



# RSSL NEWS

**AUGUST 2009** | **THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA**

**The General Meeting for the Month of August 2009 will not be held on account of the AGM to be held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August Sunday 2009. The AGM notice is attached.**

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Please note that unless otherwise notified, monthly General Meetings will be held at the Sudharsi Hall at 0530 P.M. on the **last Wednesday of the month**. Please also monitor the RSSL net regularly on 145.625 MHz at 0900 P.M. for RSSL announcements. You are welcome to contact any Council member if you need to verify. Membership and ID Card applications can be obtained at the meetings. Membership renewals are also accepted by the Treasurer at the monthly meetings.

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### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009**

The official announcement is attached herewith. The AGM will be followed by the fellowship Lunch and members can also use the swimming pool. We are charging a subsidised rate of Rs. 550 per person. You can bring along family and friends for the fellowship lunch/buffet. It will be helpful if you could let the Council know about waiting for the fellowship lunch as we have to make available numbers to the hotel.

The AGM is open only for members of the RSSL. We urge all members to come for the AGM and also meet members who you haven't met in a long time. There are also new members who would like to come to know old timers too. Please note that only fully paid up members will be eligible to vote. You can update your membership before the commencement of the meeting by paying back arrears.

### **LIGHTHOUSE DX-SPEDITION TO BARBAERYN**

15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August will be the Lighthouse radio event and this year too arrangements are being made to go to Barbaryn Island and operate 4S7LGT. So far we have 22 who have given names. It's a lovely outing of fun and radio, some RF too and the highlight is the BBQ on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>. We also hope to conduct the VHF net from there so look out. Depending on HF conditions and the number of contacts we make the RSSL plans to issue a special QSL card depicting the beautiful light house. We propose to operate 14,21, 18 and 7 mHz for starters and of course VHF.

**RAE/CW/MORSE TEST:** The TRC will conduct the test on the 20/21<sup>st</sup> August 2009. Those who are eligible to sit the practical test to hurry up and register with the TRC.

### **0900PM/1530 HOURS RSSL VHF NET**

The net takes the air daily unless a net controller is not available and the net is for radio hams to get together more or less. If anyone has any emergency and needs some

assistance medical or otherwise they can check in and let the net controller know.

It is also the best time to get a signal report on your signal as it's the time everyone comes over to listen on the Yatiyantota repeater on 145.625 MHz FM.

It is an interesting experience to know who is active on the band and also to know that those who check in are active and keeping well, if not anything else. Its also interesting to see radio amateurs checking in from far out places like Ibbagamuwa, Kurunegala, Matara, Bandarawela in addition to others closer to Colombo. Those who check in give the weather report and a brief report about their activities. Having checked in a station can go out to another frequency with someone who has checked in already or he could request the net controller to call for a station that he/she is looking for. We are trying hard to get the echo-link working. The echolink is a link between amataeur stations all over the world via the internet which is connected to the VHF repeater enabling a radio amateur to get in touch with stations all over the world even using a simple VHF handheld. At the moment the Echo-link of off the air due to technical problems but it is hoped to get it going in the next few months at least.

In addition to the "checkins" in recent days the Net has started to develop into a radio journal format where the Solar indices, Flux, A, K, and Sun spot numbers are given in addition to a weather report. It also features DX contacts made and a round up of band condition along with RSSL announcements and information regarding matters which interest radio amateurs in general.

**Net Controllers Needed:** Net controlling is fun and it gives great operational experience to anyone. However, it needs dedication and discipline to be regular in taking the net and making sure when unable that an alternative controller is contacted to take the net.. Over the years we have had many net controllers who have put their own individual style, which helped to enriched the net and the community as a whole. The net is conducted in English by the net controller, but anyone is free to check-in, in what ever language he/she is comfortable with as long as the net-controller can handle the language. Hi. Usual languages have been English, Sinhala, Japanese, Spanish, French, Italian and German. It creates a bit of interest and fun as well. We hope to add Hindi and Tamil in the near future. We also have interested VHF listeners who are greeted by the net-controller and others who check in. We all remember how good we felt as SWLs when the hams greeted

us on the air. Even though we were eagerly waiting for our own day to get on the air, we felt a part of the community when we received greetings on the air. It goes without saying that any SWL can ask the net controller to pass their greetings to anyone else on the net.

