

The XF4L operators: N7NG, OH2BH, OH2BU, XE1L, W6RGG, JH4RHF, XE1XA, XE10H.



Operators LA1EE and LA2GV hope to be activating Bouvet Island in December.

dition. The doors open at 0930 and the entrance fee is £3.50. I have attended the last three HF Conventions and all have been very enjoyable occasions and an excellent chance to meet your fellow HF enthusiasts. The event really starts on the Saturday evening, however, as many DXers travel long distances to attend and stay overnight at the Belfry Hotel or nearby — the bar areas are usually packed with people wearing callsign badges by mid evening on Saturday. Quite often there are also informal slide show presentations until well into the wee hours.

In the last Q&Z I mentioned the XF4L expedition to Revilla Gigedo and said that they made about 30,000 QSOs. Well, the final tally was almost 48,000. It was good to receive a letter and photo of the intrepid DXpeditioners from Jarmo, OH2BN, who is the unfortunate individual who is dealing with all the QSLs for the XF4L trip. Jarmo's letter gives some interesting details about these islands:

"Revillagigedo Islands are located 450 miles off the coast of Mexico in the Pacific Ocean. The archipelago consists of three small islands and two adjacent rocks. The island of Socorro is 24 miles long and 9 miles wide and its volcanic peak rises slightly over 3700 feet. The island is manned by a small military garrison . . . Following a four-hour flight, our Beechcraft King Air plane touched down (with) a strong tailwind, barely managing to pull up on Socorro's short runway. A total of 6600 pounds of gear and supplies were set up on three separate sites high up on a

volcano to provide clean operating on CW and SSB simultaneously, and to take advantage of narrow propagation windows. The tent and generator-based XF4K was in action . . . While not on operating duty, the XF4L team members participated in a variety of activities all the way from fishing and climbing the peak of the volcano to socialising with residents of the local naval base."

However, Jarmo says that they think their greatest achievement was training and making operational Fernando, the island's military commander, who has been given the callsign Xf4F. Icom and the Northern California DX Foundation provided a complete station for Fernando to use, which was set up and left behind by the XF4L team.

As a postscript to this highly successful DXpedition, it is reported that in June Fernando managed to save the lives of two people, when he used the amateur radio equipment for emergency traffic. He contacted XE3EB and asked the navy to send a plane to the island to pick up a sailor with a lung problem and a lady who had a miscarriage. Official communications had failed, but amateur radio saved the day. If it had not been for the DXpedition and the training given to Fernando by the DXpedition team members, these two people's lives could well have been lost.

Bouvet Island

What is generally regarded as the second rarest DXCC country in the world (second only to Albania) looks like being activated in December and

January. This is Bouvet Island, which has the dubious distinction of being the most isolated island on earth. Uninhabited, it lies in the South Atlantic, about half way between the southern-most tips of South America and South Africa, and close to Antarctic waters. The island belongs to Norway and Einar, LA1EE; Kaare, LS2GV and Erling, LA6VM hope to be the DXpedition operators on what sounds like being one of the most ambitious expeditions for many years. They have formed the Club Bouvet in order to raise sufficient funds for the trip — the LA-DX Group is providing the equivalent of 12000 US dollars for starters, but much more will be needed. However, if anyone can make it happen, these three should be able to — readers will remember that the same team activated Peter 1st Island (another Norwegian Antarctic island) for the first time ever in 1987.

Bouvet, however, sounds anything but welcoming. Club Bouvet write that the island is "surrounded by a virtually endless, cold ocean. Sea and air temperatures are near freezing point. Visibility is poor most of the time . . . Strong, frightening gusts of wind on the lee side of the island, "impossible" landing conditions with worst case ocean wave heights up to 30 metres making . . . especially departure very difficult. Multitudes of living creatures, weighing up to 5 tons, will be guarding the shore (Bouncers? Rogue elephants? Huge truckers wielding CBs??). They are savage, do not love DXing and will