHz from Bahrain were hard to come by and only those with really good ears could hear me. I worked around Europe and North Africa and even got a few Gs, but reports were generally around 459 and each QSO was a real struggle. I was counting QSOs, not countries, and I soon decided that I had to get on 14MHz.

I obtained some parts during a brief leave in the UK in September 1952 (flying in the ill-fated Comet 1) and by November 1952 I had built a 6AG7-807 crystal controlled Tx (two crystals), with 20w input. Compared to 7, operating on 14 was a pleasure and I now began to count the countries worked. Meanwhile, I had acquired a Hallicrafters SX-43 Rx, a big improvement on my O-V-1, and it was with this equipment that I made my first BERU QSOs in March 1953.

During 1953 my operating skills improved and I also rebuilt the TX power supply to give about 50w input. BERU in 1954 was in January and I was keen to see how I would make out. In fact I made 70 QSOs and was placed 36th out of 90, using 7 and 14. This wasn't too bad bearing in mind that Saturday and Sunday are working days in Moslem countries and I could only operate part time. Actually I was top in Zone 17 but I was the only entrant !

1955 was rather similar to 1954. I was again on 7 and 14 only, operating part time. I finished 37th out of 82.

The 17th BERU Contest 1954

Bill Hayley 'Rock around the clock'
**IBM announces electronic brain for business and
 'transceiver' to send data over phone lines**
Australian, Peter Thompson wins British Open
Comet crash, metal fatigue suspected
Four minute mile

With the growth in phone operation Current Comment pressed for better proficiency in operating and listening¹⁶. The Editor followed on with comments about the BERU Contest,

a contest which is very fair, favouring no-one, but a contest which puts high demands on first grade operating techniques. The Empire has changed into the Commonwealth but the feeling behind the magic letters BERU as they come through the phones with that faint 10000 mile echo. They mean red on the map.

Table 2.20 Leading stations Senior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1954^{17, 18}

1	ZS2A	3176
2	VQ4AQ	2894
3	VE3KE	2341
4	DL2RO	2295
5	ZE3JP	2246
6	G5RI	2059
7	VK2GW	1907
8	VE2WW	1805
9	VK2DI	1775
10	ZL2FA	1689

Table 2.21 Leading stations Junior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1954

1	ZS6R	2275
2	ST2AR	1547
3	ZD4AB	1544
4	ZB1BF	1326
5	VQ3EO	1205
6	ZD4AE	1079
7	G3IDC	937
8	MD5XZ	850
9	4S7LB	732
10	GW3AHN	573

Frank, G3IDC, was in the signals section of the RAF and in 1954 made an Empire tourround the various UK airforce bases, (see Chapter 7).¹⁹

For many the mid-1950s represented the change from homebrew to commercial equipment. Jim, VK6RU, says,

Any gear up to 1953/4 was all home made - much from "surplus" gear swiped from the Yanks in the Pacific during the war which I was able to get home. In 1954 I joined the Collins stable and have used it ever since. I have never like JA gear and do not have any now. Antennas have been 10-15-20 stacked 3 & 4 element with verticals for 40-80 (trapped) and now a couple of slopers grace the sky-line under my yagis. I use a Drake TR7 exclusively for CW with no amplifier and the Collins S line KWM2A - 30L1 combination for SSB. At least I can service it all myself!



Jim, VK6RU, (G3MXJ)

The 18th BERU Contest 1955

Disneyland opens
RCA demonstrates music synthesiser
Unrest in Cyprus, South Africa walks out of United Nations
Einstein dies

Conditions were regarded as being the best for some years. DX was workable from the UK on one band or another for the entire 48 hours. 28MHz was dead, but the G-ZL path was open simultaneously on 3.5, 7 and 14MHz.

¹⁶ RSGB Bulletin, 29, 299, (1954)

¹⁷ There were 109 total entries, 18 in the Junior. G3FXB came 22nd.

¹⁸ The BERU Contests 1954, RSGB Bulletin, 30, 85, (1955)

¹⁹ The Empire DX Tour, RSGB Bulletin, 30, 573, (1955)

The winner George Dent, VQ4AQ, used 150watts to a 100TH with rhombic and V beams. 200 of his 300 contacts were made on 14MHz and overall he had contacts with 22 of the 24 zones on 14MHz alone. Runner up was Jack Drudge-Coats, DL2RO. The leading G station was Derek Ritson, G5RI, who used an impressive antenna system, a rhombic, 275' legs, 50' high on 160/340°, a V beam with 230' legs, 50' high on 45/235° and 275' Zepp N-S !

Other G's in close contention were Dud, G6CJ, and Pete, G5DQ. G6CJ used a 2 layer 200' V and a quarter wave vertical on 3.5MHz.

The balance between operating skill and antennas is one of the fascinations of BERU. ZC4JA only used a 135' centre fed at 35' to just beat VE3KE who ran 350 watts to three half waves in phase and a three element rotary on 14MHz.

Table 2.22 Leading stations Senior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1955²⁰

1	VQ4AQ	2894
2	DL2RO	2481
3	ZC4JA	2321
4	VE3KE	2307
5	G5RI	2177
6	ZD2DCP	2150
7	G6CJ	1941
8	G5DQ	1920
9	ZE3JP	1898
10	VK6RU	1827

ZS6R again won the Junior section . He would have been placed 6th in the Senior section, and on 3.5MHz only VE3KE did better. ZS6R made full use of the war surplus then available. A triple conversion receiver, an RF24 converted down to 3.5MHz, then a National NC200 converted to 455KHz and finally a BC453A converted to 85KHz where, ' signals threw in the sponge and crept out as mere audio frequency'.

Table 2.23 Leading stations Junior Telegraphy BERU Contest 1955

1	ZS6R	2152
2	ZB1BF	1674
3	VU2JP	1580
4	VS9XZ	1054
5	4S7LB	858
6	G3IDC	823
7	GW3AHN	672
8	VK3HL	635
9	ZE3JO	622
10	ZE5JE	606

GM2FHH commented that the LF bands were amazingly good. And despite being troubled by Americans ignorant of the meaning of BERU, VE2UN said, ' honestly have never enjoyed myself so fully in any contest'. ST2AR commented when the 'other life' intruded, 'After arranging for a free weekend, two charter flights came along...imagine my feelings listening at 9000' and unable to join in.'

The 19th BERU Contest 1956

Gold Coast becomes independent Ghana

Video recorder demonstrated

Hoad wins Wimbledon

Hungarian uprising

Elvis

The 1956 contest coincided with a spell of better conditions which allowed the new 21MHz band to show its potential.

George Dent, VQ4AQ, won the Senior event again, he had the best score on 7, 14, 21, 28MHz, and he won without using 3.5MHz at all!

Table 2.24 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1956²¹

1	VQ4AQ	3465
2	VE3KE	2690
3	ZC4IP	2642
4	G5RI	2085
5	VO3X	1993
6	VO1D	1766
7	G4CP	1762
8	ZL3JA	1761
9	G2DC	1735
10	VE2NI	1728

Reading the results commentary it is very apparent that much more complex antennas were now in use. Many of the leading stations had very large areas to use for antennas, VQ4AQ was using rhombics and V beams, VE3KE used three half waves in phase for 3.5 and 7MHz, 2 inverted rhombics for 21MHz and a rotary 3 element on 14MHz. G5RI used rhombics, V beams and Zepps. Most of the leaders had some form of rotary yagi for 14, 21 and 28MHz. Al Slater G3FXB, had his quad operational. But Russ, VK9XK, used 136' end fed 15' high and plenty of other stations did well with simple antennas and cunning operating.

21MHz was the highlight of the contest, being open for most people some of the time. Jack Drudge-Coats, G2DC, back in the UK, commented that 'competing as a G the going was much tougher than as DL2RO', and you ' have to

²⁰ The BERU Contests 1955, RSGB Bulletin, 31, 26, (1955). Senior 72, Low Power 16.

²¹ The BERU Contests 1956, RSGB Bulletin, 32, 31, (1956). Senior 64, Low Power 19

be on one's toes and prepared to make quick frequency changes.'

Table 2.25 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1956

1	ZS6R	2288
2	ZD2DCP	1939
3	VU2JP	1767
4	ZB2I	1271
5	ZE5JE	1193
6	ZD4BQ	1001
7	ZE3JO	862
8	G3IDC	853
9	DL2UY	827
10	VQ4KPB	832

MP4BBE Bahrain by John G3VDL Part 2.

In 1956 I was able to take much of the Saturday and Sunday off, giving me more operating time than previously. I was now on 7, 14, 21 & 28 and finished 22nd out of 68. My aerials were a 14MHz ground plane and an end fed wire.

During long leave in the summer of 1956 I built a new Tx, with a valve line-up 6AG7-5763-parallel 807s. It was crystal controlled (six crystal) and input was 60w. It may be of interest to note that this Tx with the addition of a VFO and home brew ATU, is today my only Tx; it has been used in every BERU from 1957 onwards and could be now considered as a working antique!

Back in Bahrain at the end of 1956, my new TX worked fine. I put up dipoles for the HF bands but, as yet, had no aerial for 3.5 or 7.

The 20th BERU Contest 1957

Singapore and Malaysia independent

Treaty of Rome creates the Common Market

USSR launches Sputnik 1, 'signals strong enough to be detected by amateur enthusiasts'!

Better propagation conditions on the higher bands made this one of the more successful contests, around 550 Commonwealth stations took part of which 250 were in the UK. 150 logs were entered. The Senior section was won by Canada for the first time. Vic Williams, VE3KE, had a clear lead over George Dent, VQ4AQ, closely followed by George Barrett, ZC4IP. Derek Ritson, G5RI, was the highest scoring G followed by G6CJ, G5DQ and G3FPQ. Some of the G stations managed over 100 bonus contacts. The scoring system, the sliding scale of bonuses, was felt to be 'too complicated' a point readily agreed by the Contests Committee when it came to checking! It was simplified for the 1957 contest.

Table 2.26 Leading stations Senior BERU Contest 1957²²

1	VE3KE	4267
2	VQ4AQ	3943
3	ZC4IP	3903
4	G5RI	3359
5	G6CJ	3129
6	G5DQ	3115
7	G3FPQ	3065
8	G2DC	2644
9	VK6RU	2530
10	G3FXB	2529

Table 2.27 Leading stations Junior BERU Contest 1957

1	ZS6R	2250
2	ZB1BF	2141
3	G3IDC	2072
4	VQ2GR	1644
5	GW3AHN	1420
6	AP2RH	1170
7	G5MP	1167
8	ZD4BQ	1140
9	DL2UY	1078
10	VQ4KPB	1025

Jack, G2DC, commenting on conditions, said,

...propagation conditions that must have been new and fantastic to many competitors..in six consecutive contacts, six continents were worked.

Most of the leading stations used some form of directive array, fixed V beams or rhombics as well as rotatable yagis. In the receivers there was evidence that home construction or at least modification was on the increase. Out of the top 26 stations four had home brew and the rest were extensively modified. HRO, AR88 and Eddystone 888 were most popular. 813s and 807s were the favoured PA.

Operating standards had improved but one 'well known' entrant was heard to be 'using methods of queue jumping that proved highly unpopular with other contestants'.

Tom, GW3AHN, an entrant in the Junior section commented, 'Believe me there is nothing 'Junior' about successfully working in BERU from G with 25 watts.' From then on the 25 watt section was called Low Power.

²² The BERU Contests 1957, RSGB Bulletin, 33, 24, (1957). Senior 107, Low Power 23.

MP4BBE Bahrain by John G3VDL Part 3.

In BERU 1957 I made 211 QSOs and came 37th out of 110.

An incident occurred in 1957 that was to affect future BERU contests for me : not long after the Suez crisis, Radio Cairo had been stirring up the local Bahraini population; all the locals were on strike , the road between Awali (the oil camp where I was) and Manama (the capital town) was impassable for various reasons and the telephone lines had been cut. The situation was quite hairy. There was no official radio communication between Awali and the outside world and we amateurs were asked to do something. So we set up a CW link with the nearest Cable and Wireless station and passed all our official Company traffic to them, who relayed them on to the London and New York offices. During this period , the London newspapers were printing reports of "expatriates in Bahrain being massacred". Our little operation put a lot of people's minds at rest.

The incident was never publicised by the Company, because it did not reflect very well on the company's emergency plans. The outcome was that the Company decided to quietly encourage the three or four amateurs in Awali and, as far as I was concerned, what better way of keeping in practice than being able to enter BERU full time! So from 1958 onwards I was able to take the BERU Saturday and Sunday off, although in practice any urgent work had to come first.

I had now obtained a rather battered Hallicrafters SX-28, which weighed a ton, and my aerials were dipoles for the HF bands and a wire for 7. In BERU 1958 I was on 7, 14, 21 and 28 (still not on 3.5) and came 34th out of 118.

I had the same set-up in 1959 and came 14th out of 118.

The 21st BERU Contest 1958

Hilary and Fuchs cross Antarctica

Stereo audio equipment on sale for first time

Integrated circuit demonstrated, Van Allen belts discovered

Birth defects linked to Thalidomide

The 21st contest was won rather easily by ZS6DL, but the contest for the highest G was a close run fight between G5RI, G3FPQ and G5DQ who had 248, 242 and 232 contacts respectively.

Table 2.28 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1958²³

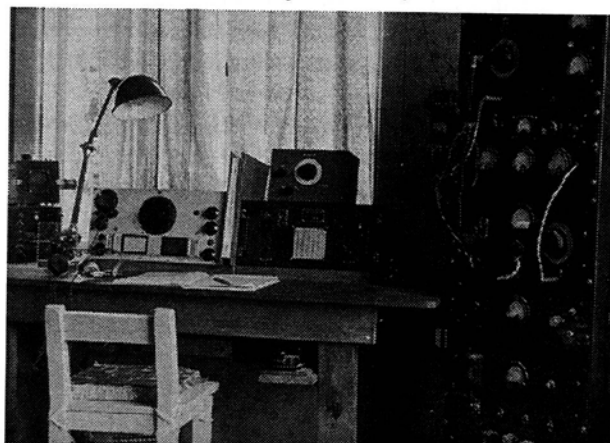
1	ZS6DL	4669
2	ZC4IP	4145
3	VE3KE	3977
4	VE2WW	3339
5	G5RI	3165
6	G3FPQ	3104
7	G5DQ	3018
8	G3FXB	2841
9	G6CJ	2698
10	G2DC	2685

Table 2.29 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1958

1	ZS6R	2538
2	ZD2DCP	1994
3	ZB2I	1946
4	GW3AH N	1735
5	VQ3SS	1690
6	VS1FJ	1603
7	VO2NA	1508
8	VS1HX	1450
9	DL2UY	1340
10	VQ4KPB	1233

ZS6DL had an impressive antenna farm, 5el on 28, 4el on 21, 6el on 14 and 2el on 7.

Of the twelve leading stations National receivers were much in evidence, 4 HROs, NC100/200, usually with a crystal controlled converter for HF. However the most significant new technology was the first use by a leading station of a new type of equipment, the SSB transceiver, the Collins KWM1, used by VE2WW, Don McVicar.



ZL1AH in 1958, Tz Clapp CFO to push pull 807s Rx Homebrew triple conversion based on HRO tuning-gang

²³ The Twenty First BERU Contest 1958, RSGB Bulletin, 33, 577, (1958). Senior 118, Junior 25.

and 3,5 - 4.0 MHz band spreadcoil. Crystal converter front ends. Antennas Vee Beams.

The 22nd BERU Contest 1959

Space Race starts, Russians photograph moon's 'dark side'

Peace in Cyprus but emergency in Rhodesia

St. Lawrence Seaway completed

Transistors replace valves in radios

Antarctic Treaty signed, creates science reserve.

Not only a DX contest but a meeting ground for old friends, fleeting contacts with calls that will not be heard until the next time.

For the second time a Canadian won, Jack Hepburn, VE7KX, made 463 contacts of which no less than 132 were bonuses. The contest for the leading G station was particularly close with Peter, G5DQ, and Derek, G5RI, both having the same number of contacts and bonuses. Close checking separated them by 22 points.

Locked in close combat!

Pete started on 14 at 0000 on 17/1/59. He worked 8 VEs in quick succession but by 0034 G5RI was already ahead 9/13. Pete then alternated between 7 and 14 until by 0222 and ZD2GUP the scores were 26/29. A short trip to 3.5 only snagged ZC4IP and VE2WW followed by John, MP4BBE on 7. Sticking to 14, by 0548 Pete was ahead 43/39. Continuing on 14 and as the morning wore on increasing trips to 21 and 28 paid off with Pete drawing ahead, 85/75 at 1102 and by 1150, 91/81. After a long spell on 28 a quick trip to 14 caught ZS2CV, Marion Island, Pete 140, Derek 126. At 1943 Pete took a rest until 0110 on 18/1/59 and by 0827 after a quiet night on 3.5 and 7 a QSO with ZL3GQ took Pete to 163 and Derek closing at 160. An hour more work took them to 170/173, by 1328 they were 185/182 and by 1535, 198/197! By hopping between 21 and 28 Pete opened up a small gap, 204/201. But after a further hour Derek gained the lead, 211/213. Pete's last QSO was with VO2NA, 228/225. On checking they both had 225 QSOs and 99 bonuses. A close run thing, both used Labgear TXs but quite different antennas, dipoles and verticals at G5DQ, rhombics and beams at G5RI.

Great operating, gentlemen !

Derek commented recently that Pete is one of those operators with an uncanny instinct for the interesting station. Apparently Pete suffered from TVI and this meant that he would go down onto 40 whilst the rest of the horde were fighting it out on 20. Pete picked up DX the rest never heard.

Table 2.30 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1959²⁴

1	VE7KX	4948
2	ZC4IP	4157
3	VE2WW	3702
4	ZD2GUP	3426
5	G5DQ	3100
6	G5RI	3078
7	VE3UOT	3081
8	VE2YU	2914
9	G5WP	2798
10	G2DC	2559

Table 2.31 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1959

1	ZS6R	2816
2	ZD2DCP	1807
3	ZC4PN	1729
4	VS1HX	1635
5	GW3AH	1524
	N	
6	9G1BQ	1429
7	G2DU	1428
8	ZE5JE	1415
9	ZE6JE	1267
10	VO2NA	1237

G3IDC/4S7 won the receiving contest more as a consolation prize, as he was unable to transmit due to a ban being in force in Sri Lanka.

From 1959 to 1970 Rusty, G5WP, kept a diary on each contest. Luckily these diaries survived as they were passed to Al Slater, G3FXB, for safe keeping. Rusty prepared for the contest with considerable care. He had to finish early in the 1959 event. The diary comments,

Blew up! Transformer in power supply - primary went down to frame and the heater transformer tapped on secondary burned up !

More commercial transmitters as well as receivers were in evidence, both G leaders G5DQ and G5RI used Labgear LG300 transmitters²⁵ The trend in modified receivers continued with G3JZK being most ambitious...an Eddystone S740, preceded by a converter, fed a panadaptor and an extended if strip with crystal lattice filters, synchronous detector with twin product detectors, I and Q audio channels with sum and difference circuits giving independent upper and lower sideband outputs to each earphone, or either sideband to both phones.

VOIDX enthused about the sense of Commonwealth unity the contest engenders. Whilst 9G1BQ praised the

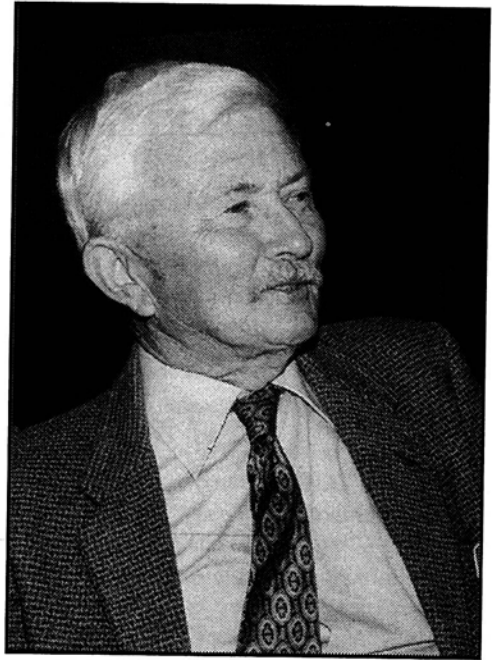
²⁴ RSGB Bulletin, 34, 530, (1959). Senior 118, Low Power 21.

²⁵ RSGB Bulletin, 37, 29, (1961)

quality of operating, '...an American friend said he had not heard such beautiful operating from so many amateurs in any other contest.' Comments about 9G1BQ's operating are less complimentary. The Canadians had to put up with a lot of QRM from 'South of the border.' VE2YU related that after hearing a W call 'CQ BERU' he was surprised to hear a station come back. The reply, short and to the point, was simply *Remember 1776!*

Summary of the post war decade by Dan, GW3HCL, ex VR1AA

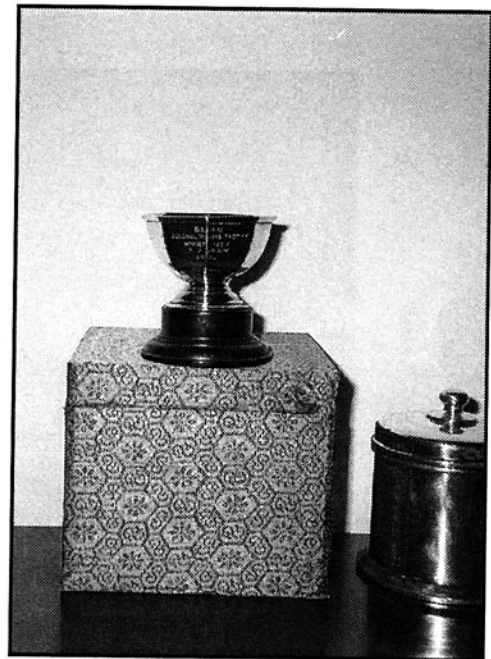
I suppose that BERU reached its peak in the decade following WW2. In the colonies the expats were still running things, many lived isolated from their kind. To them amateur radio was a godsend. Most put in an appearance in BERU because it was the thing to do. I think of friends, alas mostly dead now, planting rubber in Malaya, tea in Ceylon, coffee in Kenya, District Officers up country in Africa, a manager of a gold mine in Fiji, plus Colonial Policemen almost everywhere and teachers and missionaries of various persuasions. And there was one lighthouse keeper²⁶ and of course the Postmaster on Pitcairn. For several years there was a ham at the cable repeater station on Fanning Island but I didn't know him. These people were the heart of BERU, while in the 'old' Commonwealth many still thought of the UK as 'Home' and felt they should support the clans. These ties have now rotted away while the expats have been replaced by locals more interested in money than ham radio.



Dan Lockyer, GW3HCL, ex VR1AA, (G3MXJ)



Pete, G5DQ (L) with Derek, G5RI (G3MXJ)



The miniature of the Col. Thomas Rosebowl awarded to Peter, G5DQ in 1959

²⁶ Russ, VK9XK

Chapter 3

The Post-War Years 1960-1969

The 23rd BERU Contest 1960

Wind of Change speech. Sharpsville massacre

Kennedy elected President

Dead Sea scrolls discovered

First weather satellite launched. Laser demonstrated

'Psycho' opens to a shower of applause

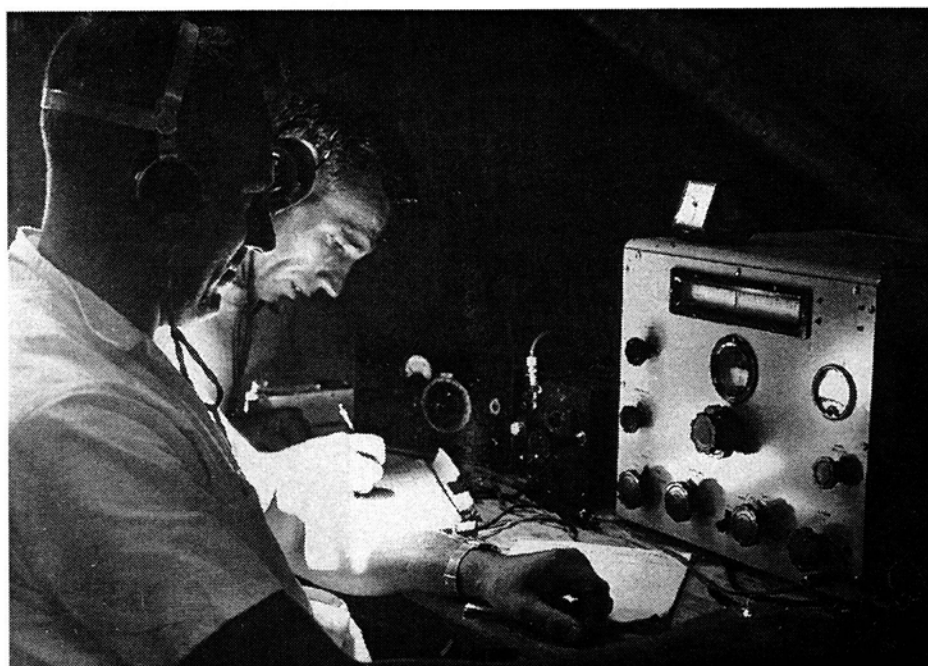
George Barrett, ZC4IP, moved up one place to win the 1960 contest from Don MacVicar, VE2WW. Derek, G5RI, was the leading G by a short head from Ron Perks, G4CP, who in turn had a small margin over David, G3FPQ. Only 100 points separated the three of them. Conditions were generally poor- African stations had electric storms and ZS6R commented that this probably, 'evened things up for the G stations who had to close down for TVI'. VK5JT lamented, 'conditions on all bands were very poor...dust, heat and rain...not much DX...'

Table 3.1 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1960

1	ZC4IP	3804
2	VE2WW	3620
3	VE3UOT	3545
4	ZB1FA	3304
5	VE2YU	3209
6	G5RI	3115
7	G4CP	3030
8	G3FPQ	3005
9	VK5NO	2920
10	G5WP	2835

Table 3.2 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1960

1	ZS6R	2381
2	G2DU	1825
3	GW3JI	1620
4	ZE6JE	1380
5	ZE5JE	1329
6	ZL3US	1305
7	VO2NA	1295
8	G3LHJ	1230
9	G3GNS	1193
10	VK5BS	1145



ZB1AQ with G3FGD operating, Field Day, Rx CR150 and Q Fiver, Tx 20 metres output 8 watts to QV047 (G3 FGD)



Ray Jones, VK3RJ, at 80 in January 1980, the receiver is an early National HRO ex-war vintage, Tx is Yaesu. Above left is Geloso transmitter, homebrewed. Just visible above it is Ray's 1.8MHz TPTG super chirp producer! (VK3XB)

Whilst G2HDR expressed the general concerns about the lack of DX when he said, 'If the Canadians ever withdraw their support, BERU will be a very sorry affair. There was very little activity from other Commonwealth countries as far as I could judge.'

Rusty's diary covered many aspects of his preparation and tactics -

- Auto-CW. The Grundig system was fundamentally OK but bad recording. This must be more carefully done and the relay actuation reformed.¹

- TX. Must take the 400 v negative off the key, dangerous. Seemed to be no need for full break-in.

- Antenna. Quad satisfactory. Good on 14Mhz, great improvement on '4ZU. 3.5Mhz GP still outstanding. 7Mhz GP seemed satisfactory. ZL3JT reported receiving me but I didn't hear him seems to point to that shortfall is in RX.

- RX. In my case the coil changing mechanism of the HRO is a bore. Must consider a new RX.

- Operations. Grave mistake not going to bed on the Friday night as I was exhausted through the Saturday afternoon. Get a new chair!

Rusty also noted down what he learnt about other operators. Here are his comments on the approach used by David, G3FPQ,

'3FPQ went to bed Saturday night from 9 till 2 AM. Also went to bed Friday evening 7 PM - 12 midnight. He worked a number of VE2s and 3s around 4 AM on Sunday AM. I missed out on this. He also said at 4 AM 14Mhz was wide open to Pacific Islands but no ZLs. It certainly wasn't on Saturday AM but condx were poor then and good on Sunday.

If VE1-3 worked on Saturday still seems no point in cutting proposed Saturday night sleep down.

Possible op. times :- Sat 00.00 - 03.30, 06.30- 23.00, 06.30 - end.

Sleep :- Fri night 03.30 - 06.30, Sat night 23.00 - 06.30.

Sleep on Friday evening not easy. Possible take Friday off and sleep in afternoon which seems to come easily.

Later in 1960, it was announced that G2EC, Eric Cole, or to give him his full title, Major-General Eric Cole, CB,CBE, Director of Telecommunications, War Office, had accepted to become President of the RSGB for 1961².

¹ This was a method of using a tape recorder and detector to send calls.

² His Presidential Address makes interesting reading, RSGB Bulletin, 36, 410, (1961)

As you will have read he won the BERU Contest once³, not twice as the Bulletin announcement said, as SU1EC and came runner up once as ZC6EC. He won the Rosebowl twice, however, for these results.

The late 50s and early 60s was a very active period of technical change. Post-war equipment was still in use but was being modified extensively to improve performance. The most significant change was the growth of SSB telephony. Many were building SSB transmitters, the only commercial ones being US from Collins etc. There was as yet no evidence of the Japanese electronics industry supplying the market⁴. A photograph of a JA shack in 1960 looked very much like a UK one, with home built equipment much in evidence. Dick, G2DAF, was just starting his regular column in the Bulletin and describing the latest transmitter and receiver designs. He commented in late 1960 that, 'SSB is attracting ... many dyed-in-the-wool CW men'.

The 24th BERU Contest 1961

Cyprus joins Commonwealth

Malta self-government

South Africa quits Commonwealth

USSR first man in space

The major change in the rules was shift of date to the beginning of March. This was to try and avoid clashing with various other contests, the Russian WSEM and a US one too. The former was a frequent source of problems especially on the Sunday. BERU remained a weekend 48 hour event.

George, ZC4IP, won for a second time but Rusty, G5WP, and David, G3FPQ, came second and third respectively. The change in date seemed to be well received from the VEs and VKs.

Table 3.3 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1961⁵

1	ZC4IP	3719
2	G5WP	3489
3	G3FPQ	3459
4	VE2WW	3401
5	G5DQ	3214
6	G5RI	3183
7	VQ2HR	3165
8	G3FXB	2940
9	VE1TG	2727
10	VE3KE	2720

Table 3.4 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1961

1	G3IDC	1955
2	ZS4MG	1929
3	ZL3US	1867
4	VQ3HD	1755
5	G2DU	1500
6	VK7SM	1200
7	G3GNS	1135
8	5N2DCP	1104
9	9G1BQ	1039
10	G3OOU	890

G3IDC did very well to win the Low Power Section, with 163 QSOs. Al, G3FXB, commented that, 'Joke of BERU- a UB5 calling CQ BERU.'

Rusty was well pleased with his second position and most of his system seems to have worked well. He slept on Friday 19.00 - 23.30, had a snooze 03.30 - 04.20 and Saturday 20.00 - 05.30. This arrangement seems OK and no particular exhaustion' and goes on, 'Sat 2P, Sun 1P !'

The 25th BERU Contest 1962

New Zealander, Peter Snell sets world mile record

Live trans-Atlantic TV with Telstar

Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago independent

Marilyn Monroe dies

Quasars discovered

Conditions were rather better than expected for most of the weekend. Good 3.5MHz signals were received in UK from several ZLs, some VEs and VP8GQ. Jamming on 7 again made the band very difficult, a few ZLs, VKs and again VP8GQ. An excellent evening opening to VE7 on 14MHz was accompanied by rare ZD9AD and VR2EA. 21MHz carried VS4RS, VS9MB and VQ8BM but few signals were heard in the UK from VK and ZL. VE stations were very active though African stations were much less in evidence.

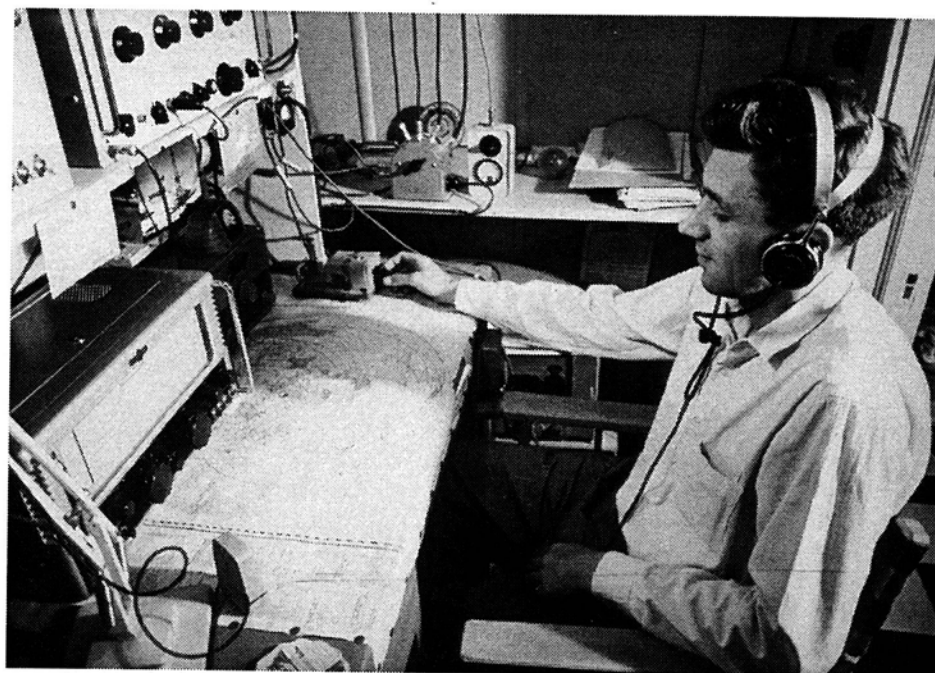
Rusty commented,

7Mhz almost useless Saturday evening due to splurge from jammers and the Russians who seem to have a contest nearly every weekend. Band good Sunday morning in spite EUs etc all over. I went to 7026 and just ran tape until VKs found me. In future no CQs! With CQ 2 BERU 2, lots of others come back.

³ Society News, RSGB Bulletin, 36, 174, (1960)

⁴ The Kokusai company had just started to supply SSB and CW IF filters.

⁵ The Twenty-fourth BERU Contest 1961, RSGB Bulletin, 37, 31, (1961). There were 102 High Power, 18 in Low Power.



John, MP4BBE, in 1961. Rx 888A homemade Tx 807 60 watt

Table 3.5 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1962⁶

1	ZB1HC	3422
2	ZC4IP	3245
3	G5WP	3035
4	VK5NO	3009
5	VE2YU	2890
6	VE2WW	2849
7	ZC4PB	2780
8	VE2NV	2760
9	G4CP	2755
10	G3FXB	2736

Table 3.6 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1962

1	VK2APK	2052
2	MP4BBE	1863
3	VK3RJ	1808
4	VQ4IN	1555
5	VK7SM	1474
6	ZL3US	1360
7	VK3AYR	1345
8	VK3ZC	1295
9	G3HRY	1160
10	ZB1CR	1135

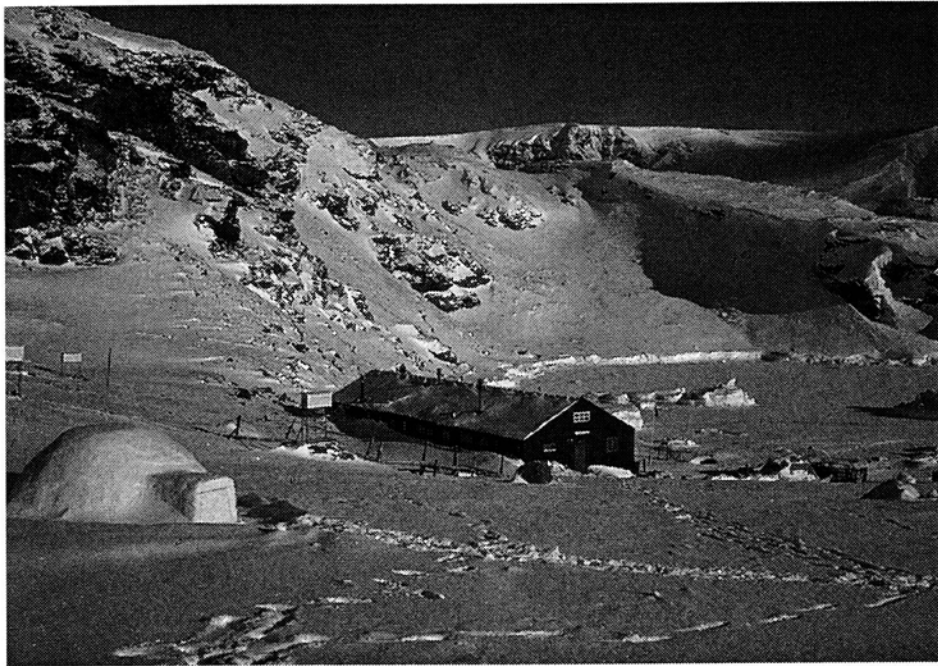
Peter, VP8GQ, missed the post with his entry. It was post marked March 27 1962 but did not reach RSGB Headquarters until January 29th 1963! But let Peter tell it in his own words.

VP8GQ Signy Island by Peter, G3LET. Part 1

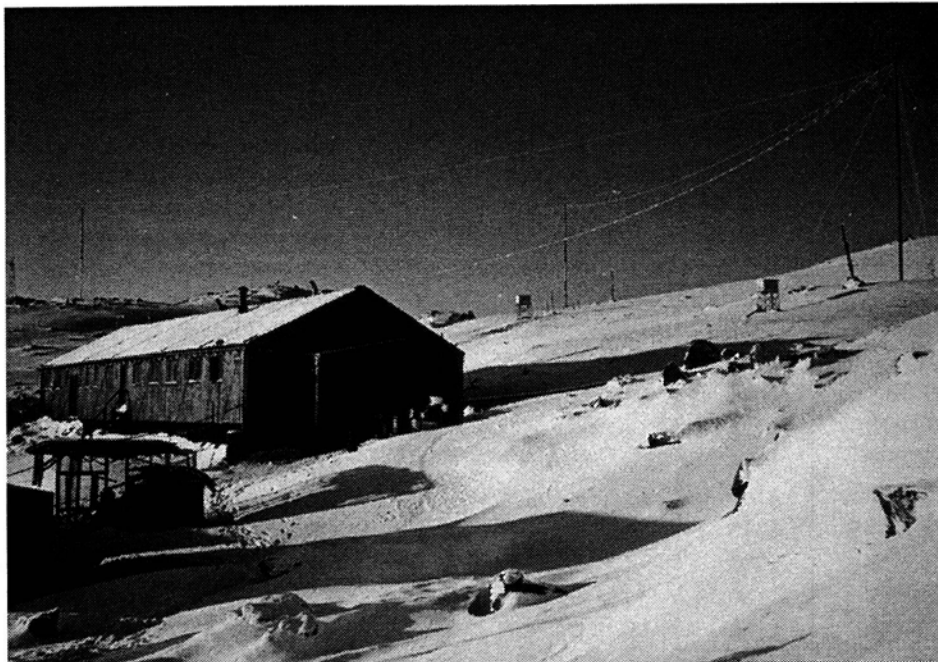
My own two periods of BERU activity were from 1958 to 1964, the latter three years being from VP8 and again from 1986 to 1991. The first period is really an 'in-between' era between the early days and the developments of today, with home-built transmitters still accounting for 30-40% of activity. Receivers, of course, were by that time almost exclusively commercial, although largely of wartime vintage.

Looking back, ham radio and, in particular, the BERU contest drove my decision in 1960 to apply for a position in what is now known as the British Antarctic Survey. Since I could remember, the contest had always been won by an east coast VE or a Mediterranean station and it seemed most unlikely that there would be openings of sufficient duration to G for a VP8 to actually make it to the top spot. The relative isolation from other Commonwealth areas and the presence of the southern pole between VP8 and VK/ZL also didn't help.

⁶ The Twenty-fifth BERU Contest 1962, RSGB Bulletin, 38, 137,(1963) There were 109 High Power, 16 in Low Power.



