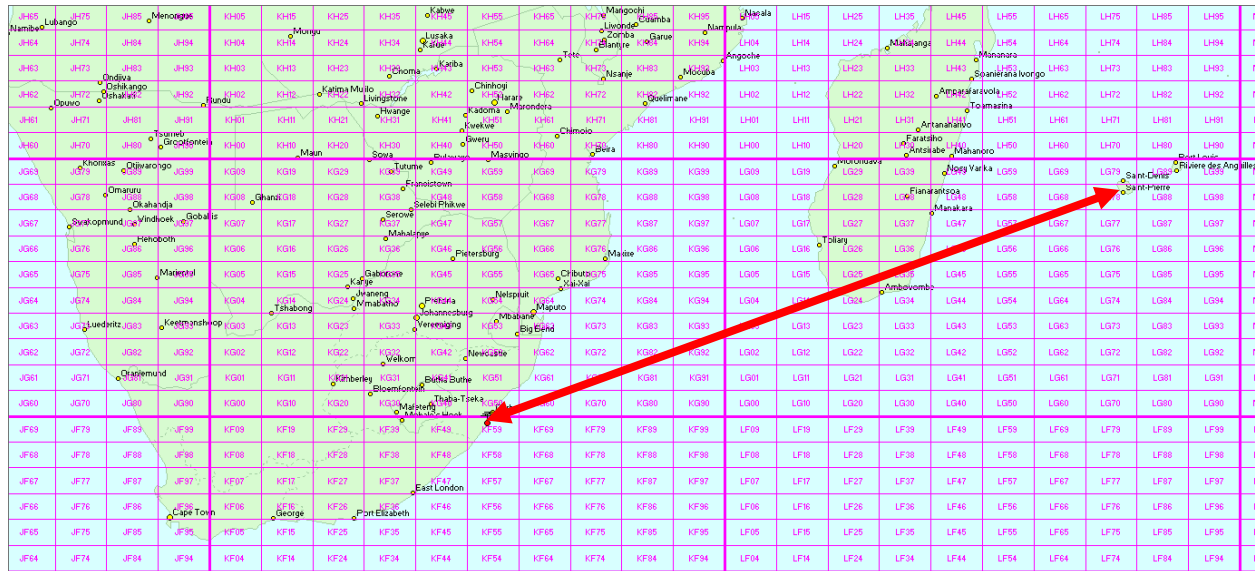


First 70cm contact between ZS and FR on 10-02-2010

Distance 2655km by Derek ZS5Y



Firstly I live on the east coast of South Africa, about 50km South of Durban in a small town by the name of Scottburgh in grid KF59JR.

During some past test between myself and FR5DN when the Hepburn index showed good forecasts we have tried on 70cm, and the result was always the same. Not even a peep from Phil over the path of 2655km.

Using the Hepburn index things started again on the 9th of February 2010 when Phil worked Glen ZS2GK on 2m using JT65B, there after Andre ZS2ACP worked Phil for a new 144MHz SARL distance record of 3205km also using JT65B

As soon as I saw Phil stating to CQ again I called him on 144.401 and he came back to my call immediately and we completed a digital QSO without hiccups.

I then called Phil using SSB and again we had an easy QSO ! Phil then worked ZS5LEE on digital and SSB and ZS5DJ on digital.

During e-mail exchange between myself and Phil I suggested he tries to get one of his 8 yagis than broke when his tower came down back to working condition. Phil said he will do so the next day when he returns from work.

I continued to monitor the beacon on Reunion throughout the night and next day with good decodes.

On my way home on the 11th of February I received a message from Phil saying he is up and running on 70cm calling CQ on 432.200 JT65B with a 21 ele yagi and no Pre amp, but using low loss coax.

Phil's 2m beacon was still booming through on my side with constant decodes when I arrived home.

I switched to 70cm and continued to monitor 70cm.