Do check in and help make the RSSL ham spirit grow.

### **KNUCKLES MOUNTAINS DXSPEDITION (4S7AB/M).**

It was windier than any place I have ever been to and so cold for Sri Lanka. The wx was changing quickly, we felt the whole world was below us and we were still walking quite a distance from our final destination. We decided to walk since the road was quite bad. After a walk of about one and a half kms along a picturesque narrow jeep track through the forest, we arrived at the "Dotalu Cabin" which is a forest bungalow located at the halfway point on the way to the top of Mount Dotalugala.

Myself, Dimuthu (4S7DZ) Dammika (4S7DF) Kamal (4S7AB) Jaliya (4S7AJ) and SWLs Pinith, Upendra and Sukio (xyl of Upendra) were able to reach the cabin before noon. We were impatient to unpack our stuff and set up the station on arrival. Kamal, Jaliya and Pinith were busy drawing a long wire up the side of the mountain rock while myself and Dimuthu were trying to access the Yati repeater on 145.625 using a homebrew Tiny 3" 3 el Yagi. The repeater was accessed and we were soon in contact with Suranga(4S5SS) with a 59+ signal even though we had an obstruction from a mountain between the repeater and our location. It was obvious that we were getting a bounced off signal from the mountain range. Kamal's mobile station was performing well with the long wire we drew along the mountainside and worked a good number of dx station that evening. However, Europe was very poor as the huge rock in front of us was obstructing our path to Europe.

That night we set up a wood-fire near the cabin because we were almost freezing due to the strong wind that was hitting us, while on and off, icy rain was falling to add to our misery! However, it also had a romantic tilt to the whole expedition. It was so cold that we huddled together literally and sang camp songs to warm our spirits.

The following morning we were up early despite the rain as we wanted to reach the peak of the range. Progress was slow due to the hard climb made even harder which was constantly interrupted by the king-size leeches that kept climbing on us faster than we climbed the mountain side.! Back at base camp we pulled an extra RF ground wire to the setup to pull in a better signal, which resulted in working a few US stations at good strength. That

night it started to pour down heavily and we had to go QRT rather early.

The following morning we dismantled our equipment and started our homeward journey, happy for having added a new experience to our Ham life.

Arosha (4S6AK)

Ed note My apologies for missing this article which Arosha had sent in some months back. I am glad we could share a fantastic experience even late)

DX-speditions:

Dimuthu 4S7DZ and Prasad along with Dammika 4S7DF have plans for future Dx-speditions. So watch out for details.

### **PROPAGATION FORECASTS**

Those interested in a daily propagation forecast including Solar Flux, A and K index figures can go to the internet and check WM4D.NET or Spaceweather.com and get hourly reports. The solar activity figures alone will do very little in finding real on band conditions as they just indicate some probabilities. The time of the year and whether signals paths cross the polar regions, daylight zones, grey-lines, winter and summer conditions to mention a few, play an even bigger part in radio signal propagation given the same Sun-spot, solar flux, A,K. numbers.

Your own experience of the Band from Sri Lanka is the best guide to propagation, along with signal strength indicators of stations from various parts of the world. Experience is the best guide as our top dxers like 4S7EA, 4S7NE, 4S7RO, 4S7KM to mention a few of our top current dxers, will tell you. An even better indication will be the observation of the NDXC run worldwide chain of Beacons which transmit an identification every 3 minutes. Picking up the signals which are sent at 100w, 10W, 1 watt and 100 milliwatts will give you an on band indication of propagation conditions.

You can google on the internet [www.ncdxf.org/beacon](http://www.ncdxf.org/beacon) which will bring you a complete schedule of the International Beacon programme including recordings of the many beacons.

ED NOTE: Excuse the rather hurried Newsletter this time.

**E-Mail Newsletters:** If you like to get the newsletter by e-mail please send me your address. If you like to get RSSL announcements only but not the newsletter, inform me as well. Its useful to be able to reach you via e-mail  
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