The hut on Signy Island , 1962 (G3LET)

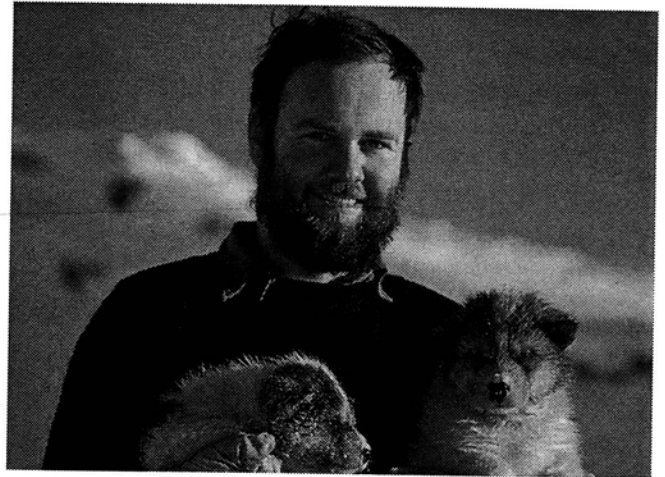


A rare shot of the living hut and rhombic, with the frost making it visible, 1963 (G3LET)

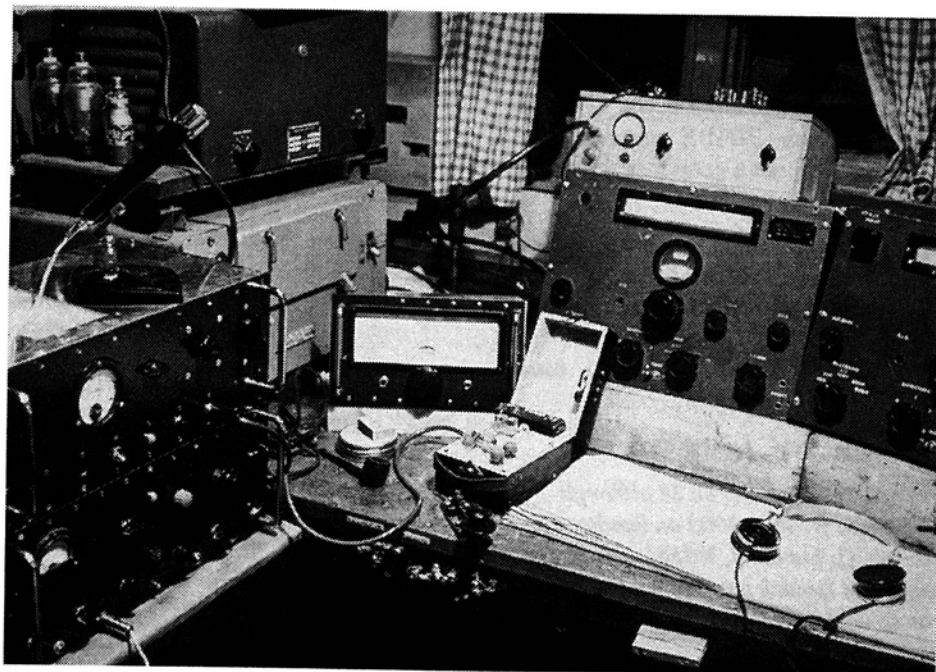
Nevertheless, I spent much of 1960 constructing and testing a modified G2DAF phasing type exciter and assembling the parts for a 2 x TT21 amplifier which would run at about 500 watts. On completion of my apprenticeship I duly applied to BAS for a job as wireless operator/mechanic and was successful, being assigned to Signy Island in the South Orkneys - rare! Sailing time approached quickly and the PA never got beyond the chassis metalwork stage. But I packed all the bits anyway.

Arrival at the base was rather a let-down. It was on the site of an old Norwegian whaling station, right on the shore in a sheltered cove and badly screened in most directions. The antenna consisted of 70 ft of wire running N - S, supported by two 40ft masts and fed directly into the existing RCA ET4336 transmitter. This ran a pair of 813s and had an indescribably unstable VFO for use on anything other than the official channels which were crystal controlled. The receiver was a Marconi CR100, which required the fingers of a brain surgeon to resolve any frequency above 14MHz. There was also a fully installed and operational T1154,

complete with the original rotary power supply, for use when the gennies were out of action. Arriving in early December 1961, it was some weeks before I was actually able to work into the UK and I could well understand the problems experienced by my predecessor VP8EG, who I had chased for weeks from the UK and with whom I had eventually made a somewhat doubtful QSO.



Peter, VP8GQ, with friends 1962 (G3LET)



BERU 1963 shack, G2 DAF exciter and 2 x TT21 PA on left. VFO in centre, Z match above, LH B28 receiver. Note the fully operational T1154 top left, used with batteries and rotary converter to send traffic to Port Stanley, Falklands, when generators not running (G3LET)

The first priority was clearly to try to finish the TT21 PA and hope that I hadn't forgotten any major item, the base at Signy only being accessible to the outside world from December to April. I finished it, and a Z-Match ATU by late January and found that conditions were starting to improve after the solstice. At least I was getting a G pile-up on 14MHz for an hour or so around 1900Z, but with sunspot minimum approaching, the band soon died to Europe, leaving another few hours open into the US and Canada. I could never work out why conditions into the US were so reliable whilst days could go by without a sniff of a G.

March 1962 came around and with it BERU. At least there were more Gs around than usual and I did about as well as I could have expected, with even a few Gs on 7MHz and G5WP on 80.

I copied out the log entry but, alas, the last ship had already sailed and there was a note in the Bulletin the following year offering commiserations that VP8GQ had missed the deadline for entries by about 9 months. Not a lot of encouragement and the next year would be my last chance!

The 26th BERU Contest 1963

*'I have a dream', says Luther King
Hitchcock's 'The Birds' first shown
Kennedy assassinated*

Conditions were patchy for the most part. As is usual under such situations they were better further south. VP8GQ, G5WP and ZB1BX were the leading stations. VP8GQ managed with only 6 hours sleep in the 48 hours, one of the advantages of youth. ZB1BX commented, 'I have learned a few lessons, it is not a good idea to include curry in your contest diet!'

Although a win from the Mediterranean is said to be a 'natural' due to the large number of Gs available on almost all bands, these can cover up the more valuable bonus QSOs and this was the reason that Rusty, G5WP, just inched ahead of ZB1BX. ZB1BX had twice as many contacts as Rusty.

Rusty's view of conditions from the UK was,

Poorish. Very few ZLs. Nothing on 28 although ZC4IP said he might try it on 1000 on Sunday - tried a couple of CQs but dead. WSEM contest on 7MHz Sat night and Sunday morning and all day until 18.00 or so on 14MHz.

7Mhz Sunday evening very quiet little doing tho' VP8GQ was good signal all through evening calling the Gs he hadn't worked, not CQing. VP5XG good signal around 2315 Very few VK/ZLs. VEs weak.

3.5Mhz not bad. Fri-Sat night heard VU2GG round 0100-0130 calling but only heard him work VU2AR!

21Mhz fair to poor. Surprised to hear VE2/3 although didn't hear any VE1s.

Because of the WSEM contest Rusty evolved a strategy to mitigate the worst effects. he wrote,

Undoubtedly one has to break the back of 7MHz contacts through Friday night - Saturday morning before the weekly WSEM starts. Very rough going on Sunday morning with the T2-T4 notes. Also 3.5MHz needs tackling on a first night - morning because on Sunday morning the PAs and DLs are on there trying for DX QSOs.

Table 3.7 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1963⁷

1	VP8GQ	3477
2	G5WP	2850
3	ZB1BX	2840
4	G3FXB	2598
5	5B4IP	2590
6	5B4TC	2551
7	VE2NV	2539
8	VS9AAA	2517
9	G5RP	2432
10	VP5XG	2420

Frank, VS1FJ, won the Low Power section. He used a three band ground plane with 25 watts and an Eddystone 888 receiver.

Table 3.8 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1963

1	VS1FJ	2180
2	ZB1CR	1930
3	VQ4IN	1921
4	VK7SM	1435
5	GW3JI	1375
6	G3DYY	1300
7	G3HRY	1160
8	VK3RJ	1015
9	ZE3JE	960
10	VK3ZC	770

Dennis, G3MXJ, remembers 1963 as his first entry. VP8GQ was an outstanding signal on all bands. Dennis, using wire antennas made 86 contacts, good enough to give him 37th place and 14th highest G.

But here is the winner to relate his second and ultimately successful attempt to win.

⁷ BERU Contest 1963, RSGB Bulletin, 38, 127, (1963). There were 90 High Power, 14 in Low Power.

VP8GQ Signy Island by Peter, G3LET. Part 2

Serious antenna work was clearly required. I had one spare mast and experimented with a phased broadside array, aligned for the UK. A few dB improvement perhaps but the phasing was only effective on 14MHz so what about BERU?

Many evenings during the following winter were spent generating a great circle map of the world, centred on Signy Island. This was prepared by calculating, using log tables, the distance and bearing from Signy to all the 30° lat. and long. intersections and drawing in the continents and islands freehand. Study of this masterpiece revealed that an unterminated rhombic antenna pointing in the general direction of the UK would effectively cover the major Commonwealth areas, except for VE, to which the path was already consistently good.

Some fast talking (in morse) with HQ in Port Stanley produced one more mast and a big reel of rather nice BeCu stranded wire, all of which was delivered the following December. Frenzied activity installing this and moving the existing 3 masts produced a rhombic, 250ft per leg, high up on the scree slope above the base hut, fed with open line from the trusty Z-Match.

My investment of time, nervous energy, hard labour and frostbite in BERU 1963 was considerable. Tests in January with Steve G2BVN, who used to handle my logs, were encouraging. Much to Steve's relief these could now be passed regularly on SSB, but the performance of the CR100 in this mode made life quite trying on the return path.

A week before BERU, I 'intercepted' a brand new Eddystone 680X on its way down to Deception Island. As an air base, they apparently merited superior equipment to us plebs on Signy, who were really only there to counteract the presence of the LU-Z base on neighbouring Laurie Island. Here at last was a receiver that worked on 21MHz without holding your breath! I shall never know how it performed on 28MHz because the band had been dead for months.

The night of BERU arrived. It had been brought forward to February in 1963. My official function as wireless operator was to pass weather observations and other traffic four times a day, including a sked at 0001Z, so I hustled the Port Stanley operator and made the start only a minute late. 14MHz - almost dead. 7MHz - not a lot, but a few Gs starting to come through.

By 0030Z, things were looking quite reasonable, with S7 and S8 reports coming in. Conditions were obviously quite grim in the UK, because the incoming serial numbers were very low and even the VEs were finding it hard going. 80m opened slowly and produced a few points.

Things steadily improved and by the end of the first day it actually dawned on me that the impossible could happen. With the low sunspot number, the path between G and VE that counts for such a lot in BERU was virtually dead above 7MHz, whereas I had good access to both of these areas. In fact, most of the paths from VP8 are N - S if you think about it. LF noise was low, allowing very good signals on 80 to VE, but not so good to G, the path to which, it later turned out, peaked at the solstices. The other factor that helped was the 48 hour format, which removes some of the luck from contests like BERU, because although 21MHz was rather watery early on, signals to G on the second day were tremendous. Conversely, 7MHz, which had been really good during the first night, deteriorated steadily thereafter.

A major disappointment was missing VSILP on 80m towards the end of the contest and by that time I was sure that either 5B4IP or ZB1BX had won yet again because their numbers at the last encounter had been well above mine. However, with their strong signals into the UK, I don't think they had the same incentive to go scratching around for bonus points as I did during quiet moments. Not that there were many of these and had I stayed awake the second night, G would have been worked during every hour of the contest. Nothing like BERU to really check out conditions!

Being a little earlier in the year, the sea-ice stayed away and the precious log winged its way to arrive with a few days to spare.

When the results came out, my feelings were (only slightly!) mixed, because G5WP would otherwise have won, a very rare occurrence from the UK as you know. However, conditions had peaked at just the right time for a VP8 win and there was I, a young sprog, to take advantage of it.

I would actually be interested to know who is the youngest winner of BERU to date; My claim is 23 and 11 months! Incidentally, I think many participants would like to see a list of BERU winners from the beginning. They are all there on the trophy but, being abroad at the time, I never saw it, having to be content with my miniature.

The combined effects of the rhombic and the unusual conditions of 1963 were further demonstrated in 1964, when an illegal multi-op BERU effort was mounted from the home of VP8HJ in Port Stanley, using the same transmitter and quite a reasonable wire antenna. We got absolutely nowhere!

The 26th BERU Contest 1964

*Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment
Kenya becomes a republic*

Conditions were fair to poor over the entire world, except it would seem for the UAs and UBs! The contest was won by Mike, 5N2JKO, well clear of ZB1BX, G5WP and 5B4IP who were all within 68 points of each other. The effect of the different operating strategies can be seen in the Bonus/QSOs ratios of the leading stations. 5N2JKO had 58/428=0.13, ZB1BX had 61/363=0.17 and G5WP had 100/228=0.44.

George, 5B4IP, related later in 1966 that,

1964 entry was spoiled as cross fire between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus prevented me from retuning the vertical for different bands!

Table 3.9 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1964⁸

1	5N2JKO	3250
2	ZB1BX	2990
3	G5WP	2960
4	5B4IP	2922
5	G3FXB	2758
6	VS9AAA	2655
7	G4CP	2597
8	VQ2WR	2544
9	VE7KX	2530
10	5B4KG	2416

ZB1BR won the Low Power Section with a score which would have placed him 12th just ahead of G5RI in the High Power Section. By way of interest the Bonus/QSO ratios for ZB1CR were 46/285=0.16, for VK2APK 50/141=0.35 and for 5H3HD 41/119=0.34. Even 'hunting' can't catch 'running' if the runner can go twice as fast as a hunter.

Table 3.10 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1964

1	ZB1CR	2327
2	VK2APK	1690
3	5H3HD	1404
4	ZD6OL	1395
5	GW3JI	1372
6	VK7SM	1320
7	VK3RJ	1190
8	VK3ZC	1090
9	G3DYY	1055
10	VK4SS	1005

Rusty's careful preparations were somewhat frustrated by a visit from the Post Office (the licensing authority in those days). The inspector came at 1800 and didn't leave until 1930. Rusty went to bed at 1930 but couldn't sleep.

Rusty noted,

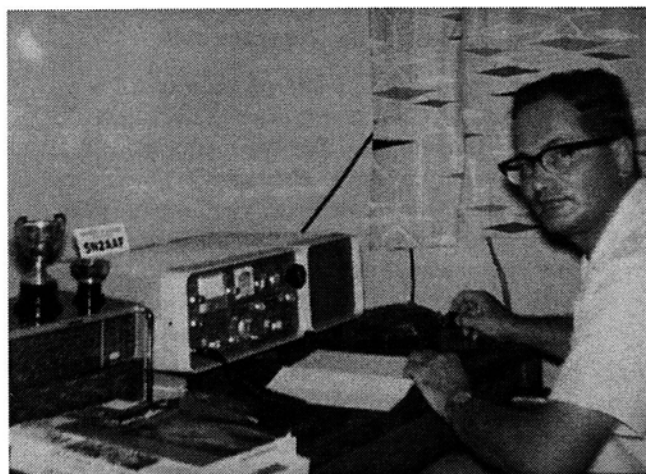
'FBX (G3FXB) can listen through and goes on one sign after I go over! Also Al quite ruthless about QRMing.

VS1LP a wonderful signal on 3.5 Sunday 2300 S7 without antenna on HRO - better that way evidently front end overloading on commercials and loud Gs on frequency.

Still need more selectivity.'

Here's Mike's account of his contest.

Idle thoughts during BERU by Mike Dransfield, 5N2JKO⁹



Mike, 5N2JKO/5N2AAF, 1964, (Lomax)

⁸ BERU 1964, RSGB Bulletin, 40, 469, (1964). There were 91 High Power, 15 in Low Power.

⁹ RSGB Bulletin, 40, 316, (1964)

The small paragraph in the Lagos newspaper caught my eye; 'Idel Fitr public holiday, February 14 and 15.' A check of the RSGB Contests Diary : BERU Contest, February 15 and 16. What a stroke of luck ! For the very first time 5N2JKO would be able to enter a 48 hour contest without having to go to work on the Saturday. This was an opportunity not to be missed, and also a challenge; hadn't VS9AAA told me the other day he would also be making an all-out effort to win ?

Friday dawned-the first day of the holiday. Log sheets were prepared, a table for stations worked was also drawn up (must remember to give more space for the G6s and the G8s this year-ran out of space last time and had to use the GI column instead). Wonder if I should include a column for ZL? Bound to remain blank, but no harm in being hopeful.

A quick check of the transmitter on all bands seemed to show that it was functioning normally. Better clean and adjust the bug key and tighten all the locking nuts-not much CW has come out of 5N2JKO since he went SSB. Clean the harmattan dust out of the pa compartment. Wonder if a second 40m dipole at right angles to the existing one would help? Probably would, but a check in the junk box produced only 6ft. of co-ax, so that idea fizzled out.. Amazing how BULLETIN authors always find just what they want in their junk boxes-5N2JKO never does ! Houseboy given an important instruction for the weekend: 'Ba ka tafi gidan radio ba !' (Keep out of the radio room).

Meals arranged to coincide with probable spells of low activity. Convenient that African cooks have the ability to keep food hot for hours without spoiling it too much.

Count Down

15.00 GMT-nine hours to go. Took an early supper, then dismissed the servant and went to bed.

16.30-Neighbour called to sell tickets for the University opera; seemed a little shocked at my unconventional bed-time.

19.00-still awake; wonder why I can never sleep before a contest.

20.00-never felt less like sleeping, so got up and watched ' The Saint ' on TV.

20.35-back to bed and finally asleep.

23.45 Alarm clock did it's stuff, so rig warmed up, operator likewise. Freezing in the shack (well nearly-temperature down to 60°F). Quick look on 20 showed only a few South Americans, so tuned the rig up on 40. Exchanged reports with G3FPQ to confirm rig was working and then ...

00.01 GMT --W H A M M M ! 40m bursts into activity. I had been keeping a channel warm so there was no problem with making the initial contacts which give one confidence. Gs seemed to be finding BERU stations hard to uncover, so 5N2JKO was kept busy.

The Contest Begins

After about 3 hours of this 40 was becoming deserted, so a QSY to 80 was indicated. G3FXB was coming through weakly, but knowing that Al has a good pair of ears, gave him a call and got him. Where were the rest of the Gs? VE3KE dominated the band, but very little else was coming through. Comforting thought that my current serial number was a bit higher than most others. 05.40 hours-a beautiful pinkish-orange African sunrise, and 80 started to peak up; quite a flurry of activity for half an hour, then the band went dead as the hot sun started its climb.

Now for the rat race on 20m. Should find quite a few Africans and the Gs should be coming through soon. What was that? ZB1BX giving me a number 20 more than mine? How did he do it , because I never even heard him on 40 or 80?

07.30-breakfast, and then I put the beam long path to the Pacific. 08.30-still no Pacific DX in the log.

Barka da Sallah, Maigida!' This was my garden boy greeting me in the hope of getting his Sallah present, so forked out five bob and told him to vanish for the day. Back to 20 and 15 metres. Tried to work ZB1BX and VS9AAA on 10m, but no propagation. Later heard some F and CT1 stations, and also ZB1BX, but Denzil must have returned to 15 as I was calling him on 10.

Dancing Girls

Now more interruptions. In the UK, the carol singers perform in the evenings before the holiday; here in Northern Nigeria the kids visit the houses during the two days of the holiday to show off their new songs and dances. Bit off-putting to one's operating to have young girls doing a cross between the can-can and a belly-dance outside the window.

Throw a few pennies out and return to the contest. A quick shout of ' Mum gode, Maigida ' and they are gone, only to be replaced in half an hour by another troupe. This is most upsetting to one's concentration, so finally close the front door and hope that the next batch will assume I am out.

14.00 hours. Getting pretty warm in the shack; the thermometer is up to 95°, but the transmitter seems to be running fairly cool. Wish the operator was! Have a cold shower before lunch, and wonder what has happened to the Far East stations. Found a

couple of VS1s, but nothing from 9M2 or VK. Turn the beam back to Canada and put out a directional CQ on 15. Not even a W came back, a sure sign that I wasn't getting out to North America. Back to 20m-Europeans should be getting stronger now. Yes, lot of Gs looking for DX, so get down to the rapid routine of contest exchanges.

Oh no, not another knock at the door! This time it was the night guard wishing me 'Barka da Sallah' and wanting his holiday dosh. Gets kinda expensive, especially as these people expect presents at Christmas as well!

At long last the Canadians start coming through on twenty, and I collect some welcome bonus points. The Gs faded out at sunset (17.40) and things quietened down. Haven't heard VS9AAA for sometime-wonder how he is doing. Can't hear any other 5N2s being worked- am I the only one carrying the flag for this outpost of the Empire-sorry, Commonwealth. (No, BCRU doesn't have the same feel about it as BERU).

Might as well have a bath and supper now. Back on 20 at 19.00, but the band seems horribly quiet. Very few Gs and no VEs. Another 29 hours to go-why did I ever start this contest? Conditions seem to indicate a few hours sleep, so set the alarm clock for 02.00 and get into bed.

Sleep Claims the Operator

Sunday morning. Seems to be getting light -must be the moon. No, can't be-it was the new moon yesterday when Ramadan ended. Look at the clock-05.00-what happened to my good intentions? The alarm seems to have gone off, but it failed to rouse 5N2JKO. That's ruined my chances of making a decent score. Hurry back to 80m to get a few points before diving into the maelstrom of 20 again. But what's all this din on 20? Key clicks from here to kingdom come, chirps, drifting T6 notes-another contest in full force. This is going to complicate things. Turn the beam to East Africa to remove some of the QRM and scrape up a few points. 5Z4AQ is a good signal-wonder if he can hear the noise from the north? Run out of stations from the east so beam on Europe again; a few strong Gs coming through, but worked all those yesterday, so go for a walk to stretch my legs before breakfast. Quite a nice morning now that the sun is up; pity I've got to waste it indoors!

Better have a look on 40m to get 25 points from one of the 9G1s.

A check on the serial numbers being exchanged on 20m reassured me that the leading operators must also have been in bed. What about 10m again? Should I waste precious moments in the hope of

bonus points, or stop on 15 and rake in the Gs at 5 points a time? Finally announce to anyone who might have been listening that I would now QSY to 28.1, and was delighted when ZB1CR came back to my CQ. Unfortunately no-one else did, so back to 15, No shortage of stations here -didn't realise so many Gs were contest-minded.

So the day wears on. More children come to dance in their holiday finery. Stock of pennies getting a bit low, and don't want to start dispensing shillings; these are the only currency in common circulation around Zaria. At 14.00 the expected opening to the Far East comes, and work VU, VS1 and VS4. Still no 9M2 or VK activity.

A Hausa trader with a huge pile of baskets on his head rings his bicycle bell. Perhaps he will go away if I pretend not to hear him. No, he is one of the persistent types, so get the house boy to send him away.

Note from my record chart that I still haven't worked Canada on 15, so again beam in that direction. A W1 answers my CQ, so work him in the hope that some VEs are listening. Yes, here they come. Get VE3, VE2 and VE1 in successive contacts, all the while being called by dozens of Ws and a DJ6 plaintively crying 'Wot is BERU?' The band closes like a clam to North America. A quick check on the transistor radio shows that the BBC is above average on 21470kc/s so there should be plenty more Gs to work. Many stations on 15 seem to be giving me better reports than they are getting from me-perhaps I should have realigned the receiver before the contest. Too late now, so I press on while I can still hear them.

Back to 20m. What a racket after the peace of 15! All the available space seems to be filled by ZB1BX, VS1LP, VS9AAA, several 5B4s, 5Z4AQ and G8KS, but finally manage to squeeze in and continue exchanging reports.

18.00-a vivid red sunset with the smoke from a bush fire silhouetted against the sky. Six hours more of the 1964 BERU. Not feeling too tired thanks to my unintentional full night's sleep, so resolve to fill in some of the missing prefixes. Try 40m-a CQ brought back LZ, YO, YU, SP and SM. Try again. Still that YO with the T2 note. Better work him or he will be bothering me with his buzzing all night. Heavens! That was fatal -now all of Eastern Europe is calling me-so try a quick QSY and try to work ZD3A and VS9AAA. Wonder why Bob and John only attract Gs with their CQs? Finally get ZD3A, but VS9AAA remains unworkable. I should have put up that other dipole after all. Scrape around 40 and work a few more Gs and also work ZB1CR-the only station I work on all five bands.

19.30-finally gave up the effort on 40m and return to 20 with the beam westwards for VE and VP. Call 'CQ BERU NO USA' -20 Ws call me. Try 'CQ VE ONLY' -this time 30 Ws come back. Next try 'QRZ VE?' -this brings back 40 Ws. Finally find a VE off frequency who is calling, and very slowly manage to get rid of the pile of Ws by working the more persistent ones, promising some others a QSO in their ARRL Contest next week, and threatening not to work those who wouldn't stop calling me. At last, the East Coast fades out, and the VE4-8 are audible. Quickly wrap up the remaining VE prefixes. Still no West Indies though TI2PX gave me a fb report.

Two hours to go. Shall I call it a day and go to bed, or stay to the bitter end and try for a few more points. Finally decide to make some more coffee and slog it out on 80m 'til midnight. Get an unexpected bonus with my penultimate contact when I work VOIDX, helped along by a W3 who has to wait until BERU is over before I will work him.

What did I get out of it all? The satisfaction of making a large number of contacts and possibly being amongst the top six? Or was the chance of working some of the old-timers who make an appearance in BERU and are seldom heard otherwise? I don't know. My first BERU was as recently as 1960, but even after such a short acquaintance with this contest it is the one event in the whole of the International Contest Calendar that I try not to miss.

MP4BBE Bahrain by John G3VDL Part 4

In the spring of 1959 I had to go to Sumatra for an eight month assignment and I was in the UK when the 1960 BERU came round. I checked with the RSGB and was told I could legally enter the receiving section. I had just bought an Eddystone 888A Rx (still my main Rx today) and this seemed to be an opportunity to try it out. I hung up a trapped dipole from KW and came second in the receiving section.

I was back in Bahrain for the 1961 contest. At last I was on all bands 3.5 to 28, using the trapped dipole as an inverted Vee for the two LF bands and dipoles on the other bands. That year I was 29th out of 104. In 1962 I was 27th out of 111, in 1963 38th out of 92 and in my final year as MP4BBE, in 1964, 22nd out of 125. That year I was helped by a homemade 2 el beam, fixed on UK.

The 28th BERU Contest 1965

Churchill dies
Mini skirts in fashion
Rhodesian UDI

Despite being close to sunspot minimum there were a number of openings on all bands including 28MHz. The pattern appeared to be that 14MHz was the common band used most by all. But the VEs made best use of 80 and 40, whereas the Africans had North-South openings up to 28MHz. VS9MG seems to have had the best of both! Conditions in the Pacific were poor.

Bob Milton, VS9MG, operating from Gan in the Maldives totally dominated the contest. He amassed a record breaking score which was more than double his score in 1964. The second placed station, 9M4LP, Bob Snyder, also doubled his score. An extremely determined effort by these two stations. David, G3FPQ, was 5th and the leading G station.

Table 3.11 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1965¹⁰

1	VS9MG	4388
2	9M4LP	3135
3	VE2NV	3000
4	VE2NI	2765
5	G3FPQ	2645
6	9J2DT	2570
7	9J2W	2510
8	VE3KE	2375
9	VO1FB	2290
10	G5RI	2255

Jack, G2DC, was 11th.

Mike, 5N2AAF (ex-5N2JKO), winner in 1964, turned the power down and really showed the potential of QRP, emerging as an easy winner, having double the points of the second placed station, Sam, VK7SM. Mike was one of the few to have won both the High and Low Power Sections of the contest¹¹.

¹⁰ BERU 1965, RSGB Bulletin, 41, 603, (1965). There were 93 High Power, 13 in Low Power.

¹¹ Mike, G3JKO, died in 1996 whilst this was being written.

Table 3.12 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1965

1	5N2AAF	2430
2	VK7SM	1175
3	7Q7EX	1135
4	G3GNS	950
5	VK3ZC	885
6	VK2QK	850
6	ZB1J	850
8	VK3RJ	765
9	VK5ZF	655
10	G3NKQ	595

Rusty had a poor BERU but he had some consolation,

Just went back after TV to collect 9M4LP and there he was with EU, VE, W and G calling him. Just one call and that was that ! Comforting after a poor BERU and a lousy cold.

In his diary he noted,

Couldn't work up any prior enthusiasm, had not even listened or put TX on 7, 14 or 21 before the contest. To cap everything got a hell of a cold develop on Thursday evening. Had not arranged any leave however due to cold came home at 1600 Friday and went to bed about 1900 without much certainty that I would take part at the start. Did not sleep and got up at 2230.

So just jogged through contest - taking the chair for 3-4 hours when felt particularly lousy. Rotten headache most of the time and must have consumed 30 aspirin through the 48 hours!

However it was quite a pleasant way of taking part and quite enjoyed the 3-4 hour stretches. Makes quite a difference to your mental approach if you are not trying to win.

Here's how the record breaking score was made.

Maldivian Memories of BERU by VS9MG¹²

At 4.45 a.m. local time a large Service Policeman shone a searchlight into my weary eyes and requested a signature for the early call which was to get me away to a good start, but first I had to ride about one and a half miles down to the other end of the Island to the shack where for the past few days I had been frantically trimming the aerial systems to give me a low swr on the low end of each band. Previous conversations with 9M4LP had informed me that I was going to get some stiff opposition from that direction but despite my belief that the

QTH was worth a few points to me I had made sure that every drop of RF from my KWM2 was going to be radiated where I wanted it. As it proved the effort was well worthwhile.

So then on with the fray. A quick look on 20 and 15, not so good, so down to 40; Ah! That's better! Looks real good. Fired up the rig on 7007 by which time the early CQ BERUs were already well into their stride. A quick word with 9M2TS in Ipoh and G5RI was onto me like greased lightning for No.2. So they kept coming VEs, Gs, 5N2, 9M2s and ZLs and for a moment I imagined I was up on 20. Kept this up at a leisurely pace until 00.50, and then decided to try 20 again, looking for a dividend of VKs. One quick VK and then 9M4LP was hammering at my ears. Noted I was 12 QSOs up already.

CR9AH decided that he would like a report so got rid of him with a 569 and dived into a welter of DX-hungry VKs keeping up a good pace until Gus, AC5H, blasted me at 02.05 for a quickie. Back into the VK storm with the occasional VU and ZL to make up the number.

At about 03.00 the skip was shortening fast so started searching for a few bonus QSOs, but could only find VS9PGM, so at 03.30 went back to 40 and found more VUs than I ever thought existed with 9J2DT sticking out like a sore thumb. Whatever happened to 9M4LP ?

Battled on with requests for QSL information with the VUs until 04.30 but after taking another look at 20 decided that I would forgo that cup of coffee and move up to 14050. With the beam on VK lands the pickings looked good there, but business slackened quite soon until at 05.40 a look at 15 told me where 9M4LP was hiding.

A quick exchange told me that I had increased my lead to 75 and VKs were coming at me thick and furious - wonderful! At 06.30 I tried a bit of band hopping and at 07.12 found 9M4LP on 10 after a quick QSY from 15 in company with VK4LT. The lead had moved up to 90 and I downed a couple of quick coffees to celebrate the flying start. Then came for me the best part of the contest - a QSY to 15 found Europe right in my lap with Gs in numbers unthought of. Four hours solid work bought my total up to 201 and a wave of sympathy for Arthur Milne passed me by!¹³

Back to 20 as I seemed to have worked all I could for the moment, and immediately got VQ8AI and ZD5R in quick succession. Wondered if the ZD5 was still in BERU but didn't argue. At 12.00 took a breather from the contest and moved up to 14.320 to net control the SEANET and had my usual natter

¹² RSGB Bulletin May 1995 pg 314

¹³ RSGB QSL manager at that time.

with the gang until 12.20. Then back into the hunt for bonus QSOs until 13.00 when my stomach told me it was time for grubstakes.

A meal and one hour the hunt was on again with Gs getting stronger all the time and an odd VE poking through the QRM. Six hours later still at it with the score showing 305 decided that 40 might offer more bonus QSOs but apart from the occasional Gs found the VKs in firm possession with 9J2ZW sharing the feast at 185. A close look uncovered the odd VK9 and VK0 and a lone VS6 who didn't seem to be doing much business. Just as I was wondering where 9M4LP had got to my receiver erupted and I was delighted to find the lead up to 159. Left him there polishing off the VKs and was rewarded on 20 with VU2NRA who, although looking for DX, obliged with a quick exchange, with JT1AD getting in on the act. Some VKs debating whether to chase DX or carry on with the contest. Didn't stop to find their intentions but cleared up a few new VKs and an AP5 who wanted to ragchew. I bet he is still wondering what it was all about. A quick look at 40 but only found four VUs in a roundtable and managed to get quick reports from all of them. Back to 20 and was immediately called by FB8WW - a new one for me and boy, that note!

Dozing a bit now but picked up a few strays who were not in the contest but only too happy to oblige with a contest number. Up to 15 and found it good but too many familiar calls. Took a short break for sleep and then back into the search for new ones. At 09.55 checked 20 and was horrified at the WSM Chirp Test QRM so scuttled back to 15 which was just as well as several new Gs were around, although European non-contest stations were giving me a hard time.

Did a quick QSY to 10 with VK6SM to put the score to 393. Back to 20 which was just getting interesting as the odd Caribbean was heard through the QRM. At 17.50 decided that I had run out on 20 so had a look on 80 to find 9M4LP again. Lead now up to 174 (426-252) but took time out for a chat with Bob and some refreshment.

Back to 20 as 80 didn't seem to hold out much promise. Not much there either so 40 seemed a good bet: 2 1/2 hours and 24 QSOs later I was groggy with the QRM and the slow progress, but 10, 15 and 20 had nothing to offer so decided on a final fling on 80. Progress was slow and the Ws seemed to be copying me well but they honoured my request to wait until after 00.01. At 23.55 VE1RB was the final QSO but there were a few loose Gs still audible.

Polished off the Stateside DX and pulled the big switch happy with a trouble free contest. Bed, bath

etc, and a well earned sleep with my ears still ringing.

Comments

Operating	Standard very good
QRM	Passable except for WSM
Propagation	Perfect for me
Equipment	Trouble free
Strongest G	G3FPQ
Strongest African	9J2DT
Strongest VK	VK6SM
Strongest station	Who else! 9M4LP

Finally, a wonderful BERU for me with everything going just right. Roll on 1966 (from ZB2N, I hope).

Bob was back in UK for 1966 as G3OEV.

The 29th BERU Contest 1966

Australian troops fly into Vietnam

England win World Cup

Cultural Revolution

The 1966 contest was moved to mid-March and this met with the approval of many contestants especially VK/ZL. The change gave better HF conditions but poorer LF conditions for those who were closer to summer static conditions in the Tropics.

D.J. Taylor, 9J2DT, and David, G3FPQ, both significantly improved their positions over 1965 moving up to first and second respectively. 9J2DT used three Vee beams and a rhombic. George, ZD7IP, (ex-5B4IP) was third after having missed 1965. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth places were only separated by 34 points calling for some careful log checking.

Table 3.13 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1966¹⁴

1	9J2DT	4040
2	G3FPQ	3427
3	ZD7IP	3236
4	VE2NV	3215
5	VO1FB	3214
6	9V1LP	3202
7	G5WP	3182
8	G5RI	3150
9	G3OEV	3105
10	6Y5XG	3100

J.F.Dunglison, 5Z4JX, won the Low Power Section having entered the High Power Section in 1965. Ray Jones, VK3RJ, came second.

¹⁴ BERU Contest 1966, RSGB Bulletin, 42, 478,(1966). There were 100 High Power, 13 in Low Power.

Table 3.14 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1966

1	5Z4JX	2162
2	VK3RJ	1778
3	G2DU	1675
4	VK3QK	1285
5	VP9BO	1195
6	VK4SS	1190
7	VK3ZC	1150
8	G3GNS	1115
9	ZL1MT	860
10	VK5ZF	785

Conditions were slowly improving as the solar cycle moved towards the next peak in 1968-9. This with the move of time to March helped most with better HF scores. In the nature of BERU propagation is rarely if ever good for everyone as the following comments show.

3.5MHz. 9V1LP commented, 'total loss', whereas 5N2AAF found it 'much better than 7MHz, good signals and little QRN'.

7MHz. 9V1LP comments 'horrible QRM' but he found a good opening to G and VE. On QRM 5N2AAF had to agree and added that it was 'disappointing'.

14MHz. 9V1LP had excellent openings to EU and G but suffered heavy EU QRM. 5N2AAF seems to have conditions mixed.

21MHz. 9V1LP was wiped out by QRN. 5N2AAF found this the most productive band for QSOs, though not for bonus points.

28MHz. was much improved with an opening from 9V to G and excellent openings to VK/ZL. 5N2AAF had to be content with G and VE.

George, ZD7IP, commented on the difficulty of working VK and ZL from ZD7 because the direction is south across the Antarctic. He failed to contact either. Mind you he was also handicapped with crystal control!

Rusty noted quite a change in conditions,

Quite a change by virtue of being in March instead of February. Condx reasonable on 21 and 14, poor on 7 and noisy on 3.5. Surprising on 28.

The sun noise was quite terrific on the mornings of both days and so was the fade out on all bands after breakfast on Sunday. I tore around searching for the break in the antenna circuit to RX!

The sun activity seemed to play queer tricks such as the way VO1FB came through on 21Mhz on Sunday from 10.30 onwards. March is almost too late for ZLs on 3.5 and certainly for VK5KO.

Most surprising BERU activity all over the world. Heard UB5, DJ, F and lots of Ws calling CQ

BERU! Lots of calls from USA on 7 and 21 answering tape calls!

No WSEM contest this year. BERU had it all to itself! Note low rate of scoring on the Sunday morning (10-12) due to the Dellinger fade mostly.

And his operating approach,

Off all day Friday. Only light duties! Bath at 16.00 with Ellimans. Bed at 18.30 slept nicely until 21.30 and then got up as sleep obviously at an end.

Worked all through the night with no snoozes. 1P about 05.30 and 1 P after breakfast about 10.00. But felt rather tired at tea time i.e. between 18.00 and 19.00. Not mentally but 'leggy'. However recovered after hour in the armchair. Should have had 2 Ps about 10.00 instead off again between 20.00 and 21.00 to see Durbridge TV serial!

Bed about 22.00 and slept like a log. Set alarm for 06.00. Things dull as usual on Sunday morning, (should have had breakfast). Good sleep. 2 Ps after breakfast and OK for the rest of the day.

With the RX,

The old HRO still doing its stuff but perhaps should rewire the heaters and maybe use DC on the oscillator heater as the T6 note on 21 and 28 makes life hard with the weak ones.

The 30th BERU Contest 1967

Six Day War

Australian Prime Minister drowned in surf

BBC started colour TV broadcasts

A spell of good conditions produced a record score for the winner, Don McVicar, VP7DX, who had 623 contacts and contacts with 97 call areas. All of the top three stations were neck and neck for most of the contest and indeed VE3KE was ahead at the half-way stage. VP7DX with a higher QSO rate finally won through even though VE3KE had 120 more bonus points.

Derek, G5RI, again was the leading UK station, and the station with the highest number of bonus points as he made contact with no less than 115 call areas (out of a total of 126).

Table 3.15 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1967¹⁵

1	VP7DX	4803
2	VE3KE	4740
3	3C2NV	4497
4	VE1TG	3945
5	G5RI	3864
6	G3FPQ	3739
7	G5WP	3702
8	ZL4BO	3692
9	G3FXB	3675
10	VE3AU	3530

The steady decline in the number of entries for the Low Power Section led the HF Committee to suggest that it be deleted if participation did not improve in 1968.

Table 3.16 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1967

1	VK2QK	1537
2	VK4SS	1245
3	VK4UC	740
4	G3GNS	710
5	G3APZ	300

In the Listener Section Eric Trebilcock made his 26th entry.

The MUF was 50% higher than predicted giving some of the best HF conditions for years. Of course LF conditions on 3.5MHz were poor leaving many scratching around for points. The good HF conditions were a big bonus for the Northern Hemisphere conditions on the Southern were poor.

Being pestered by non-BERU stations is one of the problems for the rarer stations in the Commonwealth. VP7DX kept a side log and made WAC, 43 countries and 35 states from non-BERU. He found 'it easier to work them than to buck their QRM'. You still can lose a lot of useful time doing this.

Rusty noted,

28-21-14 Mhz. Almost too good! 14Mhz almost all night to some extent. 21 and 28 both open to really late. 28 to 20.00Z and on 21 VE5s still cracking away at each other at 22.00Z. Trouble on all three bands was too many VEs to work, %99+ signals and it was an ear splitting game. On 14MHz - wonderful conditions on Sunday evening to ZL/VK and Far East, with ZL1AH at S8 over the North Pole when he got up on Monday morning. ZL4BO seemed to come through for 12 hours on end.

Generally conditions couldn't have been better on the HF bands.

7 and 3.5 very much down. 3.5 - missed ZLIHQ on the Saturday and didn't hear him on the Sunday. No ZL2s at all only '3FZ and '4IE were working the boys. 7- cluttered with Chinese BC and jammers. Not much going on Saturday morning - Sat. evening the usual UA contest started for 12 hours so Sunday morning was cluttered. Had a QSO with ZL4BO and a little chat with VK7SM which did not count, he gave me 589! and then down to 14 to catch up on that band. Among the VKs I worked VE3KE at 08.00Z so the band was open all night to VE. Lots of Ws and UAs called me as G5WP/BERU, guess they thought I was a new country. Heard some Yanks moaning about being told to get lost and that the British Empire DX had written off this weekend as far as they were concerned. Missed VS4RS on 14 though heard him.