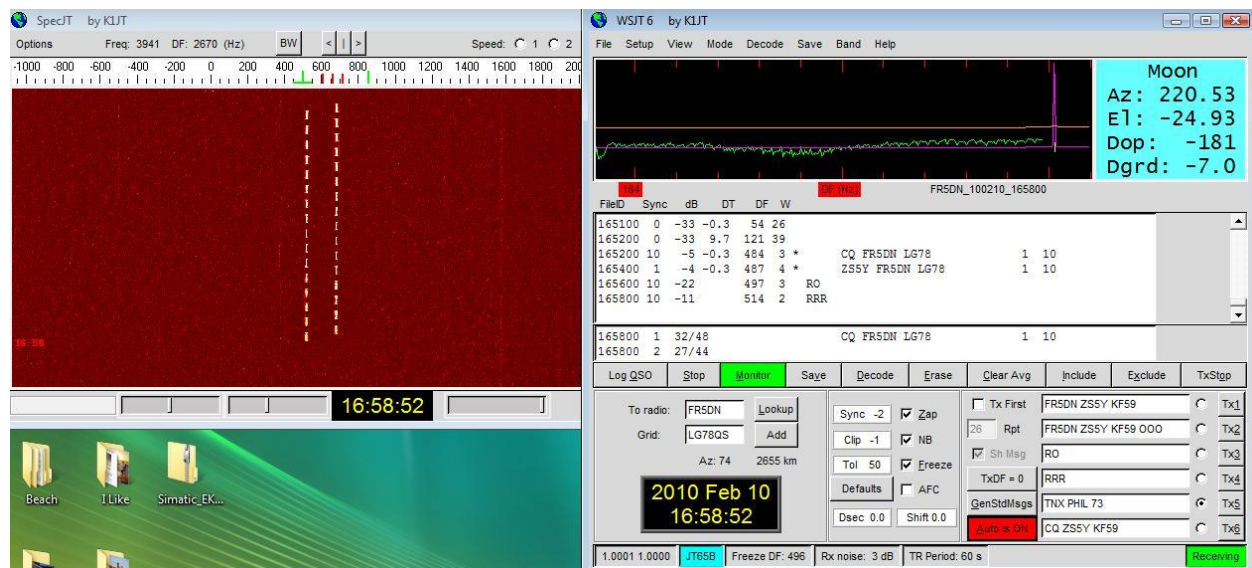
At 17:48 SAST Phil was called to dinner but he left the 70cm beacon running with 50W out.

At 18:18 SAST Phil announced he is back in the shack and turned up the power to 300w.

At 18:48 I hear someone testing on 432.200 SSB, I thought its one of the locals as the signal was so strong. I mailed Phil and he replied "That's me"

I relied to Phil's by now very strong signal -4 and -5 and we completed without a hiccup on 70cm using JT65B.

Phil mailed me and said "strong !! after we go SSB"



Phil called on SSB and after some tuning found his SSB signal, it had lots of QSB but wasn't too fast. He came up to a 5/5 and he gave me a 4/1 I was running a pre-amp and 4x12 ele yagi array and 60W Phil had 21 ele yagi and 300W for digital and 150W for SSB, but no pre-amp.

We tried a while longer on SSB but signals faded rapidly into the noise floor. Phil went back to calling in JT65B trying to work Glen ZS2GK and Andre ZS2ACP, but seems the conditions dropped away completely, even on 2m. The rest of the night didn't produce any more signals on 2m or 70cm.

Comment from ZS5Y

"During the QSO I was trembling with excitement ! Couldn't keep my hands still...hahahaha"

Comment from FR5DN

"I cried YIIIIIPPPIIII!!
My wife was wondering what was happening hi...
We LOVE that kind of adrenalin!"

Thanks to Phil for his passion for VHF and his determination to studying the Tropo path between ZS and FR, It has paid off and im sure many more QSO's will follow.

73's

Derek Gravett ZS5Y