



Ridgeway Repeater Group. Newsletter First Quarter 2019

Messages/Notices

I hope you have all had a Merry Christmas and father christmas was good to you, and wish you a very happy and prosperous new year from the RRG committee.

Dx on our repeater ! (GB3TD)

I hear you mumble is that possible on a repeater well it can be with use of echolink but rarer if it is analogue radio transmission through the ether. This is reported from Rob and Richard whom I thank them both for the information.

Richard, G4MUF/M and Rob, G4XUT/M worked an unusually distant contact on GB3TD on 20th October 2018 around 11.00 Z. The station was John, EI8JA located in Waterford. The QSO lasted for many overs and the signal was a smooth S7 for all of that time. The report back from John was the same. Richard calculated that the distance between GB3TD and Waterford at 383 Km and neither Richard or Rob had heard EI's on the repeater before even with similar tropospheric ducting.

For the records, F/G4XUT/M, Rob had worked GB3TD from near Rennes in France whilst mobile a few years earlier working Andy, G0BEQ/M at Blunsdon and some 370Km.

We would be interested in any "DX" contacts you have through our repeaters for our records.

Article by Ken Powell G1NCG

My Work Experiences in Libya Part Two.

After the first Christmas spent in Libya, the management offered me a plane ticket to anywhere I wanted to go, this first year I just took a flight back to the UK, but in later years I got more adventurous and will tell you more later. So the next few months were spent learning where the stations/places were in regard to names and where each one was situated. There were 16 sites with microwave equipment in them between Tripoli and Sirte which we were responsible for. This was about half way for us as there were 17 sites between Sirte to Benghazi, this was as far as we went but there were more sites towards Alexandria in Egypt, but I did go to one site after Benghazi, Al Bayda which was about 200 Kilometres further on from Benghazi. I have an amusing story from this place as we were asked to go there on one of my visits to Benghazi to investigate a fault with a piece of equipment. On arrival we had a look at this piece of equipment and decided that we needed more information on it, but while we were there I noticed a pile of damaged PCB boards from another piece of equipment that I did have knowledge of, but to my amazement most of the chips (Integrated Circuits) had their tops blown off as if someone had pulled them off. I asked what had happened and was told they had had a lightning strike and this had surged through all of this equipment so there were 30/40 damaged boards. So I asked if they had earthing on the equipment to counteract this issue and was pointed at a thick yellow and green wire from the rack of equipment and I followed this to its end point only to find it dangling through a hole in the building's wall, I then found a way to get to where this yellow & green cable went just to find it was hanging there and waving in the breeze attached to nothing. This was what caused the damage to the chips on the boards no earthing to anything, so I suggested they deal with it but I'm not sure anything was done or if anything has changed even now.

I do have another funny experience with what could be called "A Brush With The Weird". I was asked to go to a place called Gharian and this was located on a plateau just at the edge of the Sahara Desert, we headed out of Tripoli towards Tunisia on the coastal road and after about 20 to 30 minutes we then headed inland and drove for around two hours before we got to the winding road that took us up to the plateau where this town was situated. We found the telephone exchange building but I did notice something odd with one of the dish towers. We introduced ourselves to the local telecoms engineers who took us to see the tower and it looked as if the giant from "Jack & The Beanstalk" had grabbed the top and folded it over, the top of the tower had been folded over and it touched the ground. We were told they had had a bad storm that folded this tower over and two departments couldn't decide who should repair it (Bureaucracy runs rampant again) The real culprit