Didn't hear 'FPQ after about 19.00 on Sunday. '5RI got to 300 when I was 299. '3FXB was about the same and trying hard. He still listens through the opposition. Many old timers having a go '5RP, '5DQ, '2PL, '6LX, '2DU, '2QT also lots of new boys, some of them doing well with 250-280 plus! Should be a very close result all over the world with VEs and Gs well up. I had numbered out to 240 but in the end had to rule yet another page.

Note the smashing reports and results eastwards on the Sunday evening all with the beam east and calling BERU. ZL1AH gave me S8 and Dud S5/6!

Commenting later on the HRO, Rusty finally decides to build a new RX,

...with xtal oscillator, mechanical filter and Q multiplier.

When the scores came out he wrote,

Terrific competition this year, '3FPQ, '3FXB and '5RI all having a real go and all of us around 300 at the end, 'FPQ - 310, 'FXB - 290 with 111 bonuses, '5RI - 318 with 115 bonuses. Plenty of others active, '2QT, , '5HZ, '5DQ, '6HF, G3SSO (?) and a host of G3s. Hundreds of VEs, quite a few VKs but very few ZLs and only a handful of Africans.

'FPQ only slept 01.30-06.30! Said he started on 7 (although he knew 14 was open) for the first hour but he only worked the usual run, presumably VE and when he came down to 14 found he was behind with numbers.

¹⁵ BERU 1967, RSGB Bulletin, 43, 470, (1967). There were 109 High Power, 5 in Low Power.

The 31st BERU Contest 1968

New Zealand car ferry capsizes

Luther King assassinated

First UK heart transplant

Astronauts orbit the moon

In quite excellent conditions, at least for the north-south path, the leading station was Neville Jackson, 9J2VB, ex G3IAD. He took full opportunity of the high G QSO rates afforded by the conditions. Remarkably Neville did not operate on 3.5MHz. He used a Drake T4X/R4A into V beams and inverted Vs. VP7DX used a KWM2A into a TA33 and trapped vertical, with a 2 element yagi on 7MHz and phased inverted Vs on 3.5MHz. VE1TG also had extensive arrays 5 el monobanders for HF, a curtain array and verticals.

Table 3.17 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1968¹⁶

1	9J2VB	5100
2	VP7DX	4991
3	VE1TG	4802
4	VE2NV	4357
5	VE2YU	4215
6	ZL4BO	4060
7	G3FPQ	3940
8	G5WP	3840
9	VE2WA	3819
10	9J2BC	3785

Table 3.18 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1968

1	5Z4KL	3072
2	G3IDC	1985
3	VK4SS	1720
4	VK2QK	1239
5	VK3RJ	1195
6	G3LHJ	1107
7	VK3ZC	1100
8	G3GNS	1011
9	G3OOU	985
10	G3JKY	830

Rusty made quite a few changes in 1967-8, he wrote,

Well I've built the new RX and the band switched TX and bought a new chair and put the switch on the tape motor circuit.'

Rusty felt that conditions were 'average to fair' he continued,

¹⁶ BERU 1968, Radio Communication, 44, 402, (1968). There were about 1500 stations active, 107 entrants High Power and 15 in Low Power.

... 14MHz on Sunday nothing much left to work. All the VEs audible (S9+) had already been worked. Quite a few VKs and ZL4BO calling CQ BERU, VK3MR S9.

3.5 quite poor. 7MHz fairly to quite poor. Number of VKs around on Sunday evening around 21.00Z but few audible to copy. VK3QK chipped in after several CQs by me to say several calling me - but couldn't hear 'em. Missed VP9BF, heard him around 20.00 on Sunday evening S9 with hundreds of Gs calling him, he got fed up and went. On 28, 5N2AAF told me I had been S9+20 on 7MHz at sunrise on Saturday am.

9J2MX Zambia by Dennis, G3MXJ. Part 1

1968 saw me well set up for BERU with a DX callsign, 9J2MX, a decent rig with full licensed power (maybe even a little bit more!) a big V beam and the nearest TV 800 miles away!

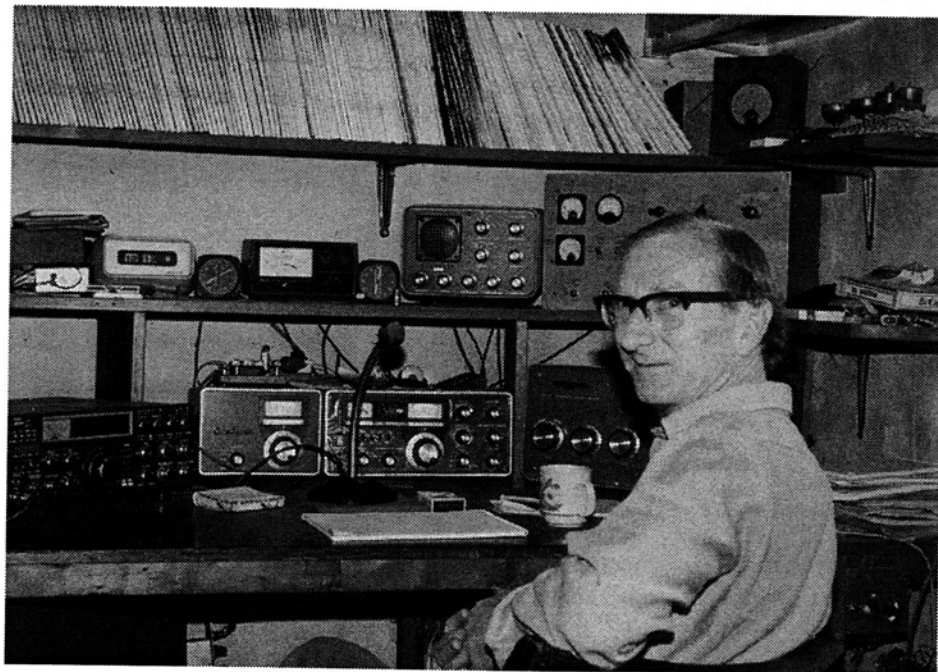
Previous contests had shown the QTH and setup to have a lot of potential and I was looking forward to making my mark on BERU. My log shows a good QSO rate on 14MHz at the midnight start with good openings into VE and G and local exotica such as VQ8CC (now GU3MBS), 5H3, 5Z4 being shuffled around 80m and 40m for bonus points. 15/10m duly opened as soon as daylight appeared and I was off and running - or so I thought.

*When I got up to start the contest at 0200 local time, I had felt a little queasy and had put it down to contest nerves. However, by the middle of the Saturday, the good runs on 15/10m were doing nothing to alleviate the escalating feeling of non-well being. On taking a P-Break around lunchtime, I was shocked to find the water **bright yellow**. The immediate reaction was to regret succumbing to the temptations of high power, especially as it came from an open-plan 813 linear with heaven knows what kind of radiation in the shack. The great contest-checker in the sky was taking revenge! However, my wife turned out to have the same symptoms and, by the middle of Saturday afternoon we were both feeling very ill. So we called the doctor who took one look and diagnosed Yellow Jaundice (known these days as Hepatitis-A).*

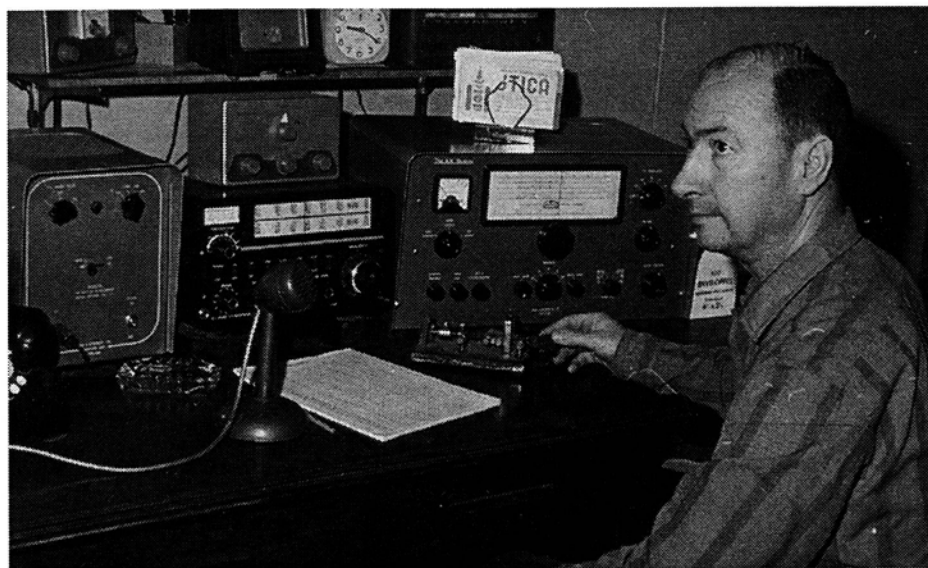
That was it for that particular BERU, which, incidentally, was won outright by 9J2VB at the other end of Zambia - just showed that it could be done. The only good thing to come from that episode was that I am now permanently immune to Hep-A and it does avoid at least one of the multitude of jabs that they insist on you having for international travel these days!



Al Slater, G3FXB, 1966 (G3MXJ)



David, G3FPQ, 1968 (G3MXJ)



Graham, VE3ST when VE2WA, 1969



John, ZL1AH, in 1969 antennas 2 element wide spaced quads for 14/21/28 Vee beams for 3.5/7

Dennis came 62nd.

Rusty noted some comments from David, G3FPQ, after the contest,

David worked on 10m, VE6, VQ8CC, 4S7, 6Y5, 9G1 and ZD5 he missed out on ZL1 but got ZL2. He also got 9H1.

On 15m he worked ZD5 and 4S7 but missed out on ZL2 and 3.

On 20m he got VP9 and ZD5, missed some of the ZLs and 5N2AAF.

On 40 his 2 element beam at 65' made it easier to copy the VKs, he said, and also to copy the Africans with fair ease. David said that some of the 9J2 and 5H3 said were going on 3.5 for the last quarter hour, 5H3 heard him but he could not hear them.

It seems that David spent much longer and later time on 28 and 21 than I did on Sunday evening. It seems to me it would not have helped me because I did listen down there and there were only late VEs and 9J2s there. My poorer location (for 10) makes quite 1/2 hour to an hour difference, (David's signal on 28 with 5N2AAF was 10db stronger during this QSO). He has a tri-band quad about 45'. A dual 2 element 40/20 yagi at 60' and a dual 15/10yagi at 70' plus a couple of 65' masts - presumably an 80 metre dipole or a couple of phased verticals!

Don't think there is anything I can do about 10 - except give it more time or move QTH!

No doubt about it David does work on the Sunday night right to the end. Whilst I slack right off and apart from VO1AW - I did nought in the last 3 hours! He goes to bed on the Saturday much later too. I think he said 00.30! Age tells!

The 32nd BERU Contest 1969

Human egg fertilised in test tube

Concorde flies

Biafran relief crisis

First man on the moon

Rusty took stock after the 1968 Contest and reviewed his operating plan. 1969 was also the first year of the present scoring system, 3 bonus QSOs per call area. The contest still lasted 48 hours.

He wrote before the 1969 Contest,

At this point of the sunspot cycle - that is with 14MHz open through the night, it seems good planning to spend the Friday night, first part, on 14 and concentrate on everything else except VE1-3 and not mind dropping behind the Gs in number of QSOs chalked up. The Africans are quite willing to

take up their first Gs and also the Caribbeans are not subjected to Saturday - Sunday night W QRM.

When 14 goes sourish at 2 or 3 am then, of course, start on 7 and take what's going with excursions to 3.5 to check on not missing such as VO and 9H1.

By 06.30Z concentrate on 3.5 for ZLs and all VEs available Saturday morning - directly the ZLs have faded concentrate on 7MHz in case there is going to be a UA contest on the Sunday. Don't waste time on G pile ups for the loudest VK and ZLs but search for a clear frequency up to 7025 and run the tape. After QSO immediately a short run on the tape to hold frequency. The VKs, even the louder ones, get fed up with a G QRM pile and requests for repeats and go looking for easier meat. Unless 7 folds up hang on until 28 is due.

Be on 28 by 08.15-30Z and concentrate on Far-East and VK/ZL, with some excursions for Africans and even MP4 and 9H1. Because on the Sunday morning there will be much more G competition on 28 and they will all have beams and a fat signal.

When the 28 band is fading down start on 21 and continue there for VK (sometimes long path at first) and Far East with regular excursions back to 28 sweeping up Africans and Asians. This pattern continues on and off until early afternoon when some excursions also to 14 for Asians and VKs. Always nail down Caribbeans, 9H1, MP4, ZC4 as and when heard, also any VE4-6, 8, VO. Don't forget the VE7 break through about 1700Z on 28.

By the Saturday evening back on 14 looking East and sometimes South with, at first, checks on 21 for VE4-7. Sweep up anything other than VE1-3 on 14 tuning well up the band for fugitive VPs, VUs etc and also because a lot more of the band is used for BERU at this stage than on Sunday when in the evening no more than the first 25KHz is used.

Doubtful if it is worthwhile going to 7 unless 14 is very unproductive what with the EUs, Broadcast and jammers. But worthwhile possibly to make up on the VO and VE1-3 on 7 if necessary.

Sunday morning, from 05.00Z until 06.00Z concentrate on 14 for ZL and VK checking 7 and 3.5 for anything useful.

At 06.15/06.30 on 3.5 for ZL in case Saturday has not been productive.

Then down to 7 with again plenty of tape on a clear spot.

If the EUs come on frequency immediately run and re run the tape until they get the message.

After 7 again down to 28 for the East and VK and then the pattern as the previous day.

For the fag end of the contest plenty of tape on 14015 etc to the East. ZL and VK will be good at dawn their time and the VE1-3 will make up the number and provide interest at the end when otherwise there nothing left to work on 14 and one is left fuming on 7 at the shit and every QSO is worth '100' points not 5. Providing 14 is doing its stuff it is better to let the odd 7 and 3.5 QSO escape.

9H1BL took full advantage of the good conditions on HF to work large numbers of G stations. He used a KW Viceroy, an Eddystone 888A and PR30X with inverted V dipole on LF and dipoles on HF with a ZL Special fixed on the UK for 28MHz.

VE2WA used Collins equipment with a second receiver for spotting etc. He used a TH4 and a GP for HF with dipole on 7MHz and a vertical and 2 el phased antenna on 3.5MHz.

Some of the comments made interesting reading. VK2NS, who had been first on the air with spark in 1914 and who won the first contest in 1931, wondered how many others who took part then were still around.

The many older calls conjured up the impression in 9H1BL of,

besppectaced Edwardian gentlemen struggling up to the attic on gout ridden legs to dust the cobwebs off the TPTG to give it its annual airing.

And on the perennial topic of unwanted callers, VQ8 to W,

if you want to join the Commonwealth you should apply to the Queen not me!

Table 3.19 Leading stations High Power BERU Contest 1969¹⁷

1	9H1BL	6336
2	VE2WW	6171
3	G3FPQ	6142
4	VE1TG	6080
5	9J2MX	6078
6	G5WP	6053
7	G5RI	5739
8	G3FXB	5565
9	VE2WA	5510
10	VO1AW	5053

Table 3.20 Leading stations Low Power BERU Contest 1969

1	5Z4KL	4312
2	G3IDC	3536
3	5H3LV	3098
4	G3TXZ	2186
5	ZL1AMO	2170
6	VK3ZC	1681
7	G3GNS	1635
8	VK3RJ	1510
9	9H1Q	395

After the contest Rusty noted,

Important new rule this year. Each zone carries 3 bonus points QSOs. Should help the G entrants but I guess the 500 QSO boys will still take the first 3 places. In view of the rule decided to try and get as many of the 3 as possible for each zone and ignore the easier QSOs leaving them to be picked up on Sunday pm. As a result I was 50 QSOs down on 'FPQ, 'FXB, and '3AAM and maybe others by the Saturday night. But by Sunday evening I seem to have caught up to within 15 to 20 of them. The final results will show if I have made anything up on bonus points thereby.

Conditions. *20 had been open all night the week previously and stayed useful all night. 15 and 10 quite useful though VK/ZL were poor. On Sunday evening the VK signals on 20 were out of this world. '3MR and '3AXKetc were up to S9 and almost up to the VE ear splitters. Listened up on 40 on Sunday evening but BC splatter right across LF end. Knew 'FPQ had been up there because VS6AX told me on 20. He had heard several Gs but 'FPQ the only one to hear him. As I had plenty to do on 20 I didn't see any value of sweating it out on 40 in the shit. 'FPQ also went up to 80 and worked '3APN and '2NS all to himself he said. There again I saw more points to be had on 20.*

Operating Scheme. *Well I think it worked OK, ignore the VE1-3 on 28-14 and don't call 'em. This leaves plenty of interest for the last 6 hours. Rather than compete with the G hordes when VE1-3 first appear. In fact it was a push over to work them on the Sunday, they came back every time.*

3.5 On Sunday morning I took up my stand on 3512 and ran tape. The ZL gang found me. I stuck to the frequency and never competed with the G gang on 3503. Ran tape at the end of QSOs and kept the frequency inviolate!

7. Took up my stand at 7012 and ran tape and similarly the VK/ZL gang found me and again I didn't compete with Gs. Much easier then looking for them under a pile of calling Gs. Whilst there

¹⁷ BERU 1969, Radio Communication, 45, 494, (1969). There were 94 High Power, 9 Low Power.

were G pile ups on ZLABO and VK3MR on 7003 and such as Dud were kicking up hell with tapes etc. on 7000 to 7010.

Generally. I very seldom failed to get a reply on the first call and never had to wait more than three tries and that was only on one occasion on 14. I forget who it was.

9J2MX Zambia by Dennis, G3MXJ. Part 2

The following year, 1969, there was to be no mistake. Another 12 months had enabled me to improve the set-up and everything was in place. Band conditions were good and I finished with more contacts and points than 9J2VB the previous year (although 1969 was the year that the three times bonus system was introduced).

The log shows me kicking off at 0000Z and giving 001 to G3FXB on 14MHz. The following hours had the band open to all areas including VE, VK, ZL and 9V. The daily long openings on 15/10m on the North/South path to G and VE pushed the QSO total up to a very healthy level and reasonable openings on 40m produced a nice crop of bonus points.

Unfortunately, the Central African QRN level made 80m totally unworkable and the QSO total on that band was zero. I see that 9J2VB had the same problem the previous year.

80m (and 160m for that matter) in Africa is a matter of hitting the right night - with the band open and QRN levels low. I always feel great sympathy for those DX stations in the tropics who try to make it through to Europe and are rewarded by cluster comments about 'no RX' etc. Until you have seen the lightning and heard the static in those areas of the world, you can have no idea of what QRN really is!

So despite 48 hours when there was always a band open and plenty of QSOs to make, my final contest from Africa only realised 5th overall place - although only 330 points away from the leader. A few more years would need to pass before I would see my name on the BERU Senior Rosebowl! Interestingly enough, although I claimed 6065 points, I was actually credited with 6078 in the results. I have never been able to find out if it was a misprint or if the adjudicator felt that I deserved a few extra for a sterling effort!

LINEAR AMP UK Quality British Linear Amplifiers

We are the only manufacturer of high power valve linear amplifiers in Western Europe.

There are five models in our range which cover the VHF and HF frequencies:

HUNTER 750 - single 3-500ZG produces 700W with 100W drive (10 - 160m)

EXPLORER 1200 - dual 3-500ZG will give around 1200W (10 - 160m)

CHALLENGER - dual 3CX800A7 ceramic triodes produces in excess of 1500W with only 60W drive (10 - 160m)

2m DISCOVERY - single 3CX800A7 gives 800W with only 25W drive and for EME will produce 1000W with 35W drive

6m DISCOVERY - the twin of the 2m model



All our amplifiers are double-screened and are fully protected to comply with EMC regulations.

The HF amplifiers are all fitted with front-panel adjustable ALC and have tuned input circuits for all bands 10 -160m including the WARC bands

As well as a substantial reputation in the UK, we now export our amplifiers worldwide. (Many leading DXers are now choosing Linear Amp UK)

For further information, please send for details from the address below:

Linear Amp UK, Field Head, Leconfield Road, Leconfield, Beverley, E Yorks HU17 7LU
Telephone: 01964 550921, Fax: 01964 550921

Chapter 4

From BERU to the Commonwealth 1970-1979

The 33rd BERU Contest 1970

Apollo 13 safe

150,000 die in Pakistan tidal wave

De Gaulle dies

West Gate Bridge, Melbourne collapses

Monty Python starts

In his pre-contest notes Rusty comments,

Antennas 3.5MHz ground plane brought down by blizzard three weeks before test and also the Quad damaged. Took me two weeks waiting for the WX to get them repaired. Read in FOC notes that 'FPQ had a lot of antenna damage. Also heard 'FXB talking about damage to his 14MHz Quad.

The 3.5MHz GP had broken in 2 places and as the WX was bitter I did the lazy man's repair and instead of the full quarter wave vertical I put a coil equivalent to 10' at the base of the dural whip. Seems to be little difference and at least I put it on resonance.

Conditions up to 10 days before the contest had been very good and the VE7s on 28 easy meat. However as 28 went sour 14 and 3.5 looked up. On 14 the VKs were S9 between 20.30 and 21.30 and for three days before the test I worked VK3MR on 3501 at 20.00Z. By 23.20 14MHz faded out except South Americans and a few W4s.

A major solar storm with a vivid aurora may have favoured VHF but it virtually wiped out HF and LF propagation. ARRL decided late on to run the phone leg of their own contest and this cut down the entry from VE. The top station moved from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean to Mauritius, R.J.E.Mills, VQ8CR, with Don, VP7DX, runner up. David, G3FPQ, was the third station and the leading UK station, with Al, G3FXB, very close behind. Three out of the four leading stations used cubical quads.

Table 4.1 Leading stations BERU Contest 1970¹

1	VQ8CR	5357
2	VP7DX	4624
3	G3FPQ	4475
4	G3FXB	4456
5	5Z4KL	4425
6	G5WP	4350
7	VE1TG	4270
8	ZM4BO	3665
9	VK5NO	3640
10	9H1CB	3630

G5RI was 11th. 5Z4KL who had hoped to make a hat trick in the Low Power Section bemoaned it's demise suggesting that everyone should have been limited to 25 watts instead.¹

After the contest Rusty notes,

Really trying conditions this year. Conditions quite outstandingly bad to North America culminating in an auroral type fade and the reduction of G signals to T2 on the Sunday afternoon onwards. Well over a hundred fewer contacts this year with no VE4,5,6,7 worth talking about. Did not make up for the disappointing conditions generally but in contradiction there were some exceptional VK openings, ie on 28 no sign of VK or ZL except for a poorish signal from VK6HD at 09.00Z and then at 11.45 there was VK6RV at 599. Also on 3.5 at 20.00Z on Saturday conditions to VK were exceptional. VK2EO, '3APN, '7SM were wonderful copy at S6-7 and were easy QSOs. But to ZL in the morning conditions to ZL were only a little above average for the season. So it was not really a case of the MUF going low and ruining 28 but lifting 3.5.

14 and 21 both faded out for the nights. Although VE3BWY did call me at the beginning of the contest, (I went back to an African in the expectation that VEs would be easy meat!! - actually the converse was true). 7MHz was its usual noisy self; could hear one or two calling me I couldn't copy, (ZD5X for one said he had called me).

At 19.12 chucked it in, brassed off with 14 dead, 7 full of crap and 3.5 dead. David said he made five in the last hour. He had gone indoors then thought he'd just check up for final hour!

The very few BERU entrants in Africa are now very noticeable. To get a few VUs and 4S7s was a pleasant change however. The Caribbeans were also most poorly represented. The only real keenness in BERU seemed to be in VK, the one VQ8, the one MP4, the three or four 9V1s, couple of

¹ BERU 1970, Radio Communication, 46, 556, (1970). There were 76 entries.

9J2s, one 5Z4, three VS6s, couple of 9H1s, and one 5H3. Probable that the VEs would have been out in force if conditions had encouraged it (VK3KF was up to number 400 by 14.00 on the Saturday so presumably he had plenty of VE7 activity). Remembering the number of circulars I sent out to the Commonwealth all very disappointing.

Looking at 1969 I see the great fall off in activity was one 9J2 against five in 1969, one 5Z4 instead of five in '69, one 5H3 instead of three.

Forgot, could some of it be due to the ARRL Fone Contest on the same day? Yes, of course it could!

Later in May he records,

In QSO with Roy, ZL4BO, and he happened to mention the rotten change in bonus zones which put all ZL in one zone!!! I hadn't noticed this so I lose 7 zones, ie 140 points. Checked with 'FXB - he hadn't noticed and loses points but not as many as me!

However in August, when the results came out, Rusty notes,

But no reduction made re ZL1/2/3/4 so maybe the Rules were in error.

This is the last surviving diary entry from Rusty even though he continued to enter the contest.



Al Slater, G3FXB, Jack Drudge-Coates, G2DC, 1970
(M.Slater)

The 34th BERU Contest 1971

Yvonne Goolagong wins Wimbledon

Bangladesh created

Switzerland emancipates women

A postal strike in the UK prevented the rules being sent out to overseas countries. What happened to the radio ! Bring back the Empire Link stations! A very low entry of only 64 acceptable entries caused all sorts of suggestions for further rule changes.



Trevor, VK2NS, the first winner (G3MXJ)

Table 4.2 Leading stations BERU Contest 1971²

1	VK6HD	5362
2	G3FPQ	4414
3	G5WP	4396
4	VE1TG	4390
5	9H1BP	4300
6	G3FXB	4269
7	VE2NV	4150
8	3B8CR	3915
9	ZL4BO	3705
10	VO1AW	3520

Mike Bazley, VK6HD, used HF quads, an inverted V for 7MHz and a vertical for 3.5MHz. Mike wanted the month changed from January because the 95-105° temperatures made it difficult to keep equipment cool.

Mike was followed around on 20 metres by a local VK6 who was intent on working HB9s in their contest,

It did not matter where I called CQ he turned up in a couple of minutes. The irony is that this made me look on other bands and to my surprise 15 metres was open to G at 1 am local time. I was able to make a number of contacts on that band at a time I would not have thought possible.

VE1TG had a most impressive home designed and built antenna system; 28MHz 7el yagi, 21MHz 5 el yagi, 14MHz 5 el yagi, 7MHz 5 el curtain, 3.5MHz full sized semi-quad.

Amongst the many suggestions for changes were, 'no bonus points for G QSO from overseas stations', '24 hours only', 'revive the phone section', and 'more publicity'. To which the Contest Committee added their observations that, there appeared to be a steady decline in all RSGB CW contests and wondered if this was a result of SSB taking over as the most used mode.

Trevor, VK2NS, winner of the first contest, wrote with his entry, that he was getting a bit long in the tooth to send anything but a token. His comment reminds us that the contest was already spanning 40 years. John, VK3ZC, recalls,

G3FPQ had a beautiful fist and his signal in the '60s and '70s was outstanding. He was the first to be heard in this area and the last to disappear. I understand he went over to SSB and CW was the loser'.

Al, G3FXB, like Rusty, G5WP, kept a contest diary from 1971 to 1991. Here's Al's comments on 1971,

Conditions were lousy with a disturbance for the second year running. FPQ/WP again beat me on the LF bands. Major policy 'goof' was to waste time on 20 at night working VK/ZL that could easily be

² BERU 1971, Radio Communication, 47, 712, (1971) There were 64 entries.

worked in daytime. There must be no repeat of this - getting ahead in serial numbers is not necessary - as one can catch up. The second blunder was to get up at 04.30. It is far better to hang on to 01.00-02.00 GMT. 06.00 GMT is certainly the earliest necessary. These two blunders could have cost me the contest.

Equipment was OK, inverted Vs on 80, 40 provide a fair compromise. The quad on 20/15/10 is excellent. The Viceroy has a VFO problem and the KW500 should be checked for efficiency. Transceive would be useful. Low support and activity is a problem.

(1) Awards for Overseas must be improved

(2) Publicity is poor. CQ magazine did not have the details.

(3) RSGB should circulate Commonwealth Societies. Results should be duplicated and sent to all entrants.

I propose to contact G3TR about these points.

The 35th BERU Contest 1972

Britain joins European Community

Nixon visits China

Thalidamide linked to birth defects

First pocket calculators appear

Ernie Welling, VP2MU, VE2YU, won from his fathers house on Montserrat. He used a FTDX560, an SB200 amplifier, into a TA33 and a trapped dipole. Conditions were poor which with the 24 hour format, and single band awards occasioned much comment. G5WP accused the Committee of *just about killing BERU*. VP9BK liked the 24 hour format, *a lot*. Whilst VK2NS wondered where this was all leading to by reminding everyone that in 1931 BERU lasted *14 days*. Actually it lasted seven in 1931 but covered two weekends later in the 30s.

Table 4.3 Leading stations BERU Contest 1972³

1	VP2MU	5461
2	VP2AAA	5268
3	VE3KZ	4715
4	VE2NV	4501
5	G3FPQ	4015
6	VP9BK	3911
7	G3HCT	3751
8	G3FXB	3553
9	VE7UZ	3461
10	8P6DR	3428

In the 'always one every year' category, Trevor also reported a UA calling CQ *BERU ONLY*.

³ BERU 1972, Radio Communication, 48, 690(1972). There were 87 entries, 18 single band, (S/B).

Back in the UK, Part 3, G3MXJ

My first effort after returning from 9J2 land was from Berkshire, where we lived for a few years before moving to Sussex in the middle of the year. Although poor antennas only produced 67 QSOs and 42nd overall place, it was one year where I did at least make reasonable notes on the weekend. It was my first year as adjudicator so I wanted to make sure I had something to write about!

Conditions generally average. Good opening to VE on 21MHz during late afternoon and early evening. WSEM contest started up on Sunday making going on 7 and 14 particularly rough especially with T6 notes and jammer parasitics to contend with. There seemed to be some kind of pulsating jammer on the LF end of 14 and BERU stations were wedged between this and the WSEM stations. 7MHz was particularly disappointing with no activity heard from Oceania apart from ZL2CD (heard but not worked). 3.5MHz provided the usual VE and Caribbean QSOs but very little else.

Generally, activity was disappointedly low with a notable absence of activity from SE Asia and much lower levels of activity from Africa and the Med. Personally speaking, the contest gets harder going each year with more and more stations benefiting from the use of beams and/or linears and it will be interesting to see just how much effect they have when/if I have both by next year! WX - blowing a gale and cold both days.

1972 was also the first year of the 24-hour contest and the introduction of single-band awards. Although the write-up shows that these moves were somewhat controversial with divided opinion, the contest did recover in entrant numbers after declining for some years and went on to hit record levels. Not all of this was due to changed rules. The Committee also built up good publicity in VE/VK and ZL during the 1970s and 1980s - something which appears to have lapsed now, with the result that entrant numbers are again falling (1995).

Al was not happy,

Depressing again ! The 24 hours was N.G (?). Was 'bushed' on the Sunday AM. The band awards reduced activity. Conditions were not good . 50 mph gale broke wires on the 14 MHz quad and the FLDX2000 blew up ! Couldn't take it after 10.00 and quit.

Have niggled again about publicity. Also suggest 48 hour test with 12 or 18 hour rest period and no band awards. Also phone BERU or even 'G' contest like the SP contest etc. 190 QSOs with 132 bonuses for 3590.

The 36th BERU Contest 1973

Vietnam war ends

Jeans are the sign of the times

Watergate

Bahamas independent

Bob Nash, VE3KZ, operated from the Radio Club of Humber College as VE3HUM to win the 1973 contest. Bob used a KWM2 with a 30L1 linear with a 51S-1 receiver and TH6DXX and inverted Vs for the low bands. Al, G3FXB, was the leading UK entrant.

Conditions were again poor with little activity from the rarer Commonwealth areas such as the Caribbean. Dan, VR1AA, again commented that he did not hear any UK station at all. The LF bands appear to have been noisy generally.

Dud, G6CJ, operated as VK5BV during a trip to Australia.

Table 4.4 Leading stations BERU Contest 1973⁴

1	VE3HUM	4114
2	VE2NV	3972
3	5Y4XKL	3608
4	G3FXB	3579
5	VE7UZ	3482
6	G3HCT	3348
7	ZL4BO	3274
8	9H1CH	3114
9	G3SSO	3080
10	VE2AYY	3014

Commercial equipment had completely taken over the leading stations, except for the home brew transmitter at VE7UZ. The majority of equipment being Collins or Drake.

There was still considerable debate both for and against the 24 hour format.

Al notes in his diary,

Unlike '72 there were no problems fine WX and conditions relatively fair for the stage of the sunspot cycle. A close finish with G3FPQ. 'HCT etc behind. Was top G. Feel happier about 24 hours but would still like 30 out of 48 better.

⁴ BERU 1973, Radio Communication, 49, 710, (1973). There were 76 entries, 16 S/B.

The 37th BERU Contest 1974

Solzhenitsyn collects Nobel prize
Genetic engineering becomes reality
South African, Christian Barnard performs heart transplant

Using the same station as the 1973 winner, but not the same transmitter, David Dudley, VE3BVD, was the leading station. The second station was VE1CD who used a KWS1 and a 75A4 a triband beam and dipoles. Dennis, G3MXJ, gave Al, G3FXB, a fright as only 80 points separated them in the battle for top UK station.

Conditions again were poor and the contest again clashed with WSEM. Conditions were clearly against Australia and New Zealand, the highest placed VK was Peter, VK2BPN, in 20th place, ZL1HV was 29th. Yet VR1AA managed 8th.

There was no lack of helpful comments from the entrants, such as *change to autumn, 36 hours or 48 hours or 48 hours with 30 hour operation!* Even Al was advocating *complete reorganisation*. The HF Contests Committee set up a special study group to consider the future of the contest.

Table 4.5 Leading stations BERU Contest 1974⁵

1	VE3HUM	3043
2	VE1CD	2887
3	VE2NV	2840
4	9H1CH	2733
5	9H1CG	2520
6	VO1AW	2496
7	VE2WA	2342
8	VR1AA	2325
9	G3FXB	2285
10	VE3GFY	2250

Al notes in his diary,

112 QSOs in 24 hours! That reflects the poor conditions and activity in which could well be my last BERU. Saturday so boring that I fell asleep! Entry posted on the 14/3 with letter to contest committee suggesting BERU be made a wide open event like the REF contest. 88 bonus QSOs for 2320 points. MXJ was 110/84 and 5WP 111 - bonus unknown. It was fatal to sleep as lost 8 QSOs all bonus but sheer boredom was the culprit. G6LX noted talking to himself! No VE4,5,6,7, or 8 and marginal opening on 21. 14 closed by 21.00Z.

The 38th BERU Contest 1975

West Indies win cricket's first World Cup
Terracotta Army discovered
Siagon falls
Dietary fibre claimed to be important for health

Just when everyone thought that BERU was finished, conditions perked up, up went the number of entrants and the doom sayers were confounded. As Frank, G2QT, put it, 'Conditions excellent, why scrap it'.

All this after the Contest Committee had decided that 1975 was to be the last under the present rules. As usual the solution was obvious, arrange for better conditions and arrange for better publicity. The latter thanks to the support of John Tutton, VK3ZC, and Eric Trebilcock who undertook publicity in Australia.

The UK nearly pulled off an overall win with Al, G3FXB, only 26 points behind Yuri, VE3BMV. One of the most closely fought contests as the top 4 entrants were only 60 points apart. However the VEs had a stranglehold on the top places, having no less than 7 in the top ten stations.

The Contest Committee was pleased to receive a good deal of comment with the logs. Hardly any entrants were in favour of major changes especially any move away from the CW-only format. So strongly were many of the views expressed that the Committee decided to *reverse* its decision and instead to continue the contest in essentially unchanged form. However it was decided to change the name from BERU to the Commonwealth Contest.

Table 4.6 Leading stations BERU Contest 1975⁶

1	VE3BMV	3971
2	G3FXB	3945
3	VE1CD	3933
4	G5WP	3911
5	G3MXJ	3769
6	VE3KZ	3712
7	VE7UZ	3617
8	VO1KE	3533
9	VE2NV	3496
10	VE7CC	3353

⁵ BERU 1974, Radio Communication, 50, 706, (1974). There were 64 entries. 13 S/B.

⁶ BERU 1975, Radio Communication, 51, 792, (1975). There were 112 entries, 14 S/B.

AI noted,

What a break ! Good conditions and high activity produce the best score for years - 3975 points from 247 QSOs, 137 bonuses.

After weeks of miserable conditions they started peaking in the week before with a disturbance occurring just after the contest. Used 1/2 wave on 80, slopers on 40, 2 el quad on HF. Pylon QRN started just before the contest ! Still tend to not shift bands enough and neglect those ZLs on 80. Suggest 06.30/07.15 on 80 07.15/08.15 on 40 next year. Wrote to contest committee suggesting CW event retained with 48/36 hours and 36/24 operating. Suggested scrapping 21/28 MHz phone event and replacing with 'COMMONWEALTH PHONE'. Don't neglect 14MHz from 11-12 am.'

The 39th Commonwealth Contest 1976

Revolt in Soweto

Viking spacecraft lands on Mars

Chairman Mao dies

The name changed but the contest remained the same. Although some started by calling CQ CC, in a very short time most reverted to CQ BERU and this has set the pattern ever since. A complete turn-round in results put the majority of top scores in the Pacific area. Just goes to show how propagation can completely change the nature of the competition.

The contest was won by Lee, VE7CC, with Dan, VR1AA, in second place. Dan did not hear or work a single UK station, and neither did he use a beam.

AI, G3FXB, led the UK entry but due to poor conditions in Europe, was over a 1000 points below his 1975 total. A situation that was reflected in many VE and G scores.

The main point of comment in the logs was whether the contest should revert to 48 hours and cover the whole weekend. After consideration the Contest Committee decided to stay with 24 hours as a 48 hour contest would run well into Monday and put a strain on VK/ZL. The contest was recognised as putting great demands on the operator and his station, both in terms of equipment and knowledge of propagation. Those who remember the 48 hour contest recall that the last 6-12 hours were often very quiet as the VKs went off to work and everyone had worked everyone else.

Table 4.7 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1976⁷

1	VE7CC	4188
2	VR1AA	3755
3	VK3MR	3377
4	VE3BMV	3345
5	VE7UZ	3322
6	ZL2BCO	3227
7	VE6WX	3147
8	VK2BPN	3028
9	G3FXB	2939
10	VK5NO	2937

AI noted,

Awful conditions but fair activity and all worked well. Slopers on 80,40, quad on HF.



Snow, VK3MR

VR1AA by Dan Lockyer GW3HCL

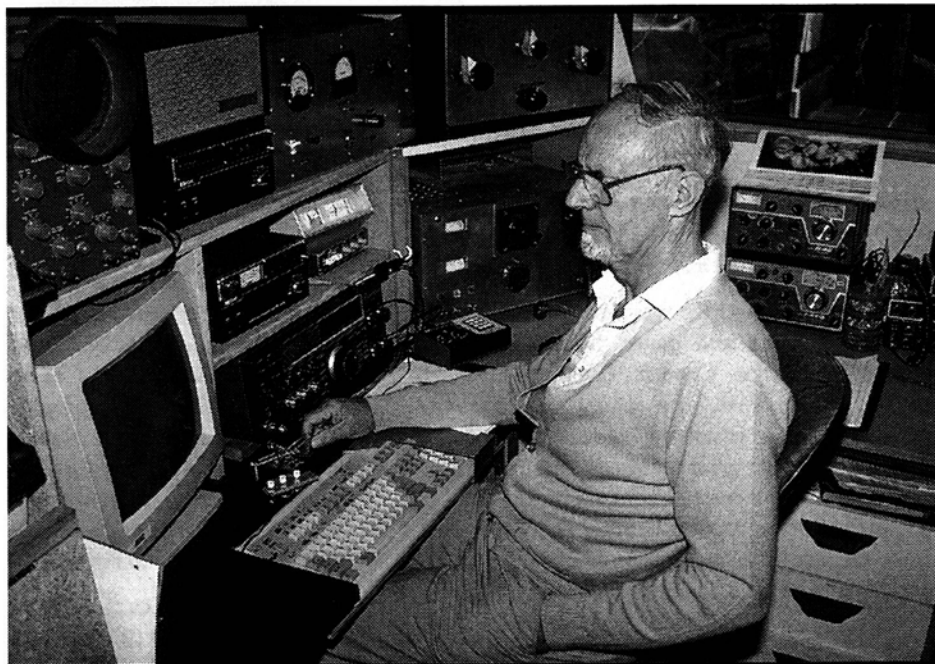
VR1AA was my call between 1971-77 while attending the demise of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony and the birth of the Republics of Kiribati and Tuvalu. It should have been a 4 year assignment but with all my trunk communications, ship-to-shore links and ground-to-air links in place the politics changed and I had to reorientate everything to cope with two separate republics. Main problem was retraining staff since one nationality was not acceptable to the other country.

One year I did particularly well in BERU and got the Rosebowl (Junior). 1976 I think it was. It was noteworthy that it was the only time that a Rosebowl had been won by a station whose log did not contain a single UK call. All done by multipliers (bonuses).

⁷ The Commonwealth Contest 1976, Radio Communication, 52, 774, (1976). There were 100 entries, 18 S/B.



Peter, VK2BPN (G3MXJ)



Peter, ZL3GQ, (G3MXJ)

The 40th Commonwealth Contest 1977

*First flight of the Space Shuttle
'Star Wars' & 'Close Encounters'
Elvis dies*

The good trans-Pacific paths of 1976 were repeated in 1977. Conditions for stations in Europe were rather indifferent whilst the trans-Pacific paths for Australia, New Zealand and Western Canada were very active. Good publicity in Australia, masterminded by John Tutton, VK3ZC, and Eric Trebilcock, increased the level of entry.

The winner moved to the other end of the Pacific to Peter Watson, ZL3GQ, who held off 1976 winner, Lee, VE7CC.

Al, G3FXB, retained the UK leading position, getting a steadily firmer grip on the Col. Thomas Rose Bowl. However he only beat Dennis, G3MXJ, by 100 points, so what was the difference between the two? In fact Dennis had marginally *more* Qs than Al on three bands, 14, 21 and 28MHz, and only three less on 7MHz. The big difference was on 3.5MHz where Al had 30 Qs with 18 bonuses over Dennis with 21 Qs and 16 bonuses. A difference of 85 points.

Table 4.8 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1977⁸

1	ZL3GQ	4777
2	VE7CC	4696
3	VE7UZ	3856
4	ZL2BR	3658
5	VE3AKG	3656
6	G3FXB	3583
7	G3MXJ	3481
8	VK5NO	3431
9	ZL2BCO	3353
10	VK2BPN	3293

Al's diary says,

Below normal conditions again. 7MHz sloper fouled quad and cost 1/2 hour. Otherwise all OK. 2 rigs pays off. Next year move people around and make more skeds.⁸

⁸ The Commonwealth Contest 1977, Radio Communication, 53, 805, (1977). There were 109 entries, 18 S/B.

The 41st Commonwealth Contest 1978

*Amoco Cadiz oil spill disaster
First Black Holes discovered
First test tube babies born*

Although conditions improved, the top two positions still went to the Pacific as in 1977. Peter, ZL3GQ, increased his margin over the rest of the field, 'an outstanding and consistent signal on all bands' was a common comment. He used an extensive antenna system, 3/4/5 el quads for 14/21/28 and a 160m dipole for the LF bands. Long 28MHz openings for Europe and the West Coast of Canada were a feature of propagation. Even 7MHz playing an important role. The improved conditions no doubt were the reason for the improved participation.

The single band entries were led by Stuart, G4CNY, who commented that he intended to 'join the men and do all bands' in 1979. Al, G3FXB, won the UK entry yet again holding his 100 point margin over Dennis, G3MXJ.

ZL1HV, commented that he had sent his log by airmail as, 'Surface mail now takes *longer* than in the days of sailing ships'.

Table 4.9 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1978⁹

1	ZL3GQ	6677
2	VE7CC	5821
3	VE3KZ	5687
4	VE5RG	5477
5	9H1EL	5393
6	VE3AKG	5249
7	G3FXB	5164
8	VE1CD	5156
9	G3MXJ	5061
10	VE5RA	5010

But with 6 VEs in the top ten a period of dominance was emerging. This sort of pattern seems to be a feature of BERU contests, partly conditions, partly rivalry between top class operators.

Al noted,

'MXJ getting closer! 102 points separated us in the results for 1977. An estimated 77 in the claimed points this year, FXB 5240, MXJ 5165, FPQ 3rd. Good conditions ZLs on 10 in the evening with VE6/7. 40 good for VE4,5,6,7 but 80 poor. No problem but for line noise. 2 lines of gear paid off yet again.

For 1979,

⁹ The Commonwealth Contest 1978, Radio Communication, 54, 880, (1978). There were 119 entries, 22 S/B.

1. Move around more. One of the pitfalls of the contest is to stay on one band too long.
2. It really is not a bad thing to note the numbers of the competitors.
3. ZLs on 80 peak at 07.00 NOT 06.30. Don't be panicked into getting on 14MHz by 08.00 - it doesn't really pay.
4. In view of power line noise consideration should be given to a horizontal RX antenna.'

The 42nd Commonwealth Contest 1979

*Three Mile Island nuclear incident
Egypt and Israel sign peace treaty
Nobel prize for inventor of the CAT scanner*

The total number of logs increased yet again. Good band conditions reflected the steadily improving solar cycle. 7MHz showed a marked decline, as did 3.5MHz. Conditions on the day seem to have favoured Western Canada and the Pacific but there was no doubt that the trend towards high Canadian scores noted the previous year continued.

Lee, VE7CC, used a 3.5MHz delta loop, a 2 el yagi on 7MHz and a tribander for the HF bands at about 100 feet. Lee also had a 4 el monobander for 28MHz.

Table 4.10 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1979¹⁰

1	VE7CC	6613
2	VE3KZ	5796
3	VE5RG	5646
4	VE3BVD	5527
5	G3FXB	5516
6	G3MXJ	5251
7	VE7CMK	5078
8	VE6KW	4888
9	VE5RA	4840
10	5W1BZ	4736

Al suffered the poor conditions like everyone else,

Aurora on Saturday night spoilt this one. Good fun though. Slopers U/S on 80 - angle too low ! 4 element wire yagi on 40. No comment - just keep hopping around !

Summary

The debate about the rules, started because of falling participation continued to rumble on throughout the 70s.

One suggestion was to change the contest into one that was Commonwealth versus the Rest of the World. This was rejected as making the contest similar to many others despite the fact that it would vastly increase the level of activity.

The question of the bonus point system was felt to be most unfair to UK stations. Suggestions that the UK call areas should count separately, with the implication that the UK would be able to work each other, were considered, but not acted upon. The change so that the first three QSOs counted for bonus, enacted in 1969, seemed to have increased the interest but had led to an even greater imbalance on the North Atlantic path.

The adjudicator pointed out that propagation plays a very important part in such considerations as even a few years previously in the early 70s Al, G3FXB, was only 26 points behind the leader and the top places were dominated by Europe, Africa and Eastern Canada with the Pacific trailing along behind.

However the most important aspect was the question of adequate and effective publicity, especially in the larger Commonwealth countries, but also in the newly independent countries who in the past had had a core of British administrators or residents who were consistent supporters.

¹⁰ The Commonwealth Contest 1979, Radio Communication, 55, 960, (1979). There were 126 entries, 29 S/B..

Chapter 5

Modern Times 1980 to 1989

The 43rd Commonwealth Contest 1980

Mount Saint Helens erupts
Rhodesia becomes Zimbabwe
'Solidarity' union created

Good conditions near to sunspot maximum favoured the Northern hemisphere, especially Canada to Europe. But made for difficult conditions with Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Lee, VE7CC, retained the Senior Rosebowl for the second year.

Analysis of the winners log reflects the excellent openings to Europe which allowed Lee to build his score. As always bonus points and contacts on 3.5MHz and 7MHz were especially important. VE7CC did particularly well in this regard much to the chagrin of the European stations.

3.5MHz Several Gs took good advantage of the early evening (UK) opening to VK/ZL. G3FPQ worked, C5, VE1,2,3, VK3,7, VO, ZB2,ZD8, ZL2,4, and 9H1.

7MHz. Some excellent DX was worked on this band. VE7CC for example snagged, VK2,3,4,5,6,7, ZL1, 3, 5W1, VP9, C5 and VP8. VK4XA exploited the early evening VK opening to the Pacific, VE1,4,5 and 7 and a similar pattern could be seen in the logs of ZL2BR and TX. Some Gs worked 5W1BZ a good catch from Europe at any time.

14MHz as usual carried the bulk of the contest traffic and also attracted the largest interest from the single band entrants.

21MHz and 28MHz both were exceptionally open. VE7CC taking maximum advantage. ZE3JO commented how poor conditions were for Africa on all the HF bands. Ron, ZL1AMO, managed to wring 301 QSOs and 56 bonuses out of 21MHz in the leading single band effort.

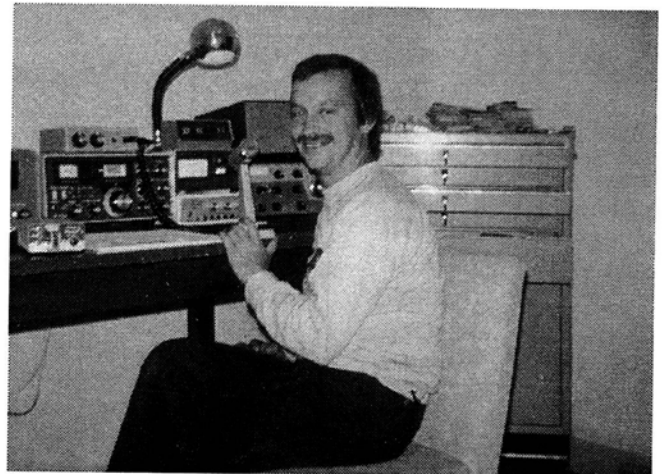
Table 5.1 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1980¹

1	VE7CC	7293
2	9H1EL	6734
3	G3FXB	6112
4	G3FPQ	5692
5	VE5RA	5691
6	G3MXJ	5679
7	VE2WA	5615
8	VE1MX	5525
9	5W1BZ	5383
10	VE6KW	5190

As usual there were some lame excuses about what might have been, such as ZL2TX complaining that a bee got into the shack and stung him on the foot!¹

No complaints from AI,

Fair conditions - still a great contest. Next year check 10 and 80 more frequently.



Jeff, 9H1EL, 1980, (G3MXJ)

The 44th Commonwealth Contest 1981

Royal wedding of Charles and Diana

Stock market collapse

First suggestion of emergence of AIDS

John, VE6OU, was the leading station, continuing the run of VE leaders. Although AI, G3FXB, was second there was still a big margin to make up. The indifferent conditions opened up the leader board to four G stations, the best showing for some time. Russ, VK4XA, also managed to get into contention, in fifth place overall.

¹ The Commonwealth Contest 1980, Radio Communication, 56, 926, (1980). There were 127 entries, 18 S/B

3.5MHz conditions were rather short skip, Pacific openings were absent and no G stations made it to VK/ZL. The leading UK stations found VE1, 2, 3, VO, VP5, 9H1, ZB2, 5N and C5. VE6/7 and VK/ZL were limited to semi-local contacts only too.

7MHz was also poorer than previous years with G stations working the Caribbean and Africa without difficulty. The VK/ZL opening was reasonable but obscured by short skip.

14MHz conditions somewhat compensated for the poor LF ones with both short and long path openings from Europe to VK/ZL.

21MHz followed much the same pattern as 14 as far as Europe was concerned but remained open very late in VK. Sporadic long path openings occurred throughout the night to Europe.

28MHz was a big disappointment. Openings were generally marginal except in the Southern Hemisphere where the band remained open virtually the whole contest.

Table 5.2 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1981²

1	VE6OU	5436
2	G3FXB	4895
3	VE5RA	4794
4	G3FPQ	4438
5	VK4XA	4365
6	G3MXJ	4181
7	C5AAP	4143
8	VK2BPN	4129
9	G3OZF	4079
10	VE2WA	4024

The Australian entry comprised nearly 40% of the total. This was due to the efforts of John Tutton, VK3ZC, and Eric Trebilcock, BCRS195, who ran a long publicity campaign including the medallions donated by John to the best VK entrants.

Al commented,

Poor conditions - aurora - poor RSGB publicity - so low VE turn out - so next year will take it on my own account to drop copies of rules to QST and CQ.

Don't neglect tuning up to 030 !

BERU phone - good casual support but no serious competition³. Clash with VP9 contest probably did not help. Good conditions though did help.

² The Commonwealth Contest 1981, Radio Communication, 57, 834,(1981). There were 100 entries, 14 S/B.

³ Organised by the Canadians.

Last word to G3HAL,

First time in all the years that I have been operating that I have taken part in BERU. If they've all been like this, then I'm sorry I missed them.

The 45th Commonwealth Contest 1982

Argentineans invade Falklands and in June, surrender to UK task force

E.T.

Fibre optic cables start to be used in telephone networks

Domination by Canadians was the mark of the 1985 contest. VEs took the first 4 places. Russ, VK4XA, was the leading VK again from a strong contingent. 80 poor, 40 not too bad, 20 and 15 excellent and 10 patchy sums up conditions.

3.5MHz was rather poor for most areas with high static which made copy particularly difficult. ZL1AIZ commented on the brief opening to Europe, though he heard many more than he could work.

7MHz conditions were mixed but many Gs were pleased to get their first QSOs with VK9NS on Norfolk Island.

14MHz as usual carried most of the traffic. VK9NM and VK9XM were two choice DX stations on hand.

21MHz was excellent which made VE7BS comment that it was the best assortment of VK call areas for some time. The band being open for him to somewhere or other for about 17 hours.

28MHz conditions seem to have been good enough across the Atlantic to allow the VE3s to run Gs but not quite good enough for anyone else do much apart from pick up bonuses.

Table 5.3 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1982⁴

1	VE7CC	7588
2	VE6OU	7434
3	VE3BVD	6772
4	VE5RA	6311
5	VK4XA	5798
6	ZL2BR	5562
7	VK9NS	5524
8	G3FXB	5449
9	9H1CH	5328
10	G3MXJ	5265

John Heine, VK3JF, commented that this was his second BERU, his first being the first BERU in 1931, when he competed as VK7JK, and was second overall to Trevor, VK2NS.

⁴ The Commonwealth Contest 1982, Radio Communication, 58, 786, (1982). There were 132 entries, 19 S/B.

Al noted,

Conditions better than '81. 13.65 points per QSO - best ever. MXJ only 260 behind though as opposed to 714 in '81 and 433 in '80. Ear problems, the use of the speaker probably contributed to the lower score plus 'MXJ making a more determined effort. Never will win from G though! Go to VK next year!

Some felt that the rules gave an advantage to VE. However the Committee felt that overall, given the change in conditions from solar maximum to minimum, the rules gave a balanced result. Gs had been close to overall winners bearing in mind that the winners generally have extensive antenna arrays with good performance on the LF bands. Factors which are known to give the edge in the final reckoning.

The 46th Commonwealth Contest 1983

Lasers start to be used in medicine

Australia wins America's Cup

US invades Grenada

Another major solar disturbance disrupted 1983. The unusual conditions created just the opportunity for Russ, VK4XA, to slip through into the winning position. Russ achieved a clear victory over Peter Lake, ZL1AIZ, ex 5W1BZ, and very closely followed by ZL2RY. Peter did not use a beam antenna which just goes to show what a great leveller the ionosphere can be. The result fully justified all the effort the Australians had put in to promote the contest and build up their participation.

Conditions were the worst since 1974 (G2QT), since 1945 (G3KSH), ever (G3JKY)!

Mal Geddes, Z23JO, took three hours for two QSOs. Despite what the 'whinging poms' said, ZL1AIZ said the short path to UK was good and VK7RO agreed!

Trevor, VK2NS, made a part-time entry, he of course won the first contest in 1931.

Table 5.4 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1983⁵

1	VK4XA	4475
2	ZL1AIZ	3924
3	ZL2RY	3909
4	VK3BLN	3862
5	6Y5HN	3828
6	VK2GW	3828
7	VK3XB	3374
8	ZL2BR	3310
9	G3FXB	3221
10	VE5RA	3130

ZL2BR apologised for his lousy score. On checking it was found that he had missed off 1000 points in the final addition.

Al noted,

Another near disaster from conditions point of view. Very good turn out from VK though. Conditions much like 1952-3.'

The last word goes to Don, VK2BDU,

*And didn't I have fun too! The antenna blew down the week before. Couldn't get it up because of the heat of the tin roof until Friday night, which I spent scrambling around the roof with a torch like a b****y possum! Finished it Saturday morning, then all I got was a couple of poms - pardon G stations!*

The 47th Commonwealth Contest 1984

Acid rain threat to UK countryside, scientists warn of greenhouse effect

AIDS virus discovered

Bishop Tutu given Nobel Peace prize

Better conditions resulted in a 30% increase in entry. The largest for 10 years or more, with the VKs making up almost half of the total entry, the G entry was up 30% too. 43 Commonwealth call areas were active at sometime or other.

The winner was Nigel, 6Y5HN. Amongst the leading stations, Nigel not only kept the number of QSOs up on 14 and 21MHz but also took advantage of openings on 3.5 and 28MHz to pick up both contacts and bonuses. This was only Nigel's second entry to the Contest. Second place went to Jim Roberts, VE3IY, and third to Russ, VK4XA. The leading G station was Al, G3FXB.

3.5MHz Phil, G3SWH, commented that he worked all he could hear, all four of them! Generally disappointing conditions.

⁵ The Commonwealth Contest 1983, Radio Communication, 59, 818, (1983). There were 106 entries, 9 S/B.

7MHz The overnight conditions from G to VE were poor leading to a long quiet night for many. VE2WA/3 had a good late opening into G. There were good conditions on the morning long path to VK/ZL from the UK.

14MHz carried the lions share of traffic as is usual.

Table 5.5 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1984⁶

1	6Y5HN	5903
2	VE3IY	5583
3	VK4XA	5391
4	G3FXB	4943
5	ZL1AIZ	4840
6	VE6OU	4693
7	VK2BQQ	4644
8	VK2BPN	4206
9	G3RRS	4204
10	VK3AEW/1	4197

From the information available the most popular single rig was the FT101 closely followed by TS830s and 520s. Antennas were mostly dipoles for the low frequencies with the ubiquitous triband yagi for HF.

Al was satisfied,

Conditions fair for this stage of the cycle but geomagnetic field not stable and flux around 110. Certainly better than 1983 ! Down tho' on '82 and '81 although the score in '81 was much the same - so I guess we are doing things about right. Nearest competition this year G3RRS. Better 40m performance over him. If there is a negative comment - it is the fact that 10 got neglected !

The 48th Commonwealth Contest 1985

*Unrest increasing in South Africa
Gorbachev is new Soviet leader
Rainbow Warrior sunk in Auckland*

The battle between Canada and the rest continued with Lee, VE7CC, wresting the leading position back again. Unfortunately the WIA decided that the 10th of March would be a good day to celebrate their 75 anniversary with a CW contest. This caused some confusion, including some claiming VK75A as VK7 when the station was located in VK3! Nearly half of the Commonwealth call areas were active, 51, including such rarities as 3B8 and 3B9.

Nigel, 6Y5HN, had to be content with second place, being closely pursued by 5Z4MX, who was Rolf Salme, SM5MX, operating from the Swedish Embassy in Nairobi. Fred, G4BWP, took the top UK spot from Al, G3FXB.

⁶ The Commonwealth Contest 1984, Radio Communication, 60, 788, (1984). There were 138 entries, 14 S/B.

Conditions were generally poor.

3.5MHz Conditions seem to have been fair. G4BWP had good results with 67 QSOs, 33 Bonuses and 22 Areas.

7MHz carried about a third of the traffic.

14MHz succumbed to the dismal conditions with no long path opening to VK/ZL.

21MHz Even the leaders only made a handful of QSOs with the exception of 5Z4MX who made good use of the North-South path.

28MHz conditions poor - no contacts from the UK and only four elsewhere.

Table 5.6 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1985⁷

1	VE7CC	4265
2	6Y5HN	4062
3	5Z4MX	3954
4	G4BWP	3793
5	G3FXB	3514
6	VE5RA	3501
7	P29PR	3499
8	VK4XA	3365
9	VE3CRG	3135
10	ZL2BR	3115

Al commented,

About the quietest that can recall. VEIASJ(?) 17.30 on 40, super VK/ZL LP on 40 but nil on 20, SP poor on 20, only VE1VO on 15, nil on 10! Also big threat from G4BWP! Serial number up on mine at end by a few!

The 49th Commonwealth Contest 1986

*Challenger shuttle explodes
Chernobyl reactor fire
Halley's comet*

A major change in the scoring in Australia when Amateur Radio Magazine said, 'each completed contact will count 5 pints.'! Kev, VK3AUQ, claimed 93 gallons and 1 pint. Just enough to see him round to next year. The number of entrants was an improvement so perhaps a new type of incentive could be the result of this misprint.

The winner VE3BVD, David Dudley, used an impressive set up with high performance 3.5 and 7MHz antennas and monobanders for the HF bands. Nigel, 6Y5HN, was runner up for the second year, with Lee, VE7CC, only 14 points behind. Al, G3FXB, was, as had become a habit, the leading UK station. Russ, VK4XA, led

⁷ The Commonwealth Contest 1985, Radio Communication, 61, 722, (1985). There were 115 entries, 18 S/B.

the Australian entry, for the seventh year in succession. The VK turnout was really impressive.

3.5MHz was disappointing with high noise levels in Europe. VE3BVD had a high QSO and a good bonus. ZL3GQ was particularly loud on this band as well as most of the others!

7MHz was one of the most heavily used bands. Conditions were fair with openings to Oceania. G3FXB made it to 28 call areas.

14MHz had reasonable openings to Oceania at the beginning of the contest with Canada and Africa appearing later.

21MHz was in good shape to Africa from the UK but poor to every where else.

28MHz yielded very little, fleeting openings and mostly North-South.

Table 5.7 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1986⁸

1	VE3BVD	4550
2	6Y5HN	4414
3	VE7CC	4400
4	VE6OU/3	4139
5	VK4XA	3991
6	G3FXB	3945
7	G3PEK	3555
8	VK2BQQ	3517
9	G3MXJ	3468
10	ZL1AIZ	3462

Al lamented, Marginally better than '85 but 80 rather poor.

The 50th Commonwealth Contest 1987

The Golden Anniversary

'Crocodile Dundee' box office hit

London Stock Market crash

Fiji leaves Commonwealth

The Golden Anniversary proved to attract more entrants than ever before and although band conditions were only fair some good scores were made. Contacts made over 50 years ago were still being made, a tribute to the hold that the contest has in entrants' minds. The strength of the friendships made which have resulted between participants is surely an essential part of our hobby. The contest has emerged as a *dignified contest where manners and experimentation are set against a competitive spirit*.

Lee, VE7CC, won again, his fifth outright victory, making him one of the most successful entrants of all time. He was closely followed by John, VE6OU/3, who made more Qs but lost out on bonuses.

The UK leader was again Al, G3FXB. The UK performance was very good with five stations in the top ten, one of the best performances for many years.

Table 5.8 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1987⁹

1	VE7CC	5391
2	VE6OU/3	5123
3	6Y5HN	4794
4	VK6LW	4548
5	G3FXB	4536
6	GW3YDX	4488
7	G4BUO	4213
8	VE3CRG	4199
9	G4EDG	4066
10	G4CNY	4058

Four special awards were given to celebrate the Golden Anniversary :-

Special Award	Dud Charman, G6CJ
Overseas Winner	Lee Sawkins, VE7CC
UK Winner	Al Slater, G3FXB
UK Receiving Winner	C. Bradbury, BRS1066.

⁸ The Commonwealth Contest 1986, Radio Communication, 62, 586, (1986). There were 126 entries, 24 S/B.

⁹ The Commonwealth Contest 1987, Radio Communication, 63, 790, (1987). There were 149 entries, 19 S/B.



Dud Charman, G6CJ. (ZL1AH)

The award to Dud, G6CJ, was made to recognise the contribution Dud had made to the contest over the years. Dud entered first in 1936, and had been present ever since. Dud led the list of entrants in 1952, but could not accept the Senior Rosebowl because he was Chairman of the HFCC at that time. The award reflected his ability in operating since this feat has only been accomplished by two other UK amateurs in the history of the event.

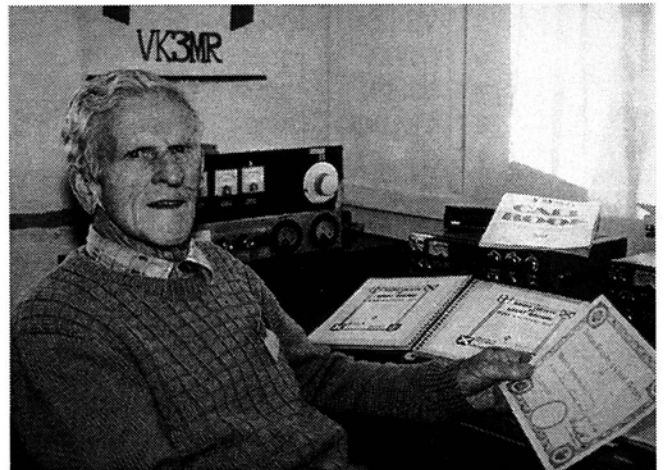
Special certificates were also presented to others who had made outstanding contributions :-

Mal Geddes	G2SO/Z23JO
Snow Campbell	VK3MR
Frank Cooper	G2QT
John Tutton	VK3ZC
Vic Williams	VE3KE/VE7UZ

Conditions

The Anniversary brought a big increase in the number of different call areas active and this added much to the attraction of the contest.

3.5MHz held out on the Europe-East Coast path but propagation to Africa and VK was disappointing. VU2LAM provided the only signals from Asia on LF and a select few Gs made it to 9J2BO. Canada on the other hand worked 27 call areas with only Asia being wiped out by the East Europe QRM.



Snow, VK3MR, with certificates

7MHz did not open up to Western Canada though signals to Oceania were quite reliable.

14MHz provided 54% of the total number of QSOs and was very much the 'bread and butter' band.

21MHz surprised many with openings to VK/ZL and VE as the sunspot cycle progressed.

28MHz was virtually dead. If it hadn't been for the presence of GB5CC and Z23JO there would have been no contacts made from the UK at all.

The GB5CC Story

A new feature in the contest was the special event station GB5CC. GB5CC could work all entrants including Gs for points. GB5CC was operated by Don, G3OZF, and Alan, G4DJX, from the station of Ian, G4LJF.

This was a good station, a 4 element tribander, a 3 element yagi on 40m and 5 by 80m slopers all at 100 feet.

It is interesting to note that if the 300 odd G stations worked are included GB5CC would have won the contest. However there was still a great difference between VE7CC and the highest placed G, G3FXB. Still some way to go before the next UK winner appears.

The conclusion was that GB5CC had had a positive effect on the contest and a number of other HQ stations were to appear in subsequent years.

Last words

Al was severely tested by Ron, GW3YDX. As Ron said on his entry,

*had the contest ended at 0900 I would probably have beaten that old ***** Slater. However I am sure he has done it again on bonuses.*

But not by many, 161 to 158! Ron clearly had Al rattled,

Conditions still bumping along the bottom!

Keen competition from GW3YDX - did I blow it by not using the AR88 as a monitor RX!? Can only draw comfort from score being 19% up on 'MXJ' - 11.88% up on last year in real terms. Analysis shows that in 77/78 when had two lines of gear that scores were 2-3 % over 'MXJ'! Does a second line of gear dilute your effort? We will find out next year!

The 51st Commonwealth Contest 1988

**Millions homeless in Bangladesh floods
Angola and Namibia announce cease fire**

Indifferent conditions lead to 14MHz being the most active band. 28MHz was very quiet. Even the main LF paths such as the G-VK/ZL were disappointing. However the contest does cover the whole globe and conditions were variously described as 'mixed, disappointing and - the best LF conditions ever!'

The entrants showed a few new faces, including the author. Concern was expressed that the CW 'art' is a dying one. John, VK3ZC, mounted a mini-DXpedition to VK1, operating as VK1CA.

Lee, VE7CC, just held off John, VE6OU/3. Both were clear of Nigel, 6Y5HN. VE7CC used a TS820/L4B with yagis for the HF bands, a two element yagi for 40m and delta loop, an inverted V and phased verticals on 80m.

VE6OU/3 used various yagis on 10-40m at heights of 150-160 feet and a sloper array on 80m. Al, G3FXB, led the UK to take fourth position overall.

Table 5.9 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1988

1	VE7CC	6213
2	VE6OU/3	6206
3	6Y5HN	5709
4	G3FXB	4985
5	VK2APK	4529
6	ZC4AP	4470
7	G3PEK	4447
8	G4BUO	4437
9	AX4XA	4384
10	VE5RA/6	4333

John, VK3ZC, has outstanding memories of 1988, he says,

As a keen 80m fan, my QSOs with 5Z4MX on 80, 40 and 20 within a couple of hours in 1988 were special for me, as were the eight Gs I worked in the same test.

Al commented,

Sprained ankle did not help, and the publicity did not really pay off. HF conditions were up and LF down. Two marginals with VS6DO and VK6LW on 80. Very similar to 1984!

The 52nd Commonwealth Contest 1989

Lockerbie disaster

Bhutto and Ghandi seal nuclear treaty

Environmental concern grows

The precursor conditions to a massive solar flare which occurred later in March gave poor propagation. A bigger entry as a result of better publicity showed that CW operators were far from being extinct.

John, VE6OU/3, was the winner, holding off Nigel, 6Y5HN, who had a rotator failure just as the contest started. Al, G3FXB, was nearly 500 points clear of Barry, G3PEK, the next G station, prompting someone to comment that Al should be *compulsory retired*.¹⁰

Table 5.10 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest
1989 ^{10, 11}

1	VE6OU/3	6847
2	6Y5HN	6754
3	ZL3GQ	5727
4	VE7CC	5699
5	VK2APK	5418
6	VK6LW	5305
7	G3FXB	5295
8	VK4XA	5270
9	G3PEK	4790
10	G3MXJ	4765

Al was starting to think about the second rig again,

Missed VP2MDY on 80 around 00.30 when working VE on 40m. Missed ZD8CW on 15 and also VKs when working VK/ZL on 14. At the time of VP2MDY we got VE2CP on 40m. When the VKs came in on 15 we had ZL2, VK4 and VK7 on 20. So it is largely a swings and roundabouts thing.

3. Next year we will have another line of gear and remember we tried it before. It never really worked. It required a major effort to break with tradition. Yes, it was an oversight. Too much concentration on insignificant matters but the bonuses lost would have been minimal.

¹⁰ The Commonwealth Contest 1988, Radio Communication, 64, 803, (1988). There were 113 entries, 19 S/B.

¹¹ The Commonwealth Contest 1989, Radio Communication, 65, 82, (Sept.1989). There were 124 entries, 20 S/B.

Chapter 6

Modern Times 1990 to 1996

The 53rd Commonwealth Contest 1990

Gulf crisis, Iraq invades Kuwait

Global warming, a 'reality'

Optics flawed in Hubble space telescope.

'CW DXers are not extinct', announced Gary, G4IFB, the adjudicator. Increased entries and good conditions made the 1990 event a great success. Lots of publicity in VK/ZL and a number of some of the rarer Commonwealth Countries active maintained the activity level of 1989 despite severe QRM from JA.

Al, G3FXB, mounted his own mini-DXpedition to ZC4ESB (Eastern Sovereign Base) on Cyprus, using a TB3 tribander, a long wire and a TS830. Al held off Lee, VE7CC, who had to settle for second despite his formidable antenna array. The absence of Al from the UK gave Dave, G4BUO, a clear run for the leading UK station. In any case Dave exceeded Al's winning 1989 score. Nigel, 6Y5HN, came third overall.

Comparing the leader's score just shows how operating skill and the associated luck go to make the winning scores. If you don't have the antennas but you do have the *nose for DX* you can do well in this contest.

A fair amount of exotic DX was around with participation from Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and India. 1990 was the first year that bonus points were available for working Society headquarters stations. There were three active, VK3WIA, ZL6A and GB5CC and they made a total of 900 Qs.

Without conditions to comment about comments shifted to the weather, '200mm of rain' P29PL, 'Antennas damaged in ice storm', from VE6OU/3. On the other hand some still found conditions not to their liking, ' Hard slog on Sunday morning', G4BUO, and 'LF conditions dismal', GW4XXF and others.

Al didn't make much comment on his only outright win, only that,

Poor LF antenna /ATU. Neglect of VK/ZL on LF SP, No CW filter in TS 830. An enjoyable holiday.

Table 6.1 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1990¹

1	ZC4ESB	6755
2	VE7CC	6590
3	6Y5HN	6225
4	VK6LW	6190
5	G4BUO	5352
6	G3MXJ	5145
7	G3LET	5117
8	ZL3GQ	4809
9	VK4XA	4785
10	G3OZF	4500

The 54th Commonwealth Contest 1991

Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, VU2RG

Independence for the Baltic states

Repeal of apartheid laws

Gulf war ceasefire

Jeff Morris, 9H1EL, and Andy Chadwick, ZD8VJ, fought it out through the entire contest with the honours just going to Jeff. It transpires that Andy lost about an hour because the owner of the station, *had to have his sked with his QSL Manager*. The leading VE, VK and G stations were familiar, VE7CC and VE3EJ, VK6LW and VK2APK, and G3FXB and G4BUO.

Al regained the Col Thomas Rosebowl after it's short break with Dave, G4BUO. Dave commented, 'I operated the Contest with the Rosebowl sitting above the rig,... but it didn't bring enough bonuses to beat 'FXB.' This despite the fact that the boom of Al's quad was broken during the week before the contest.

Severe QRM from the Japanese 5-9 Magazine Contest again spoilt the contest for many entrants.

Table 6.2 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1991²

1	9H1EL	6866
2	ZD8VJ	6765
3	VE7CC	6689
4	VE3EJ	6495
5	VK6LW	6139
6	VK2APK	5235
7	VK2BJ	5155
8	G3FXB	5055
9	G4BUO	4915
10	G3MXJ	4595

Last entry from Al Slater,

Quad boom broke on Friday. Bad power line QRN mainly on 80 due to wet weather and band conditions

- 1 The Commonwealth Contest 1990, Radio Communication, 66, 63, (Nov 1990). There were 125 entries, 22 S/B.
- 2 The Commonwealth Contest 1991, Radio Communication, 68, 66, (Jan 1991). There were 126 entries, 27 S/B.

that fell off before contest and improved when it was over!

The 55th Commonwealth Contest 1992

South Africa votes 'yes' for constitutional change

Earth Summit

Mass starvation in Somalia

A record breaking score from John, VE3EJ, (previously VE6OU/3), was over a thousand points clear of the next station Lee, VE7CC. Third station was Peter, ZL3GQ. In the UK Dennis, G3MXJ, was the leading UK station.

Plenty of QRM again from the Japanese 59 Magazine Contest though through the efforts of David, 9V1RH, and Masa, JM1UXU, the Japanese kindly changed their dates to avoid the problem in future.

Better conditions seem to have been enjoyed by all, 21MHz was very good, I myself operating from VE7SV's station as G3PJT/VE7 was working into G at 0100Z and ZL2BCH commented, 'Apart from a blackout on 14/21/28 for an hour, conditions good. What a cracking signal VP8GAV was on 21'. Yet as always conditions vary quite a lot, V85KX commenting of, 'a total lack of propagation at any time on ANY band'.

Though some had finger problems as more used computer logging, Gordon, VE3ST, '...all went well but in trying to edit I lost 30 QSOs'. G3KSH observed that the computer was making the biggest change since he first entered in 1935, 'no pencils to sharpen'.

The Contest provides a great way to work new countries, 'made three new countries on 40', commented G4FVK. G3HJF commented on the poor turnout of overseas stations but in fact there were 47 Commonwealth prefixes active. Many enjoy talking to old friends, 'Is this an old friends contest'? Brian, 9J2BO, 'nice to work so many Gs', VK6AJ, and from Don, G3OZF, 'there is nothing quite like BERU'.

1992 was G2QT's fiftieth BERU, an incredible achievement ³.

3 See Chapter 7 for Frank's story.

Table 6.3 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest
1992 ⁴

1	VE3EJ	8415
2	VE7CC	7485
3	ZL3GQ	7005
4	ZD8LI	6730
5	VK2BJ	6255
6	VK2APK	5460
7	ZC4CZ	5110
8	G3MXJ	5060
9	C56/GM3YOR	4615
10	VK4XA	4535

The 56th Commonwealth Contest 1993

Indian earthquake

Lifting of UN sanctions on South Africa

Sadly the 1993 event was over shadowed by the untimely death of Al Slater, G3FXB, a few months beforehand. Al had chalked up 18 UK wins with an outright win as ZC4ESB.

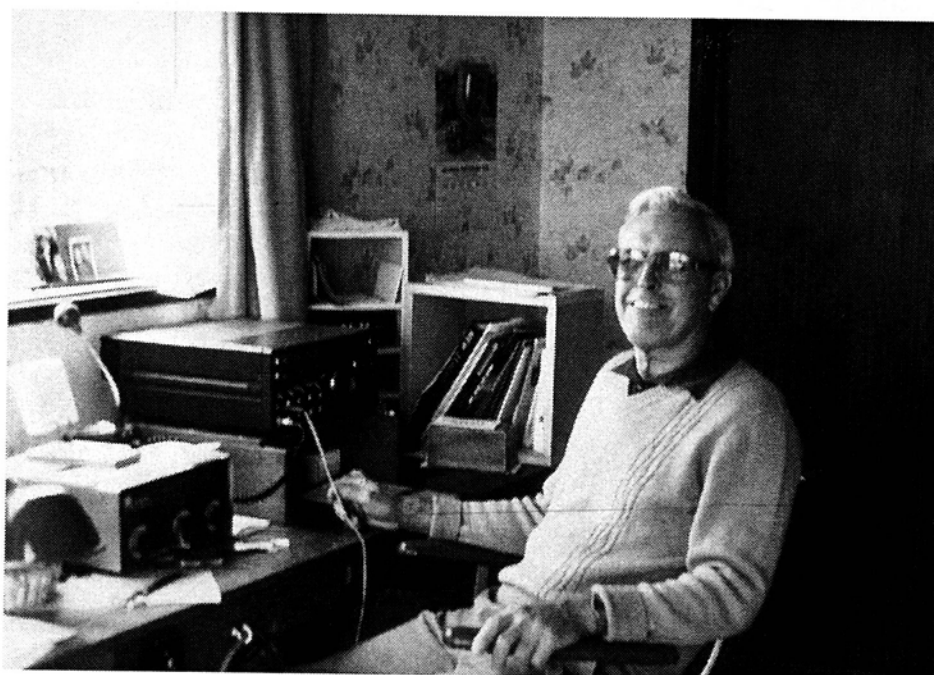
1992 UK winner Dennis, G3MXJ, went to Malta and used the station of Jeff, 9H1EL, and thus pushed John, VE3EJ, into second place. The leading UK station was Fred, G4BWP. As the solar activity started to decline the shift towards 7MHz was noticeable. Good performance on 3.5MHz and 7MHz will be important for the stations who aspire to be leaders in the coming lower years of the solar cycle.

Table 6.4 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest
1993⁵

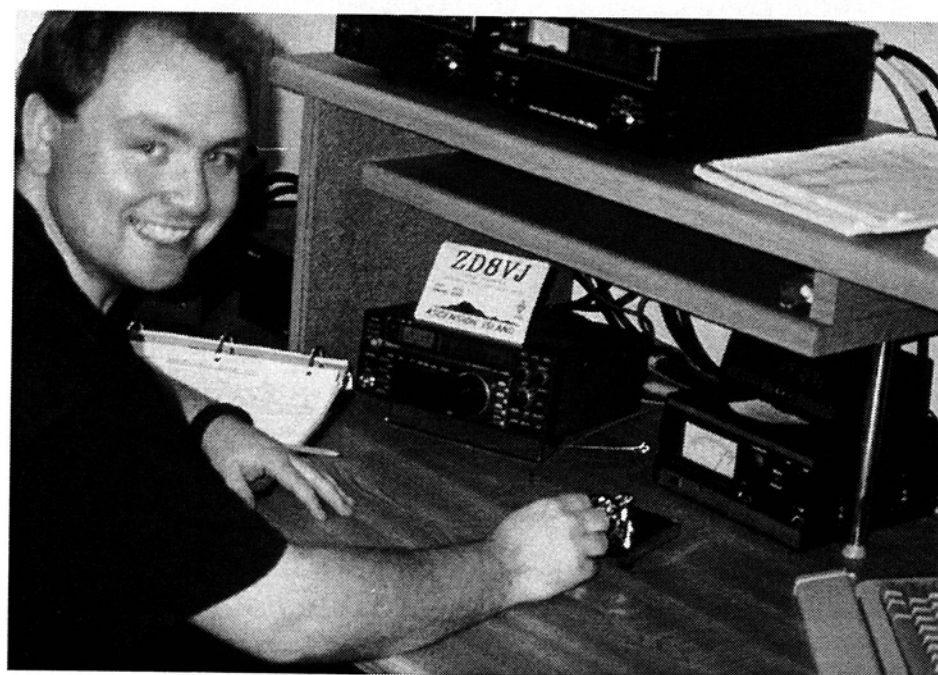
1	9H1EL	7875
2	G3MXJ	7050
3	ZD8LI	6945
4	VK2BJ	6795
5	ZD8VJ	5980
6	VK2APK	5560
7	G4BWP	5545
8	VE2ZP	5515
9	VE7CC	5405
10	G4BUO	5370

1993 was also the first year that a software programme was available that catered specifically for the Contest. The was the Super-Duper (SD) programme written by Paul, EI5DI.

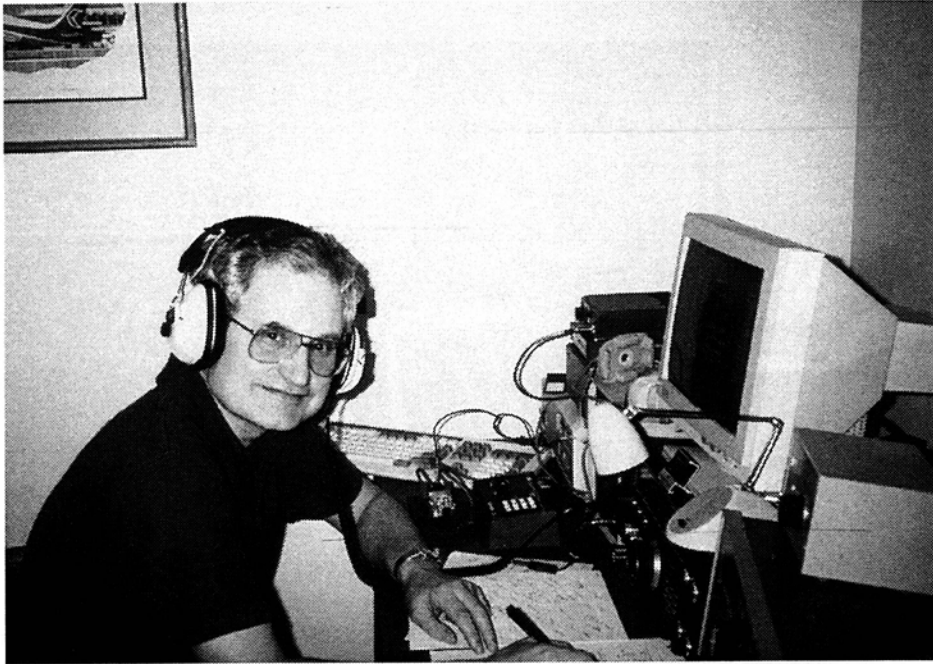
4 The Commonwealth Contest 1992, Radio Communication, 68, 63, (Nov 1992). There were 133 entries, 21 S/B.
5 The Commonwealth Contest 1993, Radio Communication, 69, 81, (Oct.1993). There were 129 entries, 25 S/B.



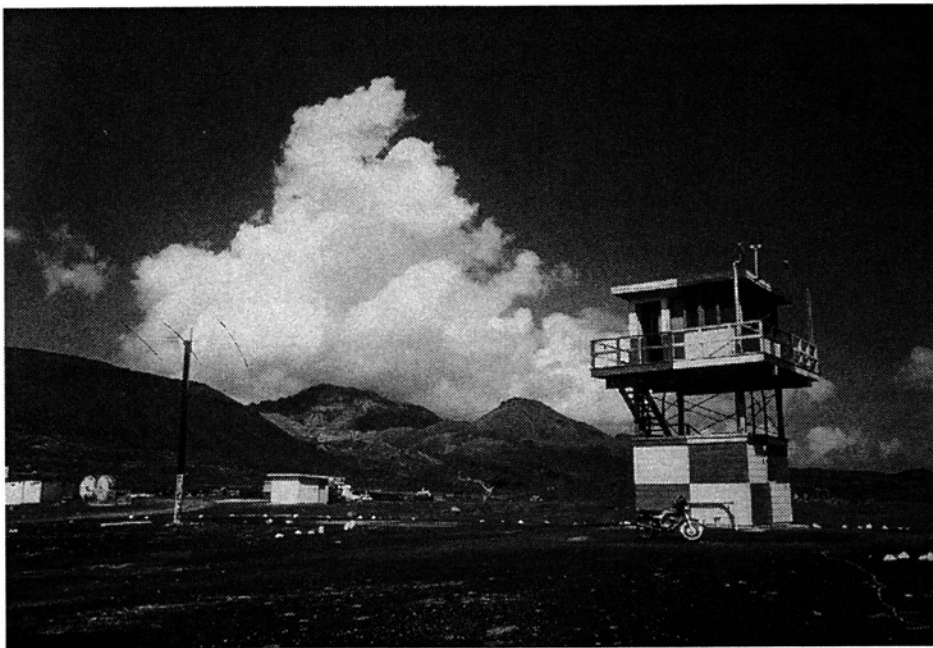
John, ZL1AH, 1990



Andy, ZD8VJ. Entered as ZD8VJ in 1991, G4ZVJ in 1992,
ZD8VJ in 1993, 5W1VJ in 1994 and G4ZVJ in 1996



The author operating G3PJT/VE7 at the station of Dale, VE7SV, Vancouver, 1992



Ascension Island Club Station, located at Wideawake Airfield in an old wooden Control tower. Andy, ZD8VJ, operated 1991/1993 BERU from here, where he had a one hour power cut at sunset and last out to 9H1EL!

1993, 9H1EL and my name on the cup! by Dennis, G3MXJ

Possibly, the ultimate satisfaction for the BERU stalwart is for his name to join the illustrious list on the Senior Rosebowl. A very difficult thing to do from UK - in fact, only G5WP achieved the feat post-war (1950). A long standing friendship with Jeff, 9H1EL, had always been coupled with an invitation to visit him, so 1993 was an appropriate time to take this up.

Jeff has a very good QTH on a high spot on the island although not a lot of space with his entire antenna farm located on the flat roof of his house.



Dennis, G3MXJ, at the station of 9H1EL

As would be imagined, there is a pipeline into the UK on all bands and this accounts for the bulk of QSOs. However, I was very aware that you could easily end up with a lot of contacts but be well down on bonus points and lose out to one of the VEs. So I had tried to give some thought to maximising opportunities for LF band bonuses - particularly with VK and ZL. The short path ought to be better than from G and the long path correspondingly more difficult. As it turned out for the weekend, conditions were not the best. Records show the A-Index/Flux figures as 23/142 for the Saturday and 16/136 for the Sunday. Although I say 'not the best' it did, of course, play into my hands. The disturbance meant that VE s had limited openings into Europe while 15m and 10m had good openings from 9H into UK.

The 57th Commonwealth Contest 1994

*ANC wins South African election
South Africa rejoins Commonwealth
IRA ceasefire*

Breakthrough in Israeli-PLO talks

Conditions were especially poor on 21 and 28MHz with some stations reporting no QSOs at all. The few that were made, were as a result of spotting the fleeting openings and using unconventional propagation. Nonetheless there were 50 Commonwealth call areas in the logs. The winner was the author, G3PJT operating as G3PJT/VP9 from the QTH of Allan, VP9AD. Second place was also a guest operation. Tim, G4VXE, operated from the shack of John, VE3EJ. Barry, VK2BJ, also originally holding a UK call, G3PEK, was third.

Many echoed the feelings of VK6AJ, 'Conditions mainly rotten ... but great fun', they also felt with V85KX, 'Great contest - gentlemanly, polite - a pleasure'.

VK4OD was the first winner of the Commonwealth Medal, awarded to the station making the most progress over the years. He too experienced poor conditions with only one G on 14MHz and no VEs. However such is the nature of BERU that G3DOT nearly made WAC in one go with only 4 watts. VK3FC gained 27th place at the age of 90 having first been licensed in 1928.

Table 6.5 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest
1994⁶

1	G3PJT/VP9	5587
2	VE3EJ	5154
3	VK2BJ	4590
4	6Y5HN	4319
5	GW3YDX	3469
6	G4BUO	3298
7	VK4XA	3216
8	ZL1MH	3017
9	G3OZF	2580
10	G3TBK	2545

⁶ The Commonwealth Contest 1994, Radio Communication, 70, 81, (Oct.1994). There were 91 entries, 24 S/B.



Tom, VK4OD, First winner of the Commonwealth Medal, 1994.

G3PJT/VP9 Bermuda 1994.7

In 1993 we spent 5-6 days in Bermuda and I thought at the time that it would be an idea to return one year to operate the Commonwealth Contest. Luckily we were able to manage to spend a 10 day holiday bridging the Commonwealth Contest weekend.

I was able to use the station of Allan Davidson, VP9AD. Allan has good antennas and an excellent site overlooking Hamilton, the harbour and most of Bermuda, a clear take off in practically all directions. The station is well known for CQWW entries over the years. Stuart, G4CNY, and Ian, G4LJF, operated from there.

In the planning stage I used MINIPROP to decide on the operating approach. It was clear that 10 & 15 were good possibilities but the openings to UK and VK were likely to be rather chancy, and were going to be difficult to spot. I agreed with Allan therefore that a good antenna for 40 would be a necessity and he agreed to put up his 2 element yagi. For 20 & 15 I used 4 and 3 el monobanders on one tower, for 10 a 3 el yagi on a separate tower and for 80, a dipole. None of these were more than 30' high as the winds were too high to allow the towers to be cranked up to full height. The location is however about 100-150' above the harbour so the take off is good. I used a TS940 for 40, 20 and 15 and a separate TS930 for monitoring 80 and 10. I took my laptop and used SD for logging both for the contest and for casual non-contest operations.

I was unable to get a VP9 call or even arrange to use the VP9 prefix first. At Allan's suggestion I programmed 'VP9' into the keyer and this seemed to at

least produce a 'QRZ VP9' in busy pileups and enabled me to then send the full call.

I had a couple of practice sessions on the Thursday and Friday before the contest. The Friday one allowed me to try out 40m. I found that the band opened to UK earlier than I expected. Also that I had a severe but intermittent noise problem. This caused me to close down several times, apologies to those calling, but the noise was S9 and I couldn't hear anyone. I gather this caused some confusion in Europe, but there really was little I could do. I concluded that as it was raining heavily it might be a faulty insulator on the overhead powerlines and hoped for a dry weekend. In the event it was and the noise did not recur. However these short tests showed that I would have a problem with non-contest stations calling me. VP9 on CW is not rare but at least it is unusual, and a lot of people are trying for the Bermuda Award.

The start of the contest is at 8am local time so the HF bands are only just opening. I therefore decided to adopt a strategy of finding the best run band at anytime and only making short trips to the other HF/LF bands for bonuses. I decided beforehand that I would probably spend most time on 20 and 40 and in the event this was the case. I had several good sessions on 20 and 40. Especially in the first few hours.

I had analysed my log and the final results from last year and set up benchmarks against the leading stations, VE3EJ, 9H1EL etc and a Q rate of between 40-60 hr at least for the first 12 hours. I therefore tried to keep track of Tim (G4VXE at VE3EJ) for most of the contest. In the event I managed to keep up the Q rate above my benchmark until past the halfway stage, with short bursts of 80-100/hour. The flat spot was 3-5 am Sunday when the rate dropped to less than 7/hour. If I spent time spotting bonuses then I would not let the rate drop below the minimum without going back to the run band. If the rate on the 'run' band is very much higher than the rate on the 'bonus' band then you can't spend very much time on the bonus band. However it is necessary to spend some time to find bonus contacts. Such is the dilemma of the Commonwealth Contest.

In the event I did not work many stations on either 15 or 10. Only four stations made it on all 5 bands, G4BUO, 6Y5HN, VE3EJ and VE3VHB, the VEs on backscatter. I only made six Qs on 10m, despite six visits covering over 1 hr. 15 was not much better, 26 Qs. If there were openings then I missed them!

80m was noisy but spotting the openings was again very difficult. I tried three skeds with ZL1AIZ and made it at the last opportunity, the very end of his sunset. It was very noticeable that the LF experts, like VK6HD, turned up just when you would expect and were easy to work. I mentioned earlier that 40 opened earlier than I expected and on the Saturday I could hear

Ian, G3TMA from 1530! Unfortunately he couldn't hear me calling!

The other interesting effect was on Sunday morning. As dawn came up over Europe, even though it was dark in VP9, it was possible to hear some well sited stations on 20m. 20m opened up well before dawn and I was then able to run some of the Sunday morning operators - looking for VK on the long path, I suppose.

Several VKs were audible in VP9 on what is the short path, but I couldn't raise them, especially VK3WIA! As I had realised that I should work as many UK stations as possible I tried to be active with the beams on the UK to match the times when the UK stations should be on, during Saturday and Sunday afternoon, during the middle of the UK evening and Sunday morning, even though propagation might not be the best. I wanted to grab as many casual Qs as possible. I think that this paid off.

I find staying awake for 24 hours very difficult, I nodded off from 5-5.30 local time.

I had non-contest stations calling all the time despite saying "VE/VK/G" stations only. People were only trying to help! Either that or they wanted to join the Commonwealth! In the end I worked 100+ non-contest stations during the contest. To be fair during the night I worked Ws on 80m just to stay awake! I spent a lot of time on 80 and 40 searching for casual VE Qs but found very few bonuses.

I thought that operating standards were excellent. Several times the frequency went completely quiet when I asked for a repeat from a weak station. I had the continuous callers, they come from all denominations (!), and were particularly bad on Sunday morning. It's the Sunday driver syndrome. A lot of G's gave me serials in the 001/005 order I hope they got a new band/country.

You can't crack every pile up with a VP9 call! If Keith, G3OHN, had not asked 9VIYC to stand by I don't think I could have cracked the G pileup for a good bonus QSO. Thanks, Keith. Andy, 5W1VJ, was a good signal on 20 and 15, I should have tried harder to get him on 40m.

Finally many thanks to Judy and Allan, VP9AD, for their great hospitality. Nothing was too much trouble for Allan, including putting up the 40m yagi and its tower just for the weekend, retuning his 80m dipole for CW, allowing me to set up his station how I wanted and acting as cook and bottle washer for the weekend.

The 58th Commonwealth Contest 1995

Mozambique and Cameroon join Commonwealth

Storm of protest as France restarts nuclear tests in the Pacific

Nigeria suspended from Commonwealth

In terms of conditions 1995 was not good. Perhaps a bit worse even than 1994. Many of the openings were very short and a keen pair of ears was necessary to pull out the bonuses on 3.5MHz. 1995 saw the re-entry of South Africa to the Commonwealth and a small number of ZS stations entered.

The winner was John, VE3EJ, followed closely by Barry, VK2BJ. Both wonderful signals on 7MHz in the UK. Place by place, year by year, Barry is closing up on the leading position. Nigel, 6Y5HN, just managed to hold off Dave, G4BUO, the UK leader. Ivor, VK3XB, who uses a short wire strung a foot over the tiles of his bungalow, picked up the Commonwealth Medal for most improving his score and with Mavis, VK3KS, being some of the most consistent supporters of the contest since the 1930s.

Bill, N4AR, operated as G0/N4AR using the station of the late Al Slater, G3FXB.

Table 6.6 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1995⁸

1	VE3EJ	5131
2	VK2BJ	4998
3	6Y5HN	3968
4	G4BUO	3896
5	ZL4OK	3653
6	ZL1MH	3439
7	9J2BO	3405
8	VK4EMM	3389
9	G0IVZ	3092
10	G4ODV	2973

⁸ The Commonwealth Contest 1995, Radio Communication, 71, 80, (Oct.1995). There were 102 entries, 19 S/B.

With the tendency just to give 599 in contests these days, VE3VHB commented, ' Anyone who got 599 from me really was S9 - and there weren't very many'. VK2AYD bemoaned the fact that he only worked 7 countries yet 60 Commonwealth call areas were active. Over 630 stations participated in the logs, about the same as in 1994.

The 59th Commonwealth Contest 1996

As of today in mid-May 1996 I don't have the final results for 1996. Harold, G2HLU, kindly let me have the provisional placings at 1 May 1996 knowing that there are a few more logs to come through the system.

Table 6.7 Leading stations The Commonwealth Contest 1996⁹

1	VE3EJ	5437
2	ZF1JT	4898
3	6Y5HN	4221
4	G4BUO	4144
5	VK2BJ	3844
6	VK4EMM	3460
7	G0IVZ	3444
8	VE3IY/7	3296
9	9J2BO	3124
10	GM3POI	3030

Comments from the logs concentrated on the poor conditions especially in the Pacific.

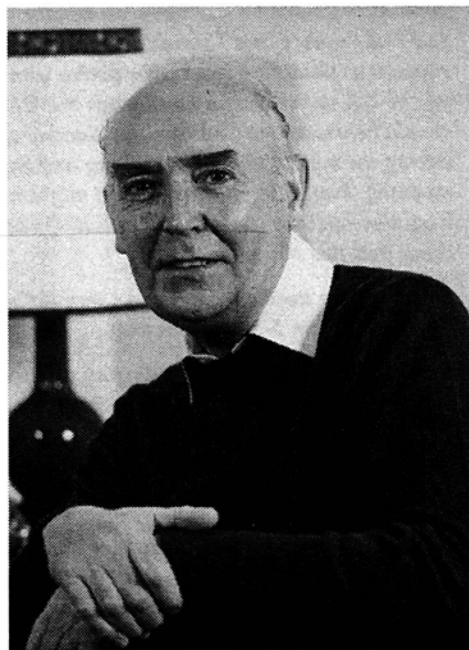
Australia and New Zealand

VK2BJ. - Conditions on HF from VK to the rest of the world were an absolute disaster - someone switched off the ionosphere just before the contest started. Conditions were good in the rest of the world judging from the high scores. Although I have a soft spot for BERU, given the lack of interest from Commonwealth stations other than G, VE, VK, ZL, I am beginning to think that BERU in its present form has passed its 'use by' date.

VK2ETM - Conditions were terrible, lots of local QRN, and also low signals on most bands. In spite of that still lots of fun.

VK3ZC - Russ Coleston VK4XA/VK4WIA HQ told me that he had, with only 150 QSOs, his worst year since 1956! I wonder if a bit more acknowledgement could be made of the work done by HQ stations operators who give up all hope of doing anything 'for their own greater glory'. Conditions here were pretty crook, nothing heard on 15 and 10 so the new cycle seems to be taking a long time to arrive!

VK4EMM - This contest is a real challenge at the solar minimum.



Jeff, VK6AJ, 1996, (VK6AJ)

ZL1MH - An enjoyable contest as always. Some of the G signals were very strong at times. Heard NIL on 10 for the entire contest in spite of calling CQ now and again.

VK6VZ - Gentlemanly operating and great fun. Conditions good into the UK but poor to North America.

VK3APN - Had best ever conditions on 40 LP this year, with Gs being worked non-stop for 1 1/2 hours! These experiences make contesting a real delight.

VK7BC - I found conditions very poor in certain directions, ie Canada and Africa, however this contest was my first BERU effort for 16 years.

VK6AJ - Conditions just about rock bottom - hours of silence and hair dryers (20 single band)

ZL/G4BUE - Called several G stations who were 579 on 7Mhz between 2030 and 2100Z but none of them heard me.

⁹ The Commonwealth Contest 1996, Radio Communication, Oct(1996) to be published. There were more than 80 entries so far plus 14 single band entries.

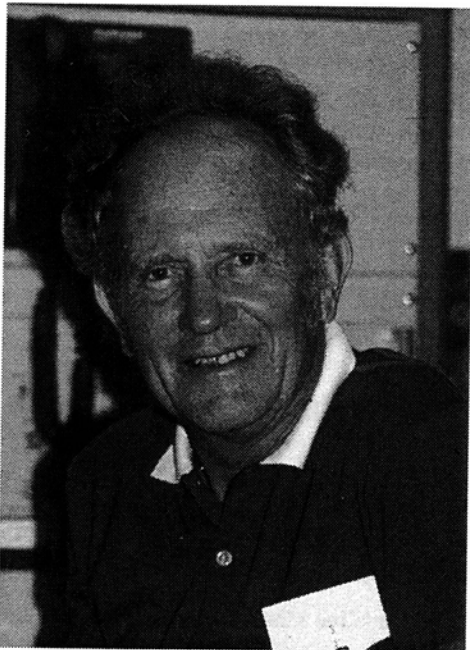
Canada

VE3VHB - At least conditions were better than 1995 on the low bands. Too bad that 20 was dead to VK/ZL from here, just one ZL1 heard on that band. And 10 was completely dead here, not even ZF1JT and 6Y5HN were heard.

VE3ST - I regard this more as a QSO Party than a contest.

VE1BN - Enjoyable contest for fun. Can't be too serious with my poor antenna systems. R5 at 45m and 40/80 dipole at 39m!

VE7FJE - Isn't it surprising how many EU stations think they are part of the Commonwealth?



Mike Hutchins, 1996, ZL1MH, who has entered as ZL1BLJ and in 1963 as VS1LU. Mike was originally G3JPO.

United Kingdom

G3VDL - Conditions pretty poor. If only there were more Commonwealth

G4BUO - Enjoyed BERU as always but have spent rather a lot of my time defending it against those in G who would make it a 'rate' contest like any other.

40 and 80 to Oceania held up well, but no opening to VE7 LP on 40 this year and both 20 SP and LP were poor. The opening around 0200Z on 20 to VK/ZL LP was a bonus.

Spent some time trying to work 9M2TO at 1600Z but no interest from him. I must be the only G who missed VK9NS on 40.

G4ODV - Like last year 'a very tough job'. HF a dead loss, but 40 was brilliant in the morning with very strong signals.

G4ZVJ - BERU is one of the most enjoyable operating events of the year - not just 'another

contest'. Slow going at times - we need to try and improve the activity levels for next year. DONT CHANGE THE RULES!

G3KMQ - Lousy conditions but still worked 3B8CF on 28MHz on an INDOOR DIPOLE!

GW3HGJ The old calls get fewer and sadly no new ones seem to be taking their place.

G3SEP - It's the first time that my 7Mhz score has exceeded my 14MHz score.

G3RSD - Very hard going with a dipole., but rewarding to hear a ZL quieten the rabble from European KWs with 'G3RSD ONLY'!

G3JKY - ZB2EO had more QSOs in 34 minutes that I had in the whole contest.

G3WRR - A good event despite the conditions, but I was disappointed to hear a couple of Commonwealth stations (C56CW and VQ9DX) who weren't taking part in the contest. (But some entrants worked them - Adjudicator, G2HLU).

G3NAN - Another Wagnerian BERU; some glorious moments, but some dreadful quarter hours! Am I getting too old for this? (Never!)

Elsewhere in the Commonwealth

VU2UR - Real bad conditions for low power and omni-directional antenna.

ZF1JT - Amazing electrical storms nearly killed the receiver, black skies, brilliant flashes, torrential rain. 10 blank except for pirates, not surprised in that weather! Odd to start on 80 with the VE7s. Missed ZK1 and nothing from 9M/VS6. Applied the Work First Worry Later rule to UA9MA/C9, one of the new Commonwealth countries, (with TJ).

Chapter 7

Personalities

Introduction

Over the long history of the Contest many personalities have contributed to its success. The Contest is big enough to attract a long term on-going interest but small enough so that the entrants who compete every year add their own personalities to the character of the event. This chapter is compiled from letters sent to me over the past two years and from articles published over the last 64 years.

Eric Trebilcock, BERS 195¹

Eric Trebilcock², was probably the most famous SWL listener in the history of the Contest. It's right and fitting that he should lead the list of personalities. As far as I can see he first sent in an entry in 1934. But let Alan, VK4SS, start the story.

Eric's young working life began as a postal employee in the frontier mining town of Moonta, South Australia. No doubt where his interest began in dits and dahs :- and sometime during this period he was sent to Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, VK8, to convert the unmanaged repeater station of the SA-NT Overland Telegraph to a Post Office - which he did successfully and established himself as a reliable PMG employee (Inland Australia is a place of incredible long distances to nowhere and nobody. Tennant Creek during the WW2 period when I flew over it was a sort of half way military staging camp)

When Eric learned that my father and four uncles all came from Moonta SA, the empathy between us grew. He visited Brisbane many times. It became some sort of family gathering of those interested in BERU. This was pre-war and many participated, but as always happens not many submitted logs. However Eric hardly missed a contest for years and years - so the RSGB records should have a long list.

As an SWL Eric really didn't have much opposition. I have lost count of his firsts in BERU as a CW SWL. I think he should have enough salad or fruit bowls or whatever to fill a trophy room.

Eric was not so active after his first wife died. He simply continued in his long-held job of Federal WIA QSL Manager. Then he remarried and moved to Tasmania.

¹ Based on many comments from all the competitors but especially Alan, VK4SS.

² Alan, VK4SS, told me , ' pronounced Trebilco' because his sister didn't like the 'cock' bit hi!' Australian humour at its best.

Eric's service to amateur radio did not go unrewarded. The news-stand magazine Amateur Radio Action honoured Eric with a handsome wall plaque Trophy for 'Service to Amateur Radio, No.1'. Only two of these have ever been issued. I have the other !

Barrie, 9J2CL etc, says that Eric was, ' the greatest SWL the world has ever known'. From Barrie's first tentative morse tappings in 1963 until well into the 80's Eric managed to hear him, from 5B4CL, 5B4TX, ZC4CL, ZC4TX, YU2AB, 9J2CL, (and all the 9J2 Field Day calls), A4XJP, and of course, G3VCL. When you used to get a report from him Eric listed all the other stations he could hear - really mouth watering DX !'

In a letter to Barrie in 1982, Eric wrote, ' I believe I am a good SWL; after 56 years experience I should be - remember I had CW for a living for 51 years - a real pro, I am or should be. All I try to do is to give my money's worth at all times - I believe all SWL reports should contain a copy of what has been heard - or some of it! And I know this is seldom done by most SWL reporters which is a pity !'

With John, VK3ZC, Eric used to work very hard giving BERU publicity. He used to write to every VK whom he thought was prospective participant.

Madeline Pugh (nee MacKenzie), ex VK4YL.

The most creditable performance in 1936 was the 7th position of Madeline, VK4YL, surely the youngest amateur ever to hold such a high position.

In 1995 Madeline kindly looked out her old scrap-books and writes:

My Dad's Log Book (VK4GK) notes that he was adjudged by the RSGB to be the Best Station in Zone 12 (Australia) in the second BERU Contest. He has not recorded the year but it was probably 1932.

He started a "2nd Ops Log Book" in 1933, and I have that. This relates that I first that I first entered the BERU Contest in 1934 as VK4GK 2nd. Op. Apparently he had intended entering himself , but as Superintendent of the Wynnum Fire Station was called to a fire just before the Contest was due to start, and I persuaded him to let me take his place. I was quite pleased to receive the RSGB Certificate dated 25th August 1934. The certificate typing is very faded now, but reads :-

This certificate was awarded to Madeline MacKenzie, in recognition of her outstanding achievement in scoring 231 points from her Father's Amateur Radio Station, VK4GK, during the Junior BERU Transmitting Contest, 1934.

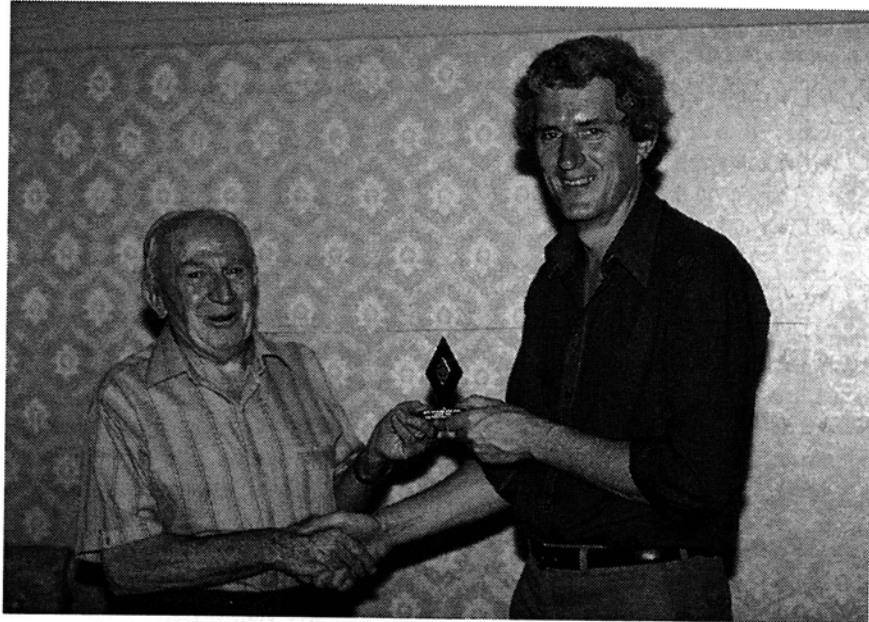
At the time of this Contest Miss MacKenzie was eleven years of age.

It was signed by Arthur E. Watts, President.

I also entered the BERU Junior test as second op. of VK4GK in 1935, and was placed in 13th position in VK.

I sat for the AOPC in January 1935 and was notified of my successful pass on 1st. Feb. 1935 in a personal letter from the Chief Inspector of Wireless, at the time,

Mr.J.Malone. The limitations placed on me were that I was not to use more than 25 watts, must always be supervised (hence Mum or Dad would be up all night plying me with tea, food, etc during a test), and all wiring etc. had to be safe. This resulted in 4GK being awarded the Best Station in the WIA for many years.



Eric Trebilcock with Dennis, G3MXJ



Madeline Mackenzie, VK4YL

My note in the front of the Log Book reads :-

Transmitter: 3 state xtal, tubes are 47 osc., TC 04/10 and DET1 last tube with 7 mc xtal, with 25 watts input.

Receiver: E C detector, with 1 stage audio.

There were no notes on the antenna but I recall two 80 ft. poles of Oregon pine, with lots of guy wires - all the family were on deck when Dad wanted to raise and lower these ! I think it was Zepp fed.

The call VK4YL was assigned to me on the 1st March 1935, and I received a certificate from the RSGB, dated 17th June 1935 to say that I had been elected a Corporate member of the Society.

Also I received a personal congratulatory letter from Jack (John) Clarricoates. He was Secretary of the RSGB, and had two daughters, one, Pamela, about my own age, and she and I became firm pen-pals. 4GK and I had regular skeds with "Uncle Jack". I had the pleasure of a brief meeting with him in person, when I went to London for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In August 1935 my QSO with ZE1JR gave me my WBE. The certificate is dated 3.6.36.

As a result of the BERU tests I became very keen on DX and in April 1935 my QSO with FM4AF gave me WAC certificate dated 25.1.36. Just one little incident here that helped me enjoy my hobby was receiving a postcard from FM4AF of a Tunisian native in full costume. I had made contact with the second op. and he had written on the back that this was the second op.!

1936 saw me entered in the BERU Junior test . I scored 163 points and was in 7th position. In 1937 I entered the BERU Senior with a grand total of 709 points, I was in 14th position all over. I listed the number of every zone contacted. In 1938 I came 6th position all over in the BERU Senior (2nd in the Australian zone), with a grand total of 784.

In August, 1939 my great achievement before the outbreak of WWII was to be awarded the BERTA by the RSGB³.

As you can see I really enjoyed the contests and kept a list of every country I contacted.

On the social side, VK4GK was RSGB rep. for many years, until the outbreak of war, and we kept in touch with as many members as possible. We often had visitors from other states, other cities in Queensland, and sometimes overseas, particularly ZL, always organising a gathering of hams for the visits. We even made contacts with ship's radio operators, while they were at sea and when their ship was in port in Brisbane Dad would go down to their ship and bring them home. The local boys had many get-

togethers , either at one anothers homes, or at a picnic on the beach.

Our photos were numerous , especially as hams sent 88's and "pse send foto" to '4YL. I guess it gave me a thrill.

I recall how terrified I was when asked to visit a cinema and appear on stage. Fox Movietone News related the story of the "Child Prodigy". I was really a shy girl who loved to study - be it radio or what was to become my career - Domestic Science. I'd spend hours pouring over "The Admiralty Handbook", now I guess, very obsolete!

My AOPC was gained whilst I was still at Primary School, and studying for my High School entrance, but my serious efforts in BERU took place while I was at Secondary School studying to become a Domestic Science Teacher. The Monday after a 'test' weekend off I went to college with no homework done, and I often dozed off in class; but thanks to an understanding (and I think proud) Headmistress, I'd be excused with the words: "I guess you had another heavy radio weekend, Madeline"!

I recall the many friends I made - our Woodman was a German and he was very good at translating many letters from Europe, and then translating the replies to send away. Unfortunately the correspondence all stopped at the outbreak of war. I also had many regular skeds with folk in many different countries - most notably with VE5BI who regularly visited Dad's sister in Winnepeg and sent us first hand news. To name special mates would be very hard - I enjoyed all my contacts and was always pleased to contact them again. I recall one special QSO with a research worker in Iceland - there would not be too many then who could say they had contacted Iceland.

The war really closed a chapter in my life that had been a great experience. It also meant that I was transferred 1000 km away from home as a Domestic Science teacher. During the war I was married and later returned to teaching for a few years to specialise in teaching mentally and physically disabled folk to care for themselves in the home, resigning in 1968 to care for our own family.

We now have six children, 17 grandchildren, and so far, 14 1/2 great grand children: so you can guess where my interests lie.

Mal Geddes, Z23JO (G2SO, FOC 13)

In 1936 I had just obtained the call G2SO and I had a QSO with SU5NK in Cairo on 40 metres and I noted that I was his last BERU contact for 1936. This was my first BERU contest and to my knowledge I have entered every contest since that year. Looking through the log for the 19th June 1936, I copied the "Loyal Relay Message" from EI9D addressed to BERU, London, conveying loyal birthday greetings from members of the RSGB and BERU members in the Irish Free State, to HM King Edward VIII.

³ British Empire Radio Transmitting Award.

As a matter of interest I was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the RSGB in 1987⁴. as follows:

'Mal Geddes, G2SO/Z23JO is awarded a Certificate of Merit in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Commonwealth Contests over almost 50 years (Golden Jubilee 1987).'

I still enjoy each contest although now 82 years of age.

Graham Williams, VE3ST

I got started in 1934 when Jim Ferguson, VE7BBF, and I came on the air with the bootleg call, VE4WA. In June 1934 I was issued with the call VE4SO which I held until 1946 when I joined Air Canada and moved to Monkton with the call VE1VF. Then a further move to Goose Bay, Labrador with the call VO6U where I 'stumbled' across my first BERU. Calls in that first log include, G5WP, G5MY, G3VA, G5DQ, VE1EP etc.

Newfoundland and Labrador were not part of Canada then. Since then I have participated nearly every year either as VE2WA (a coincidence) or as VE3ST.



Graham VE3ST, Louise XYL and Frank G2QT, at the Saginaw ARRL Convention 1991

I have worked Frank, G2QT, in every BERU I entered since. I had the pleasure of meeting Frank 'eyeball to eyeball' at the ARRL 1991 National Convention held that year in Saginaw, Michigan, not far from here and we have had regular skeds ever since.

VE3AU, Don McKinley was quite a faithful BERU entrant in the earlier post-war years but died in the 50's or 60's. Don was a 'brain' in electronics and I first met him in 1943 at a field station of the National Research Council located in Ottawa area, where he headed one of the

research groups. In those days the emphasis was on research for various branches of the military.

For a year or two in the 70's, we had a small informal DX group going in the Montreal area including Mike, VE2AYY, Ernie, VE2YU, Jack, VE2NV (later VE3SR), Don VE2BV and others. Ernie and Jack were too keen for me to match but Mike and I had, and still have, a little friendly rivalry going. This year Mike likely beat me hands down...

VE2YU's father was VP2MU but I am not sure if Ernie ever entered from his Dad's QTH on Montserrat⁵.

I must mention G5RI who I was pleased to hear and work in the contest again this year. I don't hear him between BERU tests. I have his card for a 20m CW QSO Jan 28 1951. And I was glad to find ZL3GQ and VK4XA still going.

I was born in Barry, Glamorgan Aug 1915 and emigrated to Winnipeg Sept 1929 with my parents and one sister. I served in the RCAF 1941-5 first in Radar and later switching to aircrew after failing to get a radar posting overseas. I joined TCA/Air Canada in 1946 as a ground radio op., ending up in Telecom. Admin. in Montreal and retiring at the end of 1977.

Derek Ritson, G5RI

Leading G station, 1953, '54, '55, '56, '57, '58, '60, '67. Highest overall placing 6th in 1954.

BERU really had it's origins in the colonial administrations. The administrators often were located in or close to the Governors residence and included many parts of the world not generally associated with Britain, for example, Abyssynia or Iraq.

During the '30s the best stations were appointed as Empire Link Stations, one good example was Freddie Miles, G5ML. He had an outstanding signal and was very strong on back scatter.

I remember that there were many VUs active, VU2AN, Tom Arnold springs to mind.

As far as I was concerned although I had been active in the 30s my antennas post-war were set up to maintain contact with ZS5MK/VQ4MK who was a friend of mine who moved to South Africa. I set up a rhombic for South Africa, 230 feet per leg. And for 80m I used a 270 foot end fed zepp.

In 1949 I acquired an HRO and Q5er and later an Eddystone. The TX was home brew using a modified TU5B, a VFO and using 4 1625s. The PA used 100THs. Quite a lot of the time I used two rather than one!

⁴ See 1987

⁵ See 1972.

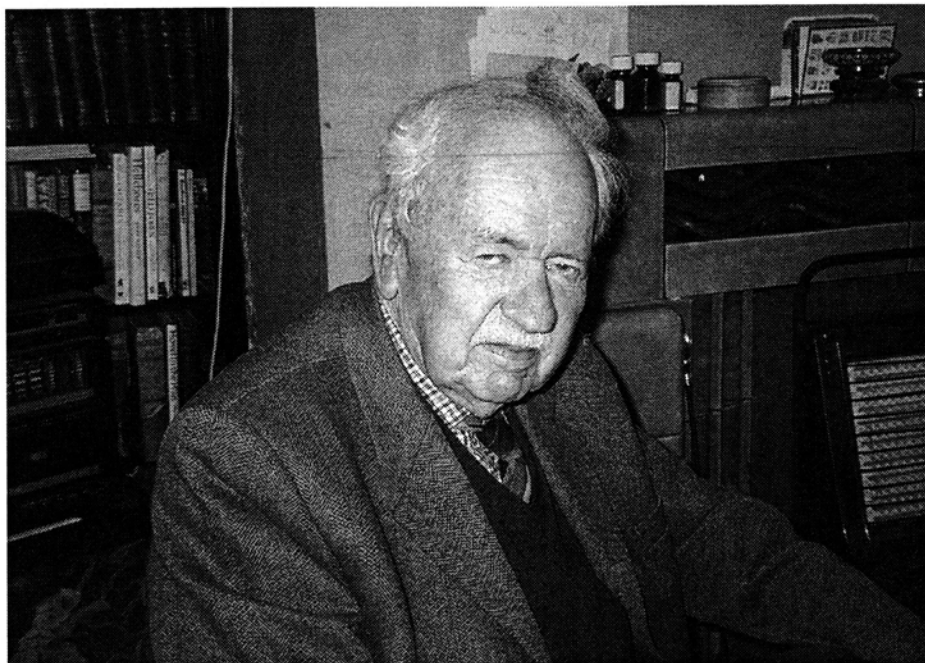
TVI made life difficult in those days. Ironically the ancient rigs are now very much OK in this respect. You don't need to spend £1000s. Just a LS5 or a T251 and a crystal would be fine for topband. On 80m a pair of 100THs should do the trick.

When the war ended the Post Office Telecoms. had huts full of bits and I still have a 3.5kV 0.5A transformer for the PSU. The rectifiers were 866s, still in use today. Later I bought a R4C.

In the early post-war period BERU was a 48 hour affair, the trick was to do the whole 48 hours, Friday night was

OK but Sunday was a problem. You mustn't go to bed on the second night, especially at sunspot minimum. You had to have a lot of persistence in the old days. And more patience than these days.

I couldn't understand how Rusty, G5WP, did it year after year. He was working stations I couldn't even hear. He was in Guildford and had a vertical antenna at the top of an old oak tree. His 80m performance was outstanding and that's what won the contest. Al, G3FXB, said it was because of the ground conductivity.



Derek, G5RI

Frank Cooper, G2QT

I have always been a competitor. I was first licensed in 1933 as 2BGR. We got mains electricity in 1936 and so I made my first entry 1935 on batteries(1V1).

My station has been hereabouts for some time, a fully creosoted 40 foot pole cost me £3 in 1938 and is still in use today! I have been in Sellingle so long that the Ordnance Survey wanted to put my towers on the map as a landmark.

I have entered every BERU since 1935 except for 1968 when I had arranged to operate from VP6CC in Barbados. VP6CC was a builder and although I had arranged to operate from his shack he went off to the other side of the island on contest day and has not been heard of since.

Over the years there has been quite a change in the countries that qualified. It's worth looking them up.

In the war I worked on Y5 receiver installations, DF RXs. In 1947, I bought a £5 HRO and built a xtal

controlled TX. In the 1950s I used a Minibeam and a 10M 2el yagi with fan fed dipoles for the LF bands. In 1960 I changed to a spider quad for HF. I built a TX with a pair of 35Ts with an Eddystone 888A which I later changed to an EA12 and KW Viceroy. I stopped building when SSB came in.

I was a friend of Roley Shears and so I had an early KW2000 and I remember Roley telling me that some person came to see him ordered 6 KW2000s, and had one sent to Japan, the FT101 followed soon after! I later changed to Drake twins and now I use TenTec Omni VI.

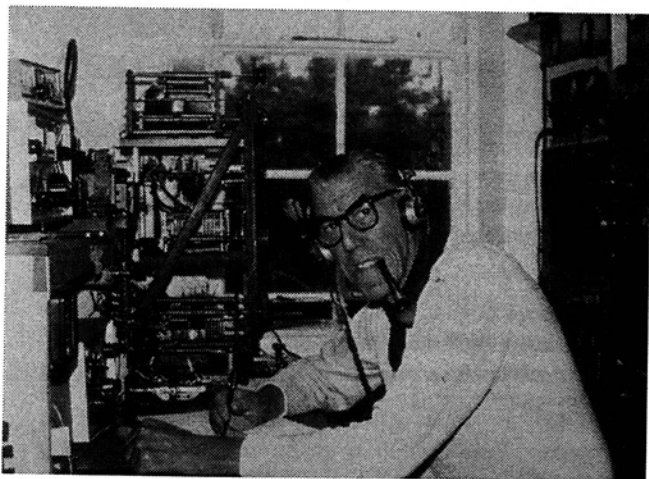
For me the attraction of BERU is that it is the same fellows year after year. I am contest minded and I also do the ARRL DX, but unfortunately I can't last the 24 hours these days. I remember my friend Graham, VE3ST saying in 1985 that conditions were so bad that he said to his wife, 'lets go and have a couple of hands of bridge'.

I am always experimenting with antennas. I now have, four 4 el loops for 40m, 4 el quad for HF, two 2 el slopers for 80m and loops for the WARC bands. Originally the

four masts came from old sailing ships and a company that later made wooden ladders. I do all my antenna work single handed through a system of winches and pulleys.

I describe myself as a 'consistent also ran' in BERU. My best position was 16th in 1981. Frank was also 9th in 1937 Junior Section, see Chapter 1.

Dud Charman, G6CJ



Dud Charman, G6CJ (VK3XB)

Dud Charman occupied a unique and inimitable role in amateur radio for more than 60 years', so wrote Pat Hawker in 1992⁶. Much has been written about Dud's major contributions to radio engineering, propagation and antenna design. The reader will have seen many references in this book and read much elsewhere and so I will only attempt to summarise his contribution to BERU and the Commonwealth Contest.

Many of the contributors to this book referred with affection to contacts with Dud.

VE1EP in 1934 noted that Dud was his first ever BERU contact.

In 1935 Dud managed 36th place and was one of the members of BERU to pass the news to Eric Cole, SU1EC, that he had won.

By 1936 Dud had built himself a Crystal Gate Superhet and had an antenna with a parasitic reflector. Two innovations which were to become standard technologies for amateur stations. Dud was one of the world's leading engineers of the day. The results from his antenna were judged by many Australians as 'astonishing'. By 1937 Dud was starting to move up the results table, being 3rd in the Junior Section. In 1938 he entered both the Senior and the Junior and came 8th and 2nd respectively.

After the war Dud continued his antenna experiments and participation in BERU contests. In 1947 he came 5th

⁶ Frederick J.H. ('Dud') Charman, G6CJ, News and Reports, Radio Communication, 68, 8, (1992), also OTNews, No 28, Jan 1993 and Focus No 13, Winter 1992.

highest G when Gs were under power restrictions. In 1948 he was 5th in the Senior, by 1949 Dud improved this to 3rd, 86 points behind Rusty, G5WP, and only 99 points behind the winner. Dud was by this time using a pair of V beams. This was followed by 4th in 1950, 3rd in 1951, and first in 1952. He was by this time working in the contest committee of the RSGB and could not therefore accept the Senior Rosebowl. Dud had added a new antenna to his pair of V beams, a receiving antenna which favoured DX signals over locals. Tantalisingly no further details are given.

In 1953 Dud set himself the task of analysing the BERU results with the objective of coming up with a fair scoring system, one which did not favour any location in the Commonwealth. From this study the idea of the bonus rather than the multiplier emerged for each of the Commonwealth call areas.

In 1955 Dud changed his antenna to a stacked V beam and added a quarter wave vertical for 3.5MHz. He came 5th in 1957 and 9th in 1958. Although he entered practically every year, Dud did not feature in the top 10 stations again.

He operated from VK5BV in 1973 on a trip to Australia and New Zealand. In 1987 after the Golden Anniversary Contest he was presented one of the four special awards. The award recognised the immense contribution Dud had made to the contest and the fact that he had won it outright. A feat only achieved twice before from the UK by Fred, G5ML, and Rusty, G5WP.

Dud was a skilled educator, best known to the amateur for his 'Aerial Circus'. Dud performed his 'Aerial Circus... a demonstration of miniature table top antennas . operating at 3200 MHz... duplicating the characteristics and performance of larger beams and antennas', in UK, USA⁷ as well as VK and ZL. The final demonstration was given in 1991 and video taped for the RSGB library.

To quote Pat Hawker again,

Dud was an ardent and skilled participant in BERU. He took a deep interest in the human machine as a radio operator and in the development of such aids to weak signal reception as the CW Stereocoder based on psychological aspects of human hearing. Dud was highly competitive yet always a gentleman-operator.

Frank Johnstone, G3IDC, VS1FJ

Winner of the Junior section as G3IDC in 1953 and as VS1FJ in 1963. Winner of the Receiving contest in 1959.

⁷ During the 1970's Dud visited W6VX and it is recorded in the latter's diaries that they visited the Queen Mary and the 'radio ranch' of W6AM, before he demonstrated the 'Aerial Circus'.

After WW2 I had a posting to RAF Iraq, and after a short period at RAF Habbania, was posted to RAF Sharjah, via Basra and Shaibah. On arrival, myself and three operators found we were part of a twenty strong unit, and we had to work the HF D/F (High Frequency Direction Finding) station from 6am to 6pm daily. Also we were expected to help out when the Norwegian Skymasters came through calling at BOAC Fort on their way to Karachi. One last duty was to drive to the then fishing village of Dubai Creek whenever a Sunderland flying boat arrived for servicing.



The station at VS1FJ

With some spare time on my hands, I was introduced to amateur radio in the form of a T1154 and an AR88 plus a Windom antenna cut for 14Mhz. So off I went as VS9GT/MP4BAB. After a year a posting arrived for RAF Shallufa, MEA Forces with a prohibition on amateur radio.

In 1952 back to RAF Compton Bassett on Boys Wing, joined the radio club, obtained my G3IDC licence, and joined the RSGB. Shortly after that I had the pleasure of meeting Wg. Cdr. 'Wally' Dunn, G2LP, who with 'Pop' Seymour at RAF Locking, was the driving force behind the RAF Amateur Radio Society. The followed a posting to RAF Locking on the Apprentice Wing and lots of work on the new HQ station, G8FC.

In 1954 I decided to take part in my first BERU contest. With 25 watts input to an 807 PA, an HRO receiver and a long wire antenna I managed 12th position in the Junior section. 1955 saw a slight increase - 11th position.

February 1955 also saw me travelling with the IRIS team on the Transport Command route through the Middle East and Far East route to Australia and New Zealand, operating G3IDC/Prefix in every country we passed through except from New Zealand where I had the calls ZL1IDC and ZL2IDC issued. The transmitter was a pair of 12" square boxes. One for the power supply, the other for the transmitter with a 6146 PA. The antenna was the longest piece of wire I could throw over a tree or building connected directly to the pi network of the PA, what TVI?! With around 25 watts input on CW and FM fone, a good time was had by all, with skeds with G8FC as much as possible.

Back to the UK in June, on 'In Town Tonight'⁸ with the little rig, and back to RAF Locking. 1956 BERU saw a decrease again to 12th position.

October 1956 saw me on the IRIS trip again, arranging delivery of RAFARS kit transmitters on the Middle East and Far East Transport Command Route Stations, Tripoli, Cyprus, Gulf stations, Massirah, Aden, Ceylon, Karachi, Singapore, Malaya, Mauritius, Nairobi, Malta, Gibraltar and home (RAF Benson). From almost every area it was possible to work amateur stations, and others of course, with the little transmitter and my Eddystone 888A receiver and the old piece of wire.

1957 BERU saw me in a new married quarters with a large field behind. It also saw me with a set of V beams in the field, and a big jump to 3rd position. Wonderful what an antenna tuner and some pieces of wire will do.

A posting to Singapore followed in July 1957. 1958 BERU - more points, more competition, and down to 6th position, in spite of the VS1FJ call. Still the same old rig, but a difficult antenna position at RAF Changi.

1959 saw me entering the BERU receiving contest for the first time from Ceylon owing to the closure of amateur radio permits from that country. The trusty Eddystone 888A saw me through and I managed to win that one.

Back to the UK again and with the same receiver but a new transmitter, a Geloso VFO and 6146 PA and the same V beams, I managed to win the Junior Trophy as G3IDC in 1956.

Back out to Singapore again, and thanks to a quad antenna, a long wire and a ground plane vertical I won the Junior Trophy from VS1FJ. The year was 1963.

Then followed promotion and sadly no more amateur radio. A return to civilian life with the pressures of starting a business in Germany put the trusty units into a cellar until our return to Dorset in 1992.

Once well settled, out came the trusty rig again, checked it through, switched on and all was well. Says a lot for the old style of construction. However what a shock met my ears. Not the lengthy chat about rigs and DX on 20m, just a frenzy of call signs at the bottom end, and with luck you could find out the station who everyone was calling. I found out that I had two switches too many for the time it took to change over.

Listening to people who had a few minutes to spare, it seems that amateur radio on the equipment side is now 'professional' amateur radio, with computers, auto logs and speed keys doing the jobs that amateurs used to do.

I will have to see what BERU 1996 brings !!

⁸ "In Town Tonight" was a Saturday night BBC radio programme which interviewed famous personalities in, or travelling through, London in the '40s, '50s and early 60s.

**Dr Mike Dransfield, G3JKO, 5N2JKO,
5N2AAF,**

by Winifrid Lomax



Mike Dransfield with Winifred Lomax (Lomax)

My husband Eric, G4DGR, 5N2ABG and I were stationed at Kaduna, Old Capital Territory, Nigeria, for 10 years - Mike being 54 miles North at the Agricultural Research Station at Samaru. We shared the lifelong interests of amateur radio and cotton growing. My husband was one of the fifth generation of bleachers and finishers and worked at Kaduna Textiles. Mike and Eric had first met at Nottingham University. Mike was a Plant Pathologist specialising in cotton. He increased the fibre length in Nigerian cotton from 8 to 12 inches. He also had the finest Zinnias in his garden, the envy of us all.

Mike came to Samaru from the heat of the tropics in the Sudan where he had to leave all his radio equipment - in haste. Nigeria had five years of civil war and Mike experienced many personal hardships. Mike set up a school in Nigeria to train students for entry into the newly formed Polytechnic/University.

Having organised the foundation of NARS (Nigerian Amateur Radio Society) we were granted the renewal of licences to very few amateurs only, (never any new ones granted until many years later). NARS was largely amateurs from UK backgrounds but there were two Dutch members. We were very isolated, I used to type the Newsletter and distribute it.

From Nigeria he went to Thailand, where he did much to be helpful towards increased cotton plant quality production, (but where no amateur radio was possible).

Mike went on a coach and sea trip to Australia and New Zealand, but had eye problems and poor sight.

My husband and I returned to UK in November 1973 bringing all our radio equipment by sea. We were all very close friends so each Saturday morning at 0830 a net was organised and kept by as many as were available; G3JKO, Mike, G4DGR Eric, G4FRC Bob Codling (Niger dam engineer) and others such as David Wilcox (Cambridge, who died at sea on a World Cruise, 18 March 1996)

I was the official Monitor for the BBC World Service whilst we were in Nigeria.



Winifred was the BBC World Service Monitor in Nigeria

Mike Groom, VE3VHB

I am a comparative newcomer, having only been licensed since 1950 at the age of 16. I was first licensed as G3GWO and only dabbled in BERU until I came to Canada in 1957. Although I was not short of power, with a home brew 813 rig, my antenna was far from ideal; with only simple wire antennas possible. Looking through my logs for these years I see that most of my QSOs were with Canada - there was no shortage of VE entrants in those days !

Apart from a few regulars there were very few entrants from ZS even in those years - I guess my hope for a sudden influx of them in the 1995 contest was wishful thinking. The only QSOs I had then which were of some interest were MD5 in the Suez Canal Zone and the then common 5A2 stations operated by British Forces in Libya. Oh for them now! Of course, ST2AR and various AP entries also spiced things up a bit.

I came to Canada in 1957 and operated as VE2AYY from then until 1992 when I retired to Ontario and have

operated as VE3VHB since that time. It was quite an experience to be on the other end of BERU with loads of UK stations anxious for a contact! And there was no shortage of any of the other Commonwealth countries with plenty of VE, VK, ZL, and all kinds of African prefixes. The VKs and ZLs are much easier from here than from the UK.

With a full sized 3 element beam on 20 metres DX had never been easier and from 1958 through 1962 I always made well over 200 QSOs although somehow I never could win the VE2 award. For various reasons my entries between 1963 and 1966 were again only token efforts but in 1967 my interest was again awakened and I made 250 or more most years through 1973. Again though there was always one VE2 or another who bettered me.

By 1975 my interest in ham radio was waning somewhat - pressures at work as an electronics engineer made it a bit of a busman's holiday - and in 1978 I made my last BERU appearance - for a mere 19 QSOs - for more than a decade. At that time I had 250+ countries for DXCC, figured I would never reach 300 and filled about one page in my log book during that time.

I am not sure what awakened my interest in 1991; I had lived with an old prop-pitch motor for many years. It regularly filled with water and froze-up in the winter for several months and this was not exactly conducive to DXing and contesting. However I decided to install a new rotator and bingo the DX bug struck with a vengeance again! I installed a 40m delta loop and an 80m half wave and in 1992 I made a serious attempt at BERU and made 384 QSOs, my best ever, winning the VE2 award, albeit with little competition. This was my last as a VE2; we moved to Ontario in May of that year. I started taking down antennas immediately after BERU - but the beam and tower waited until after I had worked VP8SSI.

The poorer conditions of 1993 still provided a respectable BERU QSO total of 306, but in 1994 my linear blew up after about 2 hours and I only managed 150 QSOs in lousy conditions. We were again plagued with an aurora a few days before the 1995 BERU but I managed just over 200 QSOs in spite of 20m being the only productive band.

My modest equipment consists of a 3 element tribander at 50 feet, a 40m delta loop facing G/VK and a sloping 80m half-wave facing Europe. (good for G but useless for VK/ZL). My transceiver is an engineering prototype from the company where I used to work with an outboard synthesised VFO for all bands. My linear is a 60's vintage Heathkit with four 811s. I do not have a computer logging but nevertheless manage to keep a running checklist for dupes. Too bad some UK stations obviously don't!

I believe that one of the main attractions in the past was the comparative lack of QRM, the true RST reports and the gentlemanly way in which (most) competitors conducted themselves. Also the likelihood of a few rare Commonwealth prefixes showing up. Sadly this rarely

happens now; only the established DXers such as 9J2BO (and the occasional G./VP9!) provide other than run-of-the-mill contacts.

Sadly when one looks at the UK entrants - and I have analysed my G contacts in the last few years - most are in the pre-war and G3+3 categories; there are comparatively few G4+3 and even less G0+3 calls in evidence. This contest just does not seem to attract the newer licensed hams and I am afraid that in a decade or so the BERU Contest may no longer be viable due to a lack of participation. It is the same in VE, VK and ZL; always the same few callsigns, many of which have been around as long as or longer than myself.

And one last thought on the abomination of the '5NN' report! I guess it's now inevitable, in these days of computer logging, but I just can't accept a '599' report followed by a request for one or more repeats. People get a true RST from me in BERU and will continue to do so. If I give '599' it is a true report, and there weren't many in 1995!

Snow Campbell, VK3MR

At last I have been able to collect a few facts on the BERU tests over the last 60 years.

It is very fascinating going through my old test logs and remembering the many callsigns of so many who have long departed the bands. I find SU1EC, VP5, PZ, ZS, ZT, ZU, ZE, the Hong Kong Gang, the VS6s, VU, Burma. And the keen gang from England, G6CJ, G2MI, G6CL, G5BZ, G2PL, G2ZQ, G5IW, G6WY, G5WP and G6DL. There were no G3 or G4 stations then. VQ4CRH, ZE1JN, VQ8AB, VS7GJ and hundreds of others all keen BERU men. They were the days. There is no doubt in my mind that the BERU is the best of all tests.

I started up with a TPTG rig using an LS5 valve with 200 volts and a sloping end fed Zepp on 7MHz. RX the usual det. audio type. Later we found out about crystals and TRF RX and the super hets and so it goes on.

My first test was the VK Centenary Test in 1934 and from then on I took a keen interest in all tests. I have about 20 BERU Certificates both Senior and Junior and have them in book form.

I have all my logs for the past 65 years and spend much time looking through them. I am now 87 years old and quite prepared to leave it to the young uns!

Snow is now leaving his property at Clyde with the wonderful collection of rhombics.

Alan Shawsmith, VK4SS

5th Junior 1939, leading VK4 in 1961, '63, '64, '66, and overall VK 2nd in '66, 2nd Low Power 1967, 3rd Low Power 1968.

I have plugged away at contests for more years than I can remember. I must be in the BERU records somewhere. Usually there were only about half a dozen VK4s participating - and those that didn't have a chance never sent in a log. I do remember one thing that happened every contest. I was interrupted, business, friends calling always got in the way - all unexpected, all unplanned. But can you

beat this ? On one occasion I sent the YF and kids away for the weekend. Sedated the dog. Locked up the house. Ignored the phone and doorbell. I was well into my stride when suddenly - pitch black. Suburban blackout for 6 hours. But it's 'an ill wind that blows no-one any good'. It stuffed my BERU effort but my mains AC hash disappeared after constant QRN for 6 months.

Authors note. Alan is also the author of the history of the VK4 radio amateurs, 'Halycon Days'. It's a good read.



Alan, VK4SS

Mavis Stafford, VK3KS

My first BERU participation was in March 1961. Being a member of the YLRL, I was actually operating in the in the YL/OM contest, but as the BERU Contest date coincided, I found myself making contacts in that also. Amongst the calls contacted were G3FXB with a serial of 162, VK6RU with 137 and VE3KE with 227.

The same coincidence of dates occurred in March '62 with G4CP, G3FXB, G3BNL and VS1KF amongst others. I made a few contacts in 1963 and 1964.

From 1965 on to 1980, the BERU and YL/OM Contests regularly coincided so I continued to make contacts in each and submit a log in each. The BERU contacts helped me considerably as I won the DX section of the YL/OM

Contest several times. 1972 must have been a good year, as, operating in both contest I managed 995 points in BERU.

In 1981, the YL/OM Contest date was changed. So from 1981 to the present I regularly operated in BERU, thought it clashed with the WIA75 Contest in 1985.

In 1986, I gained the certificate for the leading overseas entrant on 14MHz. But my best year was 1989 when I managed 142 contacts. Most years, I shared the operating time with Ivor, VK3XB.

In Feb. 1991, we shifted to the Cumberland View Retirement Village. Here, no masts or poles or other conspicuous contrivances are permitted. It was a great change from the TH6DX and many high dipoles and a vertical loop which we had used at Box Hill.

John Tutton, VK3ZC, begged us to put up something for the BERU in March. We put 33 feet of wire around the ceiling, just 7 feet above the concrete floor, and operated on 7MHz. To my amazement, Lee, VE7CC, called me. He must have the best antenna in the world. We found later that there was a great sheet of aluminium foil under the tiled roof just above the antenna. But some of the 100 watts must have leaked out.

A few months later, we put the antenna outside along the fascia board, and late again, in 1992, we gained permission to put 37 feet of wire across the roof, averaging 16 inches above the tiles (and the aluminium foil). The Village Manager's condition was: "If anyone complains, it will have to come down". No-one has complained, and our antenna still remains there, and we have worked DX regularly. The rigs are now TS130SE and a Ten Tec 560.

In all, I have operated in 33 BERU Contests, sharing the rig and time with Ivor. I think we are probably the only husband and wife pair who have consistently operated in BERU over the years.

Ivor Stafford, VK3XB

Contesting appealed to me from the very start of my ham radio in 1935. With QRP of about 4 watts input to a 201A, I participated in local contests just for the fun of it. My introduction to BERU I described earlier in the book in the pre-war chapter so I will continue to story here post-war.

Mavis and I came back on the air after the war making our first radio contacts in 1946, using a little battery operated rig running 2 1/2 watts input. We were out in the

country on a mountain where the wind blew a hurricane. I was teaching in a one-teacher school.

In 1947 we left the country as I was about to begin a University degree course. We rented two rooms of a house in an inner suburb of Melbourne. We were sharing the house with a retired deaconess who made things very difficult for my wife. But we gained permission from the owner to put a low 40m dipole and fed it from a Type Mark 2 ex-disposals rig. Almost every second ham in Australia was using a Type 3 rig in those days.

BERU contesting was resumed in 1948, with just a few contacts each year. By 1950, I was doing a post-graduate course in Education and had very little time for ham radio.

By 1951, with university courses finished, we were in our own house, with a large back yard, at Box Hill. In that year I managed 22 contacts in the BERU Junior, using the trusty 3 Mark 2, with a couple of dipoles. In the next year, we put up a V formation of a 132 feet flat top fed by open wire line. This gave us two half waves in phase on 40 metres and two full waves on 20 metres. And we had a pair of 807s with 85 watts input driven by the Type 3 Mark 2.

By 1960, we had added home brew crystal locked converters to feed into the Type 3, and a Command low frequency receiver (Q5er) for amplify the I.F. to give much greater selectivity. I managed to gain the certificate for the leading VK station on 14MHz in the 1963 BERU.

In 1964, we acquired a Collins 75S-3 receiver and a 32S-3 transmitter. Our antenna system consisted of two separate '2 half waves in phase', one radiating to Europe and the other North-East across the Pacific to North America.



Mavis, VK3KS and Ivor, VK3XB in 1984



Impressive isn't it! The trophies won by Ivor and Mavis (VK3XB)

My participation in BERU continued, sharing the time with Mavis. While I was hospitalised in 1967, Mavis cleared part of the back yard ready for the erection of a tower. By October, the tower was in place and there was a TH6DX on the top. In addition, multiple dipoles were slung. This set up helped us quite a lot. Over the next few years, the BERU clashed with the YLRL YL/OM Contest in which Mavis operated. We shared the operating time. But in the 1973 BERU I gained the medallion for the leading VK station and was placed 13th overall. I recall that Eric Trebilcock BERS 195 topped the receiving section as was usual in those days.

In March 1981, I gained 6th position and won the VK3 Team Medallion.

In 1992, I managed to gain a Team Medallion again. These Team Medallions were donated by John, VK3ZC, a long time supporter of the BERU, to the 4 members of the leading State team.

In 1983, I made 258 contacts, 3374 points, gained 7th place and even beat G3FXB.

In 1985, the BERU and WIA75 contest coincided. The latter was held to celebrate 75 years of the existence of the Wireless Institute of Australia. We got very mixed-up logs. I was using the call VI3XB, and VK5BN, operating in the BERU, said to me, 'Ur prefix is not on the list'. Hi.

In 1991, we gave up our antenna farm at Box Hill, where we had been for 40 years, and shifted into this retirement village. Here, as Mavis has indicated in her story, we are considerably restricted. But we still make a few BERU contacts. I made 83 with the bit of wire in this years BERU.

In all I have operated 46 BERU Contests sharing the rig and time with Mavis, and gaining 4 Medallions and 5 Certificates. I could only have done this with the whole-hearted support of my wife. As Mavis has been in 33 BERU Contests, I agree that we should regard ourselves as probably the only YL/OM couple to have consistently participated.

Authors Note. Mavis and Ivor were visited by many hams over the years. Here is a short list of calls the reader will perhaps know and remember :-

VK3RJ, VK3AHQ, VK4XA, VK3MR, VK2BPN, VK3YL, G3JFF, G5BZ, G2YS, G5XB, G6ZY, VK7RY, G2YL, ZL1HV, G6CJ, VK2QL, G3FXB, G3MXJ, ZL3GQ, VE3BWY, G8AX, GW3HCL, VK6RU, VK6WT.

John Tutton, VK3ZC

I was born in 1914, so I am now 82 (unfortunately!), crystal set in 1924, progressed to a valve RX and taught myself the code by 1928. Left school at the end of 1931 - was hoping to do engineering but the depression finished that idea. Job in 1932 with a subsidiary of the London Assurance which was then taken over by Sun Alliance in 64/6. I finally retired in 1979 after 46 years and 11 months. Never married ! Never had time to !

March 1932 went for my amateurs ticket, missed theory by 3 marks and went again in May - passed. On the air June 1932 - by this stage had never even seen on met another ham ! The ARRL Handbook got me this far.

Shortly after joined the RAAF Wireless Reserve, similar to the UK one, but rather an unofficial organisation. In November 1932, I joined a neighbour in a Medium Battery in the Royal Australian Artillery. For the next 7 years I did communications drills on Sunday mornings with the RAAF with the odd camp and weekend with W/T operating in WAPITI (Westland) aircraft until April 1940 when a Medium Regiment was established in the AIF, (I had told the Airforce in 1939 that I was staying in the Army). I was accepted into this and by December we were in Palestine, to Tobruk in May 1941 and out again by sea in September. Then to Syria, back again to the Desert at Alamain, and were in the battles there and then home again

in March 1943. Then in June to New Guinea, north coast, returning to Australia in February 1944. Next big move was from North Australia to Morotai (Indonesia) with the Yanks and then to Labuan (VS5) and mainland Borneo where we were when the war finished in September 1945.

I resisted the temptation to fire up an 11 set and join in the rush to the ham bands at that time.

My pre-war participation in BERU was on five occasions 1935-39 with rather in-glorious results

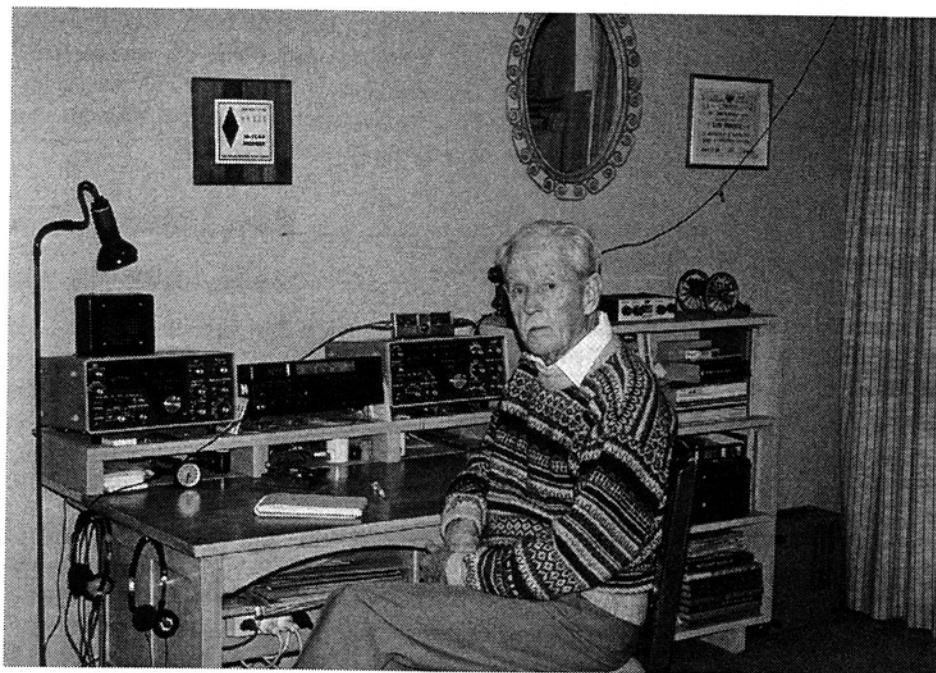
Year	Senior position	Senior entrants	Junior position	Junior entrants
1935	75	99	77	84
1936	93	148	121	123
1337	130	132	105	113
1938			90	90
1939	Disqualified	no serial	numbers	given

I was back on the air by 1947 and then participated most years even though I didn't always send a log in to RSGB.

Years	Participated	No log sent
35 - 39	5	
47 - 56	2	5
57 - 66	8	2
67 - 76	9	
77 - 86	10	
87 - 96	10	
Total	44	7



Al G3FXB, John VK3ZC and Dennis G3MXJ (G3MXJ)



John Tutton, VK3ZC



John's station at VK3ZC in 1950

Therefore I have participated in 51 of the 59 contests. Since the rules have stabilised in the late '60s I have managed to average around 30-35th in the contest as a whole, and about 7-10th amongst the VKs.

Year periods	Gear used
1935 - 39	TNT TX 20-40 W to a 45, RX TRF audio
1947 - 75	B2 30W with xtals and later a VFO, RX BC348Q
1975 - 95	Yaesu FR101, TX FL101 100w
1995 - 96	Icom IC736

Year periods	Antennas used
1935 - 84	1/2 wave 40m Zepp or 132' LW pointing north
1985 - 96	138' LW pointing east

Between 1932 and 1984 I lived at Hawthorn 4 miles east of Melbourne but moved in 1984 to Camberwell. Hawthorn is on a hill, Camberwell is in a valley !

Looking through the logs it was just incredible what could be worked on a B2, RX not so good though. After 28 years using the B2 I had a pretty fair idea it could and couldn't do.

Publicity

In the early 70s and for a few years before we were lucky to have any report in our magazine. 'Amateur Radio' of the results. When there was a report it was usually just the placings and scores of the ten or so VKs who took part. I thought I would try to improve matters!

I started off by writing to the Melbourne Office of the British High Commission with a suggestion of medals for the Australian states. I was passed on to the main office in Canberra which is where it stopped for the time being.

Meanwhile I was in touch with Dennis, G3MXJ, but that didn't produce much result either! Though they may have talked about it.

I wrote to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, having by then changed the idea to a medallion for the first

placed VK and another to the middle placing among the VKs to encourage the also rans. I flew to the UK as my sister and her husband had been living in Hong Kong and had travelled overland to UK by bus. I called at Marlborough House but they said that they couldn't do anything because every Commonwealth country would want some too!

I then went by bus to Katmandu, 70 days with 45 on board. It was a great trip through Persia, Teheran was a very different place to what it seems to be now. Just about every car was a Hillman. All the women were smartly dressed, not a veil in sight. We went down south to Persepolis where the Shah had recently had his anniversary party. Going through the Khyber Pass two young Americans were in the seats in front of me reading paperbacks the whole way. To me who knew a bit of history, I could see a tribesman with a rifle behind every second rock! Through Pakistan, Kashmir and down the Grand Trunk Road and eventually to Katmandu where I had been two years previously for a trek to Everest, up to 18,195'. (Sorry for the diversion.)

I started the first and middle medallion in 1973 and this continued until 1980. (1st VK was silver and the middle one bronze). This caused a reasonable increase in entries with the highest 43 and 44. I thought we could do better than that so starting in 1981 I offered Gold for the No 1 V, four silver for the state teams of four, scores added, and retained the bronze until 1985 when I decided that they were getting rather expensive so it was quietly dropped out in 1986.

So from '86 to '88 the gold and four silver continued, '88 was the last. During the '80s we had a few 40s, 54, 53, 66 (in '84), 58, 52, and then in '88 the support started to go down, 36, 30, 37, 32, 30, 17 to 20 in 1995. One year there were more VKs than Gs among the entries!

Each year I used to post the medallions to the recipients with a note, but increasingly I got a bit cheesed about no acknowledgement. The winner, except for a certain VK2, usually replied but most others didn't. Some thought the medallions came from the RSGB.

So that is the story of the medallions, worthwhile while it lasted and they did improve things for a while but band conditions perhaps had the greatest effect on support.

Starting the GB5CC business was a good idea. I have had a hand in organising all our entries which were VK3 in '90, '91 and '94 and with Russ Coleston, VK4XA, in '95 and '96. He seems to have lost the competitive urge and likes to get some sleep! So he will be around for some time yet.

As far as ZL is concerned things don't seem too good. Sometimes in Break-In's contest calendar the dates of BERU appear but anything more is something out of the box. Results are reported usually of the overall winner and the scores of the top three or four ZLs. Just the same you

usually hear ten to twenty of them around the bands working anything but BERU. Only ZL1MH and '1HV are really regulars (there are several more audible at the UK end, John!) Unless the ZLs are on for half of the Sunday we can't work anyone but VKs and there aren't so many of them around these days!

Russ Coleston, VK4XA

Leading VK 1979-86, Winner 1983.

Although first licensed in 1931, callsign VK4XK, my early ham years were limited to very QRP operation, around 2-3 watts with my simple low and bent dipole antennas. I was living in boarding houses around Melbourne as I was away from home, having just started work with the PMG Department.

It was not until after WW2, when disposal equipment became available that I was able to improve my equipment and antennas, and start to work some DX. I was married by this time and had spent 5 years in the RAAF Signals Unit, and I was able to erect a rotatable W8JK antenna on a home made tower 40 foot high. I was then living in a Melbourne suburb and had a much better radio location. I had room for a 52 foot timber mast which supported a 7MHz zepp for LF.

I became interested in contests and my first BERU was in 1948. Much to my delight I worked 208 stations and finished in 13th place. I recall that at that time the contest extended over 2 weekends, a fortnight apart.

From then on the BERU became my most liked contest and much pleasure was gained by working many of the same stations, year after year, and knowing they, also, were equally pleased. It was very noticeable when a regular station did not show up and very sad when it was found that they had become a silent key.

In 1951/2 I had transferred to the Lighthouse Service and was stationed at Samarai Island, Papua Territory, a small island of 55 acres! Although most of my time was spent away on the lighthouse, I managed to participate in the 1952 BERU callsign VK9XK.

The set-up was very temporary - pair of 807s, about 80 watts and a 3.5MHz dipole supported between coconut palms, when the palms swayed in opposite directions, down came the antenna!

I managed 202 QSO's and got 10th place. I think this would have been the first time that Papua Territory was represented in a BERU and of course 'P.T.' was a separate country at that time. I returned to Melbourne in late '52 and resumed operation as VK3XK.

I was able to participate in the 1953/54/55 BERU's from Melbourne. Then I transferred to the Dept. of Civil Aviation and resided at Port Moresby, Papua Territory from mid '55 to 1961. I was able to take part in BERUs

1956 and 1957 and gained 13th and 20th places. During 1958-61 Six metres was flourishing and most of my radio time was taken up with 6m working and reporting, (see photo of VK9XK set-up at that time).

Returning to Melbourne in July '61, a new home was built, and it was not until 1963 that I was able to take part in my next BERU. Unfortunately my reservation of the call VK3XK had expired and the call had been issued to someone else. I took out VK3AXK and struggled along for 10 years with this poorly chosen suffix. In contests the call was often taken as 'VK3AX' and the final 'K' regarded as the 'GO AHEAD' sign!

In 1973/74 I cancelled VK3AXK and took out VK3KX which had previously been held by a well known DXer who had died and had no surviving relatives. I have one award for the VK3KX callsign for 1973 BERU.

Following retirement and as our son lived in Brisbane, we decided to settle in Queensland. Three letter calls were the norm. But after careful checking, I couldn't believe my eyes, when I found that VK4XA was vacant. This has been a great call for the last 22 years. I was able to erect a three element, triband yagi at about 10 metres and a convenient pine tree supported one end of my 7MHz zepp. I had changed over to commercial equipment and had a Yaesu FL200B transmitter and was still using an AR88D which had given good service previously.

Since the 1975 BERU I have participated regularly and had the surprise of my life when Al Slater, G3FXB, called me one day and told me I had won the 1983 BERU. I had never thought about such a thing!

The tempo of the contest has increased greatly and higher scores are being recorded. However we are all getting older and for the 1995 BERU I offered to operate the headquarters station and did in fact do so under the call VI4WIA. This is less strenuous than the normal contest and I have again volunteered to do the same in 1996.

A lot of credit is due to Eric Trebilcock, BERS 195, who loved the BERU, and who spent a lot of time and money writing to former participants reminding them not to forget the following BERU's. Also John Tutton, VK3ZC, who looked after the publicity aspect and wrote the notes for publication in the W.I.A. Amateur Radio Magazine. For more than 10 years, John donated two medallions each year for competition between VK stations in the BERU - a 'gold' for the highest scoring VK and a 'silver' or 'bronze' for the VK with a score nearest the halfway placing. These two gentlemen certainly contributed greatly to the continued interest and success of VK stations in the BERU Contest.

After a rough check, I found that I have 26 RSGB BERU Awards and 8 VK medallions - so I have had a lot of fun in BERUs!

I hope that BERU and CW can continue to prosper for a long time in the future.

Peter Lake, ZL1AIZ, ex-5W1BZ

Second placed 1980. Leading ZL 1983-92

My first recollection of what were undoubtedly BERU activities undoubtedly pre-dated my own licensing as a radio amateur. While still at High School I can recall visiting one weekend to the home of what turned out to be in today's language to be my 'CW Elmer', Ted Napier, ZL2ARL (and an ex-G of the 1940's) in Hastings (and now a silent key). This was early in 1957 or 1958. He was busily operating in a CW contest using a small, table sized rack and panel transmitter, and crystal controlled. It fed a wire antenna and he had an early commercial receiver (or maybe war surplus). He was busy with a hand key, swapping crystals and retuning to change bands and chase contacts, along with some cussing and smoking! With low power and our geographic isolation it seemed to be a slow and difficult business, especially during the daytime.

I was subsequently licensed as ZL2AZI in September 1958 while still at school. My first QSO was on 80 CW on 26/9/58 and the second QSO on AM phone, with very basic home brew gear.

Apart from helping to operate at NZART Branch Field Day stations, my first recorded contest activity from home seems to have been in BERU 1959, in an '80m only' category with 7 QSOs on 17/1/59 and scoring 95 points. There must have been something prophetic about this! My log did not appear to be submitted - I probably did not know how!

Looking back in old NZART 'Break In' magazines I checked the timing, and it does seem that BERU was indeed in January at that time, and changed to the March timing about 1960 or 1961. By then I was largely away from home at University Engineering School (1959 - 1963) in Christchurch (ZL3) and seldom on the air other than portable or during holidays at home.

After graduation and some time in Wellington, and recently married, we were off in August 1964 to the UK on a Post-Graduate scholarship to GEC Telecommunications in Coventry for two years. In this period I had almost no amateur activity or local involvement due to work or study pressures, and my wife and I with the enthusiasm of the young were far too busy rushing around the UK every weekend or camping in Europe etc. In retrospect it was a pity I did not even get a 'G' callsign, but it seemed a low priority at the time. We returned to New Zealand in October 1966.

In 1967, still as ZL2AZI, but in Wellington, I resurrected my old Geloso VFO to an 807 rig, and with an AR88D receiver brought back from the UK I got on the air after a fashion. I then built a phasing type SSB exciter to a TT21 final as a new transmitter. Contesting also resumed, but only in VK/ZL and CQ contests at that time.

At the end of 1967 my job took me north to Hamilton, and by February 1968 I had changed my callsign to ZL1AIZ. Now with a young family, I was still not on the air much and had not yet re-discovered BERU. In December 1970 I moved again, to the Far North to Whangarei, and set up house and station again.

BERU 1972 was my next recorded participation after the initial one in 1959, with 35 QSOs. Needless to say I did not submit that entry either ! But at least I was back. I notice that around these years I also operated in the ARRL CW and Phone contests. They seemed to then occupy two weekends each in February and March and I suspect took all my spare time and competed with BERU for time on the air.

BERU 1973 saw a very modest operation as ZM1AIZ with only 6 QSOs and no log submitted. I had, however, upgraded my gear, adding a home brew 813 linear amplifier following the SSB exciter, and a new Yaesu FRDX400 receiver.

No activity followed in 1974 or 1975, and I only had 61 QSOs in 1976 and 52 in 1977 (no entry), followed by no activity in 1977. By then I had got wise and built an electronic keyer and paddle, so the pain of hand sending CW was gone, however!

In 1978 , for some reason not recorded other than correspondence from Eric Trebilcock in Australia to jog me along, I put in a much more sustained effort with 200 QSOs and 3710- points and submitted a log. To my surprise I got 1st place in ZL1 (and was 4th in ZL and 20th overall).

In that 1976/8 era Eric and John Tutton, VK3ZC, noticed that Pacific area activity was slipping and had started a campaign to increase VK and ZL participation. At that time RSGB promotion of the event was not very good as the rules seldom got to our local association magazines in time to publish, and there was little follow-up to tell the entrants about the results, Eric and John had a positive effect on this.

In August 1978 I was 'loaned' from our Post Office Engineering Department to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a two year assignment to Western Samoa and the whole family and I were off to the central Pacific. This was a chance for some real DXing as I got on the air from Apia with the call 5W1BZ with my HB transmitter, 813 linear and FRDX400 receiver, an inverted V a half wave long on 160m centre fed with open wire feeders; and a trap GP and a small tri-band trap yagi; all bought from Whangarei. I also got lucky there with a large house and grounds in an Agriculture Department compound up on the hill above Apia , with a flag pole for the centre support of the antenna and trees for the ends. There was a great view in the distance out over the reef to the North, to the Pacific about 5km away.

By BERU 1979 I had a new Yaesu FT901DM (my first ever transceiver) and with 280 QSOs and 4760 had got to 10th place. In 1979 we also had a family holiday in the Western USA and Canada, and was lucky to be able to meet up with Lee, VE7CC, in Vancouver - another long time supporter of BERU.

BERU 1980 was probably the best one, being at the peak of the sunspot cycle , and with an FL2100 linear added to boost the signal. The rarer callsign also helped . This netted 313 QSOs and 5385 points, and 9th place. This was my best ever score.

By December 1980 my time was up in Samoa and with the projects largely completed we returned to Whangarei temporarily, before a move back to Wellington in early 1981. Temporary housing prevented operation in 1981, but this was followed by a move to a newly built house in the suburb of Tawa in August 1981. This is still my QTH in 1996 and is on the side of a valley 15km to the north of the city with a good take off from the NW(short path to EU) right round through the NE to Canada, to the SE (long path). The effect of a stable location and consistent operating shows up in the next ten years of results.

In the period 1982 to 1992 I was leading ZL seven times and runner up 3 times. I was second overall in 1983, 5th in 1984 and consistently in the top 20 world wide otherwise.

For most of this period the rig was a FT902DM and the primary antenna an 80m half wave inverted V, centre fed with tuned open wire feeders, used on all bands 80-10 metres. This backed up by a 5 band trapped ground plane on the roof and later the tri-band trap yagi for 20-10m mounted on only 6m of pipe and rotated by hand. It was only just above roof level and not very effective. And all this from a suburban sized lot. By 1991 I had upgraded to a Yaesu FT1000. I am still not really into computer logging, but my QSO rates in BERU are not that high so it does not seem to be a major limitation.

As can be seen my recent results are fairly consistent, allowing for variations in propagation and minor differences in hours of operation over the years. Allowing for my antenna limitations and South Pacific location it will be hard to improve much on these averages. In latter years when I came second in ZL it was due to Peter, ZL3GQ, entering the fray again and submitting an entry. He has superior skills, location and equipment ! In 1983 there was a major propagation anomaly in the Northern Hemisphere that let Russ, VK4XA, and myself head off the field.

In 1993 I operated from home, but activated the NZART Headquarters callsign of ZL6A, in memory of Al Slater, G3FXB, who had recently become a silent key. I made 225 QSOs.

In 1994 I operated as ZL1AIZ again but only had 154 QSOs in relatively poor conditions. Unfortunately in April I got sent off at short notice on a work assignment to

Mongolia before I had been able to tidy up and submit my log. The only consolation was the opportunity to visit a rare (and cold) spot and operate briefly from JT1KAA.

In 1995 it was even worse as I had to spend all of March working in the Sydney office in a new telecommunications consultancy job, and we were so busy I did not even get time to contact or meet any of the local VK2s. During the BERU weekend I got in a few minutes listening on my Sony portable receiver, but only heard a few VKs.

For 1996, who knows. Hopefully I can get in the full contest time and get back towards my earlier averages.

Dennis Andrews, G3MXJ

This took rather longer than I thought it would as it involved going through all my logs - something I haven't done for some years and - my - aren't they interesting!! Then, of course, I had to get all the old results out and read through those as well - gripping stuff!

My first BERU seems to have been in 1963, having been first licensed in 1958 (age 16). There was then a gap until two entries as 9J2MX in 1968/69 then a further gap until I was set up at the new QTH in Sussex. From then, 1972 through to the 90s, was a very enjoyable period of BERU operation with a local derby every year with G3FXB and an intense personal interest in the contest as I was the adjudicator from 1972 to 1983.

1963 was my first BERU. I see from my log that this was held in February. I had forgotten that it was ever anything but March although I see that around 1960, it was actually in January. I guess that the change to March was prompted by a hope that it would hit better propagation around the equinox. And, of course, the contest went on for 48 hours allowing two shots at the LF bands. VP8GQ, the winner, is remembered for his outstanding signal on all bands. My 86 contacts and wire antennas from my parent's house in Gravesend was enough to put me in 14th UK place although only 37th overall.

For 1964/5/6/7 I had a change of job, marriage and the production of off-spring kept me away from radio and BERU for the following few years.

But 1968-72 saw me well set up for BERU with a DX callsign, 9J2MX (see Chapter 3 and 4)

My first effort after returning from 9J2 land in 1972 was from Berkshire, where we lived for a few years before moving to Sussex in the middle of the year. The following ten years, 1973-83 possibly represented the most enjoyable and satisfying period that I have spent in amateur radio and BERU formed a centre-piece of this activity.

Apart from the satisfaction that came from adjudicating BERU and building up a friendly relationship with the many entrants world-wide who sent logs every year, there was the bonus of the local derby with G3FXB which

stimulated improvement in stations and operating techniques and, for many years, kept us both ahead of the rest of the pack. During this period, we also had the pleasure of our local contest group, G4DAA, within which we operated many of the international contests - giving an additional boost to interest.

From the BERU point of view, the separate years do not stand out as individual contests but really as an ongoing yearly coming together of like-minded enthusiasts. It is interesting to note that, during most of this period, G3FXB and G3MXJ were #1 and #2 in the UK respectively. It is also interesting to note that I could never quite get those few extra points required to knock Al off his perch. More of the reasons for that later.

It was pleasing to see that, despite the somewhat controversial change to the duration of the contest and the change of name in 1976, to say nothing of the continuing decline in activity from the more exotic corners of the Commonwealth, activity levels and numbers of entrants remained at a relatively healthy level. This was due, in no small part, to the efforts put in by the RSGB Contests Committee together with a number of contacts in VE, VK and ZL to maintain a good level of publicity for both the rules and the results. John Tutton, VK3ZC, even paid for and presented commemorative medallions each year to the leading VK stations and wrote personally to many of the competitors.

My own performance during these years was also quite satisfying. Despite having only a small garden with a single (albeit 65') support, I was able to get together a fairly comprehensive set of antennas that produced a competitive environment for contests. For the record, the farm consisted of a TH6DXX on top of the tower with four slopers for 80m and 40m. The slopers are possibly somewhat underestimated. They look fairly crude in the ARRL Antenna Book and it was not until some years later when I was able to model them with ELNEC that I discovered just how good they are, even when compared with a full size 2-el beam.

1983 onwards shows a relative decline in 'MXJ competitiveness. There were a number of reasons. My association with the organisational side of RSGB came to an end. I had first been taken on to the HF Contests Committee in 1966 by the then Chairman John Graham, G3TR. I never forgot John's example and was able to pull many other 'young revolutionaries' into doing work for the Society including people such as Dave, G4BUO and Alan, G4DJX. I always found that their sometimes intemperate and idealistic views were almost always modified when they came into contact with the realities of the situation and they were able to translate them into practical new ideas.

However, times change and you eventually find that your own views are becoming increasingly out of line with the

newcomers that you have brought into your organisation. So that's the time to move on and find new pastures !

Although I retained a strong interest in BERU and was a regular entrant, Al's antenna farm had grown and been perfected enabling him to drive a larger gap between us - mainly as a result of the hundreds of hours that he spent in designing, building and tuning his Quad/Yagi array which was quite outstanding - no computer, no ELNEC - all done by feeling for how it was working.

Also there was the remorseless rise of the new generation of operators who were beginning to make their mark on the contest and, of course, maintain the activity and entrant levels. Finally, at the end of 1992, with the passing of G3FXB, one of my principle motivations for the yearly attendance disappeared.

Al Slater, G3FXB **by Dennis, G3MXJ⁹**

Al Slater's interests covered DXing, contesting and ragchewing with a love of the social scene. His call was one of the best known of any on the HF bands. Al's introduction to radio was through broadcast listening in the 30's, particularly the jazz programmes that were his other great love. He got his call, G3FXB, in 1949.

Although his first station was modest, in 1953 he moved to Hove, close to his radio and TV business. Al made maximum use of a restricted garden, his tower and quad being landmarks along the south-east coast road that ran nearby.

When he moved to Wychwood, Maud and he entertained many visitors, over 300 signed the book. Most of the members of FOC at that time were known personally to Al and Maud. Virtually no DXer or contesteer of any note would pass through the UK without calling.

Al and Maud travelled extensively to the US , to Australia and later Hong Kong and New Zealand.

He reached the top of the DXCC Honour Roll in 1976. In 1985 he was only the third amateur to be elected to the CQ Contest Hall of Fame. There was no major contest in which he had not obtained top honours. BERU with its unique demands on equipment, antennas, and above all propagation knowledge was his favourite. He first won the Col. Thomas Trophy for the leading UK station in 1973 and went onto capture it on a total of 18 occasions. In 1990 he won the Senior Rosebowl for the leading station overall , when operating as ZC4ESB.

He took great pride in his antennas, all home made, a four element quad and fixed wire beams on 40 produced one of the outstanding signals from the UK. A Drake C line was the mainstay with a TS930 a recent addition.

⁹ This section is based, with thanks, on Al's obituary in Focus No 13 Winter 1992 and Radio Communication, Jan 1993, both by G3MXJ.

Al didn't have it all easy, he had a line of super grid pylons running across the field nearby, and had persistent problems with noise. He was always planning the next event, what changes in antennas, equipment or operating would be needed to keep ahead of the competition.

Al dominated the Commonwealth Contest. He was the benchmark that all the rest of us strove to beat.

Al was a flamboyant, outward-going 'people person'. He was never happier than when exchanging ideas and experiences. He was always prepared to give as much of himself and his time as another group or individual needed.

John, VK3ZC, says of Al,

'I never failed to marvel how Al seemed to be able to hear my little signal on occasions when his signals were really weak here.'

Arasu Manohar, VU2UR

Leading Asian 1973, 1st Asian 14MHz 1974, leading 21MHz outside UK 1987, 1st India 1990.

We in India had lots of World War II available in the fifties and sixties, but not many of us could buy it. The dealers had learnt to dismantle the transmitters, receivers and others and then sell the components to a high profit margin. I got a BC348 for Rs265 which was a fancy sum in the late fifties for my short wave listening. I could even manage a Westrex Command Transmitter BC458A with two 1625 and a 1626 for the 7MHz range. As a novice in 1967, I had my first 100 contacts with the USSR, using 8 watts, and even had two contacts Stateside for two to three minutes Hi.

The bug bit real hard and I started taking part in serious CW DXing and contest working with a xtal controlled transmitter of 6V6 and 807PA, using an inverted Vee antenna for 7 and 14MHz, using in addition a BC-794-B RX of the great Hammarlund. All this with an investment of less than Rs1000. Contest working was a tough job for me with manipulations of HT switches for TX, RX, antenna, exchange numbers using a straight key and maintain the log also. This made me request many times 'number again please' to the DX operators, who were kind enough to repeat for the lid at the other end.

I was told about the BERU Contest by OM Dady, VU2MD, late OM Gopal, VU2GO, and late OM Joe, VU2JA, who encouraged me and the other newcomers to these contests of repute. Thus, I am taking part since 1969, but started sending my contest logs since 1972 onwards, with a wavering mind. I could hardly rise to the expectations of other BERU participants, as I had been slow and missed many that called me. But, there were others with the experience and patience to tackle me. Such operators like OM Snow, VK3MR, and OM Frank, G2QT, who would come down to my speed and exchange numbers.



Arasu, VU2UR and his wife Anuradha.

The many regulars like G3ESF, 'OZF, TBK, MXJ, RTE, PJT, G4BUO, G6LX, 9J2BO, VK4SS, VS6BG, DO, VK8AV, Z23JO, VK6AJ etc., have kept encouraging our kind and kept BERU as interesting as ever, meeting the operators every year. It was CW only with Commonwealth countries that made BERU unique and more interesting. Sometimes, a few Russians tried breaking in, which was a pleasant digression. I think one of them Victor, UY5XE, who got a reciprocal ticket as VU2LAM, did go at BERU 1987 with a vengeance and scored more than 190 contacts. I am sure there might be others from the USA and other parts of Europe who might have operated from VU land in BERU.

Since OM Rajiv Ghandi, the late Prime Minister of India, who was VU2RG, had simplified importing amateur radio equipment with no or bare minimum customs duty to the VU boys, many VU got Japanese State of the Art equipment in the early 80s. I am also one of them getting FT 757 GX and a five band antenna of vertical type. All within the Rs10,000 limit set for import. This step made many VUs get imported rigs and was really boosting the activity on all the bands.

With the modest TX, an omni-directional antenna and a 40 watt power supply at my post, I was hesitant with sending the entries with poor scores. It was but for the encouraging letter and comments of OM Dennis, G3MXJ, in May 1973, that I started sending in my entries, irrespective of my score. So far, to that encouragement, I was lucky in the years 1973, '74, '87, and '90 to get BERU Contest certificates with the endorsement like 'Leading Asian Entrant' or 'Leading Overseas Entrant' which have flattered me and made me a regular BERU participant.

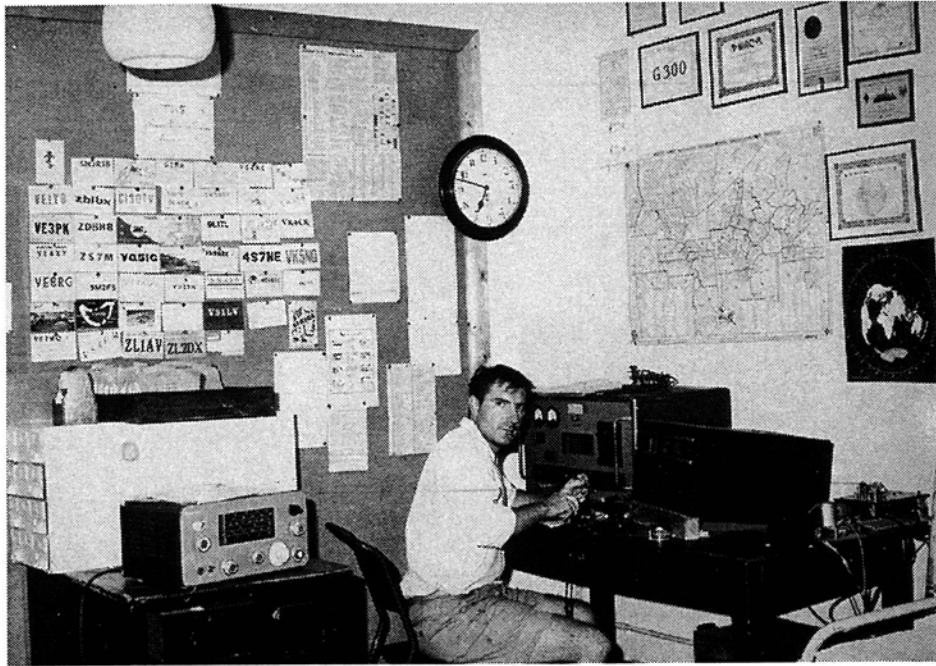
Those days BERU was not having QRM from other contests. But, later on, we had the Japanese 59 magazine's contest around the same time and lots of QRM from them. Attempts were made by IARU Region 3 officials to write to the contest organisers in Japan, to see that BERU does not suffer QRM as BERU was an old and established contest, attracting participants from all over the world.

Though not many contesters are sending QSL cards, the ones I received and cherish in my collection are from GB5CC (G4IFB), G3ESF, G3MXJ, G6LX, VK3MR who covered the world with diamonds.

With my limited funds for amateur radio and with my duties as a Bridge Engineer of the Indian Railways and visiting the various railway steel bridge girder fabricating shops for inspecting bridge components for quality, now I find little time for the hobby. But I always plan to be at my QTH for the important BERU,

You can look forward to hear stronger signals from younger operators from India like VU2PTT, VU2PAI, VU2MTT, VU2OXX in the years to come working BERU.

The success of VU2UR at the many contests, is due to the many sacrifices and continuous encouragement offered by XYL Anuradha, who is indeed very much talking to me about the next BERU in the photograph.



Barry G3VCL operating 5B4TX (9J2BO)



Brian (9J2BO)

Brian Otter, 9J2BO

I have only been a participant for the past 20 years or so. My own incentive for entering the contest was to beat my friend and mentor Barry Clark, 9J2CL (now G3VCL). He was a keen CW man who once said to me, 'I guess you will have to be like the rest, scrape through the morse test and then stay on phone'. He had some justification in that it had taken me 10 years since passing the RAE as a schoolboy to get around to taking the CW test which I had taken twice and failed. I finally took the test again at Humber Radio and had come back here with the call G4CGC which enabled me to get my Zambian licence. I don't remember how well I did with my first entry but I certainly had a good lead over 9J2CL! I believe that he was using a centre fed doublet with open wire feeders one end up at 150 feet sloping to 20 or 30 feet at the other, a pair of 807s and a straight key whereas I had a KW Atlanta and a Vibroplex bug, triband yagi and 40 and 80m dipoles.

As the older ex-pats began to leave I became the only 9J2 entering the contest, 7Q7LZ, Alan Pomfret, being my main rival in Africa.

One of the main attractions of the contest for myself is that there is a core of BERU aficionados who turn up year after year and it is a joy to meet them again even if the last time was the previous years contest. Unfortunately many have become silent keys; G2DC, G6CJ, ZB2CK (G3ATU), G3FXB, and so on but luckily some are still with us; G2QT, VK3MR, ZL3GQ, Z23JO, G5MY, VE7CC, G3MXJ, G4BUO and so on.

Another attraction of BERU is that it is still a friendly affair. Contestants still have time to say 'Hello OM', imagine that in CQWW !! And it is small enough to think you have a chance of doing well. There are few if any really 'big guns' compared with the world wide contests organised by the Americans.

Again even with the 500 + QSOs of some contestants it is still possible to make a handwritten entry and I think few contestants bother to use a computer. Listening is more important than high speed so the chap with 16wpm using a straight key can also have a lot of fun. G2QT always does well and I don't believe that I have ever heard him sending faster than 15wpm if that.

My scores rely heavily on working the UK. My position gives me a definite advantage particularly during the trough of the cycle when there is often a UK-Zambia opening on 10 metres. 7Q7LZ used to have the same advantage. It seems unimaginable to me that a station could win BERU without working a single G station which I seem to remember Dan Lockyer, VR1AA, doing one year. Another year at the peak of the cycle I had the pleasant surprise of hearing and working Peter, ZL3GQ, on 10m long path at around 2AM local time! Never heard

anything like it before or since. This excitement of the unexpected is also part of the fascination of BERU.

Confirmation of the expected is also comforting. After long hours of relative inactivity during the night you swing the beam to the SE on 15 or 20 depending on the state of the cycle. At around 7AM you listen for Snow, VK3MR, coming through short path and there he is just as expected! The first VK to come through on any band. Not for the past 5 years or so but certainly before. Another BERU stalwart not heard for many years is Leonard Snowden, 9H1CH.

Sadly, BERU or the Commonwealth Contest has not on the whole captured the imagination of the 'New Commonwealth'. Apart from the the odd ex-British operator like myself, there is almost no activity from Commonwealth countries apart from the old 'white' Dominions. In Southern Africa alone there should be stations heard from Swaziland, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Botswana, and a little further afield Ascension, Tristan, St Helena, Tanzania, Uganda, Seychelles, the Maldives and of course the West Africans. Yet hardly any activity is heard from these parts. There are radio amateurs active in these countries but why don't they take part? The RSGB shows little or no concern.

How much more exciting it would be if there was more activity from Africa, Asia, the Pacific islands and the Caribbean. Plenty of activity from Commonwealth countries in these areas during CQWW etc. why not in the Commonwealth Contest? Maybe the fact that Radio Communication still refers to the Commonwealth as the British Commonwealth is indicative of the reluctance to change in the RSGB. If the contest is not to fade away then it has to be sold to the new amateurs of the new Commonwealth who have no nostalgia for the old Empire or BERU.

The Commonwealth Contest is a CW contest and CW is a dying art. I believe that there are at present 52 licensees in Zambia and I doubt you would ever hear more than four on CW. The future of the contest may be as a SSB contest when I for one would lose interest and so would many of it's contestants today but it might pick up more support than it loses.

Operating in Bahrain, John, G3VDL, ex MP4BBE

All my scores were rather average. One of the reasons why a good score was virtually impossible was the very high noise level from overhead power lines in Awali. Much of the time the noise level was a constant S9 buzz and only the loudest signals could be heard. Usually it was about S6.

Apart from 1964 (and 1953 and 1954 when I was a bachelor), my shack was a broom cupboard of the kitchen, with no air-conditioning; operating conditions could be rather unpleasant, with regular cooling off periods

necessary. Even in January it can be pretty hot in Bahrain. In 1964 I was allocated a rather better kind of house with a so-called breakfast room; this became a fairly large , air-conditioned and comfortable shack and was a great improvement.

Another factor we had to contend with was the USSR contests, seemingly deliberately timed for the BERU weekend, which wreaked havoc on 7 and to a lesser extent, on 14. The QRM in Bahrain was appalling!

Without the disadvantages mentioned above and perhaps with better equipment , one could probably put together a winning score from Bahrain. Geographically it is well situated and stations in VK, ZL, Far East, all Africa, G and the west side VE could always be worked. The difficult areas for me at any rate, were Central and South America (not many BERU contestants) and East side VE, which I always found rather surprising.

Looking back, I sometimes wish I had made a more serious effort in BERU. I took many hours rest during the contest, had about 8 hours sleep on the Saturday night and spent some time with the family. I have to admit that working strings of G's or VK's at times began to pall.

BERU QSOs have always tended to be more friendly and "gentlemanly" than those in other contests, because of the more selective nature of the event. Perhaps it's getting too selective now, with very few DX stations on. In Bahrain I always used to work a good selection of Africans, VS's, VR2, VU plus the various stations around the Gulf, but these are few and far between now and, of course, Bahrain and the other Gulf countries can no longer enter.

BERU is one of the few contest, perhaps the only one, where one sends and receives genuine reports. I hope it stays that way and that BERU will not demean itself by submitting to the current 5NN practice.

Every year while operating in BERU from Bahrain, the same stations were heard and worked. Amongst the G regulars were G3FXB, G3GFG, G5RI, G5DQ, G5WP, DL2RO/G2DC, G2QT, GM3CIX, G6CJ, G5MR, G3FPQ, G3FPK, G3APN, G3AAE, G3KSH, and G4CP. They were nearly always in there competing. Many of these are now Silent Keys.

Harold Owen, G2HLU, ex ZD4AM

After I returned to the UK later in 1950 it was some years before I was able to resume radio activity, due to housing and other difficulties¹⁰. By 1961 the contest had moved to March, and for a time I think it started at 1200 Saturday and went on to 2400 Sunday. My first entries were with the old gear, on 20M only with a dipole, with which I managed the grand total of 30 entries in 1962 and 11 in 1963! I missed some years , but entered every year from 1973 onwards. I have usually stuck it out for most of the 24 hours, but most years have taken 3-4 hours sleep during the night, and more or less normal mealtimes.

Things improved for me to some extent as I got better gear. By 1966 I was using a multi-band TX based on Minimitter units, and a good home brew RX, with a Joystick antenna (not very good) at first , then in a year or two moving to a W3DZZ (and later a G5RV). I went commercial in 1973, with a KW Vespa TX and a KW66 RX , and in 1975 acquired my first transceiver (TS520). After some years this was replaced with TS830S, and for the last several years I have used a TS940S. Since coming to Dorset from Reading in 1988 the antenna has been a low doublet (168 feet top, maximum height in the centre, only 25 feet).

I keep a record of my performance each year, so I can compare my position in the table , both overall and among the Gs only, and similarly compare my score with the overall top score, and the top G score.

My best years seem to have been 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1982, with 121,127, 150 and 128 QSOs respectively. The low spot was 1994 when I could only manage 28 QSOs - quite like the old days! In 1978 I was 36th out of a total entry of 119, and 11th G out of 48, but my score was less than 40% of the winners and less than 50% of the top G score. 1979 was similar but a little better 1992 gave me my best score compared with the top G ; 54.4% , but it was only 32.7% of the winning score. Of course these comparisons only give a rough idea of how one is doing, because it depends on how many decide to put in an entry, and how good the other fellows are! The sunspot cycle also plays a big part in the year to year fluctuation in one's performance. On the whole I would say that my results have not improved appreciably since I went transceiver, but that change was certainly for the better in terms of ease of operating in contests and for DX generally. In my beginning days the drift during a normal - not contest - contact could easily exceed 1kHz, and that applied to both TX and RX, Actually the drift from the R107 RX was much mitigated when I made a xtal-controlled converter for the HF bands and used the 107 as a tuneable IF.

¹⁰ See Chapter 2 for Harold's experiences in ZD4



John, G3VDL



Radio Society of Zambia 1972. Back left to right: 9J2LK, 2GU, 2CL, 2TL, 2DT, 2KL, 2XZ, 2DA
Front left to right: J9241, 2SS, 2LL, 2DN, 2WR, (9J2BO))

The only other changes here are in relation to keying. I used a pump handle (ex-RAF or Junkers) until late 1976, when I went over to an el-bug, and acquired a memory keyer (Samson ETM-8c) in 1993. You will perceive I am a late developer. But no computer, and I don't think I will ever have one,

Despite last year's abysmal conditions (so far as I was concerned, anyway, tho' a linear and a beam would surely have made things rather better) I still regard BERU as the high-spot of the contest calendar. It is particularly satisfying to have this opportunity to say *hello* again to people from way back; it's also rather disturbing when regulars fail to appear.

BERU will never be the same for me without G3FXB. I used to hear him working them like shelling peas, and quite a lot of them were not even detectable to me, let alone readable and workable! I have been used from the beginning to waiting my turn in a big queue before I could get through to people like 9J2BO, but amongst the big boys G3FXB was in a class of his own.

Now we shall have the ZS boys back again, which should make for greater participation. I feel that BERU could do with more publicity overseas and especially there could be more direct feedback to overseas participants, with results from one year and the rules for the next etc.

Dave Lawley, G4BUO

I suppose like many entrants, I have served a long apprenticeship in BERU. My licence arrived a month before the 1973 event but it wasn't until 1974 that I dipped my toes in the water and made just four QSOs. The log shows that as well as working two VEs and two 9Hs I also called VP2, 5Z4, 7Q7 and ZB2 without success.

My first full-time effort wasn't until 1981, still using just a longwire at my parent's QTH and I made just 100 QSOs. That year I started noting the serial numbers of other Gs in the margin of the logbook and it shows the beginning of a friendly rivalry with Barry G3PEK (now VK2BJ), while G3MXJ and G3FXB both forged well ahead. 1983 at a new QTH yielded 49 QSOs still with wire antennas but in 1984 I had a beam and made a serious entry.

Following the practice of G3MXJ, G3FXB and many before them, I started to keep notes. One idea in particular was ahead of its time and not implemented for another six years "monitoring would be improved by use of separate RX and antenna which could be checked while the keyer was sending CQ".

BERU often yields small rewards to those who keep at it: "ZF on 80 found by tuning high up in the band". To this day I vividly remember the impression made on me that year when I heard Al G3FXB make a sked just fifteen minutes into the contest. In BERU, unlike many of the fast and furious contests, skeds frequently pay off.

Conventional wisdom at the time was that it was OK to have an hour or two's sleep in the night but I noted "try to keep going for 24 hours next time. Missed a lot on LF between 00.15-02.40". This note is repeated almost word for word for the next two years but in 1987, "spent entire 24 hours in contest, slow during night but probably worth while".

Conditions were reported as extremely poor in 1985, in the last sunspot minimum, and no Gs made any QSOs on 10m. 40m has never been easy but there was much more broadcast QRM than as well.

Slopers were squeezed into the garden and lack of time before the contest meant I had to finish tuning them four hours into the contest. I returned to the shack to check the SWR and was surprised to discover VKs CQing. They are easier to work before the QRM comes up and every year since I have checked 40m at about 16.30z. It's never safe to assume that those VKs will definitely show up on the long path the following morning and I'd rather have the QSOs in the bag straightaway. That year my notes also show no long path VK/ZL on 20m on Sunday morning, a problem which recurred at the bottom of the present cycle. Conditions were again poor in 1987 for the Golden Anniversary contest and the introduction of GB5CC guaranteed a 10m QSO - the only other on the band was Z23JO with 20 minutes of the contest left.

A 'personal best' was noted when I beat G3MXJ, and I also came out ahead of G4EDG and G4CNY who both had more QSOs than me but less bonuses. A sign that the years building up experience were starting to pay off.

Moving to the present QTH later in 1987 gave more room for antennas but no big beams (at least not yet...) and the slow accumulation of experience. After a couple of years I got serious about the second RX and by placing my Butternut vertical in the front garden so that it is shielded from the main antennas by the house, I can tune for needed QSOs while CQing. This innovation has boosted the QSO total but visitors to the G3FXB shack over many years will have noted that Al had two sets of Drake twins and although he never admitted it to me, I'm sure he had been doing the same for years. Having found a needed station, particularly on Sunday morning when QSOs can be scarce, it is essential to be able to QSY quickly and the amplifier is tuned 'on the fly' while calling the station. Usually the correct transmit antenna has been selected first!

In November 1992 I upgraded the tower and beam with the object of challenging G3FXB in the CQ WW contest, and BERU the following year. Sadly this was not to be, but now I find that I am doing to Jan G0IVZ, the next challenger, what G3FXB used to do to me and G3MXJ. Where does he get those extra QSOs from? How come he got those extra bonuses on 15? The telephone is busy in the 24 hours following the contest with QSO and bonus totals being swapped, and more little notes in the margin for next time. There were minor victories in previous years when I

found bonuses that FXB, MXJ, OZF and PEK missed. I remember telling Dennis how I cracked the pileup on 15m to get the 9Q5 only to be reminded that it is not in the Commonwealth!

A PC was first used for logging in the 1991 event but to this day I also maintain a paper check sheet which allows me to tick off the three bonuses per area as they are worked, and also to spot missing QSOs on a band. Both are good motivators. The low QSO rate in BERU makes the computer of questionable value, and K1EA's CT program has the major defect of not catering for sent RST other than 599: in this test of operating skill, many of the reports are not 599.

In 1992 I operated GB5CC from my home QTH with help from G4BKI and G4AMJ. The QSO total was inflated to over 700 and it was interesting to work very many Gs who are not familiar callsigns in other contests, and this was borne out by looking at the VE logs in particular, during the checking process.

BERU continues to be a 'niche' contest and as such it has suffered QRM from the WAG contest and, a few years ago, from the JA-DX contest. Thanks to help from IARU Region 3, in particular David Rankin 9V1RH, the Japanese kindly agreed to move their contest date but we are always vulnerable to QRM from other events. So, it is interesting to read in the 1973 writeup "It is regretted that this contest continues to clash with others -however, the calendar is very full at this time of year and short of moving BERU by many months, it would seem to be impossible to ensure a clear weekend". Clearly this problem is not new. Looking back at previous results it is clear that scores are as high as they have ever been and the entry level is stable.

My hope is that the re-admission of ZS to the Commonwealth will give a boost at the bottom of the cycle to what is for me an essential feature of the contest calendar.

Barry Simpson, VK2BJ, G3PEK

I was first licensed in 1961 as G3PEK and my first skirmish with BERU was 1963. I used a CR100 and a home brew TX at 25 watts and a G5RV. I had 24 QSOs including VP8GQ, and VP5XG (G8VG). Similar token entries were made in '64 and '65. Interesting callsigns appearing included VS9AAA, 5N2JKO, VE1ZZ, ZL4BO and VK3XB. In fact I worked several of the stations from those first three years in 1996 BERU.

The following few years were spent with more interest in girls than radio and I made no BERU QSOs in 1966 and 1967. I was also heavily into ballroom and latin american dancing as well as darts, beer, listening to Radio Caroline¹¹ and taking delight in mini skirts. I also traded

my BSA Bantam 125 motorcycle with G3NOM in exchange for his HRO 5T.



Barry's vertical at G3PEK showing the radial connection.

I married in 1970. Over the period 1968 to 1978, whilst my logs record a few BERU QSOs most years, I had no real interest.

In 1976 a job move took me from the Manchester area to work in the centre of Liverpool and that year, we moved house to Guilden Sutton, a small village on the outskirts of Chester. There for the first time I was living in a house with a garden somewhat larger than a postage stamp. Over the following few years, I managed to grow a 30' tilt over telescopic tower in the back garden on which I put a 2el trapped beam and a 42' mast on the house gable end which supported an 80/40 inverted V.

For what ever reason , serious interest in BERU first awakened in 1980. That year, using a TS830S I made 221 QSOs which put me in 24th place and the 9th highest G. From that year until 1990, when we moved to VK, I entered BERU every year from the same home location.

I strove to improve my operating and where possible my equipment and antennas. In 1984 I bought my TS930S to which I fitted an outboard switch to enable me to select 500Hz and 250Hz filters independently. This is a crucial modification to this rig, which I have not seen published anywhere, and which makes the difference in heavy QRM between QSO and no QSO. I still use the same TS930 today. I also built the first of many memory keyers which certainly took some of the strain out of operating.

Whilst I hovered between third and fifth placed G station between 1982 and 1985 I was unable to squeeze out G3MXJ from the coveted second place behind G3FXB who was of course invincible. By then I had identified 40 as being the band where I needed to make a major antenna

¹¹ Offshore pirate radio ship broadcasting popular music.

improvement as my results there were dismal compared with the leaders. I had been using variously a trap inverted V, a 130' fed with open wire and in 1985, a 200' open wire fed inverted V. I made a practice of recording my impressions of BERU at the end of each contest and my 1985 comments were :-

Rig TS830S; Ants 200' cf inv V at 45' for 80/40 fed with 300 ohm slotted ribbon; TH2 at 30' for HF.

Condx; absolutely awful. 10 completely dead; 15 as good as; my 40m results were awful - the ant was almost useless. Propagation better in the south of England.

G3FXB probably finished with 225 QSOs (215). His 40m ant much better. My final score 143 QSOs/2715 points.

Before the 1986 BERU I installed a Butternut HF2V vertical ground mounted with 72 radials. This made the desired tremendous improvement and enabled me to leapfrog into second place only (!) 390 points behind G3FXB. It also bought major TVI problems but my XYL is well versed in the need for no disturbance during BERU and each year she is ready with a selection of HP filters to hand to any marauding complainants. Fortunately she has not yet had to part with any yet. 1986 was something of a milestone because I worked 5 VKs on 80.

I tried to be too adventurous in 1987 with a complex arrangement of three dissimilar phased verticals for 40 and failed miserably, plummeting to 7th placed G.

I got my act together in 1988 and again in 1989, both years using phased verticals for 40 comprising two HF2Vs spaced a quarter wave and fed 120 degrees out of phase with switchable end fire directivity and bidirectional broadside. Both years were again a second place G finish for me.

1990 was an unmemorable year for me as far as BERU was concerned as I had taken taken my beam down prior to moving with my family six weeks later to Sydney. Nevertheless I managed a token score of 120 QSOs, the last being ZD7KM on 10. I closed my G3PEK station on the 1st April 1990.

1990 was memorable in more ways than one from a personal point of view. Moving to the other side of the world is no mean feat but I have to say that I still consider Sydney to be the most beautiful city in the world.

After 6 months in rented accommodation and much house hunting, we finally negotiated the purchase of the best radio location I have ever had. Whilst it is suburbia, 20km north of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the garden is not particularly large, I have a number of large trees round and about and we also back onto a large bush reserve. This means that it is very quiet electrically most of the time and it gives me space to erect two 130ft antennas at right angles to each other. They are each fed separately

with open wire feeder and on 40 each comprises two half waves in phase. Fortunately they face favourable directions with one firing to Europe LP/SP and the other to W/VE - ideal for BERU as my 40m scores over the last few years show. The difference between each in its favoured direction is no less than three S points and given that I can switch between them instantly this is a big bonus.

These antennas also work well on 80 with some directivity and enable me to score reasonably on that band also. However being able to work the VKs is not the bonus it seems. There are just not enough VKs active. This year for example I worked more Gs on 80 than VKs!

In the early days at this location I also opened negotiations with the local council regarding the erection of a tower. Yes it is just as difficult in VK to get permission. Fortunately I persevered and succeeded in getting permission to put up a two section 45' tilt over telescopic tower. This supports a Cushcraft A4S with which I am more than satisfied as giving me a competitive performance.

That then is the antenna set up I use every year in BERU from VK2BJ. The house is at 500' ASL on the edge of a sandstone ridge with the ground dropping away steeply in most directions - almost ideal for radio though verticals don't work here.

The rig is still my faithful TS930S although the keyer is usually my homebrew KCOQ MK1 memory keyer with memory button extension box fitted to the Bencher paddle. I do not use a computer for BERU and I am happy with my manual logging and dupe check log arrangements.

It has been very interesting reviewing my old logs for the purpose of writing to you. I had thought subjectively it appears that the level that the level and balance of Commonwealth stations had altered significantly from my first involvement in the 1960s. However it now seems to me that things are pretty much the same.

I would not like to see any significant change in the rules or scoring as this would ruin what I consider to be a very finely tuned and fair situation.

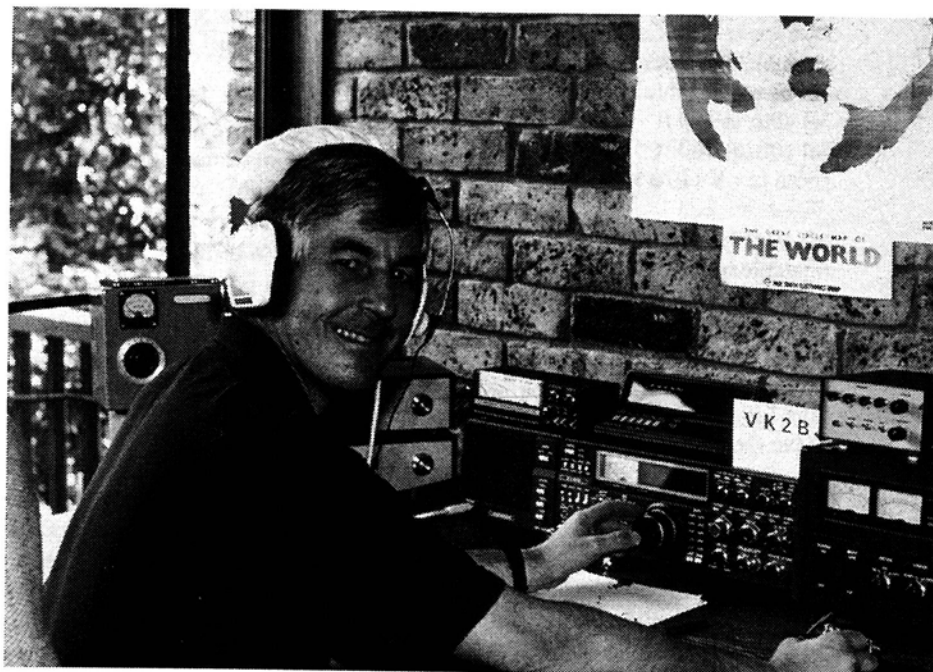
John Sluymer, VE3EJ

I have participated in BERU almost every year since 1972. I entered as VE3EKG, 1972-8, VE6OU, 1979-84, VE6OU/3, 1985-90, and VE3EJ, 1991-95. The BERU is truly one of my favourite contests. I can't quite put my finger on it but there is something about this event that just keeps me coming back, not due to high QSO rates, not due to abundance of DX, but there is a quality to this contest that can't be duplicated. I think it something to do with a sense of belonging. It just feels right to participate each time. I would feel a void if I missed this one - maybe others would too! Running into old friends is one of the big drawing cards, I would bet that if I looked over the logs of

the past 20 or so years, that several calls would be in each one.

BERU is where I worked my first VKs on 80m. It is also where I ran across VE2NV for the first time whilst using

VE3AKG only to find that this was Jack's first call. I had a great time competing over the years against Lee, VE7CC, Bob, VE3KZ, Dave, VE3BVD (now VE3OI) and many others.



Barry, VK2BJ



The towers at VE3EJ

Antennas 1996 Four towers, two at 150 ft, one at 100 ft and one at 60 ft.