was, they put a large 6 Meter diameter dish near the top but didn't reinforce the structure so the inevitable happened when the storm blew it's hardest the weak link gave way the tower folded. I was there to look at a smaller link but the dish was 180 degrees out of alignment as it was facing the other way to what it was supposed to facing. I think this tower was still like this when I left Libya so I expect could still be the same today, we never did fix the link. I have another story, when I was asked to go into the desert, the Sahara desert and I didn't have a choice as I was told you have to go to a place called Brak which is 600 kilometres into the Sahara. I was told you have accommodation at a camp along the way to Brak as the trip could not be accomplished in just one days travel. This camp was one used by the workers that were building Ghadfi's "Great Man Made River" or GMMR (Pronounced gamra) by our crews and the people working on the project. (Will explain more about this later in this article) When we arrived at this place it was like a small city with very good accommodation for me anyway I had what could only be described as a large hotel type room separate shower/bathroom and a comfortable bed, we used this place as our base while we were working there. The following day we went to the repeater station for the microwave equipment as there had been a break in but nothing was taken because I think whom ever broke in didn't know what they were looking and couldn't find anything worth stealing. Brak was another 50 kilometres further on than this microwave station, we were going there the following day. First job was to check the microwave equipment to ensure it was working okay, which it was. The reason for this microwave link was that the comms via the fibre's that had been layed along the pipeline (GMMR) that was buried in the sand went a different way than to the town of Brak, so a microwave link was used to add them to the new fibre system. With the equipment all checked out we decided to go back to the over night stop and ready ourselves for the next day's drive to Brak. Although this was only 50 Kilometres as the crow flies our route was rather longer it took around one and half hours to get to Brak. The landscape that we drove through looked like an alien landscape not of this world and if you've seen the pictures from the Mars rover of the rocky and redish brown soil that is what this route looked like, but changes back to a more recognisable sandy colour as we arrived in Brak. It took a while to locate the tower with the dishes on and the container with the equipment in as this was parked in the carpark of the local telephone exchange. I checked the microwave equipment and found a small fault and corrected it plus checked it's computerised monitoring system to ensure that was working as expected, which it was. Now time to take the return journey after stopping for something to eat and drink which was not much but enough to sustain us for the return journey. While we were driving along the route back as I can't call them roads more like a harden dirt track. We were chased by an army pickup vehicle and we had just about reached the camp and my companions whom were the Libyan engineers got out and were arguing with the military people and I do not know what was being said

but it was a very heated discussion. I took the paper work out of the glove compartment that I had to explain what we were doing there. The Libyan passenger who I think was in charge of the engineers took one look at it and said to me why didn't I give him this before as it said they the military personal didn't have any right to stop us and then he really appeared to be dictating to the military person in charge and then we were told or pointed towards the camp and the military person turned to me and said in english sorry mister and there would not be any trouble. I have to say they did look bit scary as they guns and all, I thought for a moment that this might be my last moment on earth but it all went well.

Explanation time:- The Great Man Made River was Ghadfi's big plan to make Libya the garden of North Africa as there is plenty of water under the desert that could be extracted to water fertile areas around Libya that were used for growing crops to produce food cheaply. This entailed a large pipeline from the water bore holes to reservoirs and then to feed the areas requiring the water, it was very large project for the company that I worked for, That they were involved with.

My Travel ticket reward:- The last Christmas I worked in Libya I asked for a ticket to Australia so I could visit my brother whom I had not seen for several years and I didn't know if I would ever get another chance to visit him. This journey took approximately 24 hours to get to Australia as my journey started with a flight Bahrain but had to wait in the airport over night as the connecting flight did not take off until 6:30 AM the next morning and this part of my journey took 16 hours 8 hours to Singapore with a 1 hour break for refuelling and the another 8 hours to Sydney with a further flight to Cairns where my brother lives. I spent a wonderful 7 days with him and saw a lot different places and sampled a good few of the local delicacies of food and drink, it was great and a very worthwhile trip.



The Giants Playtoy



The long Winding Road Home



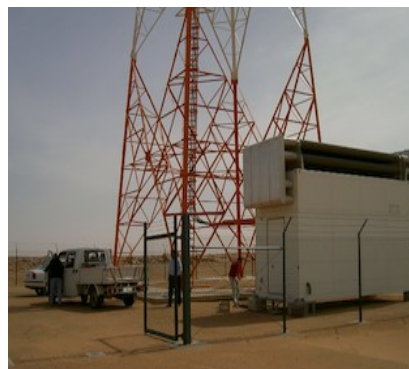
A Roadside refreshment Stop



My Daily Office View



Just another day at work



The last stop before Brak