Tower 1, Bottom to top, Mosley CL36 at 50 ft fixed SSE
3el 17m at 70 ft (side mount rotatable 300 deg)
3el 12m at 80 ft (as above)
3el 40m at 150 ft
5el 10m at 160 ft
160m Inv.V at 70 ft

Tower 2 5/5 20m 150 ft/70 ft top rotatable bottom fixed NE
5/5/5 15m 160 ft/120 ft/80 ft top rotatable bottom two fixed NE
75m Inv.V at 70 ft
40m Inv.V at 70 ft
160m Delta loop at 145 ft

Tower 3 5/5 10m 75 ft/40 ft fixed south
5el 20m rotatable at 100 ft
2el 40m (Cushcraft 402CD - Mechanically reinforced) at 112 ft
2m yagi for Packet at 92 ft

Tower 4 5el Telrex 15m at 60 ft
Single element 30m dipole at 66 ft
5el Telrex 10m at 70 ft
144/432 Mhz Packet at 72 ft

In addition there is a 4 square 80m vertical system - four 1/4 wavelength verticals spaced 1/4 wavelength and two 160m receiving Beverages - 1000 ft to SSE, 850 ft to NE.

Don McVicar, VE2WW, ex VP7DX

I was born June 21, 1915 on a farm near Oxbow, Sask., brought up in Edmonton and educated in Winnipeg and at the University of Alberta. I earned my Private Pilot's Flying Licence in 1936. My first job as VE4PH was as radio operator with the McInnis Fish Co., in the bush giving weather reports for Grant McConnachie's fish flights, then as radio man with Mackenzie Air Service in Edmonton, and finally as a DOT radio range operator at Cranbrook, B.C. In 1940 I earned Air Traffic Controller's Licence No#9 and was Officer in Charge of Winnipeg Control Tower. In 1941 I joined No.2 Air Observer's School in Edmonton as staff pilot and from there moved up to the Royal Air Force Ferry Command as Captain-Navigator. In 1942 I was awarded King's Commendation for Arctic flying as described in my books titled FERRY COMMAND and FERRY COMMAND PILOT. SOUTH ATLANTIC SAFARI describes my delivery of the first

Martin B-26 'Widow Maker' light bomber over the South and North Atlantic.

In 1943 became flight instructor and flying boat pilot and carried out first ever Polar Europe-Western Canada flights over the "Crimson Route." In 1944 I received an OBE for "Valuable Services in the Air" as described in NORTH ATLANTIC CAT, (1983).

After serving as Chief Pilot for British West Indian Airways I returned to Canada in 1945 and formed World-Wide Aviation Consulting which found jobs for many veterans. After the war I became VE2WW and flew a Stinson floatplane in a fur trading venture in Labrador, (A CHANGE OF WINGS).

World-Wide Aviation ferried aircraft from North America to 39 countries around the globe. In 1983 I was named Canadian "Man of the Year" by Silver Wings, a prestigious international fraternal aviation society.

In 1994 I published THROUGH CUBA TO OBLIVION, which recounts how my company World-Wide Airways used Curtiss C-46, Douglas DC4 and Lockheed Constellation aircraft to fly chicks, livestock and food to Cuba when the Americans cut that country off. When Castro defaulted on the flight agreement, it almost destroyed World-Wide. The company began numerous transatlantic passenger charter flights during 1964/65 using Lockheed Super-Constellations with great success. But, finally, in 1965, the Canadian Government's Air Transport Board effectively regulated World-Wide out of business.

I settled in Freeport, Bahamas, and Miami Springs, Florida, for sometime, before returning to my old stamping grounds of YUL in 1975 as an aviation consultant and aircraft salesman under the name of McVicar Aviation '.

In 1987 I began a new career as an aviation writer with 13 books all still in print.

My main recollection of BERU is the high standard of operators and the heavy, heavy W QRM. When I entered the high power section as VP7DX I used a KWM2A (barefoot) and a Racal with up to 100 Hz selectivity (great!).

Chapter 8 Reflections

Winners - Country statistics

Over the years the leading stations have come from 21 Commonwealth countries¹. The single most successful country has been Canada. But Canada did not win until 1957 when Vic Williams, VE3KE, broke through, followed by J.T.Hepburn, VE7KX, in 1959. The period of VE domination really started in 1973 since when they have won 15 times in 23 years. Pre-war, VK and ZL won 5 times in the first 9 years.

Country	Wins
Western Canada	9
Eastern Canada	8
Australia	7
New Zealand	5
Malta	3
Cyprus	3
UK	2

Whether these Canadian wins are the result of in-built bias in the scoring scheme is not entirely clear because if this were the case there should be several VE winners. In fact there are two stations VE7CC and VE3EJ who between them account for 11 of the 15 wins. Both of these operators are 'world class', have good stations and excellent antennas.

The number of VEs in the top ten changed from an average of 2.4 between 1960-1969 to an average of 5.25 between 1972-1981. As there was a significant change in the bonus system in 1969 and a shortening from 48 to 24 hours in 1972 it does seem that Canada has gained some differential advantage from additional bonuses. However over the next 8 years the VEs dropped to 2.75 and over the last 5 years has fallen further to 1.7. It seems that the period of domination also had something to do with local rivalry.

Mike, VK6HD, believes that there may be a bias in the scoring system towards VK,

A VK1, for example, can collect a number of bonuses on all bands with little effort. This is a great advantage on 80 metres. A VK1 should be able to work at least three VK2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6s and 7s on all five HF bands plus ZLs, 9M2s, 9V1s, VS6s, VK8s and 9s and Gs. The poor UK station has to battle for bonuses on the low bands.

However with the reduction in CW activity from VK/ZL Barry, VK2BJ, commented this year that he was

¹ Including deletions such as ZC6, SU and XZ.

increasingly adopting operating strategies similar to the UK. Dennis, G3MXJ, recalls that 10-15 years ago leading VK stations worked nearly a full set of VK/ZL bonuses.

Winners - Individual statistics

The most successful station is Lee Sawkins, VE7CC, who has won the Senior Rosebowl 7 times. The most consistent station, being in the top ten the most times is Al Slater, G3FXB.

Station	Wins
VE7CC	7
VE3EJ	5
VQ4AQ	3

I.V.Miller, VK3EG, C.F.Cole, VK2DI, R.G.Henwick, ZS2A/ZS6DL, George Barret, ZC4IP, David Dudley, VE3BVD, and Peter Watson, ZL3GQ, have all won twice.

G Winners

by Dennis, G3MXJ

It is appropriate at this point to look at the long runs that the various G winners have had and the way in which the position changed. It was typical that a particular station would retain this position until it was usurped by a newcomer. It was rarely regained. What is also interesting is that the leading G position was not often taken over as a result of straightforward competition. More often, it changed hands as a result of the current incumbent defaulting and not appearing in a particular year or, being indisposed in some way.

G5WP was leading G in 1963 but the following year was to be the last time that Rusty would hold this position. Previous to his first win, G5RI had been dominant. G3FPQ took over in 1965 with the comment on Rusty's copy of the results 'bad cold this year'. But Rusty never did it again. Likewise, G3FXB was breathing down the neck of FPQ during subsequent eight years but it was not until FPQ failed to appear one year that FXB managed it into leading UK position (1973) and then was able to hold the position against all comers (apart from 1985) until he went to ZC4 in 1990.

All time Winners of the Senior Contest ²

Year	Name	Call
1931	T Evans	VK2NS
1932	F W Miles	G5ML
1933	G G Sampson	ZL4AI
1934	J C Callender	ZL4BT
1935	E S Cole	SU1EC
1936	I V Miller	VK3EG
1937	I V Miller	VK3EG
1938	F J Mustill	XZ2DY
1939	E S Cole	ZC6EC
1947	R.G.Henwick	ZS2AL (not engraved)
1948	C F Cole	VK2DI
1949	C F Cole	VK2DI
1950	W F Russell	G5WP
1951	F K North	VP6CDI
1952	C S Herbert	ZL1MB
1953	C J Dent	VQ4AQ
1954	R G Henwick	ZS2A
1955	C J Dent	VQ4AQ
1956	C J Dent	VQ4AQ
1957	V J Williams	VE3KE
1958	R G Henwick	ZS6DL
1959	J T Hepburn	VE7KX
1960	G F Barrett	ZC4IP
1961	G F Barrett	ZC4IP
1962	D H Parr	ZB1HC
1963	P A F Hobbs	VP8GQ/G3LET
1964	M Dransfield	5N2JKO/G3JKO
1965	R J Milton	VS9MG

1966	D R Taylor	9J2DT
1967	D McVicar	VP7DX
1968	N Jackson	9J2BV
1969	A Cake	9H1BL
1970	R J E Mills	VQ8CR
1971	M Bazley	VK6HD
1972	E A Welling	VP2MU
1973	R Nash	VE3KZ/VE3HUM
1974	D Dudley	VE3BVD/VE3HUM
1975	G Z Blanardvicz	VE3BMV
1976	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1977	P W Watson	ZL3GQ
1978	P W Watson	ZL3GQ
1979	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1980	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1981	J Sluymer	VE6OU
1982	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1983	S R Coleston	VK4XA
1984	N Hoyow	6Y5HN
1985	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1986	D Dudley	VE3BVD
1987	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1988	L Sawkins	VE7CC
1989	J Sluymer	VE6OU/3
1990	A Slater	ZC4ESB
1991	J Morris	9H1EL
1992	J Sluymer	VE3EJ
1993	D Andrews	9H1EL/G3MXJ
1994	R Whelan	G3PJT/VP9
1995	J. Sluymer	VE3EJ
1996	J. Sluymer	VE3EJ

Rule changes²

A contest specifically designed so that all compete on equal terms.

In many respects the Commonwealth Contest is unusual in that it has been designed over the years to allow all the contestants to compete on more or less equal terms. ⁴

The differences between stations such as antennas, TX and RX performance, are accepted but the intention has been to encourage competitors to develop their personal skills in operating and understanding of propagation. Any bias due to geography has been minimised as far as possible, though of course a rare station will always be in demand and some areas have more bonuses in easy reach than others. But you can't expect to win this contest just by working a large number of stations from a limited number of countries. You do need the bonuses.³

² Taken from the BERU Challenge Trophy

³ Most contests have a specific bias towards the host country. The well known exception to this is the CQWW contest.

Although the contest has remained relatively unchanged over the years, a few thoughts on the rationale behind the various changes may be of interest.

Pre-war. There were a large number of rule changes in the early years as the organisers tried to remove bias. Zones, radial rings (1932) and various combinations of times were all tried. It was only in 1939 that serial numbers were exchanged. The concept of a bonus for the first contact with a zone was established in 1937.

Post-war. Rule changes were mostly concerned with timing and duration. A sliding scale of bonus points was used for some years, 15 for the first contact 14 for the second and so on down to one. This was modified as a result of G6CJ's review in 1953 to one bonus for the first contact with a new zone. A change was also made from zones to prefixes.

1969 - Bonus scoring system changed to provide a bonus for the first three contacts with each area. This was introduced to try to even up a perceived imbalance between UK and non-UK stations. However, it seems that it had the opposite effect. In the ten years before it changed, the leading UK station had an average overall position of 4.0. For the following ten years, this became 4.6. What the change did do was to make it very easy for a VE station to come top - with 3 bonuses available from each domestic VE call area on each band - and my years of adjudication confirmed that this effect was quite marked. However there was no great push for change - most people seemed to like having the extra interest.

1970 - Low Power section discontinued. The sections had originally been changed from Senior/Junior to High/Low power in 1958. It is true that the numbers were steadily decreasing. However, in those days, 'High Power' meant 150W. I wonder if there would be support for a new type of 'Restricted' section to give a chance for the barefoot/wire antenna brigade against the big beam/linear dominance.

1972 - The biggest change to rules in recent years. The contest was reduced to 24 hours and single band awards were introduced. There was considerable adverse comment about the reduction in duration. The reduction in time was not wholly due to a supposed decline in available contacts. With a 48-hour event, the contest did not finish until the middle of Monday in VK/ZL and started Friday evening in VE. By making it 1200Z to 1200Z, it was contained entirely within the Saturday/Sunday period no matter where you were in the world. Although there were subsequent suggestions that BERU should revert to either 36 or 48 hours with the possibility of a rest period, the majority view seemed to support the 24 hour duration. 1972 also saw the introduction of single band awards giving those without extensive antenna farms the opportunity to take part with the possibility of winning something. The numbers of single band entries have always been small but I think that their introduction,

together with the reduction in duration of the contest, did much to maintain entry levels throughout the 70s and 80s.

1976 - Name changed to Commonwealth Contest. The Committee had, for some years, received continuing comments that the contest was an anachronism left over from the old imperial days and that it was time to change. It is interesting to note that although there was a brief flurry of 'CQ CC' in the early years after the change, 'CQ BERU' remains the preferred call now. I sometimes wonder how many people know what BERU means!

1997 - Introduction of a 12 hour section. Part of the 12 hours has to be in the last half of the contest. Single band awards discontinued. The latest rules are in the Appendices.

Rule changes, a view from Bill, N4AR

In 1996 the RSGB Contest Committee invited comment on the rules for the contest and in particular how participation could be improved. Bill, N4AR, wrote as follows:

I am not sure how welcome are the views of a descendant of 'rebels', especially when it comes to the BERU contest, but I am an RSGB member and moreover have compelling interest in the current discussion of the fate of this contest. I have two other qualifications to voice an opinion:

1) I have actually operated in the BERU last March, a serious effort if not a serious result. Moreover I want to do it again and hope the contest will still be there for me next year (it will, Bill!).

2) For two and a half decades each March, I was debriefed on 40m CW by AI, G3FXB. On a yearly basis I lived the ups and downs of BERU as AI and I did with all our favourite contests.

It may be a sign of the times that a contest is not seen to be attractive if one is unable to sit on a frequency and CQ up hundreds of QSOs hour after hour. Pushing the CT rate meter to 140 is a definite skill but so is the pursuit of the rare multiplier, the mastery of propagation that makes that pursuit possible, and the patience to find new QSOs when the rates are slow. If working that rare ZL on 80m of the VE7 on 40m long path is no longer exciting then that operator is in more trouble with his advocacy of contesting than any changes in the BERU can cure.

Moreover the fact that this is not a bowling pin contest (lining up a pile of Ws or Europeans to knock over with your super station) gives the nimble but more modestly equipped guy a chance for a competitive score. Given the population base for the contest and the current state of the Sunspot Cycle I think the activity last year and, judging by the preliminary scores this year, was quite reasonable.

I don't think these scores are much different from those I remember discussing with G3FXB during the last two sunspot lows. I deplore the slow disappearance of VK/ZL from the CW bands, if you want a slow contest try working the VK/ZL sometime. I feel that BERU has a greater turnout than the VK/ZL has had in recent years, so there is still interest there to encourage and work with.

If there are any lessons to be learned from ARRL's occasional mismanagement of contests the prime one is : don't make massive changes to any contest based on the way it sounds at Solar Minimum.

Could it be changed and improved ? Perhaps, but try not to do it in a way that would invalidate comparisons with your contest giants of the past. Their view that this was the premier British Contest is still worthy of respect.

Adjudication⁴

As previously mentioned, adjudication of the contest provided a very interesting addition to my mainline enjoyment of the contest. During my time as Chairman, we endeavoured to keep to a strict timetable for publication of both rules and results for all contests. For BERU, this meant the results in September and the rules for the following year in October. This required a fairly tight timescale for receipt of logs. BERU is rather unusual in that a very high percentage of contacts are checkable as the overall QSO totals are small and a high proportion of entrants submit logs.

Although it may have changed since, during my period of adjudication, the checking was performed as follows:

A mistake in the callsign meant loss of all points for both sides of the QSO

Each mistake in the exchange lost one-third of contact and bonus points for the log where the mistake occurred. Thus, three strikes and you were out!

Where possible, deducted bonus points were reassigned to later contacts where no bonus points had been claimed.

This checking system added a requirement for accuracy to the need for a comprehensive station and the aforementioned knowledge of propagation and operating strategy.

I think that adding all these factors together goes a long way to explaining the historic and continuing uniqueness of BERU as a contest.

The present position.- The above is not quite the present position. Harold, G2HLU, the current adjudicator comments as follows⁵.

A mistake in the callsign loses all points, both contact and bonus, for the receiving station. The only exception to this occurs if a number of stations have copied the callsign 'incorrectly'. In this case the sender rather than the receiver is penalised. This has not yet occurred in the BERU logs I have checked.

With regard to errors in the exchange, then the deductions should apply to the contact points and not the bonus points. It is very rare for more than three errors to be made in the serial number.

The checking procedure

by Harold, G2HLU

The procedure I follow in checking the logs is first to arrange them in descending order of claimed score. And to make a list of them. Then they are checked one at a time beginning with the highest score. If no dupe sheet has been provided by the entrant then one has to be generated, with some grumbling, by the adjudicator. From the dupe sheets a check is made for unmarked duplicates, which are penalised heavily. They are few and far between and I must admit to feeling a bit heartened when I find one. The dupe sheets of the highest scoring station form the basis of the master sheet which is compiled by the checker as he goes along, and this helps identify rogue callsigns. In checking the first log, each of the others is brought from the pile in turn, and from the dupe sheet (usually of the log being checked) it is seen whether a contact has been made, and if so, the entry in both logs and either ticked in green or the points deducted in red. As the process continues, with each succeeding log it is found that more and more contacts have already been checked.

For each log, at some point, either at the beginning or the end, it is important to look over the entry generally for conformity, and to check the addition. Sometimes people have misunderstood the scoring rules, and it is necessary to amend their claimed score, more often upwards than downwards, though occasionally some enterprising and novel schemes appear e.g. using the bonuses as multipliers, and one chap added number of QSOs, QSO points, number of bonuses, and bonus points, to augment the legitimate score considerably. Needless to say, no penalties are imposed for this inventiveness, and the amusement in fact lightens the task.

BERU adjudication is a most interesting task; it is revealing to see the contest from the other side, as it were, and to admire the results of those much higher up the list than oneself, as well as to see how different from here in G are the contacts available to people in other parts of the world, and lastly I personally find satisfaction in putting a bit back into the contest scene.

⁴ Based on comments by G3MXJ.

⁵ Contest Checking Guidelines, Dave Lawley, (1993)

How to win from G

Dave G4BUO

Move to Canada is the flip answer, but VE3EJ's skill, and superb antenna farm on 18 quiet acres combined with plenty of VE bonuses available on all bands have more to do with it. My first UK win was with a 3 element tribander at 40ft and wire antennas, the more important ingredient being the years of experience gained while trailing in behind G3FXB, G3MXJ and others.

Several constants become ingrained: mainly the 40m long path opening to VK/ZL on Sunday morning. ZLs appear first but you must break off at 06:20 for 20 minutes on 80m, and expect to work ZL3GQ and a handful of others. Tired after little or no sleep you must judge how long to stay on 40m, as I keep making the mistake of going to 20 just a bit too late and missing the long path there. Be guided by the bonus count and once you have three VK2, 3 and 4 in the bag on 40 (some hope!) it may be time to go to 20 although you risk missing the welcome surprise of a VK7 or 8.

Keep the beam moving: I usually seem to miss Z23JO on 20m probably because I am too busy trying to decide whether to beam VE or short-path VK, and forget to beam south at all. This is fatal now that ZS is in the contest (hopefully in greater numbers as time goes on). On 10 and 15m the beam is more often south, especially when the sunspots are low, and remember that VE may be workable on skew path, beaming over South America. In the good old days when we had sunspots I remember coming across a pair of 4S7s ragchewing on 20m at about three o'clock in the morning, and got them both. If I had been G3FXB I would have asked them to QSY to 40.

In 1995 I checked 80m extra early and was rewarded with VK2BJ in the log at 1738z. More usually VK may be workable from about 1930z and 1993 was particularly good, yielding eight of them plus S21 and 9J2 in just 40 minutes. Those were the days.

Even with a small garden I'm convinced a second receive capability can be put together, especially if you don't use a synthesized rig. Homebrew or commercial bandpass filters on transmit and receive will allow antenna separation of only a few feet and give more flexibility than dual-receive rigs since you can listen on any of four bands while transmitting on the fifth. If you can achieve antenna separation of at least two hundred feet then listening in-band becomes feasible. BERU is a slow (but fascinating) contest and although simultaneous receive capability allows you to CQ more, do not fall into the trap of endless CQing rather than ringing the changes such as changing band or turning the beam.

Never be too proud to ask a VE3 (or anyone else!) to QSY, although it may only be for five points. G3PJT was

mightily impressed in the 1994 contest when I called him on 15m when he was G3PJT/VP9 and asked for a sked at 1145Z on 10m. We made the QSO on skew path for 25 points each. The sked was a good guess on my part, not a certainty by any means. I like to think that I did exactly what G3FXB would have done. It's moments like that which make BERU so very special.

Some lessons from Al, G3FXB

Al's comments cover both the 48 hour and the current 24 hour event and this fact should be taken into account. Al's first point is to assess quite carefully the options that exist for working particular areas. Often there will be choices to be made between areas which can be worked during several periods during the contest and areas which can only be worked at one time. The choices which are made in such circumstances may be critical.

In the 24 hour contest there is no alternative but to attempt to operate the entire contest even though the QSO rate may be very low.

A constant search for bonuses must be mounted. One of the pitfalls under periods of good conditions is not to shift bands enough. There are definite times to be on 80 and 40 on the Sunday morning, 06.30-07.15 on 80 and 07.15-08.15 on 40. Don't be panicked on to 20 before 08.00, it doesn't pay off.

Al also found that having two rigs paid off in the 1970s and '80s but by 1989 he was beginning to feel that it diluted the effort.

Al kept a diary of notes from most of his contest entries and it is clear this is very useful (and not only for the historian). A practice to be adopted.

Winners Tactics

Barry, VK2BJ.

Over the 1980s I very carefully studied form and tactics, especially those of G3FXB. What I grew to like was the need to seek out the QSOs with frequent band changes; to make sure you didn't miss the vital short openings on 80m to VK (1930Z) and ZL; to check 10m constantly; to work the VE4,5,6 and 7 boys with the big fluttery signals; to see a lot of the same people very year. It goes on and on and BERU is an emotional experience as much as a - sorry - the contest.

Operating from VK in BERU is little different from the UK as regards strategy. You still have to do frequent band changes and make sure you do not miss the windows, particularly on 80 where there have been amazing openings to G from about 1700Z the last two years. Of course when conditions are right long strings of Gs can be worked for lengthy periods.

To try and improve my performance over the years generally I have carefully analysed the performance of the leading stations both in terms of scores and individual band performance. This enables me to plan on what bands to expect most activity by comparison with similar sunspot periods - although it does not always work out. It also demonstrates that VE operators have a decided advantage although I do believe the scoring is as fair as it possibly can be. I also believe that, given the right conditions, BERU is winnable with my present station - but not the 1996 conditions! I intend to keep trying.

How I go about winning it

John, VE3EJ

Before the contest

- Review the logs from last year and the same time period during the last sunspot cycle. This should give some *good clues as to what propagation might be like.*
- Have a few dupe sheets from previous BERU contests on hand for call recognition purposes.
- Have the country/prefix list for the Commonwealth countries handy.
- Get plenty of sleep ahead of the contest.
- Prepare food and snacks ahead of time.
- Verify performance of antennas, rig, amp and computer ahead of time.

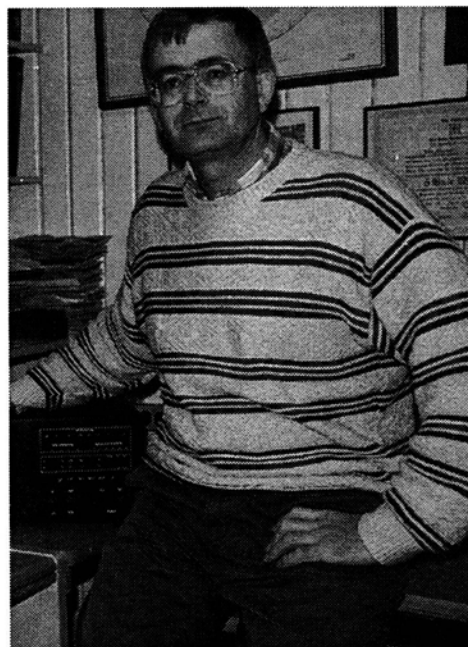
During the contest

- Check 80m first to the Pacific at 1200Z (15 after sunrise). Pick up a few VK/ZLs if possible, (the band may be noisy next day or stations may not be there).
- Clean out 40m in the 1200-1230 time frame - usually lots of VK/ZL and Western VE activity.
- Work with the second radio on 20 or higher bands if open whilst CQing on 40.
- Usually QSY to 20 at 1230 or so. Always keep one antenna on VK/ZL while the other is on G. This could be the only time to work VK on 20 during low sunspot years.
- Work Gs on highest available band through 'common' daylight hours.
- Constantly check other two high bands for activity.
- Move or sked almost anything outside of G land!
- Check 'bent' paths out of Africa on high band.
- Go to 40 early. Work Gs in late afternoon. They won't be any good through the night.

- Spend the time on 10/15 into VK/ZL 2100-0100 - its slow but the bonuses make up for it.
- Check 20 at 0000 for the rare Asian stuff. Usually a VS6 or 9M to be had.
- Run Gs on 80 and 40 alternately as long as propagation will allow.
- Continue checking the high bands frequently - particularly 20 for openings to the West.
- Keep CQing and tuning all night long. The rates are always poor but the contest is often won by just a few QSOs.
- Just as on the high bands, move everyone for bonus points on the low bands.
- Lots of stations will QSY from 40 to 80 who might not otherwise call on 80. Its easy when you know the callsign for sure and can predict the serial number.
- Never quit! Morning will soon come.

General notes

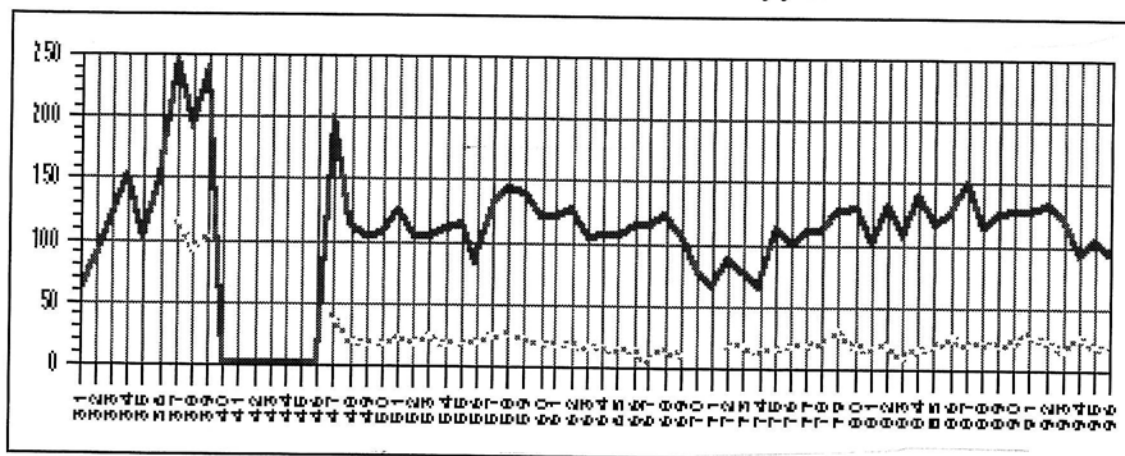
- The use of 2 radios to keep an eye (ear) on other bands has been a big bonus. In addition having several antennas on each band allows me to monitor several directions on the same bands at all times. This has been a big plus as it reduces the laziness factor sometimes associated with having to rotate a large antenna just for one call. VE3 is probably a good location for the BERU and I guess I have been rather lucky too!



John Sluymer, VE3EJ

Lessons for a long running contest

Total entrants BERU by year



Some men have achieved greatness in a night - but rarely without long and careful preparation.⁶

Why has the Contest lasted such a long time? The answer to this question is complex. Part of the answer must be that of the basis of competition. Roughly the number of entrants is constant at between 100 to 130 with an average of 118⁷, the number of participants perhaps several hundreds more, more when conditions are good, fewer when they are bad. The Low Power and Single Band entries are roughly 20% of the entrants. The rule changes in 1969, '70 and '72 due to apparent declining interest with the benefit of hindsight probably had as much to do with declining conditions. It provides some support for the view that changes at sunspot minimum might not be necessary when conditions recover. Although activity goes up and down with the sunspot cycle, it is more affected by conditions on the contest weekend. The exception to this seems to have been 1956, but poor conditions were commented upon over the 1970--74 slump and the postal strike in the UK in '71 didn't help to publicise the rules in good time. From '75 on better conditions and good publicity by John, VK3ZC, and Eric, BERS95, seem to have sustained and increased interest through to the 50th contest in 1987. A drop off in 1993 appears to have again been due to conditions. Looked at overall, interest remains reasonably high. For the future the previous good levels of advertising have to be rebuilt, especially to increase participation in VE/VK/ZL. For maximum effectiveness, this advertising will need to be done with help from stations in those parts of the Commonwealth. The temptation to meddle with the rules has to be resisted in periods of low solar activity. Better to increase the advertising.

The other aspect is the slow and steady reduction in CW proficiency around the world. Derek, G5RI, said to me recently that CW is like playing a musical instrument. To enjoy it you have to become proficient. Too many don't make the necessary effort, even though they could work much DX thereby.

Certainly BERU has a strong attraction to the entrants. The same people crop up year after year. And the regulars do look for each other. Part must be the nature of the challenge. Not just a case of sitting on one frequency and working all comers. Rather more a challenge to winkle out the DX prefixes. You can win the contest outright, be top VE or top ZL. You can set yourself a target to see how many prefixes you can work on all five bands in 24 hours. Not as easy as it sounds. You have to make skeds, but what's the best time? You have to stick at it, especially when it's quiet. You have to adopt your operating style from high speed to ragchew so as to attract the casual bonus station upon which your final result will depend. Anyone can build up a score when conditions are good, but when the bands are quiet, that separates out those with real skill and understanding. If you are a good DX operator and listener, if you understand propagation, you will do well. And you don't have to send at 40 wpm but you do have to be accurate. In short the contest challenges your operating skills and station directly.

Arthur Watts, G6UN, said that the aim of BERU was to *make Empire friendships*. He would be pleased to know he succeeded. Can I propose to you that you adapt Arthur's aim to the modern Commonwealth and use this contest to continue to *make Commonwealth friendships*.

73, Bob, G3PJT.

PS. I know that you would now like to enter next years Commonwealth Contest. 1997 will be the 60th, the Diamond Anniversary, so I have included the latest rules, a prefix list and a sunrise/sunset table in the Appendices. CU there.

⁶ Quote in calendar for 1934.

⁷ The deviation is large at 34, due to the large variations caused by conditions.

APPENDIX 1

60th ANNIVERSARY COMMONWEALTH CONTEST 1997 RULES

The Commonwealth Contest promotes contacts between stations in the Commonwealth and Mandated Territories. See Appendix 2 for qualifying Call Areas. A more relaxed contest environment which gives you the opportunity to work some choice DX. These rules should be read in conjunction with RSGB General Rules in the *RSGB Contesting Guide 1997*.

DATE	TIME UTC	FREQUENCY BANDS	MODE	EXCHANGE
8 to 9 March 1997	1200 to 1200	3.5,7,14,21,28MHz	CW	RST + Serial Number

- 1 Eligible entrants:** UK entrants must be members of RSGB. Overseas - Licensed Radio Amateurs within the Commonwealth or British Mandated Territories. Single-operator. Entrants may not receive any assistance during the contest, including the use of spotting nets, packet clusters or other assistance in finding new bonuses. Headquarters stations, GB or other special event call signs and maritime or aeronautical mobile are not eligible.
- 2 Sections:** (a) Open, no limit on operating time. (b) Restricted, operation is limited to 12 hours. Off periods must be clearly marked and a minimum of 60 minutes in length. In addition, at least four hours operating must take place after 2359 UTC.
- 3 Frequencies:** Entrants should operate in the lower 30kHz of each band, except when contacting Novice stations operating above 21030 and 28030kHz.
- 4 Scoring:** Contacts may be made with any station using a Commonwealth Call Area prefix except those within the entrants own Call Area. Note that for this contest, the entire UK counts as ONE call area, and therefore UK stations may not work each other for points. Each contact scores 5 points, with a bonus of 20 points for each of the first three contacts with each Commonwealth Call Area, on each band.
- 5 "Headquarters" Stations:** A number of Commonwealth Society HQ stations are expected to be active during the contest and will send 'HQ' after their serial number, to identify themselves. Every HQ station counts as an additional call area and entrants may contact their own HQ station for points and bonuses.
- 6 Logs:** Separate logs and lists of bonuses claimed are required for each band. Entries must be accompanied by a summary sheet indicating the section entered and the scores claimed on each band.
- 7 Address for logs:** RSGB HF Contests Committee, c/o S.V.KNOWLES G3UFY, 77 Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 7AF, UK
- 8 Closing Date for Logs:** Logs must be postmarked no later than 7 April 1997.
- 9 Awards:**
 - (a) **Open** - The Senior Rose Bowl will be awarded to the overall leader, and the runner-up will be awarded the Junior Rose Bowl. The Col. Thomas Rose Bowl will be awarded to the highest-placed UK station. Certificates of Merit will be awarded to the third-placed entrant overall, and to the leading station in each Call Area.
 - (b) **Restricted** - Certificates of Merit will be awarded to the leading three entrants overall and to the leading stations in each Call Area.
 - (c) A **Commonwealth Medal** will be awarded to the entrant in either section who in the opinion of the HF Contest Committee has most improved his or her score, or contributed significantly to the contest over the years.
 - (d) In order to encourage you to work as many different Commonwealth Call Areas on as many bands as possible and to celebrate the 60th Anniversary contest, a **Special 60th Anniversary Certificate** will be awarded to every entrant in either section who makes contact with more than 50 or 60 Band-Call Areas in the 1997 contest : A silver certificate for 50 or more or a gold certificate for 60 or more. One certificate per entrant.

For example; VP9 worked on 3 different bands counts as 3 Band-Call Areas. Entrants are asked to note their claimed Band-Call Area total on the Summary Sheet.

APPENDIX 2

Commonwealth Contest Call Areas

CALL	COUNTRY
3B6	Agalega & St. Brandon
3B8	Mauritius
3B9	Rodriguez Island
3DA	Swaziland
4S	Sri Lanka
5B	Cyprus
5H	Tanzania
5N	Nigeria
5W	Western Samoa
5X	Uganda
5Z	Kenya
6Y	Jamaica
7P	Lesotho
7Q	Malawi
8P	Barbados
8Q	Maldive Islands
8R	Guyana
9G	Ghana
9H	Malta
9J	Zambia
9L	Sierra Leone
9M0	Spratly Island
9M2	W. Malaysia
9M6/8	E. Malaysia
9V	Singapore
9Y	Trinidad & Tobago
A2	Botswana
A3	Kingdom of Tonga
AP	Pakistan
C2	Nauru
C5	Gambia
C6	Bahamas
C9	Mozambique
CY0	Sable Island
CY9	St. Paul Island
G,GB,GD, GI,GJ,GM, GU,GW	United Kingdom (all one area)
H4	Solomon Islands
J3	Grenada
J6	St. Lucia
J7	Dominica
J8	Saint Vincent
P2	Papua New Guinea
S2	Bangladesh
S7	Seychelles
T2	Tuvalu
T30	W. Kiribati
T31	C. Kiribati
T32	E. Kiribati
T33	Banaba
TJ	Cameroon
V3	Antigua, Barbuda
V3	Belize
V4	St. Kitts Nevis
V5	Namibia
V8	Brunei
VE1	Nova Scotia
VE2	Quebec
VE3	Ontario
VE4	Manitoba
VE5	Saskatchewan
VE6	Alberta

VE7	British Columbia
VE8	North West Territories
VE9	New Brunswick
VK0	Heard Island
VK0	Macquarie Island
VK1	Australian Capital Terr
VK2	New South Wales
VK3	Victoria
VK4	Queensland
VK5	South Australia
VK6	Western Australia
VK7	Tasmania
VK8	Northern Territory
VK9C	Cocos (Keeling) Island
VK9L	Lord Howe Island
VK9M	Mellish Reef
VK9N	Norfolk Island
VK9W	Willis Island
VK9X	Christmas Island
VO1	Newfoundland
VO2	Labrador
VP2E	Anguilla
VP2M	Montserrat
VP2V	British Virgin Islands
VP5	Turks & Caicos Islands
VP8	Antarctica
VP8	Falkland Islands
VP8	South Georgia
VP8	South Sandwich
VP8	South Shetland
VP8	South Orkney
VP9	Bermuda
VQ9	Chagos
VR6	Pitcairn Island
VS6	Hong Kong
VU	India
VU4	Andaman & Nicobar
VU7	Laccadives
VY1	Yukon
VY2	Prince Edward Island
YJ	Vanuatu
Z2	Zimbabwe
ZB2	Gibraltar
ZC4	Cyprus (UK Bases):
ZD7	St. Helena
ZD8	Tristan de Cunha
ZD8	Ascension Island
ZF	Cayman Islands
ZK1	North Cook Islands
ZK1	South Cook Islands
ZK2	Niue
ZK3	Tokelau Islands
ZL0 &/ZL	New Zealand Reciprocal
ZL1	New Zealand - Area 1
ZL2	New Zealand - Area 2
ZL3	New Zealand - Area 3
ZL4	New Zealand - Area 4
ZL7	Chatham Island
ZL8	Kermadec Island
ZL9	Auckland & Campbell
ZS1	Cape District
ZS2	Cape Province
ZS4	Orange Free State
ZS5	Natal

ZS6	Transvaal
ZS8	Marion & Prince Ed Is
GB5CC	RSGB HQ Station
	Other Commonwealth HQ Stations

A sunrise sunset table, (March)

Country	Sunrise	Sunset
G	06.16	18.00
VE3	11.30	23.20
VE7	14.20	02.17
VK2	19.50	08.15
VK6	22.10	10.30
ZB2	06.33	18.20
ZC4	05.58	15.50
ZL	18.10	06.42
ZS	04.09	16.20
9J	04.10	16.20
9V	23.10	11.10

Super-Duper for the Commonwealth Contest

SDC - the Contest Logging Program by EI5DI

SDC is the only contest logging program dedicated to the RSGB Commonwealth Contest. It's derived from Super-Duper (SD), the logger for RSGB and many other HF contests.

- Used by G3PJT to win the 1994 Commonwealth Contest.
- Sets the standard for fast, simple logging and editing.
- Single keystrokes for all logging and editing functions.
- Tracks bonus QSOs worked and needed.
- Instant duping on any PC, whether 3 or 3000 QSOs logged.
- Instantly checks and re-scores complete log after each QSO or Edit - unique to SDC.
- Permits any combination of real-time (during the contest) or post-contest logging.
- Built-in memory keyer.
- SDC is available only to registered users of SD.
- Other Contests Supported by Super-Duper (SD)

RSGB	All contests with UK County Codes, CW and SSB Field Day, RoPoCo and AFS Contests.
ARRL	DX (both sides) and 10m.
CQ	WW, WPX and 160m
IARU	HF Championship Region 1 CW and SSB Field Day.
Helvetia	SAC ARI PACC UBA

Here's what users say about the SD group of programs.

SD	HF Contest Logging.
SDV	VHF Contest Logging.
SDU	UBA (Belgian) Contest.
SDI	IOTA Contest.

G3PJT, G4PKP RadCom - September 1993

"... highly recommended, even for the newcomer." (SD)

G2HDR "I've only one word for it, it's magic." (SD)

HB9AGA "This is the program I always wanted to write for myself"

W4BAA "After 62 years as a radio ham this is the first time that I have logged with other than a pen and paper and it was a new and exhilarating experience." (SDI)

GW0ANA "I must say (SD) is superb... It makes contesting a 'joy' with the best part at the end - no paperwork."

GM0JKF "The program and support is 100% superb." (SD)

G3YLC "At the end of the event even the computer program cynics were converts." (NFD 1993)

G3RXQ "I am amazed at how accurately (SD) matches what I want from a contest logging program and the improvement it has brought to my QSO rate."

G3IZD "I thoroughly enjoyed using SD, it's so much better than the others I've tried."

VU2PTT "I shall be using (SD) for all future contests."

G4ADD "SD.... a gift at the price."

SD - First on the Web

Get the latest news about SD from EI5DI's Home Page - on the Web since January 1995.

<http://www.iol.ie/~okanep>

Subscribe to the SD User Mailing List.

It's free! To join up, simply send the message **subscribe sd-user** to majordomo@blacksheep.org.

SD Registration

Registration fee:	SD	£25.00 or \$39.00
	SDV	£25.00 or \$39.00
	Both	£39.00 or \$59.00

Please send your cheque or postal order to:

Paul O'Kane EI5DI Tel: 00 353 1295 3668

36 Coolkill

Sandyford

Dublin 18

Ireland

SD & SDV Copyright © 1990-1996

Paul O'Kane EI5DI All rights reserved.

You'll get a printed manual and support for 12 months, with updates on request. The programs are supplied on 3.5" disks